

In this **Invite to Write**, we have chosen, a 1989 Aboriginal painting entitled, *Sandover River*. Somehow I have found myself on many a river from the Nile to the Susquehanna and it is a fitting image to follow our last theme *Offering*. The first time I visited the banks of the Susquehanna River, the guide who had brought me there said, "Before you ask her for anything - before you draw from her, please make an offering".

Through this *Portal* we have done that collectively and so in this new image we invite you to the river's edge where we have gathered at the beginning of winter and the theme of **Renewal**. Winter is the special time of half-light and the time of dreams, and the soul's sleep, as Native people have told me. Gazing through this image, I feel the river running through me, through dream time, through prayers of renewal I now whisper:

"... give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as a temperate man [that] he only can bear and carry-Anything more? [This] prayer, I think is enough for me."

-Plato's Phaedrus

Here are some of the submissions from our second *Invite to Write* inspired by the theme of Renewal and the following image:



The Dreaming of the artist Lily Sandover Kngwarreye, Sandover River, painting, 1989, Australia

Nightfishing on Soul River

I have drifted off again
and wonder what will surface tonight
as I cast about in the still and the deep

unsure of which lure to use.

But neither am I sure what the coin of the realm is here
It seems to constantly change

In the bad old days, when the sun pulled her golden rays far from our reach
I feared the river at night with its shady characters and flattened shadows
Always threatening to flood, or the accidents and encounters I had
like surfing into a bed of seaweed with thorns or the great devouring creatures
poised below the surface like a silent silvery threat

But times change, there is less toxic waste and
I am still in awe of this magical place
but I have gotten to know what to expect here.
My familiarity has lessened my fear
though my encounters are no less thrilling
As I drift from shore to shore
and back again.

I marvel at the wonders and many close encounters
Behind me the horse gave birth to the foal on her banks
The public assembly for the regatta was just around the bend
where watching the white owl hop and strut down the promenade
seemed to surprise no one but me.

I am learning to be a better fisher too, and can now nearly feed myself
entirely on my own findings.
Buoyed by experience, I trust
There is always something more to learn from
Soul River

- HD Artemis

The Stars are Still There

“There is a river,”
My mother told me,
Whose wandering banks
Bend beyond
Our seeking eyes,
Whirling blue water
Into new and unknown canyons.

Along a persistent path,
Its riffles and rapids
Revive the rooted toes
Of steadfast trees,
Who wave on
That sturdy stream
Like cheering children.

When the setting sun
Sprinkles golden grains
Of radiance,
Onto the lively meadow,
I pause and wonder:
Where does
The ruffling river go?

Atop a myrtle bluff
The ancient ones strum
Afterglow
Into the husk of night,
Crooning an eternal lullaby:
Remember Now,
The stars are still there.

- Karen D. Benson

A Sort of Wisdom: Lily Sandover Kngwarreye's *The Dreaming*

for those who've never known Earth's numinous mystery

as we do, we paint pictures of the Dreaming:

the river's relentless blue curves its unspoiled way
through riverine forests, a myriad trees and plants
take on the pellucid moonlight its halo bright
between the just-formed hills and outcrops' heave
everywhere the ancestor spirits still journey

this is the benediction of an unblemished world

that was always here until others came ...

it may yet return
if our ways of knowing and loving this Earth
become a sort of wisdom for them, too

- Tony Ullyatt

RIVER CRIES

Mother, why are you crying?
The river is flowing.
Pink blossoms
Have burst into dancing rain petals.
Showers of green sprouts
Delight the hills
And the ground herself
Is blue as deep water.
Even the sunshine
Is coming in sprinkles!
Oh Mother, why are you crying?
The river is flowing.

Because, my child,
Because
River is flowing.

- Jane Zich

Renewal

I stand still

A new river appears on my screen
Sand over river you're calm and clear

Flowing with such gentle current

Allowing me to sit and clear

My tired psyche into your waters

Sitting by the river

Watching its creation from above

Gazing at its beauty and power

Ancient rivers, new rivers veins of life

Flowing to its destination

Your autonomous movements

Conquering the way

I stand still

Every part of me is dipping in
Remembering, it is a new river

No need for life jacket this time

Seven years have been mastered

In navigating through the old river

I stand still

As I emptied my old psyche into this new river
Hearing the whispering sounds of the water

Making me renewed every time

I dip my hand in the river

I stand still

New river your waters flow
Does not wait for you and I
Life flowing through me & the river

I can sit and rest as I renew my psyche by the river

Let us gather by the river

Time and time again you remind me
I can renew at the river

- Lera Welch

5179 Looking at “Sandover River”

The sun in darkling sky might be the moon,
Each leaf in dreaming tree a likely star,
While, virginal, the blue of river bar
Is more like shore. The wood reflected soon

Will seem, although we no reversal find.
But when you look in water mirror you
Will see what's upright in unaltered view,
Perspective-wise, though all be softly signed

With tender, liquid-sweet limpidity
As if it were a smile in lover's eye
By ray new-bathed reborn-adoring. Why
Stays treasured gaze in cherished memory?

The colors bent and blended in a deep
Are emissaries of a waking sleep.

- Martin Bidney

That the oceans first came from outer space

is what I learned from Lily Sandover Kngwarreye's
dream painting (1989) with its long blue river flowing hard
through seemingly purple-
seeded stars, and

that renewal's
not the same as becoming once
again what we once were before; it's more becoming
to be absolutely new, again: *ad infinitum*

- E.E. Nobbs

River Dreaming

The whispers came in the night.
One by one they fell into
the great blue river woman.
Blink, blink, under and over
they blessed her presence, her weave.

Creation arose in half light
of day. There were trees, clouds
and textures.

There was fecundity.

- Carolina Read

At the river

A great root
weaves through the wet, muddy bank.
Which way now?
To land?
To river?

A black, mottled swan
Glides by, hisses,
Knows me as I cling there.

(Turn from the task now,
it visits you later.)

Decisions in grocery stores
hundreds of times over
can be made with the lights out.
But not this move.
Not this Big Move.

- Judith Capurso

Araminta

Along the river of time
The heart reflects the sky
Tufts of clothing growing in fields
Watch the fabric as it dances

Is it real
Can they feel
After they have long since gone

Like the rising sun
I can still hear them sing
A hymn in the vein
Of their homelands heart
Many ages and worlds apart

Yet I see the tree tops
Peeking at themselves
In the waters of time
And I am reminded
As ahead so behind

God bless our sisters and brothers
Whom hate held down
I feel them rise up
As the sun heats the ground

- Mallory Fehrensens

Here I am. All is still.
The sun, moon-like in its glimmering
the
bushes fire flies in the half light to guide my way
the river, milk
moon blue, flows on
like a path leading elsewhere

Why touch it with my
ochred feet?
The weight if my body would sink like a pebble
smooth and
cold to the riverbed
and my soul, hair streaming, to the sea

but I am
light
like the dust shuffled up at my passing

A deer kicks and swerves

A shadow into the shadows
a quick push of movement in the twilight
then
all is still again
and I go on

- Rebekah Anokhina

NILE

Like the river, I rise, filling the land. My arms
and legs breathe life again. I have been dead
for so long. My body shudders with blood pulsing.
Waters swell. I open my eyes. I see.

Fields sprout, leaves and flowers, corn
writhing in the air. Life courses through the
landscape. The sand is no longer barren.
Beasts low. The farmer walks by the riverbank.

Boats sway in the waves. The hot sun casts colours
across the horizon. The dawn wakes the household,
the sunset shrouds the hills. I breathe slowly, exhale
and inhale, the life-giving air filling my lungs like seeds.

This is my kingdom. I stand. I have been below the
Earth, waiting for the sun, for dark days, bleak months.
My body heals. I wait for her song stealing among the trees.
I hope again. I dream again. I see her coming. I feel.

- Jake Murray