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Observation Class #2
Dragonfly Studio, Marshfield MA
Teacher: Emma Boyle, Chill Class

"Sound when stretched is music.
Movement when stretched is dance.
Mind when stretched is meditation.
Life when stretched is celebration."
- Ravishankar

Every Friday morning, Emma Boyle offers a "chill" class at 9 am. This is one of my favorite classes to attend during my week. This class gently puts all the disorder going on in my life into slow motion, so that I may jump in between the snapshots and rearrange my misdirected energy. But more important than enjoyable is the internal mirror I am allowed to wipe clean in her class. Her presence always offers an overall sense of peace and happiness. She is quite a goddess in the way that she teaches, presenting every posture with an almost sanctified energy that rectifies and rejuvenates. Which only reflects her studio, painted in vibrant colors with open light, flowers and plants. The most imperative lesson learned in Emma's chill class is the pace, ultimately stretching out the breath, the posture and the rapid moving mind.

Emma first had her students lay on their back, with a blanket underneath their sacrum, and pillows elevating their feet. The class began on a slight inversion, bringing full awareness to the weight lifted off of the thighs. From here, she began a total body scan from feet to the crown of our heads, with tranquil explanation of what is going on within the body while laying in this posture. The students seemed to relax even further as she spoke of muscle tension being released, blood pressure dropping and synovial fluids swirling around our pivotal joints. In this day and age, it seems the more information the better. As though we have found a soothing sensation in knowing rather than feeling. The idea was to guide the feeling with information, for those in the room experiencing discomfort with just being. Understandably so, I would be lying if I said I always feel comfortable within my own skin. Emma embraces each student with a gentle touch and a scented spritz within the space above them. She entices not only the mind and body, but the senses we tend to ignore in such a physical focus. As she completes the opening to their class, she reads a poem out loud. This engages the mind to work out a puzzle; the shape of what is being said to what may fit with the shape of your intention.

Each pose directed is presented on the opposite side at an incredibly slow pace. Emma reminds each student of the breath, not as cue for the next movement, but rather that the current breath is the next step. And the next step after that; and the next step after that. So much that we stretch the breath into a winding staircase that inevitably leads to a room of peace in the mind. Emma delivers incredible visualizations with these core engagements. Thighs into chest, circling feet, gentle spinal twists, child's pose and downward dog lead us into a heavy rag doll oxygenating the face. One vertebrae at a

time, we come rolling up into an unmovable force known as mountain pose. At this point, I notice that most of the class has their eyes shut, focusing on the breath and the energy they have generated from the crown of their heads to beneath their mats. Here, we have arrived to “chill”. When I first started attending Emma’s chill class, I did not know that chill could be as solid as a mountain, until Emma explained: “ Mountains are strong and solid, but their force accompanies life, rivers, trees, and wildlife...mountains are very much alive.” We have now arrived at peace, on top of our mountains. The journey throughout our week, at the base of this mountain may be a grueling one, but one step at a time, one breath at a time, the top becomes an epiphany. Emma directs her students down to their mats and ends where we began.

Without heat, without much sweat, I can see that the students look worked, surrendered to the multi-facets of yoga. I am beginning to realize that the challenge from within is the most difficult of conditions. Without what is within, we are merely a shell formed to the essence of our environment. Stretching the boundaries of our shape, allows us to stretch the boundaries of our mind and question what this essence is.