



Quickwater Oracles: Conversations & Meditations

Ruth Thompson

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Ruth Thompson's *Quickwater Oracles* is a thought-provoking collection of spiritual poems and meditations that celebrate nature, humanity, creativity, and love.

Created using channeling, a writing technique centered on seeking an enlightened mental state, these poems blend Taoist and Buddhist beliefs with modern spiritual, naturalist, and metaphysical ideas. Some of the poems cover nature and the natural world, exploring in sincere wonder how every living thing in the world connects, communicates, and coexists. Other poems electrify as they laud the majesty of the human body and soul. Still others nurture as they encourage embracing all aspects of the self and proclaim loving yourself as important and necessary to living. The most engaging poems, which focus on creativity, inspire as they encourage openness, being present and deliberate, and going with the flow.

Knowing that the natural and spiritual worlds often challenge logic and rigid structures, these poems adopt a short, free-form construction and stream-of-consciousness style. This is paired with a narrative voice that changes, depending on the topic of the poem. Some verses sound like gentle self-talk; others switch to the sound of the teachings of a guru; still others shift to the tone of a strong, motivating coach, or to that of a comforting storyteller.

While some of the book's philosophical subjects are deep, most of the poems are infused with a sense of playfulness, wonder, and joy. Some passages, such as those in the poem "Dolphins," dabble with onomatopoeia when describing the happy squeaking of the creatures. Other poems use clever repetition and intentional word choices to create a rhythm, building in a gradual wave of momentum. A verse in "Poem Seeds" exemplifies this: "Just imagine. Just imagine! It's bright, crack! light, gold, and / galaxy, galaxy, galaxy, and we, we shout that!" This slow build toward jubilation appears in multiple poems, making the collection crackle with energy.

Elsewhere, though, the exploration of cerebral topics leads to passages that are too focused on philosophical pondering, though such passages are few in the collection. When they appear, the verses focus on ideas, like love or honesty, rather than using visual imagery to build a sense of space and drama. The book's more imagery-centered poems, with their visual descriptions, are spectacular: "You have affinity with starlight – cool, clear, effervescent – the light of truth, clarity. And with the void, / darkness soft as 'Ohi'a cat's fur..."

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