

Today's the Day It's Supposed to Rain

by Hannah Cloke & Maria Ferguson

Here it is again
smacking on my windowsill
I drink tea and watch each drop
snake a journey down the pane
unique fingerprint
moses basket
tiny orb
Patterns. Solid time. A blanket of possibilities. Follow the trace. The weave.
I swallow hard
ponder a biscuit
what would Attenborough think
of my diet
28000 species of fish
Feel it glide past my skin. Feel the bite.
Stretch my legs
salmon for tea
what would happen
if my lungs filled up
I'm an eel, a golden fish, a mermaid forced to live on land,
squash in a wine glass
to feel like I'm drinking
does anyone get their 2 litres a day?
Three strong strokes then drifting, eyes on the sky, the tapestry of the surface

I miss feeling my limbs lighten
kicking off
like a frog

Down from the path where the lake spills
Where the footholds slip and the unseen-ness caresses
Silver rope-plaits play to a ruffling crowd
a thrumming scent of swoop and stumble
Translucent forms of half remembered faces,
of hippo backs and cauliflowers,
arch past in uneven stunted rows
before drowning in imperfect reflections
Come closer, crouch down, decelerate to silence
Hold this cool jumble of yesterday's meteors
Ravenous silver fragments in your palm
Poised for a night of sweat and bass

My sister took to it easily, two, three then four touches on the surface of the water. My brother every so often would make ripples with his wet smooth pebble, but mine would plop and sink, plunge to the bottom every time – didn't matter how shiny or perfect the stone - we'd go camping each summer – long walks – books that would tell us which path to take, which stile to miss, which fields to cross – sometimes we ended up lost all day – a backpack of cheese and pickle sandwiches, ready salted crisps – I'd wake in the night desperate for a wee – relieve myself into the morning dew – my dad caught wasps in a trap made from a bottle, water and jam – sat there in his camping chair with a butterknife – struck the plastic as they took the bait – I watched them drown.

My babies were born in the water. In a giant blue pool enveloped by forest green carpet and the wincing scowl of the trainee midwife. Water babies. Too many lost. In the spate.

Pink stain crumbling. Waiting for the flood. Current ripping. Sharp stones tearing. Submerged tree fingers slicing. When it's over – searching through the debris for the curled pink pebble. Sometimes small enough for a matchbox cremation. Inside a bed of red silk. Too many lost.

I've been getting to know my cervix. Its mucus. Consistency, colour, position and shape. Worry I'm not ovulating. The birthdays keep on coming and the pregnancies announce themselves like hangovers. I piss on a stick – study the lines. One of my friends has a water birth – right there in her front room. I meet him 4 weeks later on a walk by the sea. She says her hormones have made her stink. I smell his fresh head like in the films. Hold him close as the wind picks up. The waves in me are stirring and I'm waiting for the flood. Every crimson splash in the porcelain – every smudge on the paper tearing me up – I obsess over my diet – take evening primrose – count my macros – They say that madness is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. I'm a failure, a miracle, battling with my battered body. Maybe a dog will do. Am I swimming or floating? Waving or drowning? I track my flow, run a bath – hold myself in the foam.

Exploding bubbles of repeated loss.

The cravings come with their pointy teeth

Mad hormonal fluctuations. Maybe you avoided eating sugar out the bag.

A spoon of Nutella straight from the jar

The oozing muds spit pebble pips.

Maybe I'll try one last time to make their smooth skin skip

There is a pebble – here in my fingertips –

How many people have held this stone in the centre of their palm?