I Don't Belong Here

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Everybody should go crazy once in their life. Homemade spear in hand, soggy socks itching in worn Timberlands...this is it. Mosquito venom from bites and already bad brain chemicals react into something my therapist would call mental instability. Maybe the answers are in my own humming. Shaking notes help me from going insane or bring me to madness faster. Whatever works.

Most people wind up on a wilderness island for three days through some kind of a plane crash or boat sinking. No burning debris for me. My arrival on the island was a bit subtler. Ten weeks earlier I was finishing freshman year of high school and walking a Johnny Cash style line. The tightrope which all parents fear, the one where you are so close from going down that suburban dark road of complete anti-social behavior which as we all know only leads to drugs, violence, and cheap sex. My parent has tried everything to stop me from being as they described a "little Nietzsche." Good solid depression is hard to respond to. The son is told on for drinking from whiskey plastic film containers on the bus. Situation handled by parents just telling him the dangers of alcohol and then lowering his curfew. Or when your kid just can't figure anything out in school then you hire him a tutor and give lots of strong encouragement. Catch is lowering curfews and tutors don't help when your kid asks "Why bother, this is so empty, so pointless." Parents begin to start wondering themselves in between the night reading and matrimonial permitted snoring.

Anti-apathy pills only worked so well so the next step was to send me to a Christian boot camp up in northern Canada. This all led up to me being dropped off in a canoe on a remote island to test my wilderness survival skills for three days. But this is a test of more than just campfire starting and making snares. Behind all the Vietnam/Boy Scout elements was a test of my emotional state as if it hadn't taken enough attacks with the drill sergeant screaming and eight-hour workday filled with hard labor. When we were all tucked in there were no bedtime stories. Only chilling prayers to a vicious God that punishes his wicked children by sending them to the Dominican Republic school. If Canada was the outer ring of Hell, then the DR was the core.

It is all logical until the present up in the tree part. Well it creeps. That is the only way to explain the way the mind creeps out. Slithers like hunger, the remnants of two granola bars sit under a patch of leaves. You are told to eat your food immediately, once you get on the island. They are the only food you are given so absorb the nutrients, then let the stomach shrink. Your stomach doesn't really shrink, it just twists, especially with the burnt texture of cooked frog legs. Its not about taste, it's about nutrients. The frog leaps no longer, with its legs in my stomach and its head being used as bait on the end of a homemade fishing pole.

Hunger can be forgotten but the loneliness doesn't stop. I tried to hum then sing then scream. The brain is creeping out with no technological distractions. Your computers, phones, and television keep you from thinking about those secret fears. Maybe I could pretend to have a
phone. Is being intentionally delusional helpful in warding off craziness? Crazy thoughts are let loose once there is nothing to distract and cover them up. We all tell lies to ourselves, but there is no lying out here. Loneliness and hunger make beautiful serpent lovers, caressing, fondling my mind with images of vulnerability. They have made love all day and as they climax I find myself in a tree searching the darkness for strange sounds.

There was only so much to take my mind away from the thoughts. Built two shelters, one for emergency, and the other for snuggling with one of my only possessions, a sleeping bag. But it rained last night and my sleeping bag has already begun to reek of mold and nervous sweat. Arming myself, I consider whether streak of mud war paint would be too much. Unfortunately there is no beast on the island, only me. God, it would be nice to talk to someone, even Piggy. Mention of God as an expression or worse. Yeah, He, She, It has to figure in somehow or more like I have to figure it in. You get fed enough Christian rhetoric and worked hard enough things start making sense. But that beautiful God of rainbows and doves with twigs in their mouths don’t translate out here. There is a place for that old Hebrew God though. Something about being hungry, wet, and cold brings that Old Testament feeling around.

No doves out here, only geese that make hideous death sounds and none of them have twigs in their mouth, only their throaty cry. Thousands of years ago my primitive self would be able to hurl a spear and have goose for dinner. But I am too soft for spear throwing, too tender even for Christians. Christians demanding that even a wilderness survival has requirements. Build two sturdy shelters. Create four emergency signaling devices. Build two types of hunting mechanism (fishing or snares). Design three weapons for self-protection. Self-protection, how true. I need something to protect me from myself but this spear or makeshift mace won’t work.

It is really about a loss of control. The Marines tell you they will break you and rebuild you. But at Christian Camp they say nothing of their secret agenda to break you down and build you up with the Holy Spirit. I am being broken soft. So soft I can’t blame it on bad chemicals anymore. My mind can dodge the Christian boot camp attacks, but out here I can’t defend myself from myself. This is not helping.

If there was someone to confess to I would.

I would tell them anything, everything to get off now.

I am weak, too weak for all of this.

It is not about deserving, it is about something else.

It is inside and I don’t want to look.

It is too much.

Too much.

The sun may never come up. And if it does I will still be here in the tree if I don’t fall out. Clinging so hard but the mania is coming to a close. The fog off the lake is sweeping in. Just might block out the sun this time. Just might block it all out. Lord knows, it has been trying.