

Written on by Experience

A friend told me her favorite quote was along the lines of “the mind is a blank slate written upon by our experiences.”

To me, that brought to mind how our future experiences are also written upon by our past.

So what could it mean to have nothing to write with?

To have a blank slate; to only have the unknown to work with?

To dive into a pool of unknown off a diving board composed of the unknown.

Maybe that’s fear:

Fear of doing a front-flip on a trampoline for the first time;

Fear of falling in a love that doesn’t seem like what you read about or heard about;

Fear of misdiagnosing a patient;

Fear of not living the life you’re supposed to.

But that “supposed to” isn’t a real thing;

It’s based on parameters for other lives,

For other people’s blank slates covered up by other people’s experiences,

Which are different from yours.

Fear isn’t a real thing.

Google tells me it’s “an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat.”

Medicine tells us that pain is a perception—

It’s presence only exists within the neuronal network of our bodies and brains.

Danger and threats, likewise, are perceptions, not necessarily a reality.

The hooded figure walking towards us on a street at night could be a woman weeping,

Or a man with a vendetta.

“I could kill someone” might be someone’s cry for help,

Heard through a perception of a different set of experiences.

Sometimes there are ways to feel like we know what’s going on, but a lot of the time,

We can’t know;

And so we guess, and we judge,

Because not knowing can feel like a failure,

And we’re encouraged to keep failure in the realm of the unknown.

Why do we feel like the unknown, or maybe even the unknowable, is a threat?

The unknown is what we started with; it’s what we came from;

It’s the foundation for the lives we lead.

So what would your answer be when asked whether or not it’s reasonable to fear your own beginning?