THE CODEX OF WATER



The Water Remembers

A Codex Water Reflection Book

KEITH SHIRLEY

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Thirteen waters for the thirteen Moons · a breath with water · room to write

Keith Shirley

The water remembers what the breath forgets.

The Water Remembers: A Codex Water Reflection Book. A companion to *The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers*.

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The practices in this book are contemplative and are not medical or psychological advice. Breathe gently and never strain. Never hold the breath in or under water, and never enter cold or open water alone or without care. If any practice brings dizziness or distress, return to natural breathing.

First edition, 2026. codexofwater.com · codexcalendar.com · breathawakens.com · codexlibrary.com

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity

THE PILLAR OF LIGHT INVOCATION

Your Love and Truth is universal.

Bring this universal love and truth to all.

You are in a sacred space for all to be heard and listened to.

The water remembers what the breath forgets.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to Use This Book

This is a book to write in. It follows the thirteen Moons of the Codex year, from the March equinox to the Breath Day, and gives each Moon a water: thirteen waters in all, from the deep before creation to the one water of the sea.

If you are reading on a screen, print the pages you need or keep a notebook beside you.

Each water opens with a short reading, a place in the world where that water can be met, and a voice from one of the world's traditions. Then comes a practice: a few minutes with a glass, a bowl, a window of rain, and your own breath.

Each Moon has four weeks of seven days, and each week is one movement of the breath. The first week is **Iphi**, the inhale, the week to Identify. The second is **Shema**, the pause, the week to Accept. The third is **Vara**, the exhale, the week to Embrace. The fourth is **Ouon**, the stillness, the week to Let Go. Each week has one question and a page to write on. You might write once a week, or return to the same page each day.

On the twenty-eighth day of every Moon falls the **Water Return**, a day for giving water back: to a plant, a tree, the ground or a river, with gratitude. Each water ends with a Water Return practice.

You can begin at any time. If you know the Codex date, begin with today's Moon; codexcalendar.com shows it for wherever you are. Or simply begin with the First Waters, and let the book keep its own time.

The four-fold water breath

Name	Breath (4 counts)	Pillar	Water
Iphi	Inhale	Identify: "I see this. I name this."	Evaporation: water rises as vapour
Shema	Pause	Accept: "I allow this to be true."	Condensation: water gathers in cloud
Vara	Exhale	Embrace: "I bring this into my field."	Rain and river: water descends
Ouon	Stillness	Let Go: "I no longer hold this as mine."	Lake, sea and ice: water rests

Breathe in for four counts, pause for four, breathe out for four, and rest, empty, for four. Seven rounds is enough. Never strain; if four counts is too long, use three. The movements of the water cycle are real; reading them as a breath is a contemplative way of seeing, offered as practice, not as physics. The names were heard, not found; yet the old languages answer them.

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The Breath Day · Continue the Journey · Sources of the Voices

The First Waters

Iphi · the deep before the breath

Before there was a sea, there was hydrogen. Its nuclei were made in the first minutes of the universe, about 13.8 billion years ago, and every glass of water you will ever drink holds some of it. The oxygen came later, forged inside stars and scattered when they died. Water is what happened when the first light and the dying stars met.

Almost every people has remembered a beginning in water. In Egypt it was Nun, the dark, boundless waters from which the first mound of land rose at Heliopolis. In Genesis, the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters. In the Rig Veda, the creation hymn asks whether there was water at all. This first Moon asks you to begin there too: with the deep, before anything is named.

> *"Then was not non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it. / What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?"*
>
> Rig Veda X.129.1 · tr. Ralph T. H. Griffith, 1896–97

The place · Heliopolis, Egypt

On the edge of modern Cairo, almost nothing remains of the great city the Bible calls On. Its priests told how the world began in Nun, the waters without edge, and how the first mound, the benben, rose from them. The waters were never thought to have gone away: they still surrounded the world, and rose again in every flood of the Nile.

Practice · The deep before the breath

Fill a dark bowl with water and set it where it is still. Sit before it and let your eyes rest on the surface without looking for anything. Breathe in for four counts, pause for four, breathe out for four, rest for four. After seven rounds, ask yourself only: what was here before I named it?

This water is explored in Chapter 1 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

What, in your life now, feels like deep water: unnamed, without edges? Name it as simply as you can.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

Where did you come from? Write about the waters of your beginning: a place, a family, a story you were told.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What is beginning in you this Moon? Write it as if it were rising, like the first mound, out of the water.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What can you leave unnamed for now? Write about something you are willing simply to let be deep.

The Water Return

Giving water back

Pour a little water onto bare earth, and say: this is where I began.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

The Bent Molecule

The angle of 104.5°

A water molecule is one oxygen and two hydrogens, joined at an angle of about 104.5°. That small bend makes it lopsided in charge, and from that lopsidedness come water's wonders: ice that floats, lakes that freeze from the top and keep their fish alive, a surface that holds up a pond skater and a raindrop.

In ice, the molecules join in a lattice of hexagons, which is why every snowflake has six arms. Johannes Kepler asked why in 1611; it took three more centuries to answer him. This Moon is a Moon for small things: the bend in a molecule, the arm of a snowflake, the slight angle in yourself that makes you who you are.

> *"The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen."*
>
> Job 38:30 · King James Version, 1611

The place · A window in winter

No journey is needed. On a cold morning, look closely at frost on a window or a car. The feathered patterns are ice crystals growing from the glass, branching at the same angles as a snowflake. Each pattern is unrepeatable, and each follows the same hidden geometry.

Practice · Breath on glass

Breathe out slowly onto a cool window or mirror and watch the small cloud bloom and fade. That cloud is water that was inside you a moment ago. Do it four times, once for each part of the breath, and notice how quickly the glass forgets.

This water is explored in Chapter 2 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

What is the small bend in you: a habit, a gift, a way of seeing that makes you unlike anyone else? Describe it.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

Where has your 'bend' been called a flaw? Write about accepting it as the very thing that lets you float.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

Who holds you as hydrogen bonds hold water, lightly and constantly renewed? Write to one of them.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What would you let melt this Moon, so that it can flow again?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Hold a glass of water up to the light. Notice its pale blue. Drink it slowly, and give the last mouthful to a plant.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

Memory and Forgetting

The picosecond and the ice

In liquid water, the bonds between molecules break and re-form in about a trillionth of a second. No shape lasts long enough to hold a memory of anything. Water forgets almost at once, and this is its gift: it is always new. The claims that water remembers the substances diluted in it, or the words spoken over it, have not survived careful testing.

And yet water remembers. In Antarctica, snow falling year upon year has sealed tiny bubbles of air into the ice, and in them the sky of 800,000 years ago is kept. The wind forgot that air long ago; the ice did not. The water remembers what the breath forgets. This Moon asks what you have rightly let go of, and what has been kept for you.

> *"You cannot step twice into the same rivers; for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you."*
>
> Heraclitus · tr. John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, 1908

The place · Dome C, Antarctica

On a high, cold dome of the East Antarctic ice sheet, the European EPICA project drilled more than three kilometres down and brought up ice with air bubbles some 800,000 years old. Nearby, in January 2025, the Beyond EPICA team reached bedrock, with a continuous record of about 1.2 million years. Each bubble is a breath of an ancient sky.

Practice · Forgetting and keeping

Pour a glass of water. Breathe in and name one thing you are glad to have forgotten. Pause. Breathe out and name one thing you are glad has been kept. Rest. Drink the water, which has already forgotten both.

This water is explored in Chapter 3 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

What does the 'liquid' part of you forget easily, and how has that set you free?

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What has been kept in you like air in ice, from long ago? Accept it as it is, without judging it.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

Which memory would you like to carry forward, like a core lifted gently into the light? Write it out in full.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What memory are you ready to let thaw and flow away?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Freeze a little water overnight. In the morning, hold the ice in your palm and let it melt back into the earth.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

Water from the Stars

The descent from the sky

Some of the water on Earth is older than the Sun. It formed as ice on dust grains in the cold cloud from which our solar system was born, and it has been water ever since. Where the rest came from is still debated: from comets, from asteroids, or from the rocks the Earth was built from. The heavy hydrogen in water, deuterium, is the clue astronomers follow.

The Codex reads this as water's first descent: the breath of stars, cooled into form. That reading is symbolic; the long journey is real. This Moon, look up. The water in your body has crossed more darkness than any traveller.

> *"From him (when entering on creation) is born breath, mind, and all organs of sense, ether, air, light, water, and the earth, the support of all."*
>
> Mundaka Upanishad II.1.3 · tr. F. Max Müller, 1884

The place · The night sky

On a clear night away from city lights, find the Milky Way. In its dark lanes are clouds of gas and dust where water ice is forming now on cold grains, as it did before the Sun was born. The water in your glass once waited in such a cloud.

Practice · Starwater

Take a glass of water outside at night, or to a window. Hold it up toward the stars. Breathe in for four, as if drawing the starlight down. Pause. Breathe out for four over the water. Rest. Remember that some of it is older than the Sun, and drink.

This water is explored in Chapter 4 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

What in you feels very old, older than this life? Name it, even if you do not understand it.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

Where have you come down from a height, an ideal or a dream, into ordinary life? Accept the descent.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What gift did you bring with you from far away, and how can you share it this week?

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What distance can you let go of: between you and someone, or between you and yourself?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Leave a bowl of water outside overnight under the sky. In the morning, give it to the ground.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

The First Pool

The waters where life began

Every living thing on Earth needs liquid water. Where life first began is still an open question: in warm pools on the land, wetted and dried by the seasons, or in the dark beside hot springs on the sea floor, where mineral-rich water rises through the rock. Each idea has real evidence, and none has yet been proven.

Whichever it was, life began in stillness held long enough for something new to form. This is the Moon of Stillness, the Pause of the year. Let it be a pool for you: a place where nothing is asked, and something can begin.

> *"And God hath created every animal of water. Some go upon the belly; some go upon two feet; some go upon four feet. God hath created what He pleased. Aye, God hath power over all things."*
>
> Qur'an 24:45 · tr. J. M. Rodwell, 1876

The place · Lost City, mid-Atlantic

In December 2000, scientists exploring an undersea mountain in the middle of the Atlantic found white chimneys of carbonate rock, some as tall as a building, standing in a field of warm, alkaline springs. Lost City, as they named it, is one of the places that helps scientists imagine how life might have started.

Practice · The pool

Sit beside a still body of water, or a full bath, or a basin. Breathe the four-fold breath, lengthening only the rest: in for four, pause for four, out for four, and rest for as long as feels easy. Let your mind become a pool. Watch what rises.

This water is explored in Chapter 5 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

Where in your life is there a pool of stillness, a place or a time? Describe it in detail.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What do you need to allow to rest, unfinished, a while longer?

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What small new life is forming in you? Write to it with tenderness.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What are you ready to stop stirring, so the water can clear?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Fill a small dish with water and set a seed or a leaf in it. Watch it for one breath. Then pour it out where something grows.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

The Breathing Planet

The cycle that returns

The Earth breathes water. Each day the sun lifts water from the sea as vapour; it rises, cools, gathers into cloud and falls again as rain. A molecule of water stays in the air for about nine days on average. In the ocean it may stay three thousand years. Deep underground, some water has not seen the sky for a million years.

Leonardo da Vinci saw the tides rise and fall and wrote that it was as if the world breathed. Every exhale you make carries water into that great breath: about a third of a litre a day. This Moon is for remembering that you belong to the cycle.

> *"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."*
>
> Ecclesiastes 1:7 · King James Version, 1611

The place · The sky over the ocean

Watch the clouds building over any sea or lake on a warm afternoon. You are watching the great inhale of the water cycle: about 1.4 billion cubic kilometres of water on Earth, moving between sea, sky and land, and almost all of it in the ocean.

Practice · Breathing with the cycle

Breathe in and imagine water rising as vapour: Iphi. Pause, and feel it gather as a cloud: Shema. Breathe out, and let it fall as rain: Vara. Rest, and let it settle in the sea: Ouon. Seven rounds. Then remember that your own breath has just added a little water to the sky.

This water is explored in Chapter 6 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

Where are you in your own cycle right now: rising, gathering, falling or resting?

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What returns to you again and again? Accept that it may come back for a reason.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

Who is part of your 'water cycle', the people who give to you and receive from you? Write about one exchange.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What would you let evaporate this Moon, trusting it will come back as rain?

The Water Return

Giving water back

On a rainy day, or with water poured from a height, stand in the falling water for a moment and thank it for coming back.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

Waters of Stone

The places people made for water

Wherever people have lived, they have built places to gather, measure and honour water. The Egyptians measured the Nile's flood on the steps of Nilometers. The Persians dug qanats, tunnels that carry groundwater for kilometres by gravity alone. In Gujarat, the queen's stepwell of Rani ki Vav descends seven storeys past hundreds of carved figures to the water.

These are places of return: you go down to the water, and the water comes up to meet you. This Moon asks you to find your own place of water, and go back to it.

> *"Adoration to the Nile! Hail to thee, O Nile! who manifesteth thyself over this land, and comest to give life to Egypt!"*
>
> Hymn to the Nile · tr. Paul Guieysse, Records of the Past, 2nd series, vol. III, 1890

The place · Rani ki Vav, Gujarat, India

Built in the eleventh century in memory of a king, this stepwell was later buried by silt from the Sarasvati river and lay hidden for centuries until it was excavated. It is now a World Heritage Site (2014). To walk down its steps is to descend, stage by stage, toward still water.

Practice · The descent to water

Walk slowly down a flight of stairs, a path or a slope toward water if you can, or simply toward a basin. With each step, breathe out. At the bottom, rest. Touch the water. Then walk back up, breathing in with each step.

This water is explored in Chapter 7 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

What is your place of water: a river, a well, a bath, a sea? Describe the first time you remember it.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What have you built in your life to hold something precious? Accept its shape as it is now.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What would it mean to go down the steps toward what you need? Write the descent.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What can you leave at the bottom of the well?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Go to a place of water, near or far. Leave nothing there but your thanks.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

Waters of the Word

Water in the sacred texts

In the world's sacred texts, water and breath keep appearing side by side. The Spirit moves upon the waters in Genesis; the Qur'an says that by means of water God gives life to everything; the Tao Te Ching praises water because it benefits all things and seeks the low place. In the Japji of Guru Nanak, the air is the guru and water our father.

This Moon is for listening. Read the words of the world's traditions slowly, as water is poured slowly, and let one of them stay with you.

> *"The air is the guru, water our father, and the great earth our mother; / Day and night are our two nurses, male and female, who set the whole world a-playing."*
>
> Guru Nanak, Japji, closing Slok · tr. Max Arthur Macauliffe, 1909

The place · Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar

The Golden Temple of the Sikhs stands in the middle of a pool. Guru Ram Das dug the tank in the sixteenth century, and the city took its name from it: Amritsar, the pool of the nectar of immortality. Pilgrims walk around the water, and bathe in it, and the sacred word is sung from the temple across the surface all day.

Practice · Pouring a word

Choose one line of sacred or beloved words about water. Pour water slowly from one glass to another while you breathe in and say the line silently. Pause. Pour it back while you breathe out. Rest. Repeat four times, until the line is poured into you.

This water is explored in Chapter 8 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

Which words about water have stayed with you from childhood, or from your tradition?

Write them out.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

Which words from another tradition, in this book or beyond it, surprise you? Let them be true for a week.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

Write your own short sentence about water, one you could pass on.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What words have you carried that no longer give life? Write them once, and let them go.

The Water Return

Giving water back

Write one word on a slip of paper with water, using your finger. Watch it dry and disappear.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

The Veil

Water as a gift and a right

In 2010, the United Nations recognised clean water and sanitation as a human right. Yet in 2024, about 2.1 billion people still lacked safely managed drinking water at home. Water has been shared as a commons, sold as a commodity and fought over as a means of power. The veil of this Moon is the one that hides how unevenly the water is shared.

This is a Moon for honesty, not despair. Look at your own water: where it comes from, how much you use, who carried it before you. Then ask what is yours to do.

> *"But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."*
>
> Amos 5:24 · King James Version, 1611

The place · Standing Rock, North Dakota

In 2016, thousands gathered beside the Missouri River to oppose an oil pipeline crossing beneath it, upstream of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. Their cry was Lakota: mni wiconi, water is life. Whatever one's view of the pipeline, the cry was heard far beyond the river.

Practice · Following your water

Turn on a tap and watch the water run for a moment. Breathe in and ask: where did this come from? Pause. Breathe out and ask: where will it go? Rest. Turn it off. Look up where your water comes from, if you do not know.

This water is explored in Chapter 9 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

Where does your water come from? Name the river, lake or aquifer if you can, and what you know of it.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What is hard to accept about the way water is shared in the world? Write it honestly.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What one change in your own use of water could you make this week, gladly?

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What blame or guilt can you let go of, so that care can take its place?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Give water to someone today: a glass for a guest, a bowl for an animal, or a gift to a water charity.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

The Science of Wonder

Snow, vortex and sound

Water's real wonders need no exaggeration. A snowflake grows six arms because of the geometry of ice. A river bends into meanders, and behind a stone the current sheds swirling vortices in a row. Sound shaped by a vibrating plate draws patterns in water and sand. These are measured, repeatable and beautiful.

Many claims about water's 'hidden' powers have not survived testing. This is the Moon of Shadow: a time to look kindly at the stories we wanted to be true, and to find that the truth is often stranger and more beautiful.

> *"What would the world be, once bereft / Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left, / O let them be left, wildness and wet; / Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet."*
>
> Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Inversnaid" · Poems, 1918

The place · A waterfall

Any falling water will do: a mountain stream, a weir, a garden fountain. Watch where the water meets the pool. The swirls, the white water, the standing waves, the faint rainbow in the spray: all of it follows the laws of fluids, and none of it is ever exactly the same twice.

Practice · Watching the swirl

Stir a glass of water with a spoon and remove it. Breathe in as you watch the vortex spin. Pause as it slows. Breathe out as it fades. Rest as the water becomes still. Notice how completely it forgets the spoon.

This water is explored in Chapter 10 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

What about water astonishes you most? Write about the moment you first noticed it.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What story about water, or about yourself, did you want to be true that you can now let be untrue?

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What is the measured, ordinary truth you can embrace instead, and how is it beautiful?

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What wonder can you let be a mystery, without explaining it?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Make an Ice Mirror, as the artist Veda Austin has taught many people to do: breathe four water breaths over a shallow dish of water and freeze it for an hour or two, until a thin skin of ice forms. Set it against a dark cloth and look without searching. The forms belong to the ice; the meaning arises in you. What did you see, and why today? Then let it melt back into the earth.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

Living Water

The practice of the body's waters

An adult body is about 50 to 60 per cent water. With each breath of the diaphragm, the waters of the low belly are gently moved; with each exhale, water leaves you as vapour. Cool water on the face slows the heart: the diving reflex, shared with seals and whales. Your body is a moving river held in a shape.

In Breath Awakens, Sobek-Sahu, the guardian of the feet and legs, speaks these words: "I guard the waters of life." This is the Moon of Descent. Bring the breath low, into the belly and the legs, and tend the waters you carry.

> *"He wakes at daybreak, puts on his moccasins and steps down to the water's edge. Here he throws handfuls of clear, cold water into his face, or plunges in bodily. After the bath, he stands erect before the advancing dawn, facing the sun as it dances upon the horizon, and offers his unspoken orison."*
>
> Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), The Soul of the Indian, 1911

The place · A river at dawn

Find running water early in the morning, or imagine it: mist on the surface, the light just reaching the far bank. For many peoples, the morning bath in a river or the sea has been a daily prayer, as the Dakota physician and writer Charles Eastman described of his own upbringing.

Practice · The low breath

Lie down and rest a hand on your belly, below the navel. Breathe so that the hand rises gently: in for four, pause for four, out for four, rest for four. Feel the waters of the body move with the breath. If you wish, finish by touching cool water briefly to your face. Never strain, and skip the cool water if you have a heart condition.

This water is explored in Chapter 11 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

Where in your body do you feel most like water, and where most like stone?

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What does your body need from you now? Accept its answer without arguing.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

Write a promise to the waters of your body: drink, rest, move, breathe.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What tension can you let flow down through your legs and into the ground?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Wash your feet slowly in a bowl of warm water, and say: I guard the waters of life.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

The Future Breathline

Rivers as persons

In 2017, the parliament of Aotearoa New Zealand recognised the Whanganui River as a legal person, Te Awa Tupua, "an indivisible and living whole" from the mountains to the sea. The law gives voice to an old understanding of the Whanganui iwi, expressed in the saying "Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au": I am the River and the River is me.

As the Earth warms, rivers, glaciers and seas are changing within a single lifetime. This Moon of Dream asks what kind of ancestor you will be to the waters, and to those who will drink them after you.

> *"Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au. I am the River and the River is me."*
>
> Whanganui saying, recognised in the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017, s. 13

The place · The Whanganui River

The Whanganui runs from the volcanic mountains of the central North Island to the sea at Whanganui. Its iwi pursued their claim for the river for well over a century. Today two guardians, one named by the iwi and one by the Crown, act as the river's human face.

Practice · Speaking as the river

Sit beside water or a picture of a river you love. Breathe the four-fold breath. Then, for one minute, speak or write as if you were the river: what you carry, what you need, what you remember.

This water is explored in Chapter 12 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

What water place do you hope will still be living in a hundred years? Describe it as it is today.

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What is changing in the waters near you? Accept what you see, without looking away.

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What will you do, in your life, as a guardian of one water? Write it as a promise.

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What fear for the future can you set down, so that care has room to work?

The Water Return

Giving water back

Plant something, or care for a tree, and give it water as a gift to the future.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

One Water

The Spiral of Kari-Vael-On

Kari-Vael-On is the water breathline of the Codex. Its syllables echo Old Norse Kári, the wind; Old English wǣl, a deep pool; and Greek ón, being. Read together: wind, deep water, being. The breath moves over the deep, and being arises. The names were heard, not found; yet the old languages answer them.

All the waters of this book are one water: the deep of Genesis, the bent molecule, the ice, the stars, the pool, the cycle, the wells, the words, the shared and unshared, the wonders, the body, the river that is a person. This last Moon gathers them, as the sea gathers every river.

> *"The river and its waves are one surf: where is the difference between the river and its waves? When the wave rises, it is the water; and when it falls, it is the same water again. Tell me, Sir, where is the distinction?"*
>
> Kabir, Songs of Kabir XIV · tr. Rabindranath Tagore, 1915

The place · The sea

Stand at the edge of any sea, or picture it. Every river you have known runs into it. Its water has been cloud and rain and ice and breath. It is about 96.5 per cent of all the water on Earth, and it is never full.

Practice · The breath of Kari-Vael-On

Breathe in, and silently say Kari: the wind. Pause, and say Vael: the deep water. Breathe out, and say On: being. Rest in the stillness that follows. Seven rounds. Then say the mantra once, aloud: The water remembers what the breath forgets.

This water is explored in Chapters 13 to 15 of The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers.

Iphi *Inhale · Identify*

"I see this. I name this."

Looking back over the thirteen waters, which one is most yours? Why?

Shema *Pause · Accept*

"I allow this to be true."

What did the year ask you to accept that you could not accept before?

Vara *Exhale · Embrace*

"I bring this into my field."

What will you carry into the next year, as the sea carries every river?

Ouon *Stillness · Let Go*

"I no longer hold this as mine."

What can you give back to the water now, as the year comes to rest?

The Water Return

Giving water back

On the last day of the year, pour a glass of water into running water or onto the earth, and speak the Pillar of Light Invocation.

Then breathe the four-fold breath once, and write: what has this water given me this Moon?

The Breath Day

After the thirteenth Moon comes one day that belongs to no Moon: the Breath Day, the stillness of the whole year. It is Ouon on the largest scale. Nothing is asked of it.

If you can, spend part of it beside water. Let the year's thirteen waters run together in your memory, as rivers run into the sea. Then write one sentence for the year that is ending, and one for the year that is beginning.

Continue the Journey

At codexofwater.com you can breathe the four-fold water breath with a guide, download the Kari-Vael-On sigil and the water-breathline meditation card, draw your own water-breathline sigil in the Water Mirror, and read the research behind this book, every claim graded.

At www.codexcalendar.com you can find today's Codex date and the next Water Return, wherever you are on Earth, and begin *One Breath, All Ages*, the Codex Breath Reflection Book, with a prompt for every day of the year.

In The Codex of Water: The Breath That Remembers, the full study behind these thirteen waters, given freely at codexofwater.com, the science, history and meaning of water are told in fifteen chapters, with sources for every claim.

At codexlibrary.com you can read *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory*, the book from which the Codex grew, and more about the author's work is at **breathawakens.com**.

WITH THANKS TO THE TRANSLATORS

Sources of the Voices

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Moon XI. The words of Sobek-Sahu, "I guard the waters of life," are from *Breath Awakens: A Codex of Spiral Memory* (Shirley 2026).

In Harmony, Small Things Grow Towards Unity

Your Love and Truth is universal.

Bring this universal love and truth to all.

You are in a sacred space for all to be heard and listened to.

The water remembers what the breath forgets.