Passage One · The Fear That Opened the Way

"Before I ever loved water, I feared it." p. 24

I was four years old
the first time water
tried to teach me something
I wasn't ready to learn.

The outdoor pool in Cypress, California.

Bright sun.
Warm concrete under small feet.

The sharp bite of chlorine in the air ~
that particular smell
that a child's body learns
to associate with danger
before the mind knows
what danger means.

Other children ran past me
laughing,
throwing themselves into the blue
without a second thought.

I watched them
from my mother's arms.

My fingers wound so tightly
around her neck
that she would have to
peel them away ~
one by one,
the way you peel something
that does not want
to be separated
from the only thing
it knows.

The arms that held me
didn't always want to.

And somehow,
my body knew that too.

So I held tighter.

The instructor would reach toward me
with soft hands
and a voice that said
you're safe,
you're safe,
you're safe ~
but my legs would grip harder,
my chin would press deeper
into my mother's shoulder,
my heart would pound so loud
I was certain
everyone in that pool
could hear it.

I didn't want to be afraid.

I wanted to be
one of the ones who flew ~
the children on the diving board
who threw themselves into the deep end
without hesitation,
without calculation,
without the body-knowledge
that the world
does not always
catch you.

But fear had already
made its home in me.

Before I learned to float,
I learned to cling.

Before I learned to breathe,
I learned to brace.

And underneath the fear ~
underneath the chlorine smell
and the sound of splashing
and my mother's impatient hands ~
something else.

A whisper.
A pull.

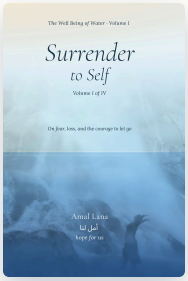
Something ancient
stirring in a four-year-old body
that had no name for it yet.

Stay awake.
Something here belongs to you.

~ ~ ~

The water was not finished with me.

And I was not finished with it.



The passage continues in *The Well Being of Water: Surrender to Self*

Waves of Hope · April 1, 2026
Paperback, 193 pages, $22.95 · ISBN 9798234283962 · Kindle on Amazon
Spas & springs: request access · Faire · Bookstores: Ingram · thewellbeingofwater.com/wholesale
Press and publishers: hope@thewellbeingofwater.com

Excerpt from *The Well Being of Water: Surrender to Self*, Passage One, pp. 24–27 © 2025 Amal Lana. Shared for review, retail and publishing consideration.