

Soul Hydration by K.D. DeFehr

*This slicing in face-first,
this full contact festival of water on hot skin.
This cold wet everywhere awakes,
first aid for the dry damage*

----- “In which skinny dipping temporarily fixes a life” by Anna Swanson

We’ve all felt the slow, inevitable drain
into this familiar façade of the blatantly mundane.
Hundreds of brands of soap for one skin type,
leaky faucets, dirty laundry,
old wounds that never healed right.
And a job that pays to be damned on this Earth.
Aching back, dry knuckles,
lost hair, lost sunlight - lost worth.
This is the daily grind, the unquenchable thirst.
This slicing in face-first.

The yearning starts quietly, an inward inflection.
A bleak rhythm, a tenuous calling,
a deep disconnection.
And then it's drumming,
drumming up a fierce desire to win -
an innocent's craving for some small measure of sin.
Unraveling now, the shedding of clothes.
The disbarment of garments until it's just sand on bare toes.
Wading now, before jumping right in
this full contact festival of water on hot skin.

Drowned are the “logical”, “rational”, persistently untrue,
homogeneous, unvarying uniforms we knew.
Now bathed in soft twilight, where the pull of the tide
envelopes flawed flesh, gravity finally on the side
of floating, cascaded by waves.
A mind exposed to the fearlessness
of the heart of a world so recklessly enslaved.
Breathe here,
open lungs to this respiratory weightlessness
this cold wet everywhere awakes.

Afterwards, in solidarity found at the edge of a rock,
everything varnished by the last sun drops.
Skin gleaming, once a withered shell, so spent,
now swaddled in a sweater, lost to something heaven-sent.
Reborn, and rising anew to this place,

stripped of the burdens once encased - and now managed
by the sea and the wind and the lapping on the shore,
by the realization that old wounds should sometimes be torn,
to have a little salt rubbed in, and be re-bandaged,
first aid for the dry damage.