

Ágnes Lehóczky
Swimming Pool

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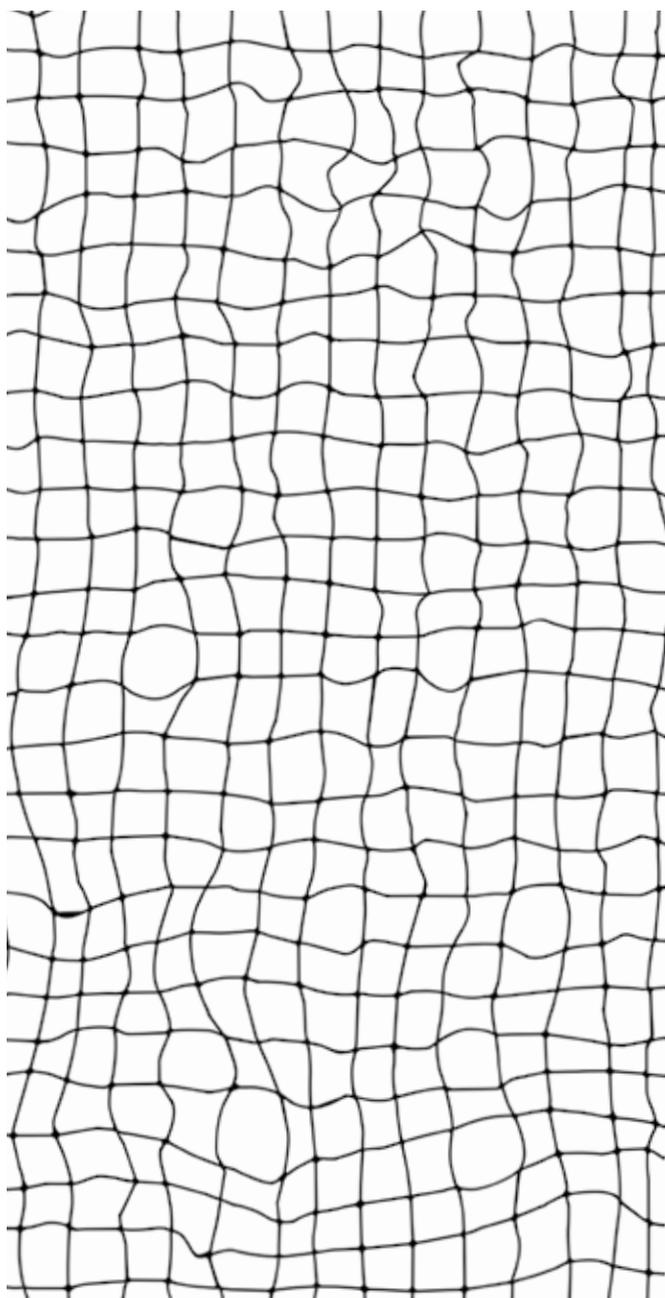
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For Adam Piette, the anonymous author, the hydrophilic friend

Swimming Pool

Discourse on Correlations in Water



Book One

On the Swimming Pool

[Postcard 1]

It's time, A., you should really check the time –
Sweet time! & in the sparkling depths of the pool,
Friend, enjoy liquefactions of desire;
To swim & immerse the embodied mind.
Swim your heart & soul out, all those lengths,
In such a joyful blue transparency!
Pool o pool, from the Danube to the Don,
As names writ in water, flow like language
Night! Day! through all the blue temporalities
Falls the leaping figure on A****'s day ...

Adam Piette, 'For A., a sauterelle'

Word One

The word (*word One* in this language) begins with Άλφα in the other's alphabet. Its prior symbol like a letter A tilted on its side, suspended in air and time, is now morphed into swimming pool, a priori. Indigo rorschach on an electronic postcard designed and sent by Adam on the occasion of my return to England. Those days I talked much about swimming as search for correlations between two parabola poles. And it's because the swimming pool is yet another aporia. Thinking de profundis. Thinking of punctuation. Ending the sentence by drowning. Apropos of melancholia. Or even more superfluous. Narcissistic. A universal weakness. The desire to navigate the body home through language. Pathology of the poem through pathos is what it is. The document, a liquefied polis, when I first received it, later read as an exported artwork from *procreate*. And millennia later I stuck the sheet on the white wall of my office in Sheffield. I also laminated this landscape. So that it could preserve its purpose once and for all without morphing into somewhere else (such as Glossop Road Baths just off West Street or The Rawson Spring in Hillsborough, these liminalities with fluid functions inhabited by one's own fluid selves). This I shall soon send to you in another's attachments. The glossy paper *now* portrays a blue canvas textured like waves and currents shaped like miniature curly tongues. Apo phainesthai ta phainomena. You could almost recognise the chequered tiles flickering at the bottom of this pool. The attachment *then* was entitled *Escaping Time*. This, perhaps, will always already be a one-way correspondence with the anonymous author, the hydrophilic friend. One in which one is at the receiving end.

Hypnos and Hajnóczy

Hypnos, the hydrophilic scribe writes in one summer email with a postcard attached on which Hypnos is lying divinely on his side with his half-brother, addressed to me along with many other addressees whose name I could not recognise at the time, turned up at the pool the other day. I have come to understand a posteriori, the message reads on, that there are simple correlations between the pool milieu and the mood of the elegiac. Between exercising the body and the movement of desire, one's perpetual drive to lead organic life back to its inanimate state; to magna mater: o water, the swimmer writes. O writing. Perhaps swimming, my anonymous reader, is the ultimate attraction towards the phlegmatic, to possibilities of thinking without punctuation, *sans* full stops. Imagine the pool, like one's inner washing machine, a hollow drum running in logocentric circles laundryless, weightless, in cyclical aquatic murmurs. In city thinking is concrete. Have you too felt that resilience in you towards anything too tangible, too definitive, and too well-defined? O the fluid statics of the swimming body, the thought, the clinamen together at rest and in motion. The poem's desire to refuse to understand anything premeditated at all. Look. Sebald's peripatetic walk occurs all along the East Anglian seashore picking up remnants of the memory of the melancholic no-one. This uncanny unnameable follows us to most places, from isles to isles, from pool to pool. From script to script. The attraction to drowning in the polis for the first time. The imprint of this event, always already *sui generis*, is ineradicable. We don't know what it is but we know that it's waiting. And when we don't know is when we wear the knowing face, head bowed down, raking through the clutter of East Anglian (apocalyptic) shorelines. But, anonymous friend, in our discourse with the swimmer, the lover, one should aspire to more from these melancholic meanderings during which you had long lost whom you had sought. Recycle the wealth of the waste word. The sameness of the soul structure. The simulacrum of the cosmos. O, water ball,

the globe. The hopelessness in which we rejoice, viva cul-de-sac; *sans* chance to find the beginning or the end always already unending, looking back at seashores always already in advance or strolling on large pebbles, who knows why, but always already backwards. False-etymology might help to open the gulf of such orphic syllogisms. Take the example of Hypnos and Hajnóczy and their binary opposition, Hypnos and his (for now) twin brother, the post-modern author, the alcoholic anonymous. *Death Rode Out of Persia* is largely set in an outdoor swimming pool in Budapest in the 1970s written from the perspective of the unreliable narrator, a former swimmer, who spends most of his time in the pool, resting carefree on his elbow drinking cans of lager and numerous brandy shots. Hajnóczy (in whose tragic case smooth-sighing Apollo is conquered by the wine drinking goat-like centaur), whose life ended due to liver failure at the age of thirty eight, is crucial for us in this line of thinking. Hypnos, who never sees the sun, lives his or her life in the cave of swimmers unminding original thought. This cultural amnesia, coralised underwater, is the paradox of modernity, the philosopher says. Hajnóczy's protagonist like a centaur, half-merged in the underworld, exercising a difficult breathing exercise, some tragicomic version of katabasis, longs for magna mater, for the cosmic womb, the absolute hydrostatic equilibrium, for the ultimate paradox. When he begins his novel, he says he needs an awfully large white paper to fill with language. To be able to ever terminate the book. To both be motion on the page, and idle. He thinks by spending time in the pool he will escape the opening sentence, his own addiction, his drive against language too phlegmatic to ever stop. Pool for the unnamed protagonist is bohemia and beer, dreamy dates, sepia changing cabins and sleepy cityscape. Pool is warm earth and another anonymous self. Or perhaps pool is mask. A surgical mask, a swimming mask. Pool a death mask. A theatre mask worn by one's inner protagonist in a larger story lying stylishly on his side on hot ink-blue tiles while the story itself around him unfolds. Pool the masquerade. A summer nap. Human fluid, heated temperament. The effigy of bronze bodies. A boundless afternoon banter on water temperature, the availability of

sunbeds and brilliant weather. Another brilliant banquet. But there is more to it. He also thinks pool is enlightenment, the possibility of all artless combinations of nonsensical thoughts and correlations; pool the absolute trope. Pool: trope's awful absence. There is no real separation between the swimming body and equilibrium. O silent friend *sans* soul, these thoughts are only one length apart; dependent on the fitness of the lungs. We must let the poem to and fro and to and fro in a hydraulic freedom for a lifetime, and when necessary allow it to struggle breathlessly like Woolf's moth on the glass, the no chance moth, the helpless moth, an anonymous dead moth which then gains a second life in an essay posthumously published in 1942. We, naturally, talk of a posthumous moth after all, struggling for its life on the window, always already in advance. Although one can't help feeling that the long-winded scrutiny of the moth is unnecessarily relentless and that the unknown narrator could have saved the lepidopteran with a simple movement. Did she in the end become fascinated by watching the furry thing dying for long hours? And besides, if she had bothered to save the moth's life with a simple fluid movement, that heart soaring article could have never been written after all? O the pathos. The bath(os). The gymnos. Body parameters. The entrance into the body's end through a swimming pool length. Here, if you will, when we trespass our own borders (*say by sentence*) we enter the maze of the Great Eastern Hotel near Liverpool Street station. We enter and take a seat next to a table opposite the louvered windows. We sit and watch the author sitting and watching. He is sipping his drink away slowly, slowly staring at us through his metachromatic mind. And the room begins to swim away with you and the anonymous author in its own artificial light.