



# Reflets dans l'eau

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## *On Seeing These Reflections*

Why do men no longer see G-d, as they did in the days of the Patriarchs?  
The Rabbi answered, Because they no longer look down as they walk.

Think of Gerrit Lansing's epochal book of poems: *The Heavenly Tree Grows Downward*.

In 1916, a player-piano roll was made of Claude Debussy playing his own *Reflets dans l'eau* — reflections in the water. He can be heard on YouTube, a century now after the composer's death.

So heaven can still be seen by those who look down. And water is everywhere — lake, stream, gulley, but maybe the tenderest is most intimate of all, the rain puddle, there for a few days but holding in its depths the whole sky above, the noble armature of trees reaching up to us.

In its depths, we say, but the image is all surface, on the surface. If we try, like Narkissos, to get down through the surface to the image itself, we find turbidity, gravel, mud. The *tohu bohu* from which the visible arises. The sheen without the stuff. Sheen is the English form of the Germanic root that means appear, shine, be good to look at, beautiful, *schön*. Sheen is what the reflected image offers so gently, offers up to us humble enough to walk looking down.

As Charlotte Mandell walks along the paths in northern Dutchess, by the stream Metambesen, looking.

Looking is the quietest art, and maybe speaks the truest.

— Robert Kelly









































































































