



The Moon in the Water: Reflections on an Aging Parent

Kathy J. Phillips

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Named a Best Book of 2008 by *Library Journal*

In a series of moving vignettes, the author begins by describing a particular representation of Water-Moon Kuan Yin, a Buddhist teacher and goddess associated with compassion, who often sits on a precarious overhang or floats on a flimsy petal. Then Kuan Yin steps out of the frame to join the author in the mundane challenges of caring for her father—transferring his health insurance, struggling with a wheelchair van, managing adult diapers, or playing in the fictions of dementia. From perplexed to poignant to funny, the vignettes record the working-class English of a fading but still wise dad, and they find other human versions of Kuan Yin in a doctor who will still make house calls or kind strangers in the street.

The book includes ten illustrations: both classical representations of Kuan Yin and also the author's own drawings, which adapt Kuan Yin in an act of practical spirituality, reading art through life and life through art. Each vignette invites the harried caregiver to take a deep breath and meditate on the trials and joys of caring for an aging parent.

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