

Let water hold you

Amelia Hawk, 2024

Transcript

The waters grazing the bottom of my knee caps
I think the deepest bit is over there, but you can never quite tell

Feeling like you're back in the womb, the closest sensation to this, kinda like you're rolling around in the womb, where it's completely dark and you're weightless. I liked that it was such an odd experience. It takes a while within it to get to the restful part though.

Running water has always been a place I come to when I feel I need to process something or step back away from something. It's cleansing, passing through and over your body, everything else can melt away. The sound as well, I find really comforting, maybe because it's so much noise.

I need that space where nobody can hear me, a space where nobody can ask any questions.

It's really levelling just listening to the body.

As someone who experiences dysphoria I can focus too much on the shape of my body and where things need to be, where I don't want them to be. But you can focus on something outwards, like focusing on how your skin feels, or something against the skin, and I find it a bit easier to be in my body.

I did it because I'm sick, and I've tried every single thing, I've tried them all. Some work, some don't, or some work for a while.

It moves in such a variety of ways over the stones and then falling, where there is a really big drop between the top of the water and then it falls down

How I imagined it, and how people describe it is that it is this profound experience and it's totally freeing because your body is totally and utterly supported.

I wonder how much water passes this spot everyday.

I spend a lot of time resting in bed. Rest is actually a glamorous word for that. I can't actually get out of bed. What's the difference between lying there when you have no choice but to rest, or are you doing the good thing you are meant to be doing and resting. I'm not experiencing any delightful rest [because] it's either enforced rest, or rest that I have no choice in because I can't actually move.

I think there is something to be said about, the entering and the coming out of the water again. If I'm thinking about going into the shower, it's something that I need to do when I'm overwhelmed or disconnected in some other way from my body. And the decision to go, okay, I think I've calmed down enough now, I can get out, I don't really think about. I do have that moment where I think, okay I can turn off the tap, I can get out. I can finalise and, kind of, close this feeling.

When you slow down and switch some of your senses off you can tune others in. Like that bird chatter or the warm light on our feet through the water.

I have a complicated relationship with rest, I resent it because I have to do it in this really calculated way. The way where I have to plan to rest.

It's kind of interesting this corporate relaxation, as opposed to natural.

I wonder how it would be to just experience this and close our eyes. Not seeing it, just feeling it.

I hadn't thought about the wind until just then.
I'm sure we had some wind before but I wasn't paying attention.

I can feel the bits of stone and grains of sand that are just below my feet.

The water feels really thick and heavy, because there is so much salt in it, it also feels really soft.

This rest is fully capitalist because you're paying for this supercharged slot of rest.

I think the sound of the water changes as you listen to it more.

When you listen to it first it's like this big block of sound, but when you hear the detail and imagine whether it is coming off a big stone or coming from a long distance. It's made up of different components rather than being one sound when you listen to it a bit more.

You can hear the big drop as it gets sucked into the body of water below, and then the trickle in the smaller sections.

I'm learning how to live with ME, I have another disability, I have rheumatoid arthritis. So it's not the first time I've been at the rodeo, but then I have subsequently got quite bad ME. I also have ADHD, [soft inhaled laugh] those two together, they're a battle consistently. I struggle with that battle. First of all remembering that I have to rest, remembering that it's a practice, rest is a practice I fully believe that.

It's nice to see the silt disturbed at the bottom and then return to clear again.

It's been lovely to feel this calm in a space that is technically public. Spaces like the city centre feel difficult and overwhelming at the moment. Me and my girlfriend get a lot of looks. Me and my friends when we're walking around, we can get a bit of attention. And so when I am walking around I have my hackles up a little bit. I feel a bit spikey. And that's not the way I like to be in the world, it's not really me, it doesn't feel like me, it feels like a front. It's nice to be in this space that is technically public and exist and not be ready for a fight.

A big part of that is the water, I don't really know why, like, not really.

Before I was sick, I was very busy. I would have my ideas travelling, or like in pause, so like on a bus, on a train, in the bath, or sometimes, or quite often when I'm just going to sleep, or washing up, doing something mundane.

It is the eternal chronically ill quest to try, literally anything to make yourself feel better. Or not feel better or heal or anything like that, but maybe sometimes just to have your body experience different things.

I think that's why water is important and having a shower is important. Because I have physical memory in parts of my body. Water re-sets it, because it's all over the different surfaces of my body. These corners that have, like, a little emotion held, can, like, feel a little bit different.

You have to learn these very, very subtle signals from your body about what's happening. And it's not necessarily just physical, it's cognitive, and screen time, or even levels of noise or being overwhelmed. And you're supposed to stop what you're doing and go and lie down and have a rest for 15 minutes, and then go back to this thing. And it's not fun.

Every drop of it is there, but it will never stay, it's always going away and taking something with it. Maybe it's the currents.

The leaves are stopping the fall of the rain.

Yeah, I hadn't actually looked up until you said that, it's really beautiful up there isn't it.

And so different to down here, so bright.

We all know we're not meant to be working this hard.
But we're in a system that wants us to.

I was speaking to a friend about his life and he was saying he felt his life was changing a little and his focus wasn't where it used to be. And the way he discussed it was. Thinking about a river and saying; I'm just going on a diversion, another channel is being made in a different direction.

It was a very gentle way of saying, maybe things have changed in my life but it doesn't mean it's stopped flowing, it's just changed. It's very much his way with the world, gentle and careful.