

Diffazure's swimming pool, May 03rd 2017

Sid arrives at the small staircase, going down and all the way to the changing room. He's come to this building many times; he knows his way. "86 and still active", he likes to shout when he gets the chance to. But this time, when he gets to the locker area, he doesn't say anything. "An old wrinkly man is an old wrinkly man after all", he thinks to himself, "so be quiet for once". He knows that it is not the place for him to play at being indestructible. As much as he adores swimming, he often thinks about all the possible dangers that are present at a pool; he could slip on the wet floor, or drown, or even have a heart attack whilst doing his lengths. Hopefully none of that will happen though and quickly he locks away all his dark thoughts. In his life, he's learned how to stop fear when it comes to trouble his mind too much.

He takes off his clothes carefully. Each movement is studied. First he removes his vest, then his white shirt that strains against his small belly like a balloon. He unlaces his brown leather shoes and pulls off his socks, then unbuttons his trousers; last he takes off his boxers. His joints are a bit stiff but by wiggling his toes and ankles he manages to bring his bright yellow swimming trunks up onto his hips to tightly cover his intimate hanging parts. He is ready to go. As he walks into the direction of the pool, his towel on his arm, he puts on his matching bright yellow bathing cap, made of its thick rubbery plastic. He has always thought these look like condoms for the heads; it's why he doesn't like wearing them so much.

Close to the edge of the water, his torso leaning forward, he seems much bigger than his normal Medium size. His ridiculous outfit and posture are very similar to the image of seventy years old Iggy Pop on stage -about to jump into his crowd of fans. He stands for a

moment facing the fifty-metre Olympic size swimming pool, which for him, short sighted, looks like an infinite flat sea, then dives into the abyss. His body, suspended in the air, appears like an electric wire from which the skin is detaching itself. His muscles and bones are so tense they might shatter into a million pieces. At this exact second, Sid can't think of anything but the chlorine water he admires in his field of vision, below him. The pool has always represented his palace of pleasure.

All the other swimmers have instinctively stopped their flutter kicks, frog jumps, backstrokes and breaststrokes and, heads bobbing out of the water, are watching the scene, completely captivated. Time has suddenly stopped and all of the characters in the scene are still, like tale of Sleeping Beauty, when everyone that lives in the castle falls into a deep sleep until the princess wakes up. Similarly to when an accident happens and the eyes and the brain cannot receive the information properly and break it up into frozen frames.

The fall is inevitable, but there is this long moment of high suspense, high intensity: a liminal space.

The impact to the water could be dangerous; the body is so fragile, the liquid could hit as hard as concrete. Yet Sid's eyes are serene; nothing in his body gives out a feeling of nervousness. He sees the water approaching his face. He wouldn't mind if his limbs dissolved there and then, and his brain decomposed into the liquidly water particles. Diving is, for him, an ordinary movement he's done probably more than a thousand times in his life, but each time he gets a small adrenaline hit, as if his body was discovering something new.

When he is in the water he is extra aware of the precision of his own movements. Beneath a calm surface, he is attentive to all details. The only thing he can hear is the sound of his tight yellow boxers rubbing against the water; the pressure against his genitals makes him aroused,

like the touch of someone's hand, the contact with another human. He understands water this way: as an emotional, caring and peaceful force, with which he's built a strong relationship.

Right in the middle of the pool, half way between the top and the bottom, his whole body is perfectly aligned, parallel to the two extremities of the space. He doesn't move his limbs the slightest up or down, but his mind drifts to places he's forgotten about. Different snapshots of his life become glued together in the thickness of the water. Things that have happened to him long ago look suddenly as fresh as if they had occurred just now. He thinks about that time when his friend smiled at him in the swimming pool before disappearing for a long while under the water. He sees himself shutting the door of the cabin to change privately; too embarrassed to be naked in front of this woman, who he has swum next to when doing his lengths a few times. He remembers the swimming instructor who had yelled at him and his friends for eating a melon in the pool.

The more Sid drifts in his memories of the pool the more the water turns green. At the beginning the colour is similar to a lawn green, then an emerald green, growing darker each second- dark olive green, deep moss green- until it looks like a swamp. A strong smell of rotten algae is spreading in the room. It is impossible to discern anything in the water; Sid's body is like one lone strand of spaghetti lost in a great quantity of squid ink pasta sauce; a happy strand of spaghetti. He is alone with his thoughts; everyone around him has disappeared.

He is so far away from his own body that he completely forgets about providing it oxygen to keep alive. When he does open his mouth to breath; he inevitably inhales water too. He chokes. The water enters his lungs, causing a muscular spasm and a violent pain. The blood

hits his brain; he is now unconscious, and his body becomes heavier. When his lungs are fully filled up with water, gravity working on the heavy body makes him sink all the way to the bottom. He stays in the dark waters for a few days, without anyone visiting him. He is all right there; he hates sharing the water with hundreds of people anyway. It's just him and his true lover, his liquid Esmeralda and no one will disrupt them.

That is until the gases make him rise again and reach the top of the pool, where he is now floating like a cork. The whole of his body is swollen when he appears above the surface. Incapable of moving at first, he gently raises his hands and touches the water with the back of his fingers. His eyes are open. He moves his legs, then his head. He starts, very slowly, almost imperceptibly, to breath. Carefully, he does a few metres of breaststroke to reach the edge of the swimming pool. The lights of the room have been turned off but the reflection of the moon through the windows lets him see a little in there. He has a strong feeling of déjà vu as he climbs the ladder.

When he steps on the firm ground, he feels land sick; walking on the floor is now abnormal and unusual to him. He is staring at his feet, trying to understand how he is supposed to use them when he catches sight of a man walking towards him, holding a pool cleaning net in his hand. The man's face is hard to see with the lack of light, but he is wearing a cap, Sid notices, dressed in a grey uniform and anti-slip grey open shoes. "Ooh, I'd love a pair of those in yellow", he thinks to himself. The man doesn't look like he wants to engage in a friendly chat.

"Do you think you're in control right now?" he asks in a mysterious tone. Sid wants to respond, but he is a prisoner of his own body, still soaked of water "You were dreaming", says the man. It is very clear to Sid that he wasn't dreaming. "No", he replies in defence,

struggling for the sounds to come out of his mouth without regurgitating the liquid. The two men stare at each other for a while as if they were both gazing into an abyss. Then the grey cap man, tensing his hands, throws the pool fishnet cleaning stick firmly to Sid. Sid catches it. He looks at the huge blue veins of the man's arm: "Who are you?" But the man, machine-like, just points at the pool as if to say, it needs cleaning. "Stop there", he says. Without waiting Sid obeys, like a servant. He walks off with the net to the specified location and starts collecting all the rubbish, algae and dark green mess, which float on the surface of the water, pilling it all on the floor beside him. The smell is abominable. The man with the cap walks in the direction of the showers: "Why do you make so many efforts to live in this rubbish place?" he asks and without waiting for an answer he leaves the room. Sid, left alone, replies with a neutral voice: "Because I like swimming", and continues clearing the pool of all the dirt that has accumulated in it -until the day arises.