游泳池的笑声

早上太阳刚刚爬上来，

妈妈就装好了游泳圈和泳镜，

我们出发去游泳池，脚步轻快，

好像整个夏天的快乐都在前面等着。

游泳池平平的、蓝蓝的，像一面大镜子，

它朝我摆摆手，哗啦，哗啦，

救生员的哨声、教练的数拍声，

混成一片哗啦啦的水声。

我扶着池边学打腿，

一下、两下、十下、二十下，

游泳圈悄悄松开了我的背，

忽然间，我自己游起来啦！

我像小青蛙一样往前游，妈妈在岸边拍手，

腿有点酸，心却轻得像羽毛，

我潜下去摸一枚亮亮的硬币，

浮上来，把它贴在脑门上当勋章。

朋友小乌龟和我比了一次赛，

他游得像鱼雷，我游得像小鸭子，

他赢了比赛，我赢了水花，

我们俩都笑了，水也跟着笑。

浅水区传来扑腾扑腾的声音，

小小孩们套着浮袖学狗刨，

一个哭鼻子，一个吐泡泡，

哭的那个很快也咧开嘴笑。

跳水台高高的，像一座小雪山，

我在上头站了三回都没敢跳，

第四回闭着眼一蹦，水花砸下来，

原来害怕的声音，比西瓜还脆。

教练教我们踩水，像踩看不见的楼梯，

一踩一踩，头一直露在水面上，

我踩着踩着喊：我会站着游泳啦！

半个池子的人都转过头来鼓掌。

游完泳，我们坐在树荫底下，

爸爸抱来冰过的西瓜，咔嚓切开，

红红的瓤，黑黑的籽，又沙又甜，

咬一口，暑气全都跑光了。

我的脸上还滴着泳池的水，

西瓜的汁又顺着下巴流下来，

西瓜加游泳，等于夏天，

笑声就是夏天发出的声音。

更衣室的柜子里，

藏着一整套湿哒哒的夏天：泳帽、泳镜、拖鞋，

它们滴滴答答地滴水，

像替我们把今天又讲了一遍。

离开的时候，游泳池安静下来，

水面托着天空和白云，

它好像在跟我说：明天见，

把你的笑声带来，把累留下。

回家的路上，我的头发还在滴水，

风一吹，我满身泳池的味道，

公交车上的陌生人对我笑，

好像他也想跳进夏天里游一场。

晚上我梦见自己又在游泳，

梦里的西瓜漂在水面上，

我游过去咬了一口，

在梦里笑醒了。

The Laughter of the Swimming Pool

In the morning the sun had barely climbed up over the roof, and Mom had already packed my floatie, my goggles and my little towel, and we set off for the swimming pool with light and quick footsteps, as if a whole summer full of happiness were waiting for us right there ahead.

The swimming pool lay flat and blue under the sky, like one big shining mirror, and it waved its arms at me, splash, splash, while the lifeguard's whistle and the coach's counting mixed together into one happy splashing sound of water.

I held onto the edge of the pool and learned to kick my legs, one kick, two kicks, ten kicks, twenty kicks, and the floatie let go of my back without my even noticing, and suddenly I was swimming all by myself across the whole pool.

I swam along like a little green frog while Mom clapped for me on the shore, and my legs felt tired but my heart felt light as a feather, and I dove all the way down to pick up a shiny coin and came back up wearing it on my forehead like a little crown.

My friend Little Turtle and I had one swimming race, and he swam fast like a torpedo while I swam steady like a little duckling, and he won the race but I won the biggest splash, so we both laughed out loud and the water laughed along with us.

From the shallow end came a paddling and splashing sound, where the littlest kids wore their arm floats and learned the doggy paddle, and one of them was crying while another one was blowing bubbles, and the crying one broke into a big grin before the minute was over.

The diving board stood up high like a little snowy mountain, and I stood on it three whole times without daring to jump, and on the fourth try I shut my eyes and leaped, and the splash crashed down around me, and it turned out that fear sounds as crisp as a watermelon cracking open.

The coach taught us to tread water, like climbing an invisible staircase, one step, one more step, with our heads staying above the surface, and while I was treading I shouted: I can swim while standing up! and half the people in the pool turned around to clap for me.

After swimming we sat down together under the big shade tree, and Dad brought over a chilled watermelon and cut it open with a loud crack, and the red sandy flesh with its black seeds was so sweet that one single bite made all the summer heat run far away.

My face was still dripping with pool water, and the watermelon juice was running down my chin, and I decided that watermelon plus swimming equals summer, and laughter is simply the sound that summer makes when it is having the happiest time of the year.

Inside the changing room locker there was a whole wet set of summer hiding away: my swim cap, my goggles, and my slippers, and they dripped drop by drop onto the floor, as if they were telling everybody about our day all over again.

When it was time to leave, the swimming pool became quiet again, and its water held up the sky and the clouds, and it seemed to whisper to me: come back and see me tomorrow, and please bring your laughter back with you, but leave your tiredness here in the water.

On the way home my hair was still dripping drop by drop, and the wind blew past and I smelled like pool water, and even a stranger on the bus smiled at me, as if he too suddenly wanted to jump into the middle of summer and swim around.

That night I dreamed that I was swimming again, and in the dream a big watermelon was floating on the water, and I swam over quietly and took one bite of it, and I laughed so hard in the dream that I laughed myself awake in my bed.