

What the Water Said

Elaine Preston

Pat Falk's *It Happens As We Speak*, a collage of research, journal entries, and poetry, will resonate with those who have journeyed into deep ocean to find subtexts of personality and creativity. Passages from scholars, writers, and mentors are thematically on point, yet aesthetically pleasing. Rich swatches of imagery color the pages, the most powerful using water as a framing device and catalyst for change. The author's search begins in a dream when she asks, "And if I let go?" and wonders whether her freed boat will meet disaster or adventure. As answer, the closing describes her on a dock imagining stars hidden behind the sun, then affirming they are not lost to her but a matter of faith, of detecting patterns in darkness, the universe's unwavering presence and continuing change.

This powerful drama of psychic injury reclaims the self others have minimized and celebrates the human quest for validation, enlightenment, and artistic voice. That we are everything we have experienced--that we are *more* than that--is echoed in a scene at the Saratoga Springs mineral baths, where the author is addressed by an attendant, the antithesis of her childhood caregivers. When she gets into the water, the dirt she sees, the attendant says, shouldn't concern her because it's good dirt the minerals remove from the body. Like water, the healing power of language has renewed Ms. Falk's sensibilities, self, and poetry.

--Elaine Preston is Assistant Academic Chair/English at the Grant Campus of Suffolk County Community College; award-winning poet and author of *Look for a Field to Land*, *Fishing Underground*, and numerous poems published in such national journals as *College English*, *Confrontation*, *Slant*, *Zone 3*, and *Journal of Poetry Therapy*; and frequent leader of writing workshops in the Northeast.