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## Pool Day

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# Pool Day

Mary Dengler

“It’s pool day, pool day,” greeted Benjamin of four,  
Mimicked by his sister Lizabeth of two,  
Clamoring from their parents’ rent-a-car  
To mount the porch steps of our seaview home,  
Their parents coming now with diapers, carseats, and the kind of smiles  
That four-years’ parenting can paint on youth.

“Pool day, pool day,” chanted Benjamin again  
While Lizzy whispered “Poo Day”  
As a fiat for a half-formed world,  
Her expectations straining toward our deck where white-capped peaks of moving blue  
Leaped obediently and drew her  
Shrieking past the wall of jaded guardians  
To lands whose hue small children enter once  
To relive till their death as “spots of time,”  
*The Prelude* flashing through my mind, where Wordsworth,  
Coming from behind the shrubs  
Of every place I live, finds rest.

The Pool Day promise, interrupted  
By the toilet, dinner, bath time, prayers and bed,  
Became next morning’s mantra, then a test  
That sent the driven parents through the morning gloom  
And chilly winds and rain instead of sun  
To break the icy waters of our white-tiled tarn.

Reliving, I too watched the tiny glowing bodies of my gold-haired guests  
Splash madly in the shallows and the rain  
Then quickly seek dry towels, blankets, mother’s, father’s arms  
And lunch at home, warm clothes, and turns with my big shoes.

Successive rides on tiny sparkling shoreline crests,  
With plastic orange buckets catching living shells and seaweed drapes,  
Successive rides on silver shoreline trains,  
Successive feasts of shrimp on piers above black-suited surfers in the boiling waves,  
Successive visits to red starfish, dancing jellies, baby sharks,  
Successive hours of singing childhood rimes and fighting over carseats, crayons, books,  
Successive crying in the nights,  
Demanding milk, approval, comfort, “Look at Me!”

Resisting bedtime, mealtime, bathtime, time to grow,  
They raced and pulled each other, wide-eyed, through a week of years,  
Entranced by things I’d think too small or ordinary for a glance,  
Then left our house reciting as their car  
Withdrew, just—  
“Pool day, Pool Day” in their incantation  
Of the dream they’d made,  
That far surpassed what life had held  
To lighten future years of ordinary dust.

A rusty shovel, muddy shells, and rotting seaweed drapes,  
Like Cain’s rejected offerings from a week of youthful work  
Neglected, lay atop the altar of my seaside steps,  
Till Wordsworth helped me bear them sadly to the jaded hedge.