

STEFAN KIESBYE

WATER PARK



They're nice to me and they don't want to be near me. While we rake grass at the superintendent's house, they stay amongst themselves, two raking, another lifting the grass into the back of the E-Z-Go. It's not like they want to offend me, and maybe if you asked them about it they'd say that it's just in my head. But when I join them, they slowly stop talking and don't start up again until I have left to take care of the strip of lawn along the driveway.

The park is one hundred and fifty acres, "a good size," Dan, the super, says. Two years ago they built a small water park with slides and a wave pool, but he wishes he could build an eighteen-hole golf course. We only have a nine-hole disc-golf course, and the disc golfers come just before dark, when the gatehouse has closed for the day. They get stoned or drunk and play and we have a hell of a time getting them off the course in time to close the park at nine o'clock.

I like the park best in the mornings, when it's still a bit hazy, and no one else is around. I drive along the trails to pick up litter. Bunny rabbits scurry along or just sit in the shimmering grass and stare back at me. Bushes and trees I can't name smell sweet before it gets hot, and if you stop the cart, the trees seem to take a step toward you, as if they want to gently block your path, unscrew your head, clean it out, and keep you there.

During breaks I might sit on one of the docks by the lake and watch the fish, mostly bass, swim in the murky water. At first sight, it doesn't seem like much of a lake, but towards the middle it gets real deep. In the evenings, anglers stand along the shore. Sometimes they even grill their catch. People used to swim in the lake, before they build the docks and put up picnic tables everywhere. Now signs tell visitors it's forbidden to wade or swim.

When the other rangers are bored, they drive the E-Z-Go over to the water park to hang out with the girls, though they don't call them girls. They call them 'chicks' and 'bitches.' They show only contempt for them, but can't stop going to our water park, where the girls show off elaborately painted