

# The well

by [Steve Lautermilch](#) in the [June 15, 2004](#) issue

I could say you are flame, but you are not flame,  
though you race over my limbs  
like fire in grass.

I could say you are cloud or vapor or mist, but unlike  
these you do not thin or fade  
but stay.

I might call you the water that builds unawares in my eyes,  
the first light of dawn that ignites the trees,  
but then there is the night

when I see differently and you are even more powerful.  
You are more steady than any feeling,  
and no thought that enters my mind has the dark, rich odor

of forest where you run clear like a stream in my heart.  
I can taste you in these words as they form on my tongue.  
Yet you are the catch in my voice when I cannot find words

and the quiet spreads through my body intimate and warm  
and needs no other language.  
Like water to fish, air to bird's wing, so you to me.

But who are you really?