creating themes (contrast between two things, psudo-parellelism)

specific imagery

symbolic significance of objects

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American Literature: Mr. Baker

Song of Self

*[\*]*

his pants overcompensate for the stressed sweater

as much as his sweater choke his chest

the pants sag droop wilt

stemming from below the waist

leaving room for a blotch of exposed skin

in limbo between the encroaching upper and deficient lower halves

the partitions inwardly screaming at one another to connect

outwardly existing in stark uncooperation

a small boy tugs at my hand

the boy's hand uneasily rough against my skin

weathered by undeserved experience

his dark eyes cast upwards towards me in expectance

perhaps in curiosity

(a marked trait)

dressed well and poorly

his sweater struggles to subdue his overstuffed stomach

stretching not-quite-enough to reach his equator

the blues and reds of the sweater drained of their vibrancy

colors muted and muffled through years of thorough wear

in passive contrast with the fiercely definite primary colors dripped on the walls

the small dark hand was a coarse shadow gnawing at mine

those hands had accomplished things they should not have

they completed tasks i would never approach

a certain wisdom of experience existed in these hands

but the sensation did not extend to his face

momentarily engulfed in childlike questioning

"am i going to be okay?" he asks

i could not answer him

how could i tell him "yes"

*[\*]*

the city frowns as rain leaks down the window

i found the rain sad

i do not know why

it simply was

as my father steered the sedan forward the muddle populated alleyways and narrow streets crawled past our view

my father's expression was controlled

yet concern leaked from the crevices in his visage

we slowed as the headlights focused on a building in the distance

the minute building stood in two divisions

nevertheless small for a single family

the structure was linear

a mathematically perfected object

subsequently warped by weather until it faded into the dreariness of its backdrop

the edifice lacked the required disposition

just adjacent lay a stenciled sign faded just as the surroundings

the signpost no longer rooted in the patch of non-asphalt

read *medford housing authority*

tasted particularly synthetic

the house

not the home

the chipped paint appeared bothersome to the rain

nature had effected its own aesthetic upon the walls

the faded grey seemed to fit the current atmosphere

although i am unsure this was the intention of the painter

the 'basketball court' tolerated the environment much like a kitten does a bathtub

its singular off-center hoop lacked netting and a complete backboard

clearly incapable of welcoming an organized game of any kind

the black tar subsisted in complacent resistance

amongst the collection of misfit objects strained together to form the environment

unlike the chaos round the pavement

it sat comfortably

which unnerved me so

how did it discover contentment in such a place

my father never embodied emotional clarity

but now his affect was particularly blurred

not exactly longing

not exactly content

"this was once home, boys"

*[\*]*

it can be therapeutic to reflect upon accomplishments

but i would not celebrate that which i do not find good

for everything can be improved upon and is thusly not good

all can be completed and bettered

circumscribed to the orbit of acceptability

to this point has been tripping forward and flailing into blackness

the endless vacuum of nothing

the forest is darkly foreboding in the struggle to find the exit easily

without a light, the i advance unknowingly without a path

for what is in darkness is not unknown

it is simply nothing

i am as an explorer born visionless

blind yet i do not see blackness

(for blackness is a sight)

i simply see nothing

i have been told that i must "find a path" and "make my way"

if not for me, for those coming after me

for i am told my brothers depend upon it

they depend upon my finding a path

so that they may find theirs

i am told to consider others when making a decision concerning solely myself

i however make not the path

nor do i navigate the forest unaltered

we do not consist of thoughts and cognizance

rather we are solely composed of experiences

we cannot dream ourselves into existence

*[\*]*

the variance enticed me to the forest

both the difference inside and the dissimilarity outside

sufficient space

while not vast and feral

familiar and worn by me in my passings

an intrinsic paradox within the natural and the artificial

maintainting a balance of imbalance

the forest asks nothing of me

yet it will tell me anything (i ask of it)

perched on the edge of a log i survey the lake which lies a distance from me

the morning calm apparent at first glance

lacking sound

adding to the paradoxically supernatural essence

in the foreground stands a tree

an authoritative oak reaching over the pristine but enigmatic lake

maintaining intensely embedded in the ground without a question of stability

a frayed rope straightens down to the water's surface

as if it were a fisherman deploying his lobsterpots

the manufactured rope does not appear as thus

as if remaining as an extension to the tree

accepting the forest not fighting it

a boy grasps a branch tightly in his left hand

his right guiding his balance

(ensuring his separation from the lake)

he slowly deliberately contrives intimacy between his hand and the rope

drops the branch as he clenches the rope firmly between his palms and fingers

naturally he wears no shirt

as he snakes towards me still with rope

various muscle groups contract with his movement

creates a continuous ripple

a wave

washes down his body with frequency yet ease

pausing

drinks in the entirety of the scene

allows it to splash over him without resistance before he tenses and hugs the rope allowing gravity and natural law to overtake his human compulsions

as time seems to slow

his body is at rest in the air

floating several feet above the surface

while even the foliage surrounding halts movement

as a show of respect to its kin

no longer is the rope contained in his hands

it begins to swing free as he allows it

drops into liquid tranquility

swallows him as the forest has

*[\*]*

i worry of life and fear death in simultaneity

people spout "death is a natural part of life"

but i am not as sure

when a friend unknowingly ushered his car into ultimately utter disfigurement

the car's plain interior dripping of alcohol-saturated blood

the blood of the 'young and promising'

when his mother was left alone in the world after his father faded from knowledgeable existence

when the happy helpful harmless and holy woman was left broken

when her perpetual smile buckled into a frown and tears

(an expression of visceral vehement perturbation)

death seemed unnatural to me

those at the funeral

those violently wailing screeching

engulfed in the masses of people sharing in the experience

perhaps frightened me more than the departure of a human being

the being which had effected a joy in these people

the being which no one would experience physically for an eternity

i have come to wonder

why we wander the forest