

Title: Waterly (waterways)
By V Franck-Lee Alli-Tis, 2023

To be at sea

There are at least two types of bodies on earth
Those who long for something they have already lived
Those who thirst for something they have never tasted

Maazi in urdu means past
Maži in greek means together
Mázza in greek means mass, lump, clump and multitude
Masa in turkish means table
The past is a togetherness
On a table
Made of water

I enter the words *water* and *table* into the searching machine. This is what I get:
“The water table is an underground boundary between the soil surface and the area where groundwater saturates spaces between sediments and cracks in rock.
Water table is important because it provides water for the 90% of the rural population who do not get water delivered to them from a city water department or a private water company”

I note:
“And cracks in rock”

Wet heart

There, in a cheerful flower garden, on a foggy day, a wandering bird tells the nomad-tree
a tale

subhe-azadi ‘the morning of freedom’
khoon-e-jigar ‘the blood of heart.’
Wahán ,there’
Gulshan ,flower garden’
Panchii ,traveler, wanderer, bird’
Shajr ,tree’
Daastaa.n ,tale’
Hansná ,to laugh’
Ha.nsmukh ,to feel cheerful’
Dehleez ,threshold’
Chingari ,spark’
Maazi ,past’
Saahil ,seashore’
Muddat ,long time’
Parvaaz ,flight’
Ujaala ,light’
Khaana badosh ,nomad’
Dhundlii ,foggy’
Sargoshiaan ,whispers’
Be-dakh.l ,dispossessed’
Dil ruba ,heart stealer’
Pani ,vepó water’

In the morning of freedom, the blood of heart becomes a dispossessed nomad
The past becomes the spark of a bird's flight on a long-time-threshold on the foggy seashore
Cheerful light whispers the tale of the wet heart stealer

More than two bodies on the go
togethermultitude
They run across seas and rivers
The membranes that protect their organs their skin the fluids that circulate in their body
cross geographical borders

Moist
Fog
Cloud
Low clouds
Sudden violent gust of wind
Cloudburst
Downpour
Rain
Thunder
Thunderstorm
Hurricane
Tornado
Ανεμοστρόβιλος

Watery boarders
flow slow
Watery boarders
Flow violently
Watery boarders
Whorl
Deadly fluid circulation

“The seas become breathless and warm”¹
Swallowing the breath of dispossessed bodies

The breaths you don't take when the waves overwhelm you
And the breaths you take when you talk when you sing when you kiss

Temporality as tenderness

They kiss they kiss
They keep kissing against the breathless sea

Chemical waves
Chemical love

'cause water remembers
Waves strike the rhythm of duration

Weaving vibrating eyelashes

¹ The phrase appears in the conversation “We Are All at Sea: Practice, Ethics, and Poetics of “Hydrocommons” Astrida Neimanis in conversation with Sofia Lemos, RIBOCA2—2nd Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art 2020

'cause water remembers
Our saliva connects us with the memory of the rivers the waves the thunderstorms

Weaving watery bridges

'cause water remembers
Oceans are full of chemical reactions

Weaving complex fluid circulation

'cause water remembers
Memory trickles

Weaving watery thresholds

Chemical waves
Criminal waves

'cause water remembers
Jetzt geht s los der Regen (now the rain moves on)

'cause water remembers
Jetzt geht s los das Reden (now the talking kicks off)

Regen reden
speak rain
flow slow
speak rain
speak low
speak rain
flow tender to me
speak rain
speak rain to me

Stream
Wetland
Springs
Flowing artesian well
Watery horizon
Water table
Compact ground
Permeable ground
Solid rock
clay
Saliva
"A drop of water beneath a new tongue"²

² The phrase appears in the conversation "We Are All at Sea: Practice, Ethics, and Poetics of "Hydrocommons" Astrida Neimanis in conversation with Sofia Lemos, RIBOCA2—2nd Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art 2020

I enter *water* and *memory* into the searching machine. This is what I get:
Janine MacLeod argues that “The water we drink and touch is the same water that erupted as a stream at the origins of the earth. All of the moments of the past have this same water as their witness.”³

Toni Morrison writes that water remembers everything.

I note:

What happens to our memory when the fluids that flow through our body, the fluids we swallow, the fluids that nurture our bodies connect us to other (more-than-human) watery bodies?

Our bodily ύδωρ our pani our water flows
maazi μαζι

The water witnesses
Their sweat resists under the waves of the deep sea
Sinking to the seafloor as marine snow
In the days of extreme heat their saliva
Will stream to the surface
Will bring the sound of their tongues
Wet clouds over the oceans
Overloaded with their voices
Cloudbursts
Thunderstorms

Water is Nepantla⁴
in-between
between us and beyond us

Sound changes the molecular synthesis of water

The sky will swallow your voice
The clouds will spit your longing saliva
On our heads
Your past
The spark of a bird’s flight on a long-time-threshold at the seashore
Your tale is
In our ears
Your watery struggles
Bring foggy whispers of the heart stealers

The crack, the fissure the irritated border
the wind unwound your wounds
Your heart your stomach your intestines
long and shinny

³ Janine McLeod in “Water and the Material Imagination: Reading the Sea of Memory Against the Flows of Capital” in *Thinking with Water*, eds., Cecilia Chen, Janine MacLeod, and Astrida Neimanis (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press 2013).

⁴ Gloria Anzaldúa, Chicana, cultural and queer feminist and postcolonial theorist. In her theory and writings, she employs the concept of Nepantla: “in-between-ness.” She writes: “Now I call [the concept of borders and borderlands] Nepantla, which is a Nahuatl word for the space between two bodies of water, the space between two worlds. It is a limited space, a space where you are not this or that but where you are changing”

Your hair your nails your skin
Your twisted tongues in the shape of a kiss

They kiss they kiss
They keep kissing against the breathless sea
You faded away
Your skin will form the rocks of the future
Your atoms became part of the deep oceans
Join the tears of breathless people with the saliva of passionate kissing lovers
With black oil splitting by the explosion of the deep-water horizon
With the guts of a caring whale
Maazi μάζα μαζι

Cheerful light whispers the tale