Mikvah Ritual for Retirement    Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus

[Thanks to MayyimHayyim.org for their resources in helping me create this ritual.]

First Immersion:   Past

I have had decades of busyness,  
of work with meaning,  
of excitement and challenge.  
I have had wonderful opportunities  
and also feelings of limitation.  
I have done what I could do,  
which never seemed to be enough.  
I have grown where I was planted.  
I have given of my time and energy,  
and I have accomplished a great deal.  
I have loved my work, and it is hard to let go.  
I have amazing memories, much experience,  
and many stories to tell.  
Now it is time to put that behind me, and move on.

Blessing:   …al hat’vilah

Second Immersion:   Future

As today I celebrate my life’s continued unfolding, I am awestruck by the wonder of my being. And so I pray that kindness and compassion may be on my lips, that strength and courage may be with me in my comings and my goings, and that I may continue to learn from and to teach those dear to me. O God my creator, as You are the first and the last, may my life ever be a song of praise to You.

(Excerpted from Richard F. Address, To Honor and Respect, URJ Press)
The possibilities are endless. The future is open. That is somewhat scary, but I will need to create my own structure, and make my time meaningful.

To take the first step
To sing a new song –
Is to close one’s eyes
and dive
into unknown waters.
For a moment knowing nothing risking all
But then to discover
The waters are friendly
The ground is firm.

And the song –

The song rises again.

- Ruth Sohn

Third Immersion: Present

*Hineni.* Here I stand, on the way to the next step in my journey, knowing I can continue creating a full life for myself, knowing that I have a circle of loved and loving ones who will celebrate my endeavors, knowing that I am sheltered beneath the wings of the *Shechinah,* knowing my own power.

Blessing: …*shehecheyanu*

Song: *Lechi Lach*
Lyrics by Debbie Friedman & Savina Teubal (based on Genesis 12:1-2)

Lechi lach to a land that I will show you
Lech l’cha to a place you do not know
Lechi lach on your journey I will bless you
And you shall be a blessing, you shall be a blessing
You shall be a blessing lechi lach

Lechi lach and I shall make your name great
Lech l’cha and all shall praise your name
Lechi lach to the place that I will show you
L’simchat chayim, l’simchat chayim
L’simchat chayim lechi lach.
And you shall be a blessing, you shall be a blessing
You shall be a blessing lechi lach.