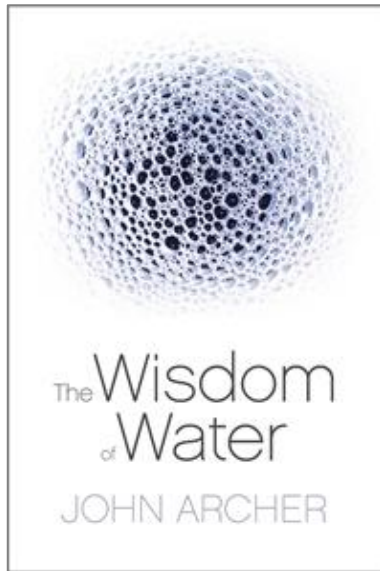


BOOK REVIEW

Archer, John. *The Wisdom of Water*, Crows Nest NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2008.



For twenty-five years, Australian author John Archer has studied water in all its many forms, immersing himself in its mysteries, legends and rituals. His journey has taken him to temples where water is worshipped as a living deity, to hot volcanic springs, to thundering waterfalls, and sacred pools hidden deep in forests.

He has "drunk the same water dinosaurs drank deep in the Jurassic swamps, sucked the dew from grasstree flowers at dawn, and sipped the sulphurous healing waters in the mountains of northern Japan."

In *The Wisdom of Water* Archer writes that "water is my principal source of spiritual nourishment and the focus of my daily religious practice ... when we begin to

commune with nature and affirm our connection with the divinity inherent in all things, meanings and significances will appear that were previously invisible to us. When each rock and tree and stream, even the most minute drop of dew feels like family, we know we are no longer alone."

Archer goes on to suggest that "Earth is water's creation ... Through the medium of water we are connected, not only to the moon and the cosmos, but to all living things past and present. If water retains within its structure the memory of its history, then it is indeed a consciousness beyond our imagining."

The book is divided into two sections: "The Waters Above" and "The Waters Below". The first section explores the mysteries of water in rain, clouds, thunder, rainbows, hail, snow and dew. "The Waters Below" include ice, springs, ponds, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, streams and oceans.

Integrating scientific facts, personal reflection and the mythology of the world's dominant religious traditions, *The Wisdom of Water* is a gentle, easy-to-read book. It has neither footnotes nor bibliography. It is a book that is meant to be read and absorbed, slowly and reflectively. But, "don't wait too long. We are only here because water has chosen Earth as a playground for a while. When she leaves so will we."

Archer invites the reader to "immerse yourself in water's mysteries, to explore its hidden depths and expand your experiences, so that you can look up at the clouds with new eyes and hear the voice of waterfalls and ocean waves, so that next time it rains, you can walk out and feel the touch of angels' wings."