

too appealing to pass up. I slowly waded into the water, rolling up my pants to avoid getting wet.

It felt incredible. There was a certain release in finally getting in. The water was slightly cold, clear and shimmered even better up close. Everything felt perfect. I looked up to the mountains on my right and imagined being on the summit. I wondered if it would give the same mental escape I was enjoying.

After wading in as far as I could, I realized I wanted to go in farther. So, I quickly took off my clothes and went in with my underwear. I felt my anxiety tick up as my hydrophobia began to kick in, but I steadied my breath and maintained my balance. I went in much farther this time, neck-deep while standing on the tips of my toes. Oh, joy! This was even better than I'd thought.

Wading had been great but walking with the water mere inches from your face, it felt special. Weightless. Joyful. I wished I'd learned to swim. Davis had wandered much further out than I had, and I was slightly jealous that I wasn't equipped enough to do the same, or brave enough to even try. Still, walking on tippy toes in the water was a close enough comfort.

We spent a few more minutes in the water, then got out because we still wanted to drive around the entire lake before late afternoon. I'd suggested the idea—I wanted to get a true feel for just how large the lake was and barring getting on a boat, this was the next best thing.

I got dressed, headed out to the parking lot, and we began the drive towards Emerald Bay and back to Incline Village. Seeing Cave Rock was very exciting, as well as the strip of road near Emerald Bay that

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had a drop-off on both sides. There were also burnt trees from a wildfire on the sides of some hills. Emerald Bay itself was a wonderful sight to behold and seemed very cozy.

On the way back, I got to see Incline Village for the second time, and it felt like something straight out of Hollywood—an entire town designed like a tourist resort or a movie set. The drive through Incline Village was the last bit of the trip around the lake, and then we headed back to Reno.

I was certain that I would be back at Lake Tahoe soon enough, and be able to swim way out into the coldest waters. I've always had a complicated relationship with water—a source of anxiety and refreshment. Now, I long for the day it is simply a source of the release I found at Tahoe. □

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