

# The View in the Water

"...Without error or mistake," is how Alfred Costner King describes the objects we see before they are distorted in a reflection.

Mountains. Cliffs, pines, the sky, clouds, and all of nature's objects reflect on the water's surface. The accuracy of the image ranges from a perfect copy to completely lost, depending on the stability of the water's surface.

On flat water, all of these are clear to us, as if the upside down image connects effortlessly with the objects and beings above the shoreline. An image of reality with only tiny ripples to create minor error and unnoticeable mistakes, left only to perceive the innocent original—harmless in intent, effectively construed—it is beautiful. It is connected.

When the water is calm, I see what is real, not illusory. My mind connects seamlessly from the image created and truth above. On these days, everything is crystal clear and I admire every feature, shape, and form that travels from reality, to the water, to my conscious. Through the lens of the water, I am present with the world because I can see it clearly. The vivid spectacle meets my eyes and incites interest and vigor.

I move from the shore onto the water. I climb an upside down mountain across the water's surface. The reflection is my guide. The unadulterated image allows my mind to transcend the shoreline from what is perceived to reality with ease.

On land, I look up with excitement, because I already know the way. I traveled it on the water. Everything is clear. I am confident.

I come back down the mountain, across the shore, back across the water to a large rock where I sit. Time passes. I see the image in the calm water turn bright orange with sunset, and then turn to crepuscular scene of the mountain — fading into a silhouette with a soft rubicund glow.

I make camp near the shore. I wash up in the cold water and see my face reflected on the surface. I am happy.

Inanimate objects are not exclusive to reflection — moving beings, humans, and our own image are cast back at us from the surface.

Even the unseen — intentions, feelings, opinions, our wishes — are all equally subject to reflections. They incarnate as our gestures, facial expressions, and the look in our eyes. I see it in the water.

With a faint outline of the mountain, flickering stars quickly appear on the water's flat face. A mirror of the empyrean in the calm.

I climb into my tent. I think about climbing the mountain and I smile. I study my maps and read as I plan for another day. I turn off my lamp and close my eyes.

I hear the faint sound of rain hitting the tent as I fall asleep.

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In my dreams I hear thunder. Light illuminate  
the inside of the tent. Flashes pulse through my eyelids.  
. . .

I hear the sound of boulders rumbling down  
the mountain. Stone crushes and splashes  
into the water. The boom and crack of  
mass splitting reverberates across every cliff face.  
. . .

My tent flaps in the wind. I hold my  
arm up to stabilize the fabric to stop the  
maddening sound to no avail.  
. . .

The storm subsides. Overcast light slowly  
infiltrates my tent walls. It's morning.

I dress in the tent and put my boots on. I go  
outside and feel sharp, cold, specks of water hit  
my face.

Walking down to the shoreline, I slip in the mud  
and catch myself with my hands. Smeared in dark  
mud, I go to the water to wash it off. The mud  
from my hands pollutes the water. I look straight  
down into the water and see a vague, muddled,  
and weak image of a man.

I shake the frigid water off of numb, water-  
hands that do not feel like my own. I look up  
and see turbulent darkness highlighted by dispersed  
peaks of white foam.

Across the water the shoreline has transformed into  
a jagged, impassable wall of stones. The mountain  
above, despite losing pieces to the night, stands.

clear and strong, its coated surface shiny in the grey light.

But my eyes are attracted back to the motion below. The crests appearing in peaks of blackness moving across the surface mesmerize me. I watch the small black waves build and then crash in chaos. I hear the slap of waves against themselves and against the rocky shore. It has my full attention and interest.

There is no reflection of what is above in the turbulent waters. The sky is gone. The mountain is gone.

But the view in the water has my full attention.

Today will be a different day.

