

Khoo Yue En Keziah

How can water have such power over us? The sight of it has made the thirsty cry out in joy with their cracked, parched lips; it has made the great stop and lapse into eloquent silence, enraptured by its beauty; it has made even the most experienced mariner feel pounding terror as it crashes and rolls.

Water is life; water is peace; water is fear. This is a universal truth— and this is also personal.

*The sea.*

*I would always hold back in fear, drawing just close enough to let the waves lick and lap at me, then rush back to land, dry land. I would dig in the sand, watching the waves from afar with longing eyes. I longed for the courage to leap in, to let the waves crash and foam over me. I could picture a laughing, splashing self in my mind's eye.*

*But actually, I was shrinking back.*

Water has always held a mysterious charm through the ages. Explorers have set out by this pull to find the unexplored breadth of the ocean. Divers have plunged underwater by this same pull to discover the creatures of the deep and to marvel at the colourful corals. Water has been feared and revered by communities, cultures and lands— and also by individuals. Individuals like me.

*But slowly, slowly, the pull of the ocean could not be resisted. I took one tremulous step after another into the sea. I stood still and watched as the waves slowly rolled towards me. One, then another, and yet another lapped past my legs.*

*Peace inched past my fear and nestled in my heart. I continued to watch the waves roll, and felt the soothing rhythm float over me.*

Water brings joy. See the faces of those who have long hungered for water light up when a long, slow sip is granted to them. Watch children frolic by a stream, laughing and splashing and running. Observe the smile that lights upon the faces of those who behold the ocean for the first time.

And water brings more than joy; it has so often brought peace to the hearts of those afflicted by sadness, pain or loss. The calm and quiet of a gently lapping ocean, a daintily twinkling stream, or a glass of warm water has brought peace to millions upon millions. The slow beauty of a lake flowing, or the immersion of one's hands into cold, clear water has rarely failed to bring serenity to the soul.

*Then I began to play. I jumped over the waves as they crashed and foamed; then I sat down to feel the rippling of the waves keenly. Again and again I leaped. Delight bubbled in my heart.*

*And when I was tired, I would stand still, and again let the waves wash over me. Peace wrapped my soul like a blanket on a cold, rainy night.*

Water is peace; water is joy; water is life.