From water’s broken mirror
we pulled it,
alive and shining,
gasping the painful other element of air.

It was not just fish.
There was more.
It was hawk, once wild with hunger, sharp talons
locked into the dying twist
and scale of fish,
its long bones
trailing like a ghost
behind fins
through the dark, cold water.

It was beautiful, that water,
like a silver coin stretched thin enough to feed us all,
smooth as skin before anyone knew
the undertow’s rough hands
lived inside it, working everything down
to its absence,
and water is never lonely,
it holds so many.
It says, come close, you who want to swallow me;

Already I am part of you.
Come near. I will shape myself around you
so soft, so calm
I will carry you
down to a world you never knew or dreamed,

I will gather you
Into the hands of something stronger,
older, deeper.

**Linda Hogan** (b. 1947) grew up in Oklahoma and Colorado. A member of the Chickasaw Nation, Hogan has received many awards and honors for her writing. She is a strong advocate for preserving endangered species, and her work reflects her deep interest in environmental issues, native cultures, and spirituality.

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1 **undertow**: a strong current below the surface of water
1. **RL1,2** An inference is a logical conclusion that is based on clues in the text and on a reader’s own experience. Reread lines 2-6 of the poem and infer what has happened, citing evidence from the text to support your inference.

2. **RL2** Poets often use **figurative language**, or language that carries meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words, in order to convey **themes**, or underlying messages. Identify the event described by the **simile**, a comparison that uses *like* or *as*, in line 12, and then explain the idea the simile suggests.

3. **RL2** **Personification**, giving human attributes or qualities to an object or idea, is another type of figurative language. Reread line 22 and explain why the line is an example of personification. Based on this personification, what can we infer about the theme?

4. **RL1,5** Authors choose their words carefully to create a tone or mood. Authors may use imagery, description, and rhythm to do this. What two ways is water being described? Cite examples of descriptive words or phrases for the water and contrast them. What effect does this have on the mood of the poem?

5. **COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION** What does the hawk’s fate reflect about nature, if anything? Discuss your ideas with a partner. Cite specific evidence from the text to support your ideas.
6. **Summarize** Review what is stated explicitly in lines 1-14 and write a brief summary of what the speaker describes. How does the image created in these lines affect the **mood**, or emotion, of the poem?

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7. **Infer** Use clues from the text to infer what happened to the hawk. Why is this unexpected?

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8. **Analyze** Words and phrases that describe how things look, feel, sound, taste, or smell are called **sensory details**. Write down sensory details from lines 15-23. How do these details help engage readers in the poem?

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9. **Interpret** Explain what is meant by lines 22-23: “and water is never lonely, / it holds so many.” Support your interpretation with evidence from other lines.

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10. **Analyze** Review the water’s plea and promise at the end of the poem (lines 24-32). What does the water want? What does it offer?

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11. **Interpret** A **symbol** is something that stands for or represents something beyond itself. Review the descriptions of water in the poem. What does the water symbolize?

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12. **Cite Evidence** What theme about our connection with nature does this poem convey? Support your theme statement with evidence from the poem.

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