

In search of the wellspring

In the fold of a page, in between noun and verb
I was searching for meaning in the spaces of verse
when my ancestors called out with instruction:

“Go find a wellspring that will sustain us all.”

They told me that when I found it:
I would understand its use,
I would learn how to nourish it.

The wellspring would flourish:
it would bring joy to others,
it would bring meaning to me.

I asked them, what is this wellspring?
How do I reach it?
How will I know when I found it?

“Only when you find it, can you know,” was what I was told.

The instructions felt like a riddle
and I did not know what to make
of this idea of wellspring meant to sustain.

So I ran my finger along the page and spine
I turned meter and rhyme over and over
but I could not find that wellspring within.

I looked out the window when an idea came
to search out others who might know more
where the wellspring begins and flows.

I rushed out my door into howling wind
I looked far and wide for the next of my kin
I sought out their wisdom – asked for a blessing.

One Elder said to me, majestic and wise,
“Look within child and you will see
a blossoming river, a deep-water spring.”

“It will pour out of you strong and fast,
it will quench your thirst and arid lands

it will be ceaseless and bountiful.”

But before I could ask anymore, she vanished
and I kept walking and searching further
for anyone who might know the answer.

The words of my ancestors circled around me,
“Find the wellspring that will sustain us all.”
I realised that it was not only me who needed this spring.

“Only when you find it, can you know,” was what I was told.

Surely if others needed a body of water to sustain
then others would no doubt be out there searching,
or equally, out there lost, far from wellbeing.

Eventually, I happened upon another soul
who pointed high at a munro in the distance,
and told me to go there and find the answer.

I stood at the apex but could not see the wellspring.
There were rivers and fjords, I could see oceans and seas,
small rivers, babbling brooks, but nothing called out to me.

All was mighty majestic but it did not feel like mine—
the water was not a familiar blue of my youth,
the temperature freezing – dangerous to touch.

I soon worried the wellspring was not even here.
Did my ancestors send me on an impossible mission?
What once was beautiful now seemed fractured, broken.

The landscape’s fabric looked to pull at the seams
hiding difficult truths I had not seen before
what once felt like belonging was not anymore.

Perhaps the wellspring had long run dry
in the land of my past – home to my ancestors
a forgotten place I no longer could grasp.

How can I nourish a wellspring within
if I cannot even find inspiration?
if I fear I lost it long ago across the sea?

These thoughts overwhelmed and exhausted me
alone with myself, I was frightened by stillness
did not know how to move forward in time.

So I opened my notebook and started to write
the words poured out without much control
but I realised then that these words were mine.

I followed their trickle which turned to a brook
which grew to a river that poured into delta
which morphed into sea growing to ocean.

It hit me in this moment that the well was not in me
but was me – the words I chose to write all along
I had been looking outward when the wellspring was in sight.

It exists in the pages of our notebooks,
It exists in conversations with our friends,
It exists in our hidden histories – the ones we are a part of.

It flourishes when we are given space to flourish,
It gives us joy when we are allowed joy,
It gives us meaning when we offer meaning to others.

The wellspring is pumping through our every fibre,
it pulsates in each vessel and vein,
our wellspring is our experiences when we choose to share.

It connects all of us in a network of waterways above and below.
We are a community of wellsprings and will continue to grow.

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*[Andrés N. Ordorica](#) is a queer Latinx poet, writer and educator based in Edinburgh. Drawing on his family's immigrant history and his third culture upbringing, his writing attempts to unpack the journey of diaspora and unpack what it means to be from *ni de aquí, ni de allá* (neither here, nor there). [At Least This I Know](#), his debut poetry collection, is out now from 404 Ink.*