***Weather writing***

Dominika Benešová

Divoká Šárka, 23.4.2020

Starting to write. While I was sitting down on this old rotten tree, I got stung by nettles. They were barely visible on the ground, however, their stings are permeating my whole body. It feels warm and odd and it reminds me of my childhood, when I used to get stung a lot. I know I hated it than, now the burn is not that intense. I wonder if my senses are less sensitive or if I am not allowing myself to feel that much, maybe to show to myself that “I am an adult”?

I engage my sight. The green around me is very soothing. Some of the sun beams escaped their leaves and now are touching my skin. There are not many of them, but they are so warm that the heat comes through my whole body. I only stop feeling them at one moment when a strong wind blows. When the wind is gone, the heat is immediately back. I am mostly sitting in the shadow, which somehow balances the heat and makes the heat more bearable.

The tree I’m sitting on is very wrinkly. I can feel its protuberances, it’s like they want to penetrate my skin. They make me realize the weight of my body.

The bark of the tree is very appealing. It seems similar to my notebook and I wish to draw on it, which I immediately do. It feels almost the same like the paper, but the drawing is losing itself in the patterns of the bark and melts with its surroundings.

I get up and walk to the water. It looks very inviting on this sunny day. Every time I look in its direction, I cannot take my eyes off its gleaming surface. I get closer. I cannot smell the water, maybe because of the mask I am wearing. I get fascinated by the algae. They look otherwordly, I imagine what would they be like to touch. They are in complete surrender with the water, moving as the water does.

I notice a lot of things around me. I can see flowering bushes and rotting leaves. Life and death coexist here and cannot be without each other, everything is changing. The nature creates and the human creates (e.g. the pathways), which then get changed by nature again. The path I chose to walk up a hill is almost gone and I have to pay attention to see where to step. The plants grow over it, some of them with thorns. I realize I usually see nature as a place of „relax“ but it can be dangerous, too. I have to pay careful attention. Where to step, what to avoid, what to touch and not to touch. I realize how „imperfect“ nature is –I touch something and it makes me dirty, which is very uncomfortable for me. It is actually strange given that “nature” is where we come from, but I try to avoid the clay on my fingers and dried leaves on my bag, anyways.

What I feel the most is *heat*. It is a hot sunny day, it makes me crave shadow and move more slowly. I wish to breathe in the colder air but I have to wear a mask. When I take it off, further from people, and take a full breath, it feels like freedom and relief and something basic and archaic and fresh at the same time. I realize how important breath is, and how I forget breathing every day, it is just happening…

Nature can be a candy. I smell “beautiful” flower bush (it is inconspicuous by sight, I almost couldn’t identify it) and can’t get enough of it. On the other hand, the river smells awful in some places. It might be the smell of the rotting, of the death… The sun makes me lazy and makes me uncomfortable. I realize how I cannot bear it without shadow, without wind, without water. Sun gives life, but it is drying everything out. How much is the perfect amount of sun? How much is too much sun? I can escape it, but not everything can. It is joy (a sunny day!) but it is fear, too…

I strongly sense everything that’s human-made. I see unusual shapes and ask myself: “Is this natural?” I am sensitive about this, I hate when people change nature unnecessarily. When they use it as a trash-can, when they cut down trees, when they straighten rivers that are supposed to be curvy. When they “care” without thinking, but mainly without feeling. Sometimes, we can be collaborators. I try to collaborate – nature soothes me and I try not to disturb it. I do not shout, I do not pluck anything. I wish I could remove all the trash from the forest. It makes me sad to see it – I sense a strong appreciation for every little plant, which is not what the trash says. I feel like it “humiliates” the nature (humans humiliate…).

*Nature:*

I wish I could immerse in it, more and more and more.

It gives me a sense of one-ness, of becoming (my lungs become the air I breathe, my hair becomes the wind).

It is calming (the water, the stones, so still). It is strong, uncontrollable but peaceful.

It makes me sense more. More of myself, more of itself. It wakes my senses.

I want to touch everything, but it does not seem enough – it is like my skin cannot grasp all the differences, all the roughness, all the fragility. The less I think, the more I sense. The senses are connected. When I smell something pleasant, my eyes start to seek it. When I see something beautiful, my body starts moving towards it.

I am drawn by it, all the stones majestically high (so high I cannot climb there), all the trees with their leaves (full of life) and blossoms, I wish to explore.

I wish to engage. I wish to LIVE.