

Nothing

by Brad Davis

I haven't been swimming in forever, or what feels like forever. I watch others swim, from far off. I stand back a good ways from the water and watch for a little and then go back to my work. There's lots of little ones swimming and these days people are weary of grown men watching their kids. So I only watch out the corners of my eyes, I don't want to make people nervous. Besides, I'm there to work. I pick up all the stuff that gets left behind, like half empty bottles of sun lotion, wrappers, cans and sunglasses. I empty out the trashcans. There's thirteen spread out across the little park and down near the beach. Actually there's fourteen cans. The one on the other side of the park stays empty though. Nobody goes over there anymore. You got to walk up a big hill, and on the other side there's a can and a small picnic table. A little dirt path, no more than a foot wide, leads down to the water. It's always dark down there, I guess cause of the trees. Nobody goes over there cause that's where the body was found. A little one. Half in and half out the water, waded up like paper. Two fishermen on a little boat found it. It was a big deal, the papers and everybody went on and on. There was no definite kind of answer as to what happened. Drowned or murdered or whatever else.

That was forever ago. Nobody goes over there but me. I do cause of the trash. I have to check on it. I usually walk over there after I've done everything else and most everybody's gone home. I go sit on top of the table and listen to the sound of nothing. Peace and quiet is what some people call that sound. But to call it what it is, is to call it nothing. The sound of nothing. I sit there and listen and look down in that dark place, with the black water and black earth. I look with every bit of my eyes, not just the corners. Every bit of everything I got I look with. And sometimes see. Sometimes I see through the darkness and down deep into what is there.

