

## BOOK REVIEW

**Crabtree, Maril.** *Sacred Waters: Stories of Healing, Cleansing, and Renewal*, Avon, Mass: Adams Media, 2005.



In the Introduction to this book, Maril Crabtree writes:

'From the amniotic fluid we swim in before birth, to the cleansing power of waterfalls, rivers, oceans, fountains, and our own tears; from baptismal fonts to the healing pools of hot springs and natural grottoes; from the sacred waters of Lourdes in France or the Dead Sea in Israel, to the birdbath or swimming pool in your backyard – water contains a unique spiritual energy.

Water shape-shifts from ice to liquid, from snow to steam. It is essential to our survival and covers much of the surface of our planet. Water's power can destroy or give life, can heal our spirits and soothe our bodies, can be a source of great awe, beauty, and inspiration – as well as a source of fear and terror.

Water connects us to ancient powers existing from the beginning of creation. All cultures throughout time have revered and protected water's life-giving properties. Western myths give us Neptune and Poseidon reigning over the oceans, Venus and Aphrodite rising from the sea, and thousands of nymphs and sprites ruling over rivers, creeks, springs, and fountains. The Japanese brought offerings each year to Kawakami and Kibune – Japanese rain gods. Egyptians worshipped the Nile as a source of fertility and abundance, and believed death involved the soul's journey across another river – the Styx.

Brazilians still celebrate on January 1 the festival of Yemanje, an ocean goddess whose origins go back to Africa. In Rio, more than one million celebrants dress in white and wade into the ocean at dusk to give homage to her.

These are only a few of the hundreds of deities connected with the recognition of water as a source of spiritual power and as an element basic to our very existence.

In *Sacred Water* you'll find true stories, meditations, and poems about the power and mystery of water in many forms. These stories show how water can be a source of guidance and inspiration to illuminate our life journeys – even when it comes in the form of a flood or a near drowning.

You'll learn ways to incorporate the spiritual energies of water through ceremonies and rituals. You'll read about the healing power of oceans, lakes, and hot springs. You'll see how water intersects with human experience in surprising and even mystical ways. These stories show how water's sacred qualities still flow through the universe, a source of life and spiritual wisdom for us all.'

This is a gentle and inspirational book. Dip into it at will and find insights and resources for meditation and reflection. It is part of a series of four books by Maril Crabtree, one on each of the four elements, water, earth, fire and air.

If only they were set in Australia!