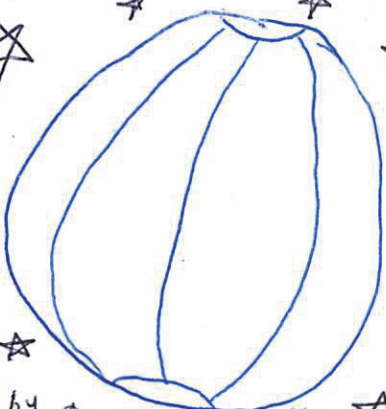


FAT IS

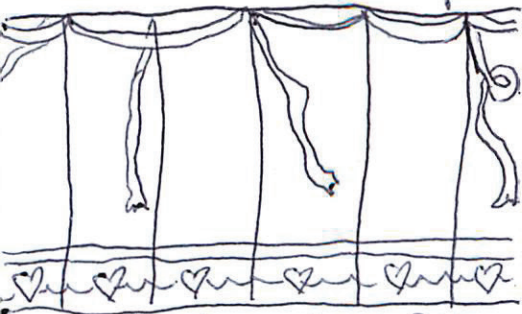
FLOATING



by AUSTIN J. AUSTIN

Outside my door, there is a courtyard. In the courtyard, there's a railing/fence decorated with crepe paper streamers.

Inside the fence is a pool.



Inside the pool are fatties.

Fat people swim all day long. Fat queens, trans\* people, and allies laugh and float and pass beach balls over and under and talk and lounge with books and babies and there is laughter, all of it is laughter. Even the memorial service late one night ends with remembrances, laughter.

I am allergic to chlorine,  
but I am not allergic  
to laughter. Nor am I  
allergic to fat people,  
which is lucky since  
I am a fat person. I  
listen to the laughter,  
the water, the ripples  
of wices, flesh, and  
liquid; I listen to it  
all day long.

I love it. I LOVE IT.

I learned to swim when I was three years old, and I was told then, and again when I was seven - relearning how to swim - that swimming was good for fat people because fat floats.

This was explained to me as an incentive to get me to swim more and slim down.

This is not what I want for myself or for my communities or for my world: the promise that if I don't lose weight, the class will use me as a floatation device.



meanwhile, I hope other fat people will call on me like this:  
5.

floating, floating above  
the sea of bullshit, we  
need one another to  
float, float, float. we  
join together, link  
our bodies and our  
minds and hearts together,  
we float and we  
laugh, we float and we  
cry, we float and we  
sing, we float and we  
make everything big  
and we float through

space and we take up  
space. Survival is a  
floatation device. Let's  
survive together and  
thrive together, and I  
will dream forever of  
fat belly laughs and  
splashes, and the love  
in that pool outside.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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