



COLLECTED POEMS:
WATER

Poems based on Water Stories interviews Written by Hadar Green Edited by Sink or Swim team



INTRODUCTION

Welcome traveller, to our watery world.
Swim into a bubble to hear the stories unfold,

Stories collected from far and wide,
Cultures and memories housed inside

A bubble to preserve the memory of water
To conserve, to remember, to love and look after

Immerse yourself in the stories within
Welcome to the ocean of 'Sink or Swim'.

CHILDHOOD

As a child in China, I had to learn how to swim
To pass the sports test from middle to high school
I felt a connection with the water, my synonym
A magical experience, for me as a rule

Humans are born with a love for water, from womb
Living in our mother's liquid before birth
Dipping, diving, flowing in the pool in full bloom
Feeling the joy and magic, it was worth

Looking at the water's reflection, half-bodies
Seeing memories in a movie-like colour
It's a little sad and happy, like childhood stories
A filter on my memories, like no other

STORIES

A pool of water, the source of my life,
With memories of childhood challenge,
A connection so strong, it's rife,
A link to the past that can't be unbalanced.

"Be water," Bruce Lee said, and I thought
Water can be strong and destroy, but also change
In mainland China, they see it as peaceful and soft
But by the sea, it's strong, with waves that range

Water means different things to different people
Linked to cultural ways of thinking, and traditions
But the feeling of being in it, is always equal
Magical and unique, like an experience in full vision.

Every month, I guide women to the Mikve, the holy bath where they shed their past selves and emerge renewed, reborn.

The Mikve is a sanctuary for introspection and growth, a place to contemplate our relationship with ourselves and with our partners.

In my faith, when we bleed, physical touch is forbidden. These days are for communication, for deepening our bond in other ways.

BATHING

RITUALS

But after seven days of cleanliness, we immerse ourselves in the Mikve and emerge purified, ready to embrace our partners in physical intimacy once again.

The waters of the Mikve cleanse us of impurity and bring new life to the world, a constant cycle of separation and unity.

Each visit to the Mikve is a journey of empowerment, a reminder that we are always capable of shedding our old selves and emerging anew.

A SENSE OF HISTORY


The cultural vein of Donghao Chung,
A moat that echoes history's hum,
Built in Wanli's Ming Dynasty,
Birthplace of Lingnan's legacy.

It flows through Guangzhou's heart,
A rich heritage it imparts,
A link between the past and now,
A centre of culture, economics, and power.

Amidst its surrounding culture,
The antique market finds its pedestal,
Carrying Guangzhou's rise and fall,
And the city's stories it recalls.

Water, a medium indispensable,
A life-sustaining substance so incredible,
In my imagination, a means to float or submerge,
A feeling of freedom, indescribable.

Soft or hard, containing or excluding,
A shapeless power ever brooding,
Water, a force that knows no bounds,
In its depths, infinite possibilities are found.



Raindrops fall and memories flood,
Of childhood joy in the pouring waters.
Paper boats set to sail,
On the street's makeshift water trail.

Kite flying and rain, a perfect match,
Collective laughter and playful cheer.
Hot pakoras served on a rainy day,
A time of happiness that would never sway.

But the times have changed, and so has rain,
Acidic downpours that cause pain.
Discouraged from water and its charms,
The joyous rituals now cause harm.

CHANGING RAIN

Preserving water means more than just its purity,
It means keeping alive those memories of community.
Of coming together in the rain's embrace,
To celebrate life with solace and grace.

Though the rain may not come like before,
Its memories still hold a precious core.
A reminder of the simple joys in life,
And the power of water in never-ending strife.

POWER & NECESSITY

01

Water, a source of life,
essential for survival,
a necessity for every being,
yet often taken for granted.

Growing up by the sea,
my initial image of water
was endless blue landscapes
that expand both physically and mentally.

02

But in Qingdao, a northern coastal city,
there is a scarcity of fresh water resources,
and the Stone Elder stands as a reminder
of the struggle for survival and the power of
nature.

The legend of the hard-working, kind-hearted
fisherman
and his intelligent and beautiful daughter
turned into a giant reef, alone on the sea,
is a symbol of the impact of water on our lives.

03

Water is not just a drink to keep us hydrated,
it is also essential for our daily activities,
cooking, bathing, laundry, cleaning,
we cannot live without it.

And with the earth being 70% water,
the natural landscape of glaciers, rivers, lakes
and seas
supports all life, interacts with the climate,
forming an ecosphere that affects us all.

04

Water, a source of life,
a precious commodity to be preserved,
for without it,
our existence would cease,
a reminder of the power of nature
and our dependence on it.

CHANGE

01

Water's allure has always been strong,
A fascination that lingers in me long.
Living by the sea for five years,
Has been a time to challenge my fears.

Surfing was a new passion to find,
Transformative, soothing, it eases the mind.
Bobbing around, feeling free,
Even without waves, pure ecstasy.

02

Feeling so small and vulnerable,
In water, a force that's powerful.
Caught in riptides, a bit afraid,
But attached to a float, safe I stayed.

Preserving oneself is not the ideal,
Rather, to keep healthy to live, to feel.
Fulfilled through meaningful creation and drive,
Being healthy, maintain while I'm still alive.

&

03

Oddly, I don't take photographs much,
Not of people, myself, or such.
But memories in my mind, they flow and change,
Transforming with time, with each passing age.

Like Auden's poem, memory shifts,
A recalled experience, reality drifts.
A painting is a memory, not a copy,
Movement, entropy, they don't stop me.

TRUST

04

And Water it seems, follows this path
Never quite still, open and vast
It changes with time, it changes with us
Safe on my surfboard I give it my trust

Bodies of water have always felt like home,
A source of comfort, a place to roam.
But when I was a child, learning to swim,
With floaties on, I was afraid to begin

My dad pointed out a frog in the water,
Its presence helped me be stronger,
Frogs became a source of fascination,
A reminder of conquering my hesitation.

But the ocean was rough when I turned six,
A wave overtook me, and I couldn't fix,
The feeling of being out of control,
Gasping for air, from heart and soul.

FROM FEAR TO

For years I couldn't face the water again,
But eventually, I learned how to swim.
In Greece, the sea water is so salty,
It keeps me afloat, almost effortlessly

Rivers filled with frogs were a source of delight,
Their songs put me at ease at night
Water is integral to my identity,
A symbol of life, a source of serenity.

But climate anxiety becomes persistent,
As pollution threatens its existence,
Preservation seems out of my control,
Like the wave when I was 6 years old

FASCINATION

HYDROFEMINISM

I am a body of water,
fluid and alive,
flowing through the landscape,
shaping the earth with my tides.

I am not just a resource,
to be extracted and used,
but a force of nature,
a vital part of the ecosystem.

The tide of feminism teaches me
to honour my wetness,
to celebrate my fluidity,
to see myself as a part of the natural world.

I am not separate from
the rivers, the lakes, the oceans,
but interconnected with them,
a network of flowing, moving life.

Through hydrofeminism,
I learn to embrace my watery nature,
to listen to the currents of my body,
to flow with the rhythm of the earth.

I am a body of water,
and I am proud to be one,
a living, breathing reminder
of the beauty and power of the natural world.

Based on Astrida Neimanis' "Hydrofeminism: Or, On Becoming a Body of Water"

