

# Wellspring: Poetry for the Journey

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A weekly poetry resource  
from St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia



## *On the Shoreline*

Her vision is unreliable, as are her prayers.  
She begs the lake to guide her, but expects nothing  
more than this mantra of lapping. A boat  
trolls by, the fishermen nearly indistinguishable  
from trees. In this light, the great blue heron  
on the dock could be anything: a child, or lovers  
folding themselves into each other. It opens its wings;  
the span is alarming. It beckons, urges her  
to walk upon the water. She offers her foot to the surface,  
and for a moment, she believes it is possible.

Laura Van Prooyen<sup>1</sup>

## Reflections

Here is a poem of hope. Here is a poem about the space between what is and what could be. Where the shore ends and the water begins is a murky line not really a line at all. And it is one I like to walk.

Here, too, is a poem about invitation and miracle. And beautiful imperfections in seeing not imperfections at all. Perhaps as “vision is unreliable”—fishermen becoming trees, a heron a child, then lovers—a call to faith is one of prismatic desire: our hope for one thing becomes our hope for another, what we need becomes not what we sought, and what we receive is a gift we could not clearly see to name. Nothing vanishes, only transforms.

Here is a poem about offering a foot to the surface. A poem of beckon and urge, of an opening of wings. A poem to remind us that moment by moment we are suspended in possibility. No one knows what happens next. No one knows what is to become.

Here is a poem that stirs up the questions. What if it's true? What if we can? What if, oh good God, you are the very one we've needed? What if, just what if, you are the very one that bears the miracle? What if it's me?

Oh, good God, what shall we do then with all this miracle so possibly inside us?

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<sup>1</sup> “On the Shoreline” by Laura Van Prooyen from *Inkblot and Altar*, Pecan Grove Press. Used by permission.

### ✞ About the poet

Laura Van Prooyen was raised in a Dutch community outside of Chicago, Illinois, and she now lives in San Antonio, Texas. Her work has included teaching, writing, and facilitating workshops with active-service members, veterans, and trauma survivors. She is the author of three books of poetry—*Inkblot and Altar*, *Our House Was on Fire*, and the forthcoming *Frances of the Wider Field*.



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