

## CHARLES SWANSON

Peter was a flamboyant salesman. We had done all the normal stuff, including hiring an inspector to go over the house we were about to buy, searching for its flaws. We then presented the current owner, Peter, with our concerns along with a demand for an appropriate lowering of the price to compensate for the needed repairs. Instead of accommodating our concerns, he walked over to the window and threw back the drape with a grand flourish and said, “THIS is what you are buying”, as he gestured to the expansive view of the river from the window. It was true. We had lived four years in a rented house on a river and had grown quite attached to the views there. Consequently, when we started looking for our own house to buy, water was at the very top of the list.

Water has always been at the top of my list. When I travel, it is a trip to the coast, stopping at every beach along the way just to look and listen. I can sit on a screened porch overlooking the ocean for hours on end and just listen and smell. Now I have this opportunity at home. But what is it that I have?

I wondered about this fascination that I have for big water. We are, physically speaking, mostly water. The earth’s surface is over 75% water. It is the only substance that expands when it freezes. We use it literally and ritually for cleansing our surroundings and ourselves. It is an absolutely unique and essential substance. I concluded that I tend to lead a life filled with minute to minute crises. The tiniest event gets raised to the level of utmost importance when it is out of sync with the way things “ought” to be. For me water restores perspective. It is soothing and restorative. On the shore of a major body of water is the one place that I realize that I am connected to something infinitely larger than my problem today. These Still and Flowing Water pieces are intended to be reminders of that connection. Little portable oceans held in subtle forms, to bring perspective.

Haystack brings about perspective for me in this same way. Whenever the opportunity presents itself to teach, learn, or simply BE here, I am always quick to take the contemplative opportunity to re-center my life, myself, and my outlook.

