



## Let Me Be Like Water

*S.K. Perry*

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A beautifully poignant and poetic debut about love, loss, friendship, and ultimately, starting over.

Twenty-something Holly has moved to Brighton to escape. But now she's here, sitting on a bench, listening to the sea sway... How is she supposed to fill the void her boyfriend left when he died, leaving her behind?

She had thought she'd want to be on her own, but when she meets Frank, a retired magician who has experienced his own loss, the tide begins to shift. A moving and powerful debut, *Let Me Be Like Water* is a book about the humdrum and extraordinariness of everyday life; of lost and new connections; of loneliness and friendship.

## Let Me Be Like Water Details

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Author : S.K. Perry

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## From Reader Review Let Me Be Like Water for online ebook

### Patty says

This book explores the deep grief of a young woman who lost her boyfriend of five years. Bits and pieces of their life together and about their relationship are shared as she moves forward in life – albeit somewhat reluctantly. She has moved out of London to get away from the memories and to Brighton where she spends her days staring at the sea. It is there she is befriended by an older gentleman who starts her re-entry into the land of the living.

Her new friend is a magician and he manages to produce the perfect bit of fantasia just when needed the most. I was never quite sure if he was a bit of magical realism or not – sometimes when I wander outside of my normal reading I find the books a bit over my head. That was the case here. Nonetheless this man becomes our young lady's new center. He invites her to join the local book club which introduces her to a group of people he has brought together. They all were "found" just like she and all were just a little bit lost.

I am not completely sure how I feel about this book. I can't say I identified with the young woman. She behaved in ways that I found decidedly stupid. I am of a wildly different generation and I know that this often affects how I react to novels. I try to balance that reaction with how the writing, plot, etc. come together.

This book was written in exceptionally short chapters if they could even be called chapters. Each series of paragraphs moves around in time slowly giving peaks into the life of our young lady before and after the death of her great love. She is also trying to understand some basics about their relationship as she mourns his loss. The overwhelming feeling as you read the book is a heavy sadness that really never lifts. This makes it hard to say, "oh wow I really enjoyed this book." There are limited moments where the sadness breaks and light enters and it's like you can breathe again.

Was I happy I read it? I'm not sure. I am honestly not sure.

3.5

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### Nancy says

I have found myself drawn to books that deal with grief and that is why I picked this up off a library display.

I liked the writing enough. This is all first person with the short chapters alternating between the present and filling in the recent past. That worked well. Holly's grief is deep and dark and she doesn't know how to work through it. The new friends that gather round her to support and ease her through the pain are great. Some, if not all of them are broken and recovering from different things, too. We watch the slow progress that Holly makes and know that she will be okay. I thought the author captured the devastation of grief and grief related depression.

There is magic realism here. That is the only thing that explains and allows for all the things Frank can do.

So why only 2 stars? Too much sexual content for me. Completely unnecessary. And the constant drinking

and getting hungover was tiresome. And drug use. And casual sex with complete strangers a couple of times. It all made me feel really sad for these people that this was how they lived and tried to deal with pain. I don't only read books that promote the same values as mine and I don't expect characters to live with the same sense of morality as me. This was just too much. Also a fair amount of the f-word. So maybe a 3 star read knocked down a star for content.

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### **Jennifer says**

Utterly sad, but hopeful. The journey one takes in recovering from the loss of a loved one is unimaginable, but Perry writes this story in a beautiful rhythm that reads more like a poem than a novel. The characters are so lovable, you'll wish they were just a real-life phone call away...

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### **Joanne Robertson says**

This is a short book (just over 200 pages) and with very short chapters as well, so somehow it becomes impossible not to get swept along in the tide of words that flow through the pages. Before you know it, Holly's journey is over and you are left a little bereft yourself as you leave her, her story ending but really only just beginning.

Holly has moved to Brighton in an attempt to escape London after her boyfriend Sam dies. She meets magician Frank, who then introduces her to a group of people who become her friends. This isn't a fast paced read, full of action or secrets, it's just the beautifully expressed, everyday world of a grieving young woman trying to make sense of life and death. Everyone is touched by the loss of loved ones at some point in our lives but we all deal with our pain in very different ways. No-one can judge whether the way we cope with death is right or wrong but we are able to become part of Holly's life and watch her deal with her loss in her own way. Frank is the catalyst for her life to change and their chance meeting seems preordained especially the circumstances of that very first communication between them. As new friends start to gather around her, she uses their own tales of loss to start on her personal recovery. She makes good decisions and she makes some rather questionable ones but they are all leading the way forward.

S.K. Perry is a hugely talented writer who draws on every emotion you have before you realise what she's planning. A year goes by in the flash of an eye and all those dates, when your grief hit's you the hardest, are there to be "got through". Holly knows it won't happen overnight and that sometimes you just have to go with the flow and take each day at a time. I didn't always like her but tried to read without judging her personal response to her bereavement.

This is such a beautifully worded book about trying to come to terms with loss and how we need others around us to help deal with our survivors guilt. Friends are the families we choose for ourselves but when we find them, sometimes it's hard to let go and to trust ourselves to feel again.

Let Me Be Like Water is an emotionally cathartic read with a poetic symmetry to the narrative that I found very soothing. A very different read for me but one I would certainly recommend.

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## **Colleen says**

Twenty-something Holly has just lost her boyfriend in a tragic accident and has moved from London to the beach town of Brighton in order to escape and try to figure out how to move on without Sam. She is befriended by Frank, an older gentleman (and magician), who in turn introduces her to a quirky group of individuals who come to mean a lot to Holly. She continues to struggle with her loss but with the help of Frank and the others, she slowly starts to learn how to cope with her new life.

This is a story about hope, loss, loneliness and friendship. As much as this sounds really sad, it is written in such a way as to make Holly's sadness bearable. S.K. Perry's writing is rather poetic, which makes sense seeing that she is a published poet. Her writing and the use of very short chapters (if you'd even call them that) to go back and forth between the present and the past draws the reader in and makes this short book a quick read.

I can see why some readers really loved this book, but I had a couple of personal issues with it that prevented me from rating it higher. I realize Holly was in the grips of grief and who knows how we would react in the same situation, but I still found some of Holly's actions questionable. This is also one of those books that I felt would have appealed to a much wider audience if the language had been less coarse. Yes, I get that people, particularly the younger generation, use this type of language all the time, but it really isn't necessary to use it to this degree in a story such as this. A little goes a long way, IMO.

I really liked Frank BUT is it only me who thinks the magic was a bit much to believe? Let me be clear: I absolutely love magic shows and magicians, and when Frank turned up I thought his tricks were very cool. But the further along I read, the more unbelievable his tricks became. Is he *always* ready to pull a trick? I find it hard to believe that even the best magician can, say, change milk into custard, spontaneously and without prior warning, as it's being poured out of a pitcher. Maybe I'm being too literal? Was the story supposed to have elements of mystical realism? Perhaps, but if that's the case Frank would have been just as charming if he'd been a more believable magician.

That aside, this is still a decent story that manages to capture a young woman's sadness through the course of her first year of grief very well.

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## **Jessica Higgins says**

A very personal account of coping with personal loss.

After Holly's boyfriend passed away, she couldn't stand being in London as every thought reminded her of him. So, she moved away to Brighton to escape. But even here sitting on a bench listening to the sounds of the sea, she can't help but think about him. There she meets Frank, a retired magician that has also experienced personal loss. She begins to meet others as well that have also experienced this. Holly slowly begins to form a support group without even realizing that it is happening. Over the next year, she begins to move on and deal with the emptiness that has been left inside her.

This way this book was written made it easy to step into Holly's shoes and experience the same emotions that she was going through, especially if you have been through it yourself. It feels like a very personal

account and almost an invasion of privacy that it is so raw. Even the guilt that she began to feel as she began to move on was expressed throughout.

The book is told from Holly's point of view and toggles from her past with her boyfriend to present. It is like going back through Holly's memory of the good (and bad) times that they had together and how it came to shape who she was. The remainder of the time was Holly figuring out how to deal with life now that he was gone, both on her own and with her group of friends.

There is quite a bit of strong language in this book and some intimate scenes as well. I would caution readers that have experienced personal loss in the past that it may stir up some feelings that may have been put to bed.

I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher. The views and opinions expressed within are my own.

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### **Linda says**

I was surprised that I didn't like the well-written *Let Me Be Like Water* by S. K. Perry more. This is the story of the main character Holly's journey through grief. Her boyfriend has tragically been killed in a car accident and she is shattered. I liked the very short chapters alternating between the present and the past narrated by Holly. They felt almost like excerpts from a diary, and that worked well, but for this reader they didn't go far enough. I found it difficult to connect with Holly. Perhaps that was purposeful because Holly no longer knows who she is anymore, but then I needed more from her glimpses of the past. I loved her new friend Frank, a retired magician, who patiently helps her out of her depths of despair and provides her with the support and strength needed to build a new normal. She meets a group of quirky friends, flawed individually, but together a beautiful group of individuals helping each other to navigate life's challenges. Frank's magic is very endearing. I would have liked to know more about each of the friends and their backstories. Maybe that is why Frank's character touched me because the author was the most forthcoming about him. There is much to like in this short novel, but for this reader it was more depressing than hopeful. Reviews of this book are amazing. In fact, the reviews are the reason I read this novel. I think this is the case of me not the book.

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### **booksofallkinds says**

**LET ME BE LIKE WATER** by S.K. Perry is a haunting and moving tale of love, loss, and grief but it also holds a very important message of hope.

Holly is lost ever since the death of her boyfriend, the man she loved with her whole heart. Not being able to remain in London where all of her memories of him surround her she moves to Brighton where she finds some comfort in the waves lapping to the shore. But it isn't long before she is lost again. Until she meets Frank, an elderly man who seems to know more about her than is possible. As Frank draws Holly into his circle of friends, she meets people young and old who have their own stories to share, and slowly Holly begins to piece herself back together even though her love for him will never leave her.

There is a captivating magic about **LET ME BE LIKE WATER** by S.K. Perry that is difficult to put into

words but it is truly soul-stirring. The characters are fascinating, likeable, and engaging which is so important in a story like this that deals with such sensitive topics of grief and loss. Like the sea, there is a melodious quality to S.K. Perry's writing that allows this story to ebb and flow effortlessly and I highly recommend this story!

\*I voluntarily reviewed this book from the Publisher

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### **The tillybird says**

I HATED this book.

'Let Me Be Like Water' is the story of a 20-something grieving the death of her boyfriend of 5 years. It is also the story of a selfish and emotionally immature girl who keenly takes from others without ever giving back. My anger over this book makes it hard for me to articulate how bad it was so I am just going to make a list:

- 1) Frank (the old man who is a magician, runs a bookclub, and bakes cakes for a living) is a affectively manic pixie dream girl. I realize this makes it sound like I do not like the idea of an old man who does magic, likes books, and eats cake but I do, it is 60% why I bought the books. My problem with Frank is twofold. The first being that he is a flat character he doesn't actually have a personality beyond being whimsical. His function is to basically show Holly how great life is and to have an inexhaustible reserve of time and sage life advice to spend on her. My other qualm with Frank is that he only exists to motivate our 'protagonist' to do things. Frank is the one who makes Holly join his bookclub and then it is a medley of him and his friends who basically get her to do anything that could be considered 'character growth moments' I literally cannot remember a moment in the book that Holly did something that would be healthy that she wasn't told or guilt tripped into.
- 2) Holly is a crappy protagonist. Good stories have characters who actively make decisions and take actions that contribute to the narrative. Holly doesn't do this. She basically just waits for someone to decide for her what she should do or she does the first suggestion she is told. \*SPOILERS AHEAD\* Holly joins bookclub because she is told to. She learns to cook with Gabriella because Gabriella invites her. Holly learns to drive because of Frank. She moves into a rooted home because of Elle\*END OF SPOILERS\* Holly never because she wants to she never ponders something for a long time and builds up to doing it.
- 3) Holly doesn't have a personality. Frank also somewhat suffered from this but he isn't the protagonist and thus is more easily forgiven. Perry seems to think that people's hobbies count as their personality. We know that Holly is a musician, has vague anxiety that is neither generalized or specific to certain things, and is painfully dependent on others. We do not know how her thought processes work, or her sense of humour, or anything else that would endear us or cause us to understand why others would be endeared to her. Holly is like a bad teen romance protagonist, she is a blank slate for the reader to project onto. But unlike a young adult protagonist who is empty but slightly brave, moral, tenacious, what-have-you thus reflecting a desirable version of yourself Holly is a funhouse mirror that you regret looking into. Holly takes the reader and reflects them as a needy wasteman who is rewarded for emotional immaturity and being an emotional and social vampire.
- 4) Holly is a shitty friend. Holly is super invasive with her friends spaces gallivanting into their homes, beds, and private moments with loved ones willy-nilly. Please do not crawl into bed with me and my boyfriend

because you are hungover. You are not a poorly child. Go to your own room.

5) The writer acts as though loosing a boyfriend can hold a candle to loosing a child. Granted Perry never directly expresses that but considering how she relates Gabriella's grief to Holly's you can see the illusions she was going for. Worse yet she makes it come off like it is okay for Holly to go on a year long bender of self pity because a mother still misses (but in very healthy and functional ways) her child who died of chronic illness several years in. Loosing anyone is tragic but loosing a University boyfriend is nothing compared to loosing a child.

6) Holly doesn't know who Trayvon Martin is. She is kind of called out for this but it comes off as more of a teasing semi-scolding. It is offensive how this tragic event is brought up and brushed off for no real reason in the story and only furthers ones dislike of Holly.

7a) I wanted to like Perry's writing. When I started reading there were passages that had some really good illusions or that I found relatable but upon further thought it fails on a very basic level, it isn't useful in telling the story. For the first 50+ pages of the book it isn't actually established that Holly's boyfriend is dead. The reader knows this because they read the synopsis. But if it were not for the faithful descriptions on the back of the book the reader may think that Holly simply broke up with same and took it quite poorly, either reacting over dramatically and moving or perhaps suffering from a mental breakdown.

7b) The relationships are underdeveloped. I don't know why anyone is friends with anyone. Frank is friends with everyone because he is a social butterfly and a fixer, every character is 'broken' and he wants to fix them. But everyone else doesn't really make sense. This harkens back to the lack of character thing. No body really has a personality so it is hard to tell why they are actually friends beyond proximity. To further accentuate this issue is all the romantic scenes are hecka uncomfortable. You know when things are supposed to feel romantic or when characters like each other because they hit narrative beats but you don't actually feel it. You see the characters do things that /could/ make sense for a couple to do but just feel uncomfortable and weird when reading them.

On this note I actually had a hard time believing that Holly could mourn the death of Sam as their relationship seemed really unhealthy, toxic, and largely dependent on grand gestures and not on two people being mutually supportive and caring of one another.

In essence don't bother with this book. It spreads a message of supporting and celebrating toxic behaviour as brave. The main character is altogether yucky feeling and the whole story is flat. If you want to read a good book with an unlikeable protagonist go read 'The Catcher in the Wry,' 'Cathy's Book,' or 'Nice Recovery' (that last one is nonfiction about a recovering alcoholic). Sorry for all the negativity but this book was just an altogether unpleasant experience.

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### **Donna Maguire says**

<https://donnasbookblog.wordpress.com/...>

This is a really well written book that touches you deep inside and stays with you long after you have finished it. The writing style is beautiful and it works so well with a book of this genre.

The pace is spot on and the characters are great and they work so well together. It is a book that completely

captures the imagination and makes you think. I devoured the book in a few hours, it was a delight to read.

4.5 stars from me, rounded up to 5 stars on Goodreads and Amazon!

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### **Lucy says**

My third 4\* review of the year! I must be going soft.

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### **Mairead Hearne ([swirlandthread.com](http://swirlandthread.com)) says**

#### **My Rating 3.5\***

*'Under the cathartic spell of the sea, and with a little help from a retired magician, a young woman learns how to rebuild her life'*

A moving debut **Let Me Be Like Water** by S.K. Perry has just been published with Melville House UK. It is described as being '*simultaneously about nothing and everything, of loneliness and friendship*'

It a book that will affect people in many different ways, as it deals with grief and the loss associated with the passing of a loved one.

**Let Me Be Like Water** is a book that follows the grieving of a young girl, Holly. After a tragic accident took the life of her boyfriend Sam, Holly is unable to cope with all that is familiar in London. Everywhere she turns she sees Sam. On every paving stone, in every passing scene, for Holly, Sam will always be present.

In a brave move, Holly moves to Brighton, to be near the sea and to seek isolation and seclusion from all that she knows. Her family, her friends, Sam's family, are all too difficult for Holly to be around. Each stir up memories that she is just unable to cope with, as Holly feels like life has given up on her. She moves into shared rental accommodation and roams the streets of Brighton by night and by day, searching for something that will take the pain away, something that will make life worth living again.

As Holly sits and watches the push and pull of the sea, she is joined by an elderly man, Frank, a retired magician with his own tale to tell. His mannerisms and general demeanor exude warmth and comfort and it's not long before Holly finds herself less distracted by her thoughts and almost enjoying being in his company. Frank invites Holly to a book club he's involved with, no pressure attached. Her decision. Her choice. Initially Holly is unsure and skeptical about meeting new people, but she takes the plunge and joins the company of this whole new bunch of folk for one evening. Holly soon discovers that she is not the only one with a story to tell, as each of the members of the book club all seem to carry some personal trauma close to their hearts.

**Let Me Be Like Water** is a book divided into four sections, defined by the four seasons. As time passes we witness very subtle transformations in Holly's demeanor. We walk beside her on her journey, as she passes through, the very beautifully written, steps of grieving. Sam was her soulmate, the man she had intended spending her life with. Being robbed of his love and his touch is unbearable for Holly, but with the help and

support of this new bunch of friends, Holly begins to live a little again. Over the year, her behaviour becomes quite self-destructive and almost wanton, as she craves something, someone, anyone to take away the pain that accompanies her grief. She drinks way too much, she goes off on regrettable one-night stands, all in an attempt to erase the pain of Sam's death.

Watching Holly, at such a young age, trying to cope with these feelings is heartrending. She is a young girl in her prime with her whole life ahead, and yet here she is, lost in Brighton, with a few cleaning jobs and a few piano-teaching lessons, to sustain her through the long days and even longer nights.

Holly has a very strong connection with the water, as she compares many parts of her life to the ebb and flow of the sea. The pull is very strong for Holly, but with the support and enlightening words from Frank and her new friends, Holly learns how to survive.

Over the years I have read Paulo Coelho and Mitch Albom books and S.K. Perry's writing reminds a little of those. **Let Me Be Like Water** is a tale of grief, but it is also a tale of hope. Unfortunately, we will all experience grief in our lives for someone we have loved and lost to illness or accident or old age. We all will travel on our own personal journey, have our own very personal experience. If we are lucky enough, like Holly, we will meet our own Frank, someone who will help us to understand and come to terms with our grief.

**Let Me Be Like Water** is a snapshot in time, over one year, as we journey beside Holly as she learns to cope with loss and learns how to begin to love herself again. It is at times heartbreak, at times quite raw, but also packed with warmth, humour and friendship.

A really lovely debut from a new author.

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### **Cathrine says**

I swam this sea for weeks.  
I could not let go of it.  
The first read was purely for the beautiful prose  
my love of the sea reflected to me.  
The second read for the plot  
a plot that helps you locate and speak your own.  
I'm grateful.  
For this beautiful read  
and for how easy my christmas shopping will be this year ;-)

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### **Brian Palmer says**

A beautiful, heartrending book about love, loss, and trying to move on, as well as all the points in-between: the moments of surprising levity, unbearable pain, and that middle part of grief that feels like it will never go away. Between the exquisite language and the MC's conversational tone (vacillating between both the reader and the deceased), this is a quiet book that absorbs and draws you in as you experience the MC's struggle to

simply feel again and how titanic that struggle is. A really solid debut.

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### **Bella says**

I'm so glad I finally finished. The font is widely spaced and the chapters are short so you flip past the pages quite quickly. By the time I felt like aborting this book I was near the middle so I stuck it out.

This book is annoyingly maudlin, self-indulgent, and the protagonist entitled and proudly immature. I also can't reconcile how she survives with minimally working at some cleaning job and a couple of private teaching gigs (they don't pay well, I know) while indulging in getting wasted, staring into space at the beach, and travelling here and there. I got more and more fed up with her and while her relationship with Frank held my interest at an earlier part of the book, Frank gradually fades out and becomes a contrived backdrop to what is now supposed to be the spotlight, the relationship between her and Danny, and of course her indulgent self.

Unbelievable. Irritating.

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