First Jump

The highest three feet you can imagine. Only four steps up, then walk the plank and jump.

Soft water and welcoming arms. How hard can that be? I watched the others do it. It seemed so easy.

Until I get up to the ladder.

It's hard to describe eternity in every step

a skinny little birch with my innermost leaves shaking...
an extremeness with every molecule anxiously trembling...
overpowering weak knees permeating my entirety...
no conscious thoughts as distant voices pass directly through me unheard...
my gut a tensely twisted knot with my dry withered throat tangled in my spineless legs as a tightly anchored coil...
intense panic of my central cells pulling me into shreds between pleasing and escape.

I have come to the edge! How did I get here? What will I do now?