

***Reflections of self worth ***

I decided to write a piece of creative writing for the self worth assignment because it's hard for me to encapsulate what self worth means without first disrobing the capitalist shame bestowed on us when we become too 'other' to 'work', in the traditional sense. 'Other' as in 'pained, or injured or sick', self worth, in the ablest culture of 'get well soon' cards; is tricky, it took me an eternity to accept that sometimes there is no better- just different.

Self worth therefore has to be lenient, even more so than you imagine, it has to be kind, and kinder still. It has to be there, like, it has to truly show up as you'd hope a best friend could, how you'd hope they would be there for you and tut loud enough to drown out any negative self talk, because believe me -ableist rhetoric is internalised through to our bones, it resides in our earliest learning.

There's a lot to unpack there.

Knowing your self worth, means knowing yourself.

It means rest, it means having the clarity to stop. And take stock, it takes learning the hard way which I'm still doing, in one way or another. It means taking a look at where we come from. I guess above all, self care is being bold enough to do what you need to in order to have your fullest version,

but smart enough to not let it cost all you had to give and more. To be paced and balanced and rested enough to know when to stop;

understanding that's literally part of the whole deal of being allowed to 'go' in the first place.

For me it's inherently political, it's a little embarrassing, but it's absolutely essential to be proud of, just to be comfortable enough to share your own truth or lack of truth is self worth enough.

I heard that rich people always crave the authenticity that comes with being poor.

As a working class person that went onto get a Disability, I guess that makes me pretty authentic. After watching my mother clean for a living, I'm both humbled and

plagued by her can- do attitude; I know it saw me through. Wide eyed and a smile I'm still learning the freedoms to frown.

You know, I once cleaned maggots out of somebody's sink for £7 an hour because it didn't occur to me that I didn't have to...that there were easier ways to pay the rent.

What your parents do has an effect on you. If talking about social class makes you UNCOMFORTABLE then it's a sure way to know, you ain't one of us.

I read it's not about how much money or privilege you have, but how good you are at working towards your goals and happiness within your means- sounded like capitalist propaganda to me.

We aren't coming at this from a place of equals.

Some people went to private schools where the pupils didn't set fire to things or threaten the teachers, when crunch-snap-pop goes the bones in a leg that another kid jumped on.

It's pretty radical that I started writing and I see that now. I don't care if you don't. Before I learned meritocracy was a myth I'd have done most things to succeed.

I guess Disability changes you.

Disability gets a capital D because I said so.

It's like, mid game, the rules change, and they don't exactly tip in your favour, it's like recognising 25 years later that at 5 years old, you were ALWAYS at a disadvantage when compared to those from more affluent homes, and it doesn't stop there, culturally, you aren't in the loop of opportunities or bursaries because that shit takes knowing about in the first place, what to value, how to access; perspectives that we just didn't have- while they were eating carrot sticks and humus my snack was salted crisps and a kit-kat.

It's no one's fault.

*My parents are the hardest working people I know. That's difference though;
Working just as hard, if not harder, and staying in the same place.*

Most poor people don't even know they're poor until they meet rich people, and a lot of poor people never actually meet rich people, because they don't venture far enough from their homes to do so- that's the state of things here.

I never felt the socio-economic realities unravelling until much, much, later, when it mattered least I felt it most. The damage already done, Imposter denial switched on full.

I guess it wasn't so bad before my sense of self was gnawed to a pulp by the benefits system; moving fast to escape social class is an option until it isn't.

I guess those who know, know.

And now I've such an inherent distrust of forms or applications; after using them only to survive, not thrive... I can't exactly see myself successfully skipping through them in my future, because, they're triggering now.

So was dismantling my dialect to appear more intelligent when I moved to London; what kind of fucked up Puritanism is that? The truth is activism has to be EVERYWHERE because privilege is EVERYWHERE.

That means difficult conversations with friends.

I know we've heard all this before but, you with the scuffed trainers, and ruffled hair, wearing a washed out tee, the old Rebox classics, with your north face puffer, your fake gold hoops, framing your life -is -for- livin'- post orthodontist - looks- you SURE this is getting through to you? 'Cause I know you could afford more, tell me, if you couldn't make the rent this month would you be going down the job centre? Or would you be letting your parents know? We've Got middle class kids borrowing the aesthetics of poverty to appear more interesting, but that shit doesn't wash with me.

It's funny. I call myself an artist now because it feels like I'm breaking the rules. But I am. I am an artist and I pretty much have to be.

I guess this is where the radical resides, just in the everyday of living in a classist, racist, sexist, society where notions of rent caps or universal basic income is chattered off the table by the cheddar-stained -teeth of Tory MPs ; not that I'm naive enough to expect anything like such radical reform,

Not in the current climate;

Where inflation creeps up as we walk into deeper disparity, with extreme lack of equity, putting the lecky card on emergency, unable to think outside the constraints of crippling former poverty.

There is no nice end to this story, just winding the day down to start another.

So we're having conversations about social class inequality.

Whether you like it or not.