

Water Wisdom

by Tanya Davis * October 13th, 2012

Do you remember a long time ago when we would watch the water flow
from springs up from the earth, cascading over waterfalls
the rivers running through it through it
leading us all to it
we'd view it
and the renewal could move us
closer to *our* source

Do you remember when we weren't cruising at high speeds towards anything
neither altitude nor finishing
rather steady climb and steady living
like the water that ran beneath things

Admittedly, I daydream
of simplicity with less machines
basic living at a slower pace
to contemplate the meaning
- like when standing by the stream, watching water flow on by

And these days we build monuments to older times
but we trade stream for streamline
we study craftsmanship but keep it within budgets
make arguments for beauty while citing statistics
something like: studies show the sounds of flowing water
help the people relax

Yes. We know that. So it's been made into fact
Is that what we need, then, to keep leisure intact?
To keep an aspect of soul on our urban maps
to give modern day humans
a source for their musings
a wellspring to tap?

I, for one, wouldn't mind trading in some science to get some more myth back.

I wouldn't mind if Haligonians made pilgrimages to sacred groves
and asked invisible nymphs for advice on their woes
wouldn't mind if more kneeled at waterside
so as to yield to nature
to beg the favour
of counsel
in exchange for their prayers

Remember when places of worship were in the outside air?
And we sought counsel from stars as much as people
when wisdom was a mythical creature
was a priestess
was a bubbling brook
was a nymph with flowing hair?

We are lucky, now, for technology
for comfort
for industry that brought us heat and lights and comfort
for all of our achievements and how our wonderings brought so much into being

But we traded growth for growth
soul for luxury
and not so many of us visit sacred groves anymore

And so, the fact that our city even has a fountain to begin with is, indeed, significant

So, then, let's take advantage of it
let's notice it
let's sit by it
and on this momentous occasion let us celebrate stone and flowing water
how beautiful!
Let us celebrate craftsmanship and stonecutters, down from the ancestors
how useful

we celebrate places to sit and be peaceful
we celebrate the public gardens, its friends and keepers
who work to make this possible.

It's pretty but it's also more than that
lest we forget the history from which fountains sprang
the mystery people pondered before we knew how water came
back when it was gods who gave it
and nymphs in sacred spots who blessed it
when we gave offerings to appease it
when we took to our knees to thank it

If you see, someday, a stranger, praying by the fountain
consider yourself lucky to witness this subtle power
if you see an acquaintance, listening to the water
pondering the cosmos or what they'll make for dinner
remember water has always been wisdom
and we have a wellspring, too!
We have fountain to contemplate beside
running water to listen to..

Thank you, friends and workers and worshippers of all kinds
now, and then
for soul as well as science
for the water that flows around, ahead, and in behind us