

***The way it ripples...***

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Under the influence of the Symbolists

**Mother:** The pond has always been a wonderful thing for me. I've enjoyed swims in it, wetted my beak in it, and have taught my children how to swim in it. It is a wonderful source. The community and I intend to use it until I die.

**Chicken:** People will think lowly of you, fascinated by water.

**Mother:** The pond has always been a wonderful thing for me.

**Chicken:** Forget your pleasures, or you will be rejected for being so strange, so foolish. Why focus all this attention on water? Are you so conceited that you have no respect for your maker?

**Mother:** The pond has always been a wonderful thing for me. It is not pleasant to associate with you. You may believe me. I speak for your own good.

**S. Duck:** I am a duck but I do not have such a horribly awkward appearance.

**Mother:** Not the shiniest diamond to say the least. I just don't see how it can be so ugly from the rest.

**S. Duck:** People are so closed. Why can't they tell me the terrible, beautiful aura I emit.

**Chicken:** You surely don't pretend to be clever.

**Mother:** It is my own child! On the whole it is quite pretty, if one looks at it rightly!

**S. Duck:** He walks around with his fathers and large body and strange twisted thoughts. How can he bare the eyes on him constantly. At least when people's eyes take in my voluptuous splendor it is hard for them to get through my layers of perfection.

**Chicken:** Can you lay eggs? You are quite useless. If you can neither provide eggs nor curve your back and purr, then keep quiet!

**S. Duck:** I would rather lay trapped in my room of mirrors than to ever have glass windows which I could see through, but at the same time I wish the opposite.

**Chicken:** Ask any sensible person about your pleasures, even ask the cleverest person in the world and they will tell you that *no one* should have such desire.

**S. Duck:** The pool reflects me and I cannot bear to look.

**Mother:** My son laid too long in the egg, and therefore is unfortunately misshapen.

**S. Duck:** Sometimes I want to dive under the surface of the water to hide from man's searing eyes, as if animals are not enough. Let the glass lake separate my mind from myself. I want to see what they see. More than my reflection I want to see my mind from their side of the mirror. See my words my face.

**Chicken:** A very peculiar cry. I tell you as a friend that nothing important comes from water.

**Mother:** Although it can swim well, it is quite ugly.

**Chicken:** I have no desire for the pond. Beyond water, there are so many other things to enjoy.

**S. Duck:** Sometimes I want to dive under the surface of the water to hide.

**Mother:** It's a wonderful source, I dive down to the very bottom.

**Chicken:** Why do you care for the water? Have you gone mad?

**Mother:** The pond has always been a wonderful thing for me.

*Enter Ugly D.*

**Mother:** It puts our family to shame!

**S. Duck:** This duckling looks nothing of a duck! I am a duck but I do not have such a horribly awkward appearance as he does!

**Chicken:** Well, what good are you?

**Ugly D:** I am ugly and unfortunately deserving of that title. I hate this pond, I wish I knew why I have no place.

**Chicken:** Why else are we here?

**Mother:** He certainly won't think of marrying, and only hopes to obtain leave to lay among the reeds and drink of the swamp water.

**S. Duck:** I know what goes through people's minds when they see me . . . people love me. He knows his image from their point of view. This pitiful being is my greatest envy, yet my greatest fear. What sort of a one are you?

**Ugly D:** I am ugly. I am siezed with such a strange longing to swim on the water. So refreshing to let it close above my head.

**Chicken:** Oh, that's just foolish. You must be crazy to swim. I have no desire.

**Ugly D:** I crave the knowledge of what is and isn't. Yet this numbness turns me sharply away. It is enough to make me feel cold.

**S. Duck:** I think it should just go find some other ugly ducks to live with.

**Chicken:** He's the butt of the whole duck-yard.

**Ugly D:** I am bound and torn by the reflections. Left . . . it follows. Right . . . it follows. It's mocking me.

**Chicken:** Oh! The pond is a neat thing. But you must be mad to have anything to do with it.

**Ugly D:** There is so much more than water. It is obvious from what this liquid mirror tells me. Gray tangled feathers, worn down from scrutiny. I have no place.

**Mother:** See, that's how it goes in the world!

**Ugly D:** I was born to my mother duck.

**Mother:** Oh, heaven be thanked!

**S. Duck:** More than my reflection I want to see my mind from their side of the mirror.

**Ugly D:** If only I were like I once was. Reflection, peering back at me. Never to question, only to understand. Have I gained knowledge? I feel I haven't. The clouds hung low, heavy with hail and snowflakes, and on the fence the raven, crying. A very peculiar cry. It turned round and round in the water like a wheel. It dived down to the very bottom and came up again.

**Chicken:** There you will have no opinions of your own. If the old woman should have no desire of diving deep and letting the water close over her head, then why should we? For she is clearly the wisest of all.

*Chicken exits.*

**Ugly D:** Have I ruptured time? Space? My finger becomes numb. I feel it was not meant to touch the beyond. Thus I am torn helplessly, for it has now touched the unseen. . . . unspoken. . . . I crave the knowledge of what is and isn't, yet this numbness turns me sharply away. I never should have touched that reflective mimic.

**S. Duck:** I could see their eyes clicking. . . . Thinking things of me. . . . Making up stories. . . . Where do they get the *nerve* that they can do this. They don't even know how my beautiful, black mind fathoms anything. They were half the world, and by far the better half. If only they would let me. . . . I would let them scratch through the mirror, shatter it with their nails through all their secrets.

*S. Duck exits.*

**Ugly D:** I never should have touched that reflective mimic. Fear keeps me in line. A line set by the authority time ago. And now I question. Experience has done this to me. If I were naive like I once was. Never question. Only understand . . . understand . . . understand. . . . What? That is the choice I must make.

**Mother:** Every morning I wake up at 7:30 a.m. I then open up all the blinds in my house. I then brush my teeth. I put on my business suit and go downstairs at 7:40. I put out 3 bowls, 3 spoons, and 3 different types of cereal. Then I brush my teeth. I take out a piece of note book paper out of the desk and write a rough draft of today's activities with my brand new ball point pen. 7:50 a.m. Then I type it.

I do these things every morning so my children will learn how the order of life should go.

The insurance company where I work is still deserted at 8:00. I step out of my SUV and lock it. I think about buying my son a bike. Every child needs a bicycle, it's American heritage. I lock my SUV. We don't officially open until 8:30, but I enjoy getting a head start on the day's work.

At 3:30 p.m. I call the after school baby sitter to make sure my kids arrived home on time. ONE time my daughter went to a friend's house after school instead of home. She could have been kidnapped or killed by some kid's psycho parents. How was I supposed to know where she was? I have to call the baby-sitter. As soon as I found her I took her straight home and had a little chat with her. It's my job as a parent to do these things. I have to call the baby sitter.

You are remarkably ugly.

*Mother exits.*

**Ugly D:** The battle takes its pause.

I hate this pond and yet it seems to capture me. I wish I knew all that lurks in the depths below.

Am I the only one who sees what they cannot? When the repetition of reality flashes frantically in my eyes all I wish to do is dive into the world behind me, for the one around me bases everything on something I cannot.

Everything in a reflection just falls into place. I'm weak and ugly and the water shows me this. The water looks at me in the face and laughs at my ugliness, tempts me to be unruly. Seen

backwards and guided into misunderstanding makes me feel as though it is a false portal. As though the real world is just to fool me.

I would love to be free with the water. So clear, yet you can see own self, your own being. The way it ripples when a puddle hits it. Why can't I be the way the water is? Beautiful and powerful at the same time. If only the real one, the one on the other side of my reflection, should step away from the mirror and let me disappear!

**Eels:** You're so ugly that I like you. Believe in only his eyes. I fancy you have gone crazy. You've a chance of making your fortune, ugly as you are. We don't understand you? You are so ugly that I like you. See, that's how it goes in the world. You're completely fascinated by reflections, but that will get you nowhere // in life. Just dive deep and let the water close over your head.

*Ugly D does as Eels say.*