

Original Waters – Collected Poems from 2009 to 2015, by Jason Espada

88 poems, 139 pages.

Introduction

On my good days, I'm one of those people who believes that poetry will save the world. You find our likes in other times, in other places, and, although this world has not yet been saved, in fact it looks like it's heading for destruction, still, we are all quite confident in our bearing.

Poetry's an invitation to love, you see, it is an invitation to dance, to be your own unique, extraordinary self, and to tap into that source that will heal us all.

"Original waters – New Poems" contains writings from the last seven years, and the title comes from a verse written while on retreat: "Original waters fill the wells...", and that to me is what poetry, and the arts are all about. We are renewed every time we touch the deep truth about our being here, however we find our way to it. This has no beginning. This has no end. The needs of today are the same as they were yesterday, and they will be the same in all of our tomorrows. And this is how we move in the world.

A Psalm of Peace

What was it this morning
about the pine tree with snow on its branches,
that made me want to run
and embrace my child?

to go to a school board meeting
and speak out,
to join my local Friends of the River?

What was said this dawn
when it was just myself and her,
that set the textures of all we do
into such relief,
that pared back everything false,
and left
just a few bare facts?

In the chill before words could rise up,
something was said
of this place,
and the gift of belonging here

In the morning,
before everything else begins to stir,
and it is just you and I,
this song of peace is heard,
so bright and true,
it moves
from one to another
waking up the courage
to love in new ways

Reclaim Your Noble Freedom

You can put a lion in a cage,
but he won't be happy there –
he's made to roam the savannah

You can put a bird in a cage,
but every moment he knows
the sky is his home

You can keep fish,
but, see, the wide open ocean
is where they belong

just so,

petty grievance is too small a place
for the living heart of love-
it needs to eclipse those bars,
and reclaim its noble freedom

and with one, or two,
or a few hearts gladdened,
we can't stop there –
we're made for more than that

in fact, it's true,
this boundless world,
and all time,
we can embrace

and, at last,
this alone
is what satisfies

a few marks on a page,
a message in code –
if you find the meaning,
a path will appear,

treasures you walked by,
day after day,
allies you didn't know you had

These hidden words are all that matter now,
the rest, fades to grey

You hold the map in your hands,
incredulous,
as day breaks all 'round