

## Notes for Mothers

Face to face with a chicken staring, the way that animals do. Birds especially. It is a game of connection and disconnection in their effort to understand what's around them. Presence and absence. Connection and disconnection. Need for connection, urgency and relaxation. It is an effort so great that it's destabilising, an attention disorder governed by contradictory impulses. That's how they know how to live. Automatic pilot.

The figurative painting is the mother of a Discharge Painting. A Discharge Painting is a place where the unwanted is welcomed, where I put the impulses not taken, where I clean my brush, where I can keep going. There is some justice in chaos when something ugly, unwanted at first, is exposed, revealed, and given value just by the fact of existing and insisting on its existence. It gains its right to live.

I used to draw labyrinths as a kid, for entertainment, imitating the ones from activity books where you find the way out by drawing a line. I used to get graph paper and spend long stretches of the day drawing over the lines creating more complicated turns, diversions and new dead ends. I learned that I have to concentrate very hard, not only to focus on drawing the lines straight and clean, but also to always see the whole thing, to understand how much paper I had left and how many more turns I could make till the end. My beautiful problem. I would draw mostly on the made bed laying down and pressing the paper against the blanket. The paper was breaking and the pen made a scar on the page that you could see from the other side. When you find the exit there seems to be justice in chaos.

Chicken sounds are always so calming. A continuous rolling scratching sound. Imagine being the air in the centre of the rings of smoke. The vertebral column of the ripples in the water after they threw the first stone that broke the surface. Many hugs, many layers. Fortresses. Contained. One circle inside the other growing bigger. Big brother, small sister, baby girl, single cell. One inside the other, they share the same core.

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