

The Effect of Somnolence on the Contemplation of Pudding

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Bedtime. The drowsy five-year-old lies in her bed awaiting sleep, because what comes after is the next bright, sunny morning, of course. After a full day of adventures out in her miniature universe, after teeth are brushed and body bathed, there is always a little time between surrender and sleep for adventures of the mind.

With her eyes closed, she sees before her an expanse of ochre-tinted nothing - literally nothing but a flawless field of warmth, smooth and soft like suede begging to be touched. It is soothing and she marvels at its simplicity and that she can feel so much from so little.

But change happens, as it always does. New thoughts come and go. Inspired by last night's dessert perhaps, the scene changes, but only in interpretation. It is now a floating sheet of butterscotch pudding skin. She is pleased by this and can almost taste the confection of brown sugar and butter on her tongue.

Remembering her past pudding experiences, she knows its surface soon will be broken by the hungry spoon. She concentrates to protect the delicate skin as long as she can to bask in the liminal state of her idea that 'nothing' can be everything; that simplicity is rich with the power to please her senses.

Despite her efforts, the spoon enters her field of mind-vision and the first wrinkles begin to form in the lower left-hand corner. No! Not yet! She's not ready for the introduction of imperfection to her comforting, sceneless scene.

The serenity, now disrupted, shifts into a new imagined reality. As the spoon moves, the wrinkles progress slowly across the smooth surface. This destruction at first seems brutal and ugly. The force of the intruding utensil slowly pushes the skin along. The color folds upon itself creating intricate patterns until the entire field of vision is scrunched into messy squiggles and furrows like a brain. Her resistance subsides as her attraction to the texture draws her in. She explores the relationship of each crease and ripple to the next and thinks about cause and effect. She sees that it has its own simplicity and she's enthralled by the suspense of the visual story unfolding. It's no longer ugly. In fact, quite beautiful.

And so she takes her time and investigates this process of wrinkling, studying the shapes and contrasts and making associations: it is like an old woman's face or elephants' knees; the way her blanket bunches when she kicks off the covers in the morning. It's a landscape with mountains and valleys. She imagines herself swooping down and flying over the terrain on wings she didn't know she had.

Are there rivers running through the valleys? Will her voice echo off the canyon walls? Were mountains created by giants the way a spoon pushes through pudding skin, she wonders.

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