

**The Well** - *by David Whyte* - (in Pilgrim)

Be thankful now for having arrived,  
for the sense of  
having drunk  
from a well,  
for remembering the long drought that preceded your arrival  
and the years walking in a desert landscape of surfaces looking for a spring hidden  
from you for so long that even wanting to find it now had gone from your mind  
until you only  
remembered the hard pilgrimage that brought you here,  
the thirst that caught in your throat; the taste of a world just-missed  
and the dry throat that came from a love you remembered but had never fully  
wanted for yourself, until finally, after years making the long trek to get here it was  
as if your whole achievement had become nothing but thirst itself.

But the miracle had come simply from allowing yourself to know that you had  
found it,  
that this time  
someone walking out into the clear air from far inside you  
had decided not to walk past it anymore;  
the miracle had come at the roadside in the kneeling to drink  
and the prayer you said,  
and the tears you shed  
and the memory  
you held  
and the realization  
that in this silence  
you no longer had to keep your eyes and ears averted from the  
place that  
could save you,  
that you had been given  
the strength to let go  
of the thirsty dust laden  
pilgrim-self  
that brought you here,  
walking with her

bent back, her bowed head and her careful explanations.

**No, the miracle had already happened  
when you stood up,  
shook off the dust  
and walked along the road from the well,  
out of the desert toward the mountain,  
as if already home again, as if you  
deserved what you loved all along,  
as if just remembering the taste of that clear cool spring could lift up your  
face  
and set you free.**

Water reflects everything it encounters. This is so commonplace that we think water is blue, when in fact it has no color... But the water, the glorious water everywhere, has taught me that we are more than what we reflect or love. This is the work of compassion: to embrace everything clearly without imposing who we are and without losing who we are.

*Mark Nepo*

## In Praise of Water

by John O'Donohue

Let us bless the grace of water:

The imagination of the primeval ocean  
Where the first forms of life stirred  
And emerged to dress the vacant earth  
With warm quilts of color.

The well whose liquid root worked  
Through the long night of clay,  
Trusting ahead of itself openings  
That would yet yield to its yearning  
Until at last it arises in the desire of light  
To discover the pure quiver of itself  
Flowing crystal clear and free  
Through delighted emptiness.

The courage of a river to continue belief  
In the slow fall of ground,  
Always falling farther  
Toward the unseen ocean.

The river does what words would love,  
Keeping its appearance  
By insisting on disappearance;  
Its only life surrendered  
To the event of pilgrimage,  
Carrying the origin to the end.

Seldom pushing or straining,  
Keeping itself to itself  
Everywhere all along its flow...

Let us bless the humility of water,  
Always willing to take the shape  
Of whatever otherness holds it,

The buoyancy of water  
Stronger than the deadening,

Downward drag of gravity,  
The innocence of water,  
Flowing forth, without thought  
Of what awaits it,

The refreshment of water,  
Dissolving the crystals of thirst.

Water: voice of grief,  
Cry of love,  
In the flowing tear.

Water: vehicle and idiom  
Of all the inner voyaging  
That keeps us alive.

Blessed be water,  
Our first mother.

~ John O'Donohue

From: *To Bless the Space Between Us*