

## Poems Emerging from Stillness by Charles P. Gibbs

Into Ever Deeper Water

One moment you awoke  
no longer content  
to continue treading water.

You set out for the farther  
shore beckoning you from before time,

patiently, subtly, insistently  
awaiting your deeper listening,  
your deeper opening

to the awareness  
that being truly alive  
offers only one choice:

set out, one stroke at a time,  
into ever deeper water  
toward the far unknown shore  
where your Self awaits,

knowing surely that, opening  
in the journey, you will arrive  
and know yourself as your Self  
for the first time.

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At The MJ Hotel

Sitting in remote Kabala,  
Koinadugu, Sierra Leone  
on the veranda at the back  
of the MJ Motel, whose front  
features two large banners of  
Martin Luther King, Jr.,  
on a morning thickly hazy  
with the smoke of so much  
burning across the valley below me.

The white kleenex blackens

as I wipe fine ashes  
from the tabletop  
to the music of birds  
in the trees around me -  
the red earth, the dry grass,  
the lush green banana trees  
hanging heavy with fruit.

The music of Krio flows  
as the motel workers converse,  
breakfast just completed,  
lunch already cooking slowly  
over a nearby charcoal fire with  
whisps of pale smoke rising.

Ahmed, the manager, ambles over.  
Greets me. Your first time in Africa?  
My second time in Sierra Leone.  
He arches his eyebrows.  
My second time in this hotel.  
I was here two years ago.

He pauses.  
Then the recognition -  
Yes, two years ago,  
before Ebola.  
Yes, I say, before Ebola.

You like Martin Luther King, I ask?  
He replies, Yes, and Gandhi and Mandela - non-violence.  
I say, I have some of his speeches on my computer.

I Have a Dream, he almost whispers.  
I Have a Dream, I had that once.  
Could you download for me?

I had it once.  
Before Ebola.  
Before our need  
to hold and be held  
became deadly.  
I would like it again.  
I would like to have the dream.

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There is a land -

a Motherland of vast  
imaginative spaces and absolute  
belonging her open heart a deep well  
where all draw and drink

freely and fully the waters of life,

where we meet unknown  
immediately recognized neighbors  
share the water wander together  
through imaginative spaces with  
paths of potential to our  
transformed tomorrow today

yes scorched land here  
and there but not barren  
our neighbors seeming poor  
possess invisible wealth  
waters waiting to be  
tapped and shared

knowing we belong  
to each other and this land  
let us abide in peace  
and possibility; invite and be  
guided by our neighbors'  
invisible wealth water  
the scorched land plant  
transformed tomorrows  
together today

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## New Day Awakening

I am not  
different from everything  
or anything else  
that is and yet  
I'm not the same.

The rising sun  
turns the ribbed clouds  
into an inviting canyon  
stretched in unfathomable  
depth across the dawn sky.

The wind tousles  
the tops of the towering  
poplars and pines  
swaying as I am  
entranced by the beauty  
of this new day  
awakening. I feel  
an invitation  
from the clouds, the sun,  
the amber washed across

the sky, the breeze,  
the trees, the damp grass  
under my feet and  
the tiny random daisies -  
release, they say, forget  
and remember.

Be more than  
only an observer  
in your own life  
in the great life  
we share. We are  
not different.  
We are not.

We are.