

Hawaii Review

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Hawaii Review

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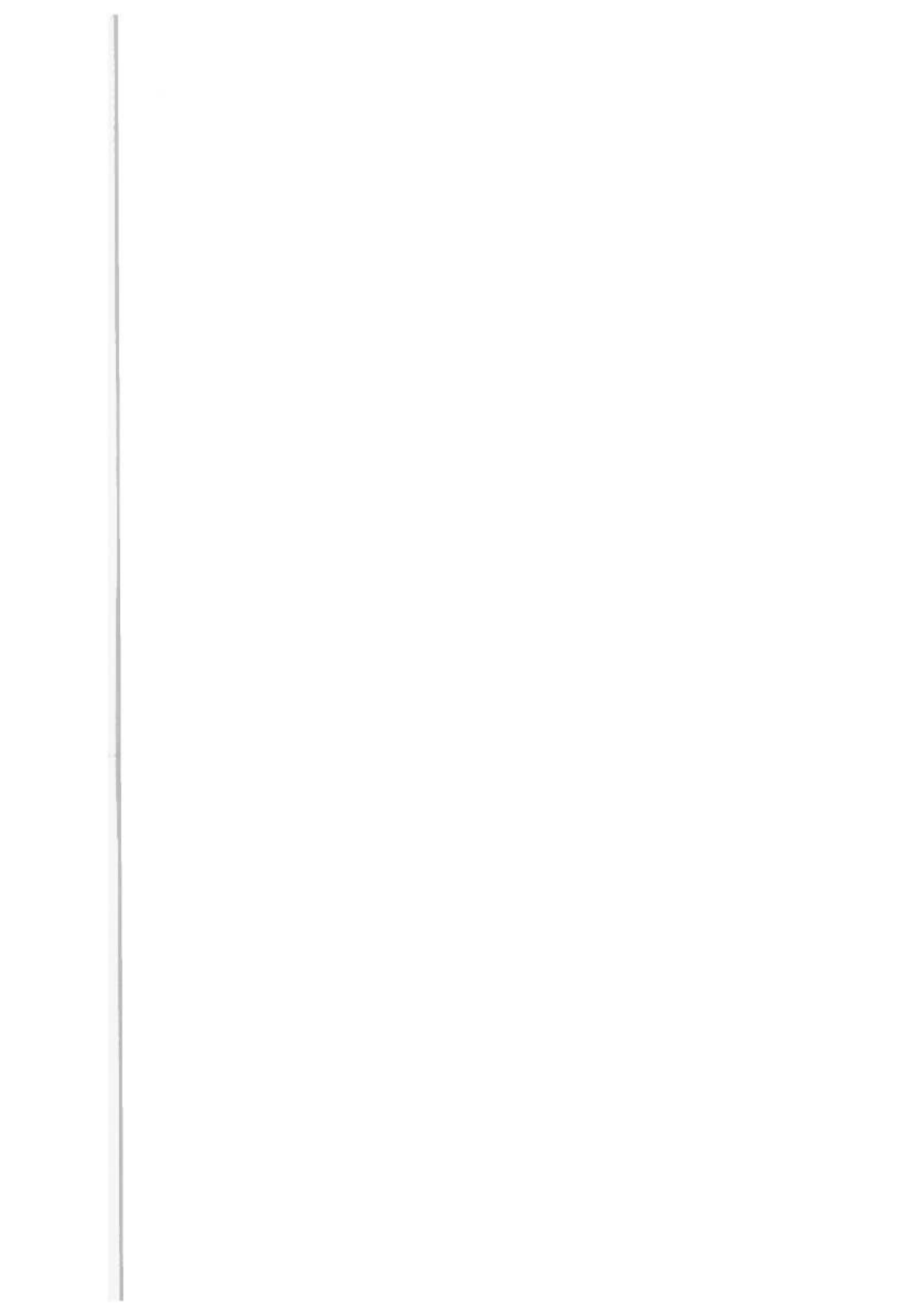
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Asterina miniata

a sonnet for sebastian the starfish (nicknamed abes)

ebbing tide flows you over sand sealed heels
you bleed this glowing august hum: *silence*.
your ears a crematorium of wave
whispered secrets; arms holding my fingers—
a five-pronged embrace traced with seaweed light.
abes, if i could breath your ocean wine i'd
dive deep and elope at your side, licking
salty champagne off all your tube toes, mmmm.
we'd be {splash!} in the sun. swim, gummy fun.
all your eyes glitter sparkling; the ocean
becomes dark sky—you a constellation.

(but the PhD man steals your beauty
screaming scientific: "*you are sea star—
echinodermata.*"
blah blah blah blah).

Lilliana Marie

for lindsey

I.

the bee at one angle looks like two sets of two
he sits in a cup of water, still
he has been there two weeks
still, he rests silent, sullen
i rescued him from seas of salt or
waves of seconds but
he is here now, with me
alone.

II.

the bee does not move most days.
i stole him from the salt,
the saline which made his tears seem like nothing.
he could float there in the tears from all eyes
floating there, he himself a tear:
of Ra, of me, of everyone.
before i stole him,
he could float feeling sorry for everyone
but himself

III.

the bee is a consonant of longing
he thinks of the bones famous for his name
he thinks, he thinks
he thinks of the famous question:
to bee or not to bee
to be a bee, to be a 'b'
but in the end the bee
bee
bee
be
be
b
b

has no answers

Lilliana Marie

For Deborah Studley, for Everett.

every time i picture you,
the scene is Middletown or Ashford;
you still have the old amplifier,
a nest of wires about the floor.
the kitchen is painted Mai-Tai red and
you are staring out the window
at the smokestacks, at dusk's cinematic fade.

your door is open,
[in a single, steady shot]
i let myself in, hold my breath.
[We fall, hitting our heads on your Marshall --
this dream, in 8 mm color reversal, forms a paradigm of my heart:

on the parquet in your father's bedroom
we can't stop laughing at the shadows on the wall from
the trees outside, the meteor shower through the window.
And And And And
She is okay in this vagary!
this is not a scary place.
She is humming d

o
w
n
s
t
a
i
r
s
,

she's squeezing lemonade.
Her skin is powdered with pearls and vowels.
Yr, yr your dad, outback,
is sanding the old rowboat.]



Earl Cooper

Singing the Blues

with

Goki and Buri

It was 10:10 on a roaster-toaster hot morning in Kyoto and the humidity hummed near ninety. When Goki walked into his bedroom after showering, his body was already beginning to glisten with fresh sweat. Even putting on his favorite aloha shirt failed to lift his spirits.

Goki buttoned the seventeenth button of his shirt, purple palm trees and ruby hibiscus spreading across his thorax, and placed a thin leg-cum-arm to his heart region. It took a while for him to locate the center of his own slow beat. Malia hadn't just broken Goki's heart. She'd shattered it.

Catching his reflection in the window of his microwave, he noticed the droop of his antennae. They hung down like the palm trees on his shirt pockets.

"Chroubles, chroubles," he muttered to himself, jerking open the refrigerator door and taking a long swig off a jug of *mugi-cha*, his personal blend of iced Lipton's diced with a good slam of Gordon's gin. He

Goki & Buri

picked up his sax case, got in his ancient Datsun and drove slowly and dejectedly over the mountain to Otsu.

Despite the nearness of Lake Biwa (or because of it), the city of Otsu was like a huge steam bath. Inside the Ant Farm Studio, the air conditioner fought a constant battle with the heat, a blue plastic *o-furo* pan catching its drippage.

As he listened to the playback takes for the vitamin drink commercial he'd recorded with Buri, Goki absently watched the drops falling into the pan. His mind drifted back to a streamside trail, falls tumbling into a pool, and Malia in a short and sexy *lava-lava*.

"Osaka's too much for me," her good-bye note had said, "too many steel rails under a cement city. You keep the neon, Goki, I'll take the beach Windward-side. If you change, call me at Nui's."

Goki patted the pocket of his aloha shirt where Malia's good-bye note lay tucked like something with a pulse of its own. He was in the middle of remembering the night he'd first heard Malia's nectar-sweet voice at BuzzBee's Steak House, when Mean Matt the Mantis came out of the control booth and walked over to wave feelers. The sound of Mean Matt's mandible clacking near his head sent Goki popping up into the air.

"Hey, my man, Gok, take it easy. Back to ree-al-it-tee. You played perzact-perfect to the note. That's the sound I want them TV commercial folks to hear *mañana* morning." Mean Matt slapped a high-six with his sax man, "Brah, you realize *Insectopedia* could go big time. Demo's already makin' waves in L.A... So, hang in there. Catch you tomorrow at 9:00 sharply."

Goki put on his shades, picked up his sax case and, without turning, waved and said, "Later, Matt."

*

Pushing open the back door of the Ant Farm Studio, Goki stepped outside. The heat hit him like an oven set on broil. Placing his sax case on the roof of his jungle buggy, Goki stopped abruptly. If Mean Matt was right, if their album could actually be a hit, then they'd be home free,

Earl Cooper

getting gigs no sweat.

"Platinum!" he said out loud. "Blue skies and clouds with platinum linings. Shaka rocka!"

Singing his own take on an old Stones tune, "Paint it, paint it blue, paint it sail-away blue," Goki got into his buggy, started the engine, and, with two feet slapping the dashboard, two on the wheel, and two on the pedals, drove directly to the Do It Yourself building supply store.

He was in the paint section scanning the array of blue tones—Sky Blue, Turquoise, IceBerg, Acetylene, Ultramarine, Honolulu Morning Dew—when a salesman in necktie and coveralls came up, nodded, and began to strap a control belt around Goki's mid-torso.

"Uni-SprayPak 800," began the salesman. "Attach vials here. This belt holds up to eight colors at 90ml per vial. Has a program that uses RAM for color mesh. Watch this."

Suddenly, the salesman was spraying a span of plywood with an aura of paint, and Goki was reaching for his wallet.

At the checkout counter, laden with the spray unit, buckets of paint, spare nozzles, with two appendages gripping a Hi-Up aluminum stepladder, Goki plunked down his VISA card. By this point, he figured aluminum was the first step to platinum. And if Mean Matt was right, soon every card in the deck would read "Charge It".

He got into his jungle cruiser, plugged in a Ledward Ka'apana tape, and headed homeward, the Hi-Up ladder jutting from his passenger-side window, gleaming in the sun like a surfboard cresting a wave. As he drove through northern Kyoto, he made two stops to pick up a few essential supplies: a fifth of Gordon's Extra Dry Gin, three bottles of Aquarius Sports Drink, and a half dozen fresh lemons.

*

The sun was still cooking on all burners when Goki pulled into the parking space he and Buri shared beside the span of rice paddies. Buri's van wasn't there, so Goki parked close to the long, whitewashed stucco wall, leaving Buri lots of room. This also left Goki very little space to carry his new purchases into their house.

Goki & Buri

“House” was not really an appropriate term for the structure Goki and Buri lived in. It had been built as a *kura* for a winter’s stock of rice, pickled vegetables, kegs of *o-sake*, and farm equipment. In short, Goki and his brother lived in a warehouse, with walls two feet thick and a ceiling crisscrossed with wooden beams. It was built to withstand typhoons, fires, earthquakes, and as it turned out, mega-decibel rock music.

The main area was now a two-story concert hall and, as Goki carried in his cans and gear, the space resounded with echoes. He popped open the power box and flipped the switches. Then he went up the four steps to the stage and put a tape into “Cassette Player 2” on the master console. The power-intro to “Gimme Shelter” began to bounce off the walls and assorted couches, overstuffed chairs, and footstools that populated the space, reverberating off the floor lamps that lit tiny islands of oriental carpet in the vast room.

Having hauled his collection of painter’s gear into the kitchen, Goki relaxed. The kitchen adjoined Goki’s room, while Buri lived in a sprawling private loft, and didn’t know a pot from a pan. Didn’t know anything about “ingredients” except how the word fit to a tune.

In his kitchen headquarters, as Mick wailed, “It’s just a shout away,” Goki mixed his first blend—a glass of Gordon’s and Aquarius.

Leaving the sliding doors open behind him, Goki went to work clearing every item of furniture from the ballroom. Between sips, he stacked everything on the main stage and in its curtained wings. It took him a good many trips to haul everything up. He had to pause during the lifting and carrying of sofas, over- and under-stuffed chairs, floor lamps, coffee tables, benches, music stands, and guitar cases. The job before him was immense. His plan: to transform the ballroom of the *kura* into an artificial yet “ultra-cool” environment.

Snap by snap, Goki strapped himself into the spray unit. He checked his vials. Turned the pressure gauges up to max. A quick check ... pffftt ... and a streak of turquoise crossed the freezer door, droplets of paint splashing its chrome handle. He smiled, finished his drink, saluted the gods of metallic-based latex paints, and entered the ballroom to lay

Earl Cooper

down a coat of primer.

With only three reloads (and refills), Goki sprayed the whole ballroom an Electric-Arctic Blue. The fumes were thick around him, but he had wrapped towels around his membranes and main brain. He'd covered the stage equipment with sheets, turned on every fan, and thrown open all the doors and windows. As a result, a hot breeze moved through the ballroom, carrying paint molecules out over the nearby rice paddies.

"Sorry there, neighbors, just might have some colorful hybrids down the line," he said, bowing once in each direction. "That pesky *El Niño*, you know."

It was while he was sitting on the stage waiting for the last layer of Cobalt II Blue clouds to dry on the upper stretches of ladder-work that the telephone rang. It continued to ring as Goki searched for, then located, the phone's long black cord and began to haul on it. Eventually the phone itself slid into view, and he tumbled down the steps of the stage to meet it at the bottom step.

The voice that came through the receiver was a bit garbled and not the one Goki had hoped to hear. There he was, tangled in the telephone cord and his spray-paint unit with the stereo going full bore, and it was his friganoonie brother on the line.

"Yo, Gok, how's it hanging? It's me, Buri. And you better get your wide-scoping antennae down here real pronto. Whoosh, you cannot imagine the wild females sittin' here right next to me. Eh, brah, consider this a summons."

"Yo, Buri, fact is, I can imagine. But I'm real busy right now, okay? So, carry on. Good-bye."

"Hey, Gok, wait a minute! Now, I realize Malia has split and gone back to Alohaland and that you're feeling bummed out. But that's why you gots to try and play in a new key. You know, like re-compose yourself."

"Yeah, I'm bummed, but she was never tuned to the Osaka scene, so it's probably for the best. Now, if you'll excuse me ..."

"Whoa, hold on. Hear me out. You really should consider sharing a

Goki & Buri

drink with Batha and Sheba. They call themselves the irresistible spider sisters, and I can promise you that is true. Sheba's got these long legs stretched out, and she's wearing a black body-stocking with an over-lapping hearts design. Man, these two are real true Black Spider ladies. And, Ms. Batha be asking 'bout you."

"Buri, I hope your life story has a happy ending. *Sayounara.*"

Goki carried the phone back into the kitchen, took a quick sip straight from the freezer bottle, and replaced nozzles and vials. Like a sorcerer mixing a magical potion, he concocted his next blend.

*

Two hours and an empty gin bottle later, he had it done. He had painted a virtual simulation of the Antarctic meeting the Hawaiian. It was vivid, beautiful, the way the floor melded from ice blue into waves of warm turquoise that broke onto golden beaches under towering green cliffs and a cobalt-blue ceiling.

The way Malia's small figure, wrapped in a bright *lava-lava* and wearing a sweet ginger lei as a halo, danced above a stretch of jade sand. The way her demure smile appeared like a melody, each of her antennae swirling as a musical clef sign.

Goki decided it was time for some Vivaldi. He laid in his favorite CD and pressed the PLAY arrow. Fearing some sort of spontaneous ignition of paint and electric lights, he switched off all non-musical power supplies, before returning to the kitchen to take a seat by the sliding doors. He gazed out over his neighbors' rice fields. And gazing soon gave way to dozing as the combination of gin, lingering paint fumes, and Vivaldi took its toll.

When he awoke, moonbeams were streaming through the skylights. It was a clear night, and the kitchen was filled with a wonderful, surreal glow. Revitalized by his nap, Goki stood up, stretching his multiple appendages. He popped open the freezer door and plucked an ice cube from one of the trays. Slowly, expectantly, he approached the door to the ballroom. His sensors told him there were minimal fumes, yet he wanted to make sure that the finishing coats had dried completely. With the

Earl Cooper

graceful dip and delivery of a professional bowler, he launched the ice cube out across the floor of the room. It didn't slow or stick. In fact, it glided smoothly across the entire open space of the hall. Goki whooped out loud, two or three of his arms playing a riff of air-sax.

As if on cosmic cue, the blast of an ooga ooga horn rang out from beyond the *kura* walls. Goki knew immediately that his brother Buri was home. He heard several van doors slam just as he was putting the first floor lamp and stand-up ashtray back in place beside a long sofa and an under-stuffed chair on a small patch of oriental carpeting.

There was a loud thud as the kitchen door met the kitchen wall, a boom-crash of bodies meeting various items of kitchen furniture, followed by bursts of laughter. Buri's large form filled the doorway to the ballroom, blocking the light, but not the ripple of giggles from the kitchen.

"Hey, Gok, man, what the heck you been—" Buri began to ask. He never got the chance to finish his question.

In an awkward slow-motion, his body was pushed through the kitchen doorway and into the ballroom. Buri was followed, in equal slow-mo, by the double ooga sisters, their black lace gowns aflutter, their squealing voices and strong shoulders propelling Buri before them. The three of them went tumbling into a huge tropical pool. Or what appeared to be one.

The Spider Sisters, winking each to the other, appendages flapping, rolled about on the aqua floor. Pretending to be capsized, they called out, "Oh, my hero, my hero; save me now!"

Buri, having landed between the Spider Sisters, began administering his version of first aid. There was a long exchange of nuzzling, plus an intermingling of assorted legs in tight black pedal-pushers and lace gowns, during which time Buri did not hurry in his pseudo-rescue efforts. Slowly, he got to his feet and, hugging the pair of giggling spider ladies under his wings, sat down with them on the sofa.

Goki rose from his easy-chair. Savoring the lemon wedge from his now dry gin glass, he approached the sofa. He winked left, then right, at

Goki & Buri

the Irresistible Spider Sisters. The trio on the sofa nudged each other, a ton of elbows in motion. They all winked back at Goki.

“Good evening, ladies,” said Goki. “May I offer you some liquid refreshment? Perhaps my brother Buri would be nice enough to make us all a drink.” He looked directly at Buri. “I think we can skip the Grasshoppers and go straight to the Stingers, don’t you, Buri?”

As Buri grinned, nodded, and made his way into the kitchen, Goki’s gaze turned to the Spider Sisters. “In the meantime, perhaps you striking ladies would join me on stage. I sure could use a hand moving furniture. There’s a whole wide open room here, so just arrange stuff wherever you think it looks good.”

While they crossed the stage, Goki punched a set of buttons on the CD player. There was a short silence, broken only by the huffing of the Spider Sisters hoisting pieces of furniture, and the sound of Goki hitting every switch in the switch box. Then light and sound were abruptly released from every quadrant. Footlights, track lighting, game machines, all came to life at once. And Mick Jagger delivering the lyrics to “Twenty Thousand Light Years From Home” began to fill the room.

When Buri reentered from the kitchen, he was grinning a 500-watt grin. He was carrying four separate trays with four separate drink glasses. Waltzing into the room, he said, “Breathtaking, man. I mean it. Absolutely carries me away.” With a neatly executed Travolta dip and spin, he handed the equally amazed Spider Sisters their drinks.

Then, in a slow swoop, Buri deftly slipped a letter from his jacket pocket and, with a Houdini-like move, caused it to appear on his brother’s drink tray.

Goki scanned it, blinked in disbelief, then looked closely to verify the return address on the envelope. It read:

Kapakahijaz
Ilikai Hotel, Suite 2001
1767 Ala Moana Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96815

Goki immediately slit the envelope open. He began to smile. Then

Earl Cooper

grin. A quiver went through his body, and he leapt into the air throbbing there for several seconds. Still hovering, he saw his brother lift, leave the sofa, and join him. The two of them hung in the air, blue sky encompassing them, seeing nothing but new horizons. Two tracks from their *Insectopedia* demo had entered the charts, before their album even hit the shops. They were starting to get famous. They were about to make money.

This was the all-time break Goki had been dreaming of.

"We're on our way," Goki whispered to Buri. Before shouting it to the room, "We're on our way! Axes back in action!"

"I hear you, brah," said Buri, removing his shades and dropping them into a waiting lap.

"Our hero, our hero," sang out the Spider Sisters, removing, first their stockings, then all other articles of clothing; "Everybody into the pool!"

*

The next day when Goki pushed open the street-level door of the Ant Farm Studio and stepped outside, the heat hit him like a steamroller. The final takes of the commercial track for VitalSunUp were being toasted in the mixing booths.

Goki walked across the parking lot, giving a solid kiss to the Kapakahijaz contract and another one to his one-way ticket to Honolulu, before tossing a few more into the air.

When he arrived at the airport, he casually parked his rusty jungle buggy in long-term parking. He lifted his sax case from the passenger's seat, and then, patting the passport in his aloha shirt pocket, went grinning to the check-in counter.

pan

Greg Evason

Plateau of Purpose

my room
is falling down
all around me
as I scramble about
in search of water
for my throat
which is on fire
from the night before
when you came by
and talked to me

Friday Estates

I cannot grasp the conclusion of my youth;
it has slipped away from me
the way night's temperate fog rises
when a new day splays its fragments
upon the dying dregs of my garden—
see how the petals curl and rust!
Frost has already peeled the colours,
stiffened the stems like brittle nerves
in a workshop of grassiness.
They are no more immortal than I.

The clock is a bastard, the calendar a liar.
The buffed moon shines like a washed face;
it slices wedges off its side, night
after night, with planetary meanness,
a key winding my life back to propulsion,
and then the cycle begins again.

Your exuberance defines me;
old powdered musings that stuck in my brain
like cotton in a wound,
are in a hatbox filled with timid repetitions,
the ones I know will never leave,
the ones I send to the blurry-eyed man
at the end of the roll,
who sends them back to me.

But I pry open the lid and release them
like hatched birds, a chorus singing
"I was here! I was here! Hear me!"
Just so I can claim I once inhabited this morbid orb
that turns and grinds so astonishingly
whether I am here or not.

Contraindications

an unpolluted pacific

a garden of eden sky

the man in the moon

the star's molten heart

a volcano's teardrop

put one of the above under your
tongue every 4 hours or as needed.

do not mix with food. do not answer
the phone. and if anybody asks, tell

them you haven't seen me, tell them
you haven't seen me for months



Danny

Danny came into class on fire. Danny came into the class. Sat down. Stood up. Threw his pencil into the air. When asked if he was going to leave the others alone, he tossed his head and said: No. Danny waved his head around a lot. It looked like a frenzy to him, if he did. The world. The whole world hummed and buzzed, looked to him like nothing much, adding numbers, adding columns all class period—he could do it. He could do it he knew this. All revved up. So he said in his head. I'm gonna watch Cops, he said, out loud, not carefully, I'm gonna watch it when I get home. A little while later: I can't wait to watch it. Kicking and kicking people in the stomach. He looked the substitute right in the face. I'm going to watch it. The world swirled and fell away, and he did another row, another row to meet up with and finish. Later he was throwing his pencil up in the air when he knocked a glass knick-knack off Mrs. Stueben's desk. Suddenly he felt red and everything had come in on him, and he couldn't stop from crying.

Getting Out

Despair grows
in the approximate region
of the stomach's pit,
slamming one's face to the floor.
Oddly disjointed, not congruent
this geometry of intersecting
lies: I told myself—
I was not enough like you.
Then I worried I was too much.
Not understanding
your detachment
at first, I meant to cradle you
in the furred fullness of myself.
I am quieted now.
Please do not keep watch
out of obligation.
Separate yourself from that desire.
A reptile vomits
the poisoned rodent it has swallowed,
already dead.

The Lost Resort

The wheezing breath of an old sea hermit
put an end to this place; perhaps
it was the nameless hurricane the locals
still talk about. Now the goats
have taken over; the island
is so cluttered with them they seem
a part of the population, unfettered
and wandering.

No trespassing is nailed to a corroded
gate; still, it won't deter the curious
or the desperate. A squatter
has built his nest in one
of the ruined rooms, has erected
his shrine, while his goat,
sole companion, scampers, snagging the sun
scorched grass in his hooves.

Caroline Misner

His boat bobs, anchored in the midst
of the offshore waves. The beach,
once spangled with bright umbrellas,
is now studded with rock, shattered shells,
old logs washed ashore, slippery
with weed; the severed head
of a sailfish, caught, gutted, tossed
overboard so that we might find it
here, pillowed in foam, the eyes
wide and unblinking; crabs
and other vermin crawl through it.

Even if I had a candle to see by
I couldn't see the splendour
of this place, back when
it was the place to be seen. Its history
of garlands, sprigs of luxury to where
the faithful made their pilgrimages,
to where marble fountains gurgled
round their champagne flutes, served
from silver trays.

The Lost Resort

This place was once better than this:
the pool is ringed with cracks, broken
stone that burns an opal spark; a diving
board for a tongue, rainwater stained
to tea by bits of leaf and strands
of frayed palm, gathers in its bowl;
faded starfish and seahorses are sealed
to speckled tile.

Rust sprouts from its heart
like a frail tumour, the dusty
carpets are rolled into tubes and left
to rot like rancid cigars.

From a distance, from the crest
of the sea, it looks a doll's house,
the walls sliced in half, so that
I may see the vacant suites, a child's
plaything taken apart
and lopped back together.

Caroline Misner

The clangour of crickets, concealed
in brush, frosted from the spray
of the sea, creaks, an orchestra
that can't be squelched; stiff-tailed
lizards scamper from rock
to rock, under the stumps of overturned
barrels. Behind them squat palms
drop their fruit; some
gets washed out to sea, some
lay split and rotting on the
flagstone steps, in the rusty
crackling grass. Ants scurry
over them to sip the sticky juice.

There is no need to rush
this place back to health;
the shareholders still bicker over that.
There is time still to nourish
its grandeur,
as long as the ridged hills paint shadows upon the shore
as long as the waves still collapse upon the stone and sand,
as long as the June trees still sprinkle their petals across the grass.

John Sibley Williams

This other island

This other island too is Iceland-
an elementary poverty
of undigested air buffeting water's fall
from the stone, ghost-fingered clouds,
black dust cooling upon an abandoned tractor
and settling in for the long winter
upon an empty fishery's sallow rafters,
this and fire gathering blue upon the sky's lip
and in the mountains and beneath out every step.

Fog moves in like jellyfish,
vague twinkling lights in its abdomen,
and what is not
stalks the silence,
almost being.

We're knocking at the door of a white church
alone amongst endless grasslands
near the western fjords.
I'm on the other side of my knock, listening,
timing my breath with the silence,
but not answering.
In safety no doors are locked before us.
But the latches only open out
and the wood is heavier,
immovable as bedrock.

Souvenirs of Who Knows What

the oceans in your eyes.

dusk, rolling in like the
last Saturday in Pompeii.

a fortune cookie saying
'you cry at weddings,
you laugh at funerals.'

a broken jukebox in the
best burger joint on mars.

your enemy in the mirror,
limbs jerking robotically
like a marionette with
tangled strings. a stop
sign that means more
than just 'stop'—we awoke
from a dream in its shadow.

the stop sign still grieves,
puts on a black veil every
april fool's day. a necklace
of vampire teeth and whole
wardrobes knitted out of
secrets, not because I like
secrets but just because
nobody ever asked me.

WIND POWER ON CAPE COD

Musings of a Cape Codder

(There's a belief that littering the landscape with noisy, bird-murdering, huge wind turbines that generate a trivial amount of power will enhance our image. They would be a hazardous, piddle-powered eyesore, and an economic disaster that the public would end up subsidizing. From a letter-to-the-editor.)

(The greater pleasure here is watching affluent environmentalists condemn one of their pet causes just because it happens to obstruct the view from their wraparound porch. From a letter-to-the-editor.)

I. UGLY TOYS

The islands already becalm The Sound--
that sand one's washing away fast at least--
and those towers'd flatten the last waves left.
Ugly, thrumming toys, their glint'd blind me,
130 40-storey ogres
trashing pristine seas, sails and jet skis.
The end of the Cape Cod we know and love.
Only six miles offshore, I might as well
pawn the binoculars, board up the porch.
How nice, sans windmills, Dutch "masters" would be.

II. POLLUTION AND OTHER EVILS

1. POLLUTION

White plastic bags have replaced styrofoam.
That's the world's way, like oil-soaked cormorants.
Nor's it to be forgot: Radiation
leaks and nuclear wastes are ways to make money.
(Stocks too help us through unpleasantnesses.)
Think how turbine builders and maintainers
will be flipping cigarette butts, other
jetsam. Think of parts breaking off. Think of
whole towers collapsing into The Sound.
Don't tell me they'll be contaminant-free.

There'd be a dreadful glint on sunny days.
Not to speak of noise. Cape Codders' children
will be deafer than those of us who live
near nightclubs or radio-strewn beaches.
(Bless all that of course, it's our cash's source,
not whines from a hundred-thirty turbines.)

2. WILD-LIFE SLAUGHTER

Fish reefs, down at the bottom, don't obstruct
normal fish communication. But towers,
a third of a mile apart, block their talk.
It'll kill them and the plankton they feed on
as will vibrating seas. Seals and dolphins
would flee the sea-floor. Watery graves for all.

Birds'd collide full-speed into a tower.
Not all migrators fly as high as claimed.
Or they may descend awhile, for the view.

III. ECONOMIC RUIN

1. MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN

Some visitors--for sure from the other party--
might be here mainly to see the horrors.
Six miles might not be close enough. Business
thrives on charters, but the dangers abound--
planes sliced in two by the whirling arms,
boats splintering up each other. Both ways,
death. Goodby eco-tourists and tourism,
land values, regattas, and conventions.

2. EVERYONE'S AGAINST

Everyone, not only we wraparounds,
is against: fishermen and any boater
(admittedly, fifty-foot depths aren't shoals,
but crafts could be blown into a tower);
chambers of commerce, all the local towns
(ugliness, glint, noise, and, yes, tourism);
Native Americans (why's hard to get--
are they ornery because of history?)
merchants (granted, for them, it's the money).

3. INEFFICIENCY

Turbines, good business for those who build them!
Think white elephant. Winds don't blow all day.
It'll never pay. It'll have us all
subsidized to death. Right now, we sustain
trains and the airlines. Enough is enough.
One square meter produces just a watt.
The twenty-five-square-mile area won't
make a dent in the system we have now.

4. TABLE TURBINES, ON TO THE REAL AGENDA

Table turbines ASAP, on to
the real agenda--residential sprawl,
public transportation, affordable housing,
water resources, water protection,
village rehabilitation--quashing
en route such perils as aquaculture,
or, worse by far than wind turbines: right there
at our breakwaters, wave-propelled power plants,
yards offshore, in our faces. Imagine!

IV. CALL ME WHAT YOU LIKE

There's my case. Call me eco-hypocrite
all you want. Left-wingers'll be quick with
BANANA, NIMBY, NOMS.* As one, The Cape's
opposed. Green energy's fine, in its place.
That place isn't here. Further out? Inland?

*Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone, Not In My Back
Yard, Not On My Sound

V. THE MAN'S GOT TO BE KIDDING

Rebuttal to the Cape Codder

Transpose your arguments to mountains, lakes,
deserts, plains, swamps, prairies, forest, rivers,
abandoned shopping malls! Just think of
the Appalachian Trail sans scenic views,
the glare blinding you, the noise keeping you
awake in your sleeping bag. Or, further out
to sea, what about plane and boat wrecks, dead
fish and people. All ways, John Q. Public
ends up footing the bill. Wind power, wind
shmower, not while there's a grain of sense in me.



The Happiness of Children

Sam Small was a sad little toadstool indeed. He called for his apple juice and he called for his tea and not a whisper of a reply echoed from the long hall of inherited privilege.

Sam's biological father, Abersome Jabberly, lived in London with a new wife Sam's mother liked to call The Ice Queen. Sam's stepfather worked as a bouncer in a grunge den in downtown Seattle and went to auditions for Pearl Jam roadies and David Lynch movie extras to show Sam's mother he was current.

Mrs. Small wanted to be a magician but had to work for an Afghan restaurant "until the magician thing works out." She was getting a little impatient with kebabs and rose-water. She began having dreams about lambs running through her bedroom with blood dripping from their necks, bleating loudly. She didn't talk about the dreams, but Sam knew. He was an intuitive little scamp.

Sam called louder. Still no reply. He began singing his apple song, his tea song and as the notes blued with improbability, Sam began whistling in the freshly fallen dark. Which had discovered the advantages of clinging.

Then one day Sam's mother was trying to change a dove into an egg and Sam's stepfather said, "You got it backwards." Sam's mother changed him into a homeless person.

Don't be so quick to judge. She had her reasons. Sam understood.

Then Sam wanted to eat eggs for breakfast and Sam's mother tried to change one into an omelet for him. She changed the egg into something, but Sam didn't know what it was.

Nevertheless, Sam demanded of himself that he remain a happy little toadstool. For a while. Until another of those miserable things that life does came along. But whatever it was, he was not going to worry about it. And you could not have guessed what was going to happen either because it wasn't going to happen. It just did.

And Sam's mother was very pleased indeed that she won that bloody custody battle before gradually depriving her son of his exquisite sense of false decorum, and Mrs. Red Hen didn't even notice her 34th stolen almost-a-baby, which had not been changed into anything, but just stayed an almost-a-baby until Sam added it to the increasingly disturbing history of his stomach.

Sarah Fulmer

Toad Season

The Fijian dry season means it rains most of the time, wet season means it rains all of the time, but I prefer to call it toad season, as bumpy skin and big eyes boil up from the yard, a bog from the constant rains.

splurt

The green-brown, poison oozing giant toads crawl from their flooding holes bringing the yard to life, scattering and splattering across the roads, a banana peel to my bike.

squeeze

With less than an inch space under the door the long tongued critters still pour into the laundry room faster than the flood waters. The laundry won't be done tonight. A battle is in the wind.

slap

Wearing rain boots and armed with a broom and bucket, we prepare to take on the enemy. Opening the laundry room door feels like entering an alien world where the ground bubbles and jiggles like pudding.

scoop

War breaks loose, all will be taken prisoner, none can be spared. Running outside, I pour buckets of croaking slime balls, like bailing a sinking ship, the fight seems hopeless, but half an hour and success is ours, with only a towel shoved under the door as evidence.

Fake Smile

Don't fake smile
Don't get fat like me
Don't use periods in this poem
But pause at the end of every line anyway

Work for the material world
your suffering increases
 Be de-linked from possessions
in your nice house
give things to the poor. Don't
define yourself by negation. Listen
(like the button said) to the Beatles
Do you keep falling in love with people that don't want you
or are dead? are your favorite family members dead?
Ron the caps and so much else are fucked in this poem.
Definitely be alone instead of with people
 who fake smile
 and talk
 to fill space
 Can you dig it?
Most tiles are undesirable.
He's mostly a hero who loves you.
Don't you want to know if Ricko is available—
Use dashes as dashes and instead of question marks.
Even if you get stood-up on a pole
 with your grave behind you
 and shot

There are still answers.
Soon as you know you're mortal you know you're dead.
Three of my grandparents
watched all of their siblings and friends die.
Don't physically attack people (self-defense is different).
Pre-emptive war, why not, if you're right.
Don't wait for some of you to get murdered to act.
Don't run away if you're a pacifist.

Busted

Shit.

We wasn't stealing mangoes.

We just wanted for climb the tree, why?

Recess, that's why.

You wasn't even supposed to be home,

you no more papers for grade,

hah, Ms. Bernard? Shit,

you wasn't even going use the mangoes anyway,

I when smell um last year.

Rotten. Waste, that kind.

And we no was stealing anyway,

half the tree hang over school property,

whose fence you think we when climb for get up there?

Shit, not even ripe, too,

and still yet you like grumble. What,

you the one haole know how for make pickle mango,

I no think so. What you was going do, anyway,

spray us with that garden hose

if we never come down? Shit

we coulda stayed up there for hours,

throw all your fricken mangos

in the school yard and what you was going do?

You lucky we not greedy.

You lucky we good students too,

you lucky we was scared your threats.

Like you could recognize us anyway.

Besides, wasn't even for us, was Mr. Parlin

when tell us go grab um, he old yeah,

no can climb the tree already. Shit,

all we wanted was extra credit

for driver's ed and I no need um anyway,

I been driving since I was ten, yeah?

Only now I gotta drive highway kind;

back roads no go everywhere.

So shit you like grumble go grumble

Mr. Parlin he get your fricken mangoes anyway.

Like he was going share.

Shit.

An Eye for An Eye

She watched knifelike headlights slice
the emulsified horizon, listened to breezy
lisps lick dead leaves and trees – limbs groaning like
animals that moaned from disease and discomfort.
She hunkered-down for warmth, felt flannel
between her fingers, played prelude ring tones
on her cell phone to pass the time.

Leaves cackled under her beat up sneakers
and laughed at her. An *unusual sentence*,
is what the media called it. She was nestled
in ribcage-roots, bit by bit praying for dawn:
frozen earth, grey-green sky. She watched sleet
fall onto muddy feet: shine and sheen like needles
glittering in frozen grass.

She was ordered to spend a night in the woods
without water, food, Lost or Law and Order.
She wore a knit cap and winter jacket.
The wind whirled. Coyotes howled in the dark night:
their bare bodies all bone and fur. Light leaked
through trees. The moon smiled at her – all its guile
masked by a cluster of clouds.

— Распался мир, — мне передали в
метро на ухо по секрету,
и вот и думаю и маюсь до рассвета
и спрашиваю, а слышали ль вы
об этом?

Но львы за рощей в час ночной молчат
и чередою просыпаясь в телевизор
позируют моим дневным капризам
и кушают предложенных зайчат.

Распался мир, но память о вогах
еще тревожит
и намятые бока еще болят,
а жизнь такая блядь,
такая сука и лупит прямо в пах
и бьет по роже.

Но обязательства в конце концов
перед семьей, перед детьми и перед
засовываю в брюки. Надо верить —
кругом до чертиков польным полно богов.

— The world has fallen apart — was whispered
into my ear in the metro,
and I lie awake before dawn thinking and agonizing
and wondering if you have heard
about this?

But the lions are silent at night in the thickets
and coming awake by turns in the television
they pose for my daytime whims
and gnaw on offered chunks of rabbit.

The world has fallen apart, but the memory of the gods
is still disturbing
and crushed flanks still ache,
and life is a real bitch
a real bitch slams you right in the gonads
and in the face.

But in the end I shove my obligations
to family, to my children and into
my trousers. Belief is necessary —
in a circle as full as full can be of gods.

Конь озадачен вконец. Ржет от боли
и каплет пена с кровью под ноги вниз.
День обозначен едва. Только полоска
зари да над полем туманная взвесь.
Где я увидел такое? В набитых троллейбусах
или спускаясь в метро или море
мое мне таким показалось?
Ледяная в стакане вода. Одинокий
мужик не спеша отпускает узду
у шума на меня пустота отпустилась.

Где это было?
Надежда, одежда, денежка, лежбище,
плечи, лечи — я слова не вспомню! Лети.
Плыл ли кобчег и в пути свисали руки как плети?
Было ли это и что с кобчегу упало?
Меж людьми, меж зверьми, меж горами,
травами, ямами, между ногами просунешь ладонь.
Там задевались, туда закатились конь
с мужиком, совсем затерялись — достань.

J. Kates
Translator

A stallion in complete confusion. It roars with pain
and drips foam and blood under its feet.
The day is barely apparent. Only stripes
of dawn over a field in foggy suspension.
Where have I seen this before? In packed trolleybuses
or going down into the metro or into my
sea, did it appear like this?
Ice-water in a glass. A solitary
man without hurrying slackens the reins
and noisily the void came down on me.

Where was this?
Speculate, peculiar, pecuniary, pillory,
pliers, lie — I don't remember the words! Fly.
Was the ark sailing and along the way hands dangled like lashes?
Was it this that fell off the ark?
Among people, among animals, among mountains,
grasses, pits, push a hand between the legs.
There they disappeared, there the stallion carried
the man away, to be completely lost — Get it.



Patsy Sumie Saiki Award for Fiction

First Place Winner 2009

The Pig Hunt

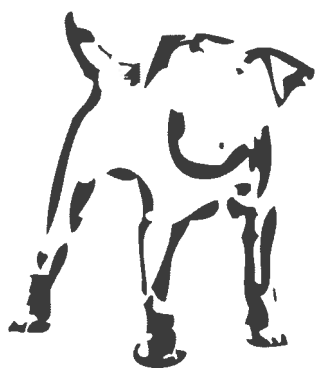
Keala Francis

Second Place Winner 2009

Splinters

Kennith Quilantang, Jr.

The Patsy Sumie Saiki Award is an award endowed by the late Ms. Saiki, a former teacher and writer. It is given for the best short story on a theme related to Hawai'i written by a UH student born in Hawai'i. All UH students are considered: both undergraduate and graduate students and students at any UH campus. The prize for the winning story is \$1000; second and third place winners receive \$250 and \$100, respectively. Each year the Director of Creative Writing selects three judges for the competition.



Keala Francis

The Pig Hunt

That night she wakes to throated grunts, deep and threatening. Alone in the middle of her kalo stands a gunmetal boar grizzled with guard hairs. The moonlight shines on thick spikes running from neck to rump. Ears covered with bristles. Thick curved tusks. An oversized snout.

The boar reels about. The woman grabs her dog before he races after the pig into the mountains. They stand on her small lanai looking over the taro farms, deep into Hanalei valley where the mountains grow sheer with crevices and overhanging cliffs. The clouds settle low to catch the purple of the night moon, and the wind blows the leaves dark side up.

They will have to hunt this pig.

She and Brownie wait on the lanai in the night without a moon, the sky open to all the stars. The hunter's truck arrives. She hears him climb out, close the door. The metal spring creaks as he opens the truck gate. She peers up from beneath her hair as a waterfall of dogs gushes onto her farm.

Brownie flirts with one of the dogs, crouching and nipping playfully.

The Pig Hunt

Momo, the huntress black as midnight, stands with ears cocked toward the trail.

The mutts mill about, tugging against the man's invisible strings, obedient yet willful. The man leads them about, pointing out the tracks, letting them smell the bloody boar bristles that cling to the broken fence.

Brownie needs no such tasking; he knows this pig.

The man hands the woman a utility belt, and she snaps her hunting knife in. He has added a gun to his belt, but he does not like to shoot—only fires to save a dog, not to kill a pig. He checks her belt, tightening the straps, and then checks his own. The man does not see the woman. Like this, as a hunter, nothing matters but his dogs.

He leads the moiling pack to the trail.

Hup!

Like racers, the dogs sprint, strides long and sure, paws hardly touching the ground, a single body until Brownie sprints ahead. A hint of sunrise bruises the dark night. The silence fools only those who do not listen, those who do not hear night sounds. The dogs will not howl until they find the trail. The man whistles at the top of every ridge. His dogs check back. No sign of Brownie.

They continue, a plodding pace. One pup in training returns with bloody gums. She has attacked a baby pig. The man forces her to heel. She whimpers when the other dogs take off.

They hear Brownie howl off to the left, toward the river.

The man reads his voice.

Your dog has caught the scent, he says.

The woman hears more, though. She hears a note of panic, high, though not yet frantic. She passes the man on the path, taking the lead.

Wait for the other dogs, he says.

The pig screeches, sounding like a banshee not something of flesh. She feels as if her ear drums will shatter.

No! The man's voice strikes a quiver, thrumming in her head, a changed note. But his voice does not matter. She takes off, using her hands to climb the steep sections, hearing the river rushing across the

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rocks in the distance where she cannot see.

Brownie's howls cut through the air and the wind and the water. She has feet with wings, though the boots caked with dirt anchor her and she slips on a flat, wet boulder, falling backward in slow motion, her arms flapping in circles, grabbing at thin branches that slide through her hands like rough ropes, burning her palms until she lands on a smoothed rock that knocks the breath out of her lungs and bruises her ribs.

She stands and gasps for air that will not come, a dry heaving. She slaps her own sternum with the heel of her hand, trying to force her lungs back into motion. As she stumbles up the path, she cuts her thigh. Whispers of air release the pressure on her chest.

The dogs run by. The man races past her, not stopping.

Beyond them, she hears the thunderous pounding of the pig, her pig, as he crashes through the bushes. She listens for Brownie and hears nothing. It is like the world has ended. Then her dog howls, one of his triumphant howls. Momo howls too.

The woman clammers up a small hill, blinded by the first leg of the sun. Momo! She hears Momo wail. An inhuman, an undoglike sound.

She moves in beyond the sun's glare. Brownie corners the boar against an overhanging rock, the other dogs barking at the edges, not daring to move in. Momo lies on the ground, gashed and bloodied. The man holds the gun in his hand, sighting, cocking.

No! she shouts, afraid that he will shoot Brownie, that he will not care who dies. She tackles him, sending the bullet smacking into rock. He shoves her away and goes to Momo's side, drops to his knees and runs his fingers along the dog's sleek body. Momo shudders, ragged breath.

The woman, on all fours gasping, turns away—a private scene, a lover's loss—she looks for her dog, searching for a space where she can thrust her entire body, her whole being, between him and the pig.

Brownie is a bloody mess with several gashes on his back legs, a slit along his rib cage, a torn ear, the boar's blood on his teeth. He will not let her die for him. He gives her a bloody smile, then whips around and snaps his jaws into the boar's thick neck. The creature tosses its head,

The Pig Hunt

trying to dislodge him, and then takes off with Brownie clenched tight. The dog loses his footing, drags behind the galloping boar.

The woman's feet turn to clay. The rain-heavy air on her skin. Her chest torn open. Her eyes wide.

Her body moves, coils tight with fury, a body that refuses the mind, that loves without sense. She flies through the air and hooks the boar's hind leg with both hands. The boar has power, the muscles packed onto the bone, no air within them. He charges away, the woman and the dog latched onto him, bodies bouncing on rocks, scraping against trees.

She fumbles at the belt for her knife. The dog is locked on. The boar cannot shake them.

She snaps the knife free. With all of her strength, she plunges the knife deep into the boar's back, the blade slicing between the ribs as if guided, not aimed. The pig roars and bucks. She loses her grip as the boar struggles up, crawls with its fore hooves, heaves, drops, crawls again.

She pushes herself to her knees, uses her arms to stand up straight. She can hardly walk. She limps toward the huge body, the almost carcass. She straddles its back and pulls the knife out, holds it high, not above her head, but to the side at an angle, and then sweeps her arm down and stabs the boar near the shoulder blade, straight through the heart.

She lets go and slides off. She watches the dog's chest move in and out. He is alive. She pries his jaws open, sticking her fingers between his teeth, digging under the upper jaw as she has done when he was sick to force food into his mouth, holding his mouth closed and stroking his throat. His skin feels hot and sweaty. She kneels down and burrows her face into his mane, running her fingers along his spine, legs, and paws, gently checking every bone. She smoothes his fur with her fingers.

Where is the man?

She races back up the hill and finds him hunched over Momo. His shoulder blades contract and expand. She thinks he has begun the task of stitching. But no, the waves of his body, the rhythms of his movement, do not follow any stitch pattern.

He stops moving, and time starts again. The woman kneels beside

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him and what she sees is almost more than she can stand. Momo's intestines show through a gaping hole in the belly. The man pushes the guts back into her body with his fingers and holds the wound shut with one hand. She will help him despite the dog's shallow breaths and glazed eyes.

He mixes Momo's blood into the earth, a paste he shoves into the wound to stop the bleeding. When he lets go, the wound reopens. The woman digs her hands into the mud and paints Momo, touching the velvety softness of her insides, pinching the jagged and ripped skin together, holding the dog together with the tips of her fingers.

The man fumbles with his backpack, using his teeth to tug the zipper open. He digs for the sewing kit, unlatches the metal clip with his thumb. He clamps the needle between his lips to thread the silk through the eye, but nothing happens. She thinks he has found a flaw, a silk not good enough. But no. He cannot thread the needle; he is blinded.

She changes her grip, one-handed, and grabs the needle from his lips.

Hold the wound, she says, ordering him, and he obeys, clamping over her hand so she can let go. She grabs the silk and threads the needle and stitches Momo up, ignoring technique, rushing the needle, crossing the stitch wherever she can puncture the skin. She ties the last knot tight with her teeth.

Please don't die, she whispers.

She dresses the gash with iodine—the medicine and the blood black as Momo's fur, absent all color, wet as the ocean. The man lies down beside Momo, nose to nose.

*

When all the world was water, the girl grew curious to know what lay below the blue, blue ocean. She called, but no one came except for a dog, who held a ball of mud in his mouth, gently as if he were holding her hand. She blew and the mud began to swell like a great brown balloon until it became the land she pushed her toes into. She piled rocks to form mountains and gouged great streaks and holes in the red dirt to form

The Pig Hunt

rivers and lakes, and she dug a cave in the hillside to take cover when the thick sheets of rain came down. She swished between long blades of grass, climbed through the interlocked fingers of tree roots, and ate liliko'i and mountain apples that she sucked to the core spitting seeds from her tongue with a quick gust of breath. At last, she grew dissatisfied. She called to him. Or not really. He called to her. Or maybe not.

They hiked along the river with dirt-caked boots and salt in the air and sweat of dogs and the glint of the moon and a hunter's breath. The sky opened. The water flowed through the land whose wet soil once held plants that resurrected with the rains, but that were mostly gone now, dead like humans who do not come back.

The girl followed the boy, eyes on his feet, placing her footprints into his own, covering her tracks, sensing her transgression. Of the earth? Of the sea? Nowhere was home. They were bereft. She had blown dandelions gone to seed and made wishes, so many wishes with her own breath. This world took life in the wrong order, the young shoots instead of the husks. She no longer believed in this world.

The boy before her, beautiful, could not prove that they would burrow in the soil like onions, that they would rise into the sky like gods.

He stopped, and she barely avoided collision, collusion, pushing her hand into the small of his back. A touch that could mean nothing at all.

The dogs erupted.

The boy crashed down the hill, legs with muscles and sinews and tendons and bones. The girl ran after him, riding the rocks along the hillside, sliding to keep up. The wilderness against them. They no longer fit. They had cut themselves away like muscles from bone with the knives of language and science that explained everything and nothing.

Branches snapped into her face. She caught her boot on a boulder; she should have gone barefoot. She flipped down a small cliff, landed hard on her shoulder blade, her head below her feet, the whole world upside down.

They hiked high into the valley where the river narrowed enough for him to splash across, to forge through water, yielding and willful. She slid

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into the cool wet river and flowed with its force, feeling the breath leave her lungs and the pebbles smooth as skin in her hands. The river did not want her, would only lead her to the sea. She walked out of the water, dripping, fully clothed.

She scrambled toward the sound of the dogs. The river split, a wayward stream formed in the long rains, another river, born of the earlier one, the larger one, the first one, but not lesser for that, not less at all.

He stood up to his waist in a mud hole formed by an eddy. He struggled against a massive boar, controlling the creature by its hind legs, as humans cannot control nose to nose, cannot look death in the eyes.

The boy meant for her to kill the pig. The pig screamed as the dogs cut the flesh with their teeth, a thousand slices.

The girl gripped the knife at her side. She knew how to kill. No. Not how to kill. She knew about death. She remembered the feel of his hand on her own, the necessary thrust near the shoulder blade, a slight turn into the heart. A quick, humane death.

She jumped into the mud, the knife unsheathed, and stood beside the boy, and she said,

Let the pig go.

*

He refuses to leave the boar. He needs to work with his hands—she would too, although with a dog dying that seems senseless. Leave the death. Mourn. As if she knows how.

He flips the pig, exposing the soft belly, and slits the boar from end to end, pulling out the entrails hand over hand, stopping only to break up the dogs when they tear at the bloody intestines.

He throws off his shirt, and she remembers the times when he slapped his stomach, a young brazenness. The body's freedom.

He ties each front hoof to a back hoof with rope. He hoists the dead pig onto his back, struggling under the weight, the blood dripping down his hamstrings and calves. All this blood: his dog's, the pig's, his own, hers. All mixed together in the dirt.

She builds a stretcher, chopping the koa`ia, constructing a carrier by

The Pig Hunt

tying the branches together with silk thread, stronger than sinew. They lay the black dog's body down and carry her out of the valley. The brown dog follows, leading the other dogs, heads down, shoulder blades slicing the sky light.

What has been done weighs along the woman's spine, but in her lungs, lightness.

;



Splinters

The mirror fogs up when I breathe.

I lean into it, to get a closer look at my teeth. I pull at my lower lip, yeah, that's what I thought, bottom tooth. Front. Missing. Sucking skinny *pōpolo* guy hits harder than I thought. Two months in already, and I knew it from the start, he'd be problems. Now I *really* look like one con.

The cell is painted light blue on the inside; the bars are white with rusty specks. The water in the toilet runs clear; you can see your reflection in the bottom of it.

Head count for chow.

"What happened to your face," they ask when I stand in line.

"Nothing, I fell in the shower," I mutter.

"Yeah right," the pasty guard snaps. He looks at the others and giggles at the skinny *pōpolo* guy.

I look down into the tiles of the floor; some of them are cracked and missing in places. The food tray feels heavy. Almost too heavy.

Next thing I know I'm sitting down across some big, old, bald white guy. He is thick, not really the *poke*-eating, Heineken-drinking, no-slipper

Splinters

-wearing moke thick I'm used to. No, this guy is more like hillbilly thick; he eats grits, I bet. I can see part of what looks like a British flag tattoo curled around one of his hay built forearms. Fucking *haole* man, he's a bruiser.

"What?" He says, pieces of corn flinging out of his mouth.

Not again, two times in one day. I say nothing again. I can hear the familiar cackling of guards amidst the clinging of utensils.

I say nothing again.

"What, like go? Hah fuckah," Hillbilly says again and now I'm confused.

I gotta chance em, "No braddah, I never mean fo' give you stink eye."

"Who da fuck said I was your braddah," baldy says, spraying me with more bits of corn when he yells.

I sigh and put my head down, not giving a shit whether he hits me or not.

He slides his tray forcefully into mine, spilling his food into it, "Next time you like give somebody stink eye, bettah back it up. Lucky you from back home, I did worse fo' smallah tings."

I start wiping the mess and glance at him walking away. I have time to read the tattoo inked across his forearm in old English underneath an image of the state flag.

Wai'anae, Hawai'i 96792

The guards come to where I'm sitting, still separating the peas from the milk. The smart assed one, the one who laughed at my teeth, comes close to me saying, "You're the first asshole I seen not get knocked the fuck out by Big J for being a smartass." He turns to the others, "The new prick is lucky."

All the guards laugh.

I put my head down and stare into the tray, rainbow colored oil floats on the milk. This is how I meet him, and I smile to myself scraping bits of milky mashed potatoes into my tray.

*

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He liked the way the water splashed when he kicked it with his feet. The boy sat there, on the black boulders watching his father surf. Glistening 'a'ama crabs scuttled into dark crevices when each set slammed into their rocky home. He watched the spindly legged things reclaim their spots on the boulders when the waves dissipated into bubbly foam.

He wanted to. He really did. But his father said no. Cannot go out. Too big. The boy squinted towards the place where he last saw his dad paddle out to.

One. Two. Tree. Four. Fiiiiiive. Six. Six guys out and to the boy they all looked the same. Which one was dad?

He heard the quiet clicking of claws all around him.

'A'ama crabs came out from hiding again. They reminded the boy of tiny robots, the kind he just saw at the movies in Kam Drive-In, the one by Pearlridge. His folks would bring the car there to watch movies while farting and blaming each other. He forgot the title of the movie; he just remembered the motion, the jerky, twitchy motions of robot claws on asphalt. He couldn't sleep for a few days after the movie, his dreams infested with claws and carapaces.

"Get back inside," he snapped at the crustaceans, a big one took its time, so the boy kicked a torrent of saltwater towards it.

By this time the boy was impatient already. Another wave came in.

Crabs hid.

"Daaaaaaaaaaaaaad," the boy called out to the figures sitting on their surfboards.

No reply.

"Daaaaaaaaaaaaaad," he yelled again, this time splashing water all around him to get their attention.

"Shh," someone said softly behind him. "They're coming in, in a little while," his mother stood above him, arms folded across her breasts, her ehū curly hair gliding slowly across her face. "Your dad guys are just waiting for their go home wave, so just wait."

"Yeah but I bored Ma," the boy said. "How come he make me sit here not doing anything, I can surf too you know."

"Yeah I know, but you have to learn to wait," she answered, squinting out towards her husband's silhouette.

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"Why I have to learn that for," he asked, kicking water to the sky. "I know how for wait already, Dad just making trouble that's all, he just no like me surf, take all the waves."

Crabs hid.

"If that's what you think, then you should sit your little ass down on that rock some more," his mom snapped, turning towards the way she came.

Waves broke on the rocks near the boy.

Crabs hid.

"In fact, I think you should ask if you can get off that rock," She said pointing out to the surfers.

One of the figures was pointed in the boy's direction, getting closer with each splash of the ocean.

*

Sometimes, some guards, when they do nightly head counts, whack the bars of the cell just to fuck with some of the guys. If you don't know the drill and get your ass out off the bed, nobody can help what come next.

So you gotta wait.

And wait.

And wait still yet.

Hard though, for wait sometimes, shit, especially in the beginning. When you dreaming of home, about early morning surf session, cannot help ah, hard for get up I tell you. Feels like they know what you dreaming about, how sometimes you feel like you not even here. But you are, so cannot help ah.

Might not seem like it but you know what? On the outside I was one of the most patient guys. They took that too, my patience, but cannot help ah, what else was I going do? I had for sell. Cannot help.

Cannot.

Maybe if I stayed home I would have had one good job and stuff, but sometimes, no matter how much you hear that little voice in your head not for do something, you do em anyways. Hardhead so cannot help. I got bored on the rock. That's what I always say to people when they ask me why I left. Shit I wanted to do my own surf tour, go to the

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places and do the things just like I saw in the movie *Endless Summer*. I always had one copy of that with me, first was VHS tapes, then I wised up and had it on DVD. Never mind if I didn't have a VCR or DVD player, I just wanted to have it.

I graduated class of 1991 with about 350 other people who had no clue what to do about it: no school. For me, I could go to the beach as long as I wanted now. Hell I was doing that anyways; now, the cops couldn't bust me for truancy. Some friends went to college, some joined the service and I know some still yet stay riding bike at three in the morning, all glassy eyed and naked.

I worked at Tamura's for cash back then. I was pretty much right on about saving money. I needed it for my plane tickets and car when I went mainland. I only spent for buy 20 cent bags from Rudy; I needed for blaze.

Early morning sessions, gave me the patience, I think. It takes dedication you know, for get up that early, get everything ready, wax the boards, pack lunch, and small kine burn.

Cannot help. This how my early sessions go.

I leave at the time the sky still yet dark, but you can make out the shape of things when you look towards Mount Ka'ala. The silhouettes of the big banyan trees are still blended into the mountains. I usually get to the beach in about ten minutes, depends on if I see the tweakers riding bike so I can talk to them about what going on and if get trouble.

Only two kine people I know that ride bike this early in the morning, rich people down Kahala side in neon tights that might as well be naked, and the tweakers here in Wai'anae, who sometimes riding bike naked already. Only difference is that one stay pumped full of stuff to keep him going, and going, and going.

Which one? I like say the tweakers but that's too easy. Try asking that guy who won that bicycle race in France? He was on something, they took away the win, I seen him on ESPN2 on the news that flash on the bottom of the TV screen when had the Triple Crown on. So no tell me who stay on what, I don't know because people with money just hide it

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better if you ask me.

Well anyways when I get to Ke'eaus, I turn off the radio, the thing no catch anyways, put the car in neutral and I listen to my tires crunch the thin layer of sand on the asphalt. I always do this. Sound mean.

Cannot help yeah?

By this time I blaze up, I gotta, 'cause if I don't, I know going be one shitty session, I might as well go home. I always park in the same spot, from September to March. If get freak sets I extend to April.

I light up.

I always sit the hood of my car and look at the sets. I close my eyes, picturing myself sliding down the face of the wave tasting the saltiness at the back of my throat. This where it gets hard, the point that if I don't go in the water I never will. I feeling too good already. Plus too I get the munchies. I still get the stick of oily beef jerky in my mouth when I jump down from the grassy hill onto the wet sand, my board tucked under my arm.

Cannot help, I hungry.

*

On the inside, we eat early. Hard enough they wake you up plenty at night, but they expect you to eat after? I thought I would never get used to it but you learn.

Live and learn.

At first, when I got in I was having small kine trouble. I knew was going be hard here, with all the Skinheads, the *pōpolo* gangs, and everybody else, so I played dumb at first.

But now cannot help I gotta find out.

I catch him in the yard. Outside, past the chain link and barbed wire fences, the thin lines of wheat fields poked through patches of snow. He is at the bench press station when I find him. The same guy from the cafeteria that crazy, pale skinned, bolohead, moke has one tank top on and the temperature is like thirty-something degrees. I think to myself that maybe he does have some hillbilly blood.

Our second meeting goes almost the same as our first, except there

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is no corn.

I came prepared this time.

I can feel the cookies crumbling in my pocket. "What you fuckah, you like me jack your jaws yeah," he snorts through clenched teeth. I turn around to see if guards are looking. I pull the bag out slow and hide them against my thigh.

"I-I sorry, I just wanted for talk," I stammer, not sure if from the cold or because I'm nervous. "You like?"

He reaches out and grabs the cookies. The flexing of his forearm means that they are pretty much powder.

"I spent five years hea. Five fucking yea's. An I nevah once went whine about not talking to nobody," he said. He throws the bag against the chain link.

Mr. Skinny, the pōpolo guy who false-cracked me looks our way when he hears it clink against the fence. He goes for the bag.

"I-I sorry, I no like bodda you," I say and stand up, ready for a hasty exit outta there.

The guards look towards Mr. Skinny whose back is turned their way. He rolls his fingers into the bag. Brings them to his nose. Sniffs then looks at me shaking his head.

Mr. Skinny leans against the chain link and pushes the bag through the holes by the time the guards come over. Imprints of the links embedded are into his skin when he walks away.

"First you bodda me lunchtime, den now? What your fucking problem," says the pale skinned moke. He sits up and the weight rack creaks.

"I said sorry, I no like make humbug."

The wheat field seems to dissolve into the grey sky.

I make it almost halfway to the unit's doors when I hear him spit out, "Where you grad?"

*

The cons considered non-violent like me are kept in a separate module than the hard-core guys but we all meet in the yard when it's time to go out. Mud sloshes around my shoes, making a sucking sound when I walk

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towards the rusty weight benches where I saw him. I heard from Wilson, the skinny, ex-Skinhead, that this guy who I would later call Uncle Jimbo, punched the guy who was screwing his wife and the guy fell, conking his head on the corner of their koa coffee table they brought with them from Hawai'i.

Make. Die. Dead.

Manslaughter. That's what he got. Fifteen years, he got that too.

That was five years ago.

One crack MedEvac.

*

For us non-violents, we get time to work in the shop making all kinds of stuff. Some guys even have their stuff on exhibition someplace, kind of like a show and tell for convicts.

The whooshing of a vent is heard when it is turned on. Someone laughs.

I ask him one day, "Eh Uncle Jimbo, you ever surf Mākaha?"

That's all I have to say.

"Of course, I used to know Rell Sunn," he says, looking at the grey clouds outside through the thick metal bars of the shop window.

"Oh wow, was hard for you to live over here or what? I mean when you first came over here?"

"Yeah of course was mento, everybody from Hawai'i get hard time adjusting at first."

His voice softens when we talked of back home and for a moment it felt like we were just two mokes, just sitting on the rock wall at Tumbleland, drinking Heinekens and bullshitting.

"So what Uncle, what you ride?"

His ears perk up with that and he rubs the dry skin on his elbow.

"Braddah, I ain't telling you, you gotta figure 'em out for yourself," he says.

"Okay, I bet you went ride one long board, nine feet four inches."

"Can tell you was born in the water," he smiles, showing the gap between his two front teeth. "What else?"

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"Hmm. Tanker?"

"Ahh, lose money, well one out of two not bad," he says. "What then, you used to ride? Boogie board? You lay down like one little boy instead of standing like a man?"

"Watch your mouth little boy, 'for I broke 'em," he snaps, catching me off guard. His fists are clenched, veins in his arms showing under the tattoos. The state of Hawai'i flag seems to pulsate under his wiry haired arms.

"I sorry Uncle, I-I," I suddenly feel like I was five again, with *tūtū* man snapping at me for dropping the wax in the sand.

"*Paipo* ain't boogie boarding dumb ass," he growls. "Fucking wise ah you sometimes?"

"Nah nah nah. I said sorry I was only playing," I shut my eyes.

"Go look in the corner and pull out the plywood," Uncle Jimbo commanded.

I didn't answer; I run my finger along the top of the thick piece of plywood and pull back from a splinter.

"Dammit!" I say. Sucking on my injury, I grip the side firmly and yank it out.

Wood catches the corner of the steel frame the plywood was in and lets out a loud screech that sounds like it broke.

"Watch out mento!"

The side that scraped against the shelving was marked with a light pencil sketch. My scrape went all the way through it, across the markings that read Wai'anae, Hawai'i almost like his tattoo.

"Fricka be more careful and I let you help me shape this," Uncle Jimbo says.

I couldn't find the words to answer him, I wanted to cry. But no can yeah? Crying would have been too panty and you cannot let people see you cry when you stay inside.

"What your finger sore?"

"Uh huh, little bit," I say staring at the outline of the paipo board.

"Good for you, I nevah feel em," he laughs. "Good thing I nevah cut

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‘em out yet or I was gone make you look fo’ one noddada piece.”

“No worry, Uncle I can cut straight.” He takes the plywood and slides it back slowly into the gap.

Lesson #1: *Paipo* boarding is not boogie boarding

*

The first thing about the Visitor’s Center I notice is how much it echoes inside when people talk. The rows of tables are set up end on end equal distance apart same like the bars on my cell. A baby’s cry fills the whole building. Orange ear plug stick out from the ears of the guards.

I hate when she visits. Every other month she flies over from back home. Always the same when she come. I ask how everything and she tells me it’s okay, that something’s up with my brother. Like I can do anything for her out there yeah? She come about once every two months. No get me wrong, I love my mom but what I no love is what happen after she leave.

When you get strip search, the thing isn’t like what you see in the movies at all. They make like you can resist and shit when they do it to you in the movies. The bad thing about being stripped search after a visit from mom isn’t the shedding of the jumpsuits so that the guards can get a better look, it’s not even when they tell you to squat in the case of hidden contraband stowed away in your ass. Cigarettes. The most popular, are what most new cons get busted for, it’s a night in solitary if they find it.

Weapons. The second most important thing automatically get a con busted for a month in solitary, that way should shit go down in the module he’s taken away out of the prison pecking order.

They took one guy to the infirmary; he put the shank the pointed end in first.

Severe internal hemorrhaging.

So I was saying the worst part isn’t taking off the orange scrubs, or when they make you squat above a mirror to peek inside your ass to find buried treasure, no the bad part is when the guards tell you to lift up your nuts so they can peek if anything’s there.

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That's how you know you don't have a choice to do so or not.

Real life is shitty that way.

Every time I see her, I see one more grey, one more wrinkle I never saw before. I trip out how much she aged since I been in.

So right about the time I tell her again how bad the food is here I know we almost *pau*. It seems as if we just talking, but no more words coming out, just blabbering away the whole time.

"You being good," she asks.

The plastic partition is shiny. "Uh huh," I reply, staring at my reflection that's been imposed upon her face. People used to tell me I look like her and since I been in I can see why. We share some of the same wrinkles around the eyes, like sets breaking over bleached coral reef.

"Well your bradda going end up in here if he no shape up," she says to me.

"Oh how come," I try for act like I interested but I really not.

"He just like you, you know."

"Hah? He more smarter than me," I say keeping up the act.

"Smarter no mean he get any sense."

My mom always trying for make me laugh so I smile at her joke. I can see her eyes when she mentions his name that this is killing her.

*

"When you make one *paipo* board the most important thing is the bottom part, how the thing curves, yeah?"

He runs his finger along the underneath of the board, "Da belly gotta be jus right."

"For what, Uncle, why no leave um flat, not like you going ride um anytime soon, eh?"

He doesn't answer, I'm not even sure if he hears me, his eye trails the edge of the *paipo* board. He's muttering something I can't understand to himself.

He plays with his finger. Turning the skin as if he still wears his wedding ring.

"Your madda come fo' visit," Uncle Jimbo asks. Someone turns on

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a sander. The screeching of grinding wood fills the shop. "You said she come planny yeah?"

"Mhmm, every odda month why," I ask. Uncle Jimbo places the board on the workbench. I watch it rock along the curve of its bottom. "She always come."

"You lucky."

"Sometimes I wish she wouldn't but," I say. I fiddle through the toolbox for the sanding block. "Waste time, you know what I mean?"

I wrap sandpaper around the block. I rub my fingernail along the rough side. White powder falls to the ground.

The veins in his arms bulge when his fists close.

"What you mean 'waste time,'" He says. He takes the block from me. "Waste time fo' who?"

"I dunno, no need get mad Uncle," I say. I rip another sheet of sandpaper and rub it against the rail of the board. "What I can do? She da one, she like come."

He breathes in and exhales loud.

"Get da fuck away from me."

"What," I say.

A loud crack when he hits me.

"I- I was just saying, shit uncle no need snap." My cheek stings.

White flash. Some teeth are loose. My blood tastes salty.

"Muthafaka." White flash again. My head swings back.

Blood on dripping, slipping down my arm onto the concrete floor.

"I-I-sor-sorry Uncle. Please."

He lets out a loud sigh and his broad shoulders slump a little.

"You know what, no fucking ask me if you like help me you ungrateful bastard."

Uncle Jimbo's eyes never leave the jagged, splintered, wood, and his eyes seem to surf along the rough edge of pine until the guards come.

That's about when I black out.

We never talk again.

*

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A long time ago, men slide down her face. In places where she smoothes out, they leave no mark. A patch of roughness. One is left now. He darts out of her closing mouth, she lapping up his movement with her curled lip. He vanishes. He is deep within her now, succumbed to her constantly quiet roar as she swallows him. In that instant she is done with him and now relaxes, spent. He glides out; slick with her moistness and with a flick of his head throws his locks away from his eyes, resolute to find another.

She is swelling again, her mounds of water climaxing when he makes it to the line up to where his brothers were waiting.

She's killed on lesser days and he knows this when an offshore wind chills his body causing him to fold in his arms and wreathe. He isn't supposed to get into the water today.

Keep it covered and lightly rub Vaseline on it. Don't let it get dry.

It stung when he first jumped in, but he got used to it.

Don't go in. The bandage fell away exposing the reddened tattoo.

The guy does good work he laughs to himself while rubbing the leftover balls of adhesive still stuck to his forearm.

The tattoo gleams bright when it's submerged in the ocean.

*

He woke up gagging. The sweat on his forehead shone off the fluorescent lights that came in from the hallway outside his cell. Nothing but the light blue cell to stare at. There it was again, that pain in the chest that made him scared to tell the doctors. He sat on the edge of the bed rubbing the baldness of his head.

Something was new. A new pain traveled up and down his left arm, a constricting ache that made him want to go bareballs while he slept. He giggled at the thought of sleeping naked, something he hadn't done for a while.

He got up and the pain was worse but he needed to spit the mucus that collected while he slept.

The water in the metallic toilet bowl was clear and he could see his reflection in it. The bloody mucus he spat into it slowly tinged the water red.

Nothing new, he thought.

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He needed to lie down, to sleep to the sound of rain starting to patter on the barred windowpane.

Sleep now.

*

She fades into a froth of bursting bubbles in salty white foam. His face stings, the brine finding its way into red eyes. He can hear his own breathing and it's louder than anything else, more audible than the rising mounds of water when she rushes towards the beach.

Heart pounds.

Heavy breathing.

In. Out.

Limbs reach out, muscles tighten. His lungs betray him and start to take her in. He could let go make it easy on himself and just give in to her dark saltiness. He wants to. The glass ceiling flashes above him and he wants to relax and let her have her way with him.

Legs find a way to kick towards the shimmering light above. He can almost touch it; feel the warm air above her moving walls. His fingers curl in.

He withdraws his hand.

And his body goes limp, leaving a trail bubbles that spiral towards the water's surface.

It was a hard fight.

Pan.

*

The guards found him in his cell naked and cold; toilet water tinged red with his blood.

*

I go to the woodshop, making my way past the rusty band saws, past the gouged out counter where all the hammers hang, to Uncle Jimbo's little corner. I pull on the *paipo* board carefully.

It looks like it hasn't been touched since I last talked with Uncle Jimbo. The early morning sunlight reflects into my face. I tilt the piece back and forth admiring the lines, raised grain lines in the wood cast wave-like shadows across its surface. I tuck the board under my arm and I feel out

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small sharp splinters jab at me through my shirt. I take it to the gouged out counter graffitied with gang tags and swastikas. Find the grease pen.

It doesn't take me long to get the right way to write the numbers under where he wrote Wai'anae, Hawai'i. They match pretty good and I step back to admire what I added. So I look out the windows while sanding the rails of Uncle's *paipo* board and I see the wheat bend in the direction of where I think is home. After I pau sand in the shop, I end up in my mod ready to jump on the top bunk and let my legs dangle off the side, waiting for my go home wave just like mom said.

David Spiering

at home: burden evaluations

how long before I lash out
at the domestic candle wax,
the flimsy broom sticks,
the sticky skillets, the unsteady
refrigerator doors, the oscillating
heating coil, the flies escaping
the autumn's cold blush—
the brush or pad twisted
with dough gunk, the toilet
that only half flushes, and the shower
that trickles more than it blasts,
the rushing water sounds inside
my bathroom's wall that startle
me into believing there's a flood underway—
on an average day I live with these
occurrences with mirth, but one day
the temperature will be just right, the combination
of the good, the awful, and the terrible
surround me and broom sticks break,
skillets fly at dumpsters, refrigerators
have empathy with a calm's inner
suction to keep its essential whole—
what and where are these personal thunderbolts?—
should I look for them everywhere about
me, ready to duck, to embarrass myself, again
and again, but I'm so weary of thinking of it, I
just want to circle myself in sunlight



Sakura Koi
Acrylic paints

Raena Campos



Judoka

Judoka is the term used for people who practice the martial art of Judo. I took a picture of my sister throwing her partner and used pen and color pencils to draw the picture.



Twist in Time

For this painting I basically used acrylic paints. The piece started off as a smaller version of abstract pieces cut out of a magazine and I replicated a larger version of it by painting it on a canvas.

Shintaro Okanaka



*The Past and
the Present*

Silver gelatin
print

2006

Shintaro Okanaka



*Between Society
and Freedom*

Digital inkjet print

2007

[illegible]

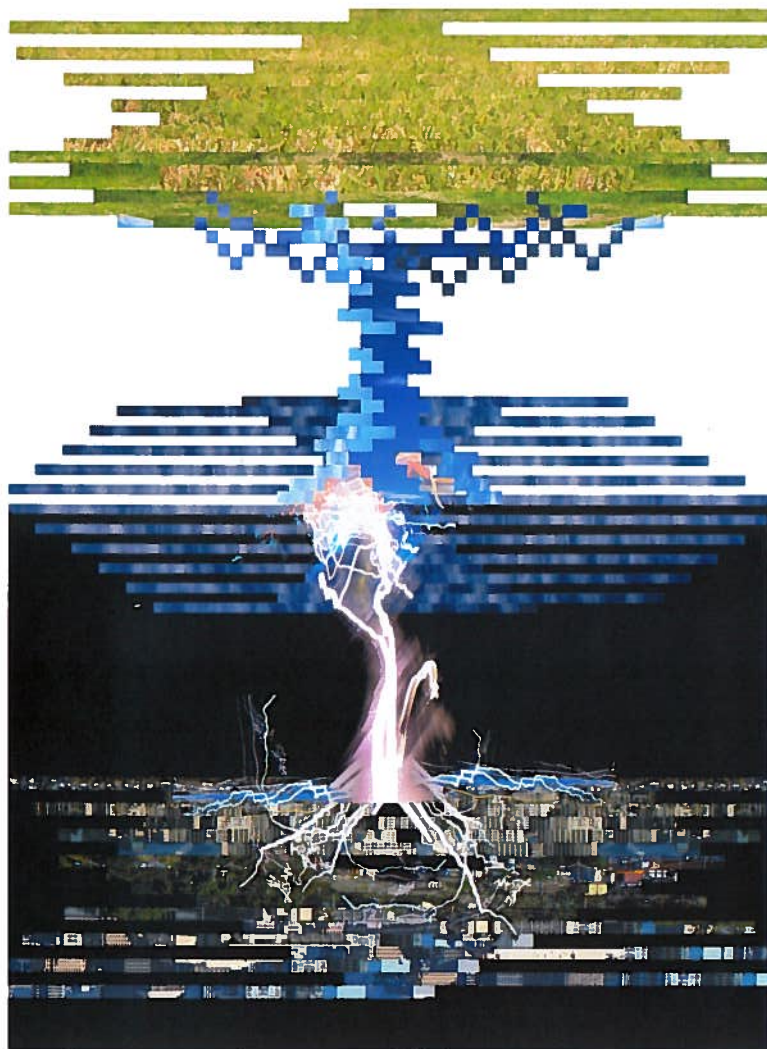
Digital inkjet print

80



Consumerism
Digital inkjet print
2007

Shintaro Okanaka



Balancing Act
Digital inkjet print
2007

Shadow

in the darkness
of his skin
we wrap ourselves
en masse
because we're crazy
and we're stupid
and we're absolutely desperate

The Lone Streetlight on Piliwale Road

I'm supposed to say something like light
defeats darkness and beats back the shadows,
but from the bottom of the road, the radiance
is a dull smudge on black. There's nothing
noble in the little bit of illumination the lone
streetlight spills on this short black strip
of Piliwale Road.

The stars are bold, blue,
and the edge of the galaxy burns through
the sky, every brilliant point, another ray
cast into the vast void where all light is lost.

I'm supposed to wish for dawn and see hope
in the day that conceals stars in a blue mask,
to find solace in the tragedies and comedies
we make of our lives as we make ourselves
the measure of all things.

As I drive
up the hill, the light from the bulb swells
into a dim golden ring with ragged edges
of grass and a scatter of plumeria blossoms.
In that pale glow, the spit of road is brief,
a span of black from nowhere to nowhere
and gone.

Nobody will miss that light less
than I will when somebody finally blasts
that bulb blind. I'm supposed to celebrate
the victory of light, but I just can't see one.
There is nothing more here than a faint fire,
a spark with no strength against the night.

Eric Paul Shaffer

Kalpana Chawla Aboard Columbia

Through the port,
 she saw the planet,
 and from the port,
her own face reflected
 in the blue curve
 of the Earth.
Reflecting from her eye
 on the dark glass,
 she saw the image
of our world within her.

Joan Payne Kincaid

Rain Again II

Rain again irritating need
galoshes raincoats umbrella tilting;
at breakfast we argue over dates and deeds;

she's gaining and gagging down grits
while we drink coffee at the diner;
you drop some on your wrinkled shirt
after a grim meal of omelets;

it's time to move our feet and silently melt away
not wishing to deny good manners,
(on no account do we want to do that)
we decide to exit to another mode;

I seem to be smothering with odd symptoms
a minor sort of insanity modeled on a modem;
I don't mean to make demands but you might feign
some existential indication or acknowledgement
indefinable but definitely in existence
instead of standing there on the corner with the dog
playing with beads to calculate how to count or play
that ding dong clanging minor key on the piano
a lone lingering note that keeps lounging in Key West;

why do you pretend it doesn't matter?
I disagree with you and insist that it does...

Joan Payne Kincaid

Poem In Three Parts

Moving to a new replacement of vaguely laced
vanishing points into dead issues and eccentric
languages of tongues tong-ed in a glue of dim-
inished animal tissue and issuing attitude lip-lap
engagement on dizzy entering for disengagement
arguing intrigues of another's altitude of resentful
submission balanced in the prescribed technique.

Technique prescribed balanced submission
resentful of altitude another's intrigues
argue disengagement entering dizzy on
engagement lip lap attitude issuing tissue an-
imal minimal nubile miniscule diminished
fifth of glue tong-ed tongues language of
tissues into dead vanishing points of vague
local replacement new to moving on top.

Submission balanced in the prescribed technique
moving to a new replacement of vaguely laced
arguing intrigues of another's altitude of resentful
vanishing points into dead tissues and eccentric
engagement on dizzy entering for disengagement
languages of tongues tong-ed in a glue of dim-
inished animal tissue and issuing attitude lip-lap.



Dennis McFadden

Delicate Ways

Spotting a prostitute through the Truck Stop windows, Francis gives chase. Two truckers at the counter look up from their coffee, annoyed at having been startled. The elderly waitress, Doris, however, immersed in a word puzzle in the back booth, never so much as glances at Francis running by, flabby and flat-footed, his crucifix bouncing before him.

Down the unforgiving concrete steps in the front of the building, Francis heads toward the back where the prostitute was pounding on the trucker's door. He's a reluctant chaser at best. He has little use for sweating, and can't remember the last time he ran before he chased his first whore, but duty beckons, a double duty. It's his responsibility as Night Manager of the truck stop to let his truckers sleep in peace, and, more importantly, his obligation as Lay Minister in the Episcopal Church to try to steer a young girl from the path of iniquity.

Is he still a Lay Minister? Francis isn't certain, not since the troubles,

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since the split from the church. What is certain is this young girl is in need of his ministry, even though, just as certainly, she's bound to display a reluctant, if not downright hostile, attitude toward his ministrations.

Francis sees the Roadway the girl was pounding on, but she's gone. Slowing to a trot, he spots her nearing an England three rigs over, slinking through the parking lot shadows. He accelerates, grasping his crucifix to keep it from bouncing away. He wants to ask the girl if her mother knows what she's doing, give her some food for thought, perhaps plant a seed that might sprout into repentance and reform. But he has to get closer, as shouting would only defeat his purpose.

He never ceases to be amazed at how fast a girl in heels that high can run, to the inevitable waiting car that roars off into the night. Stopping, he bends to catch his breath, clutching his knees, near collapse now the adrenaline is spent. The car speeds past the gas pumps to the intersection, right on red, down the boulevard toward I-80. Probably from out of town; Francis is hard-pressed to imagine prostitutes abiding here in his own hometown, here in Hartsgrove, Pennsylvania. His crucifix is clutched in his hand; he doesn't remember removing it, though he does remember waving it about as though chasing a vampire. Huffing, he heads back toward the restaurant.

The truckers, two black shadows, stand in the window watching. Francis puts his crucifix back on. The truckers vanish.

The crucifix is identical to the one his wife Mary Anne no longer wears, Jesus carved in faint relief on a wooden cross, four inches long and a quarter inch thick, hanging by a rawhide bootlace. They bought the crucifixes after becoming Lay Ministers at Grace Church Episcopal, but since the troubles and the split, Mary Anne has quit wearing hers. Not so, Francis. He feels the crucifix is a reflection of his faith, not of his allegiance to Grace Church. He also wears it to suggest to his wife that perhaps splitting from the church was not the right thing to do, though he suspects it isn't a particularly effective suggestion, since Mary Anne has never broached the topic. Nor, therefore, has he.

He uses the handrail to pull himself up the steps, legs like putty. He

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can't chase whores like he used to. Turning forty hasn't helped. He tugs at the edges of his gray uniform vest—TSA, for Truck Stops of America, embroidered in red on the breast— but they no longer meet over his belly. The row of buttons is gradually moving away from the row of button holes, continents drifting apart. Francis misses his surplice. It was much more forgiving, a full-sleeved, flowing garment, luxurious in its plenty.

Back in the restaurant, the great, dull gleam of the place, usually so soothing, with all the vinyl, plastic, and Formica washed down and waiting, at rest, at peace, somehow offers him little comfort on this night. Is it his weariness after the chase? Francis catches himself waddling, corrects himself immediately, pointing his feet, straightening his shoulders, but he can't escape the feeling of littleness padded in fat, and he feels anxious. Why? Because he didn't catch the prostitute? He doubts it, as he's never caught one yet. Because of the split from the church, how it nags? Or because of the way the truckers, now back at the counter, hunched over their cups, are glaring?

Even earlier, they'd been watching. His crucifix. Customers have often commented on it, how unusual it is, how big and delicate, and he's always responded with the story of how he and his wife bought them just after becoming Lay Ministers. It's a good story. But now it occurs to him, again, that he can't tell it anymore.

"Hey, Padre," the younger truckers says. "If you're that God damn horny, I know a couple whores I can set you up with."

The other trucker, two stools down, snorts in delight. He's bulkier than the younger one, who is quite burly himself. They both wear truckers' uniforms of dull denim and flannel, and truckers' hats that shield their unshaven faces from the lights overhead. The older trucker says, "Ain't they supposed to be celebrate or something anyways?"

"Yeah," says the other, "except for them altar boys."

Their chuckles are mirthless and menacing. Still trying to catch his breath, Francis forces a smile. "Can I get you gentlemen anything else?"

"First of all, Padre, you can quit calling me a God damn gentleman. I don't drink my coffee with my pinkie sticking out, I don't wear fancy,

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shoes, and I don't set down to piss."

"Speaking of piss," the older trucker says, "gimme some more of that coffee."

Francis' face falters in the middle of a failed smile. This degree of hostility is new territory. Across the restaurant, at the rear booth, Doris gives a yip of delight, having found a particularly well hidden word. There's no lightness in the truckers' words, no hint of humor that might indicate an impending punch-line when they'll all laugh together. Speechless, Francis can only stare. Their faces are hard as their words. His heart, still quick from the chase, booms hollow, as an odd expanse comes over him, turning his restaurant foreign and unfamiliar. He has a sudden vision of catching the prostitute, asking her if her mother knows what she's doing, and the young girl's reply of, *yes—yes; she's driving the car*, leaves him floating in a blank and boundless vacuum. Instinctively he glances upward, to the rain-stained tiles of the ceiling.

*

"I don't know a delicate way to put this." Father Bill, three months earlier, spoke as if each word depended on him for its very survival in the language. An enormously fat man with a neatly trimmed salt and pepper beard, he'd brought Francis into his parish hall office during the coffee hour following the service. It was the second Sunday in Lent; Francis remembers it by the deep purple color of the chasuble Father Bill had worn during the Eucharist.

"Sit down," Father Bill said, patting the chair beside him.

"What is it, Father?" Francis sat, leaning forward.

"Francis," said Father Bill, slapping his knee. "There's a problem."

"What kind of a problem?"

"Well, it's—" Father Bill sighed, breaking eye contact with Francis to stare at the threadbare carpet. Not his usual M.O. Francis became concerned. Beyond the office door, the general rumble and clatter of the coffee hour seemed to subside. "I have it on good authority," Father Bill said, "that while you've been assisting me with the administration of the Holy Communion—which probably makes it worse, though I suppose

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it's not good at any time..."

Francis waited, blood draining from his head.

"There's no delicate way to put this," Father Bill said. "During the course of handing out the Host to the laity, you've been seen...picking your nose."

Francis sat stunned. "I don't think so, Father." He remembers only an echo of that remark, the shock having filled his mind with a secular white noise.

"The thing of it is, Francis, I've heard it from more than one source. Independently. At different times."

Only then did it all click into place, tumblers in a safe door: Old Bob Mertz behind his thick glasses, Ethel Smyers with her bony hands, deaf Miles Shugars, all of them, all more distant and reserved of late, avoiding eye contact, reluctant and evasive with their handshakes and hugs.

"Now I don't want you getting upset," Father Bill said. "We can work this thing through. Don't go getting your nose out of joint." Francis realized this was a common expression of Father Bill's, though it threw him a little nonetheless.

They talked for a few minutes more, Father Bill attempting to reassure him with an anecdote about a young Indian in his parish in North Dakota thirty years earlier who'd overcome an unfortunate incident of sneezing into the chalice. Francis heard hardly a word.

He didn't want to leave the office. He wanted to stay put, hide out. But words—any grace at all with which to play for time—had deserted him. Stepping back into the coffee hour, he saw Mary Anne, her crucifix against her fuzzy lime-green sweater, towering over old Elva Plotner, amid a room full of chatting, chewing, sipping people interrupted—watching him one and all, frozen in time for that instant.

*

He told Mary Anne in their Sunday bath. It was their habit—their ritual—to bathe together after church on Sunday, filling their oversized tub with water, oils, and bubbles, lighting a candle or two, eating cheese and crackers. She called him her *Hairy Bear*. Their crucifixes they always pla-

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placed together beneath the candles on the tiled table by the tub. Sometimes, though certainly not frequently, if the sermon had been good, the weather pleasant, the mood right, the ritual might lead to what they'd come to refer to as *essey-ex*, though, on the whole, Mary Anne preferred physical expressions of their marriage to take place in the purity of darkness. Francis waited till they were settled in the tub to tell her.

Mary Anne listened, a frown crossing her wide brow. "Were you picking your nose?" Francis stared at her stout freckled breasts.

"Of course not," he said.

Mary Anne went into silent stare mode. When she knew he was lying—when they both knew he was lying—she simply stared into his eyes till he looked away. Francis looked away. The old habit must have returned. He knew it. It was unconscious, involuntary as breathing. How many times in the past had he been surprised, watching television, at the movies, driving to the grocery store, by Mary Anne slapping his hand away from his face when he hadn't even realized it had ventured there?

It crept about with its own agenda, a mind of its own, like the Hand that terrorized the innocent in that old horror movie. He thought he'd broken—or been broken of—the habit. He couldn't recall the last slap, though it must have been years ago, and now it came to him, a devastating revelation, that the habit must have adapted, evolved, survived, learning to venture out only when the coast was ostensibly clear.

"Francis," said Mary Anne, wagging her head. "What am I going to do with you?"

From beneath his averted face, Francis looked up, full of hope.

"What else did he say? Are you still going to be assisting? Is he 'firing' you, or what?"

"I don't know. He didn't really say."

"Find out. I want to know."

"Okay."

"Now. Call him at home."

"Okay." But Francis didn't stir. Instead he stared at his finger, his offending finger, in the water beside his leg. When he wiggled it, not a

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ripple broke the surface. Mary Anne heaved a sigh, causing a wave. Rising abruptly with swells and splashes, she stepped from the tub, donned her large fluffy robe, and left the room.

Francis had never felt more alone than he did at that moment, drifting on a wild and lonely sea. He could hear Mary Anne talking on the phone in the next room, an undertow; her voice was matter-of-fact, business-like, a solid, safe sound, yet he couldn't make out a word. A lifeline just beyond his reach.

He'd insisted on helping old Bob Mertz that morning, pushing his wife Edith's wheelchair up the steep sidewalk to the church door, despite Bob's reluctance, and he'd been mildly curious—nothing more—seeing him minutes later wheeling Edith down the aisle, gripping the wheelchair handle with a white handkerchief.

Francis slouched at the back of the tub, perfectly still in the water. He heard Mary Anne's voice rising in the other room, as the water rippled away from his heartbeat.

She returned, submerging herself again before she spoke. "No. He's not 'firing' you. He couldn't fire you if he wanted to."

"What did he say?"

"He said we'd just wait it out. Actually, what he said was we'd hold off *till this whole nose thing blows over.*"

"He said that?"

"Can you believe it? Sometimes I wonder about that man."

"He probably didn't mean..."

"Sometimes I wonder."

Mary Anne sighed, twisting in the tub, trying to settle herself comfortably, without much success. She shifted again, causing waves, letting them settle. She made herself a cheese and cracker, ate it, brushed crumbs from her bosom toward the edge of the tub, made herself another. Francis, usually the frontrunner in the cheese and cracker derby, didn't stir, leaning back limp in the water, a teddy bear with his sawdust leaking out. Setting her third cheese and cracker back on the tiled table, Mary Anne leaned up to embrace Francis, clasping his head to her chest.

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“My poor Hairy Bear,” she cooed, with clucks and wags. “My poor, pathetic Hairy Bear.” The words calmed him wondrously, and he licked at a stray crumb clinging in the moistness to the base of her breast.

*

Francis lay low. It was, after all, what Father Bill had more or less suggested, it was what Mary Anne had told him to do, and it was the easiest course of action, which made it unanimous. Sunday he stayed home. Mary Anne told Father Bill he wasn't feeling well. She wasn't lying. At the Golden Dawn Supermarket the next Tuesday, Francis bumped into Gloria Davies, a spinster of some stature who prayed and sang hymns with her arms raised toward heaven, such was her zeal, and early Thursday morning, toward the end of Francis' shift, Jim Haney, who usually sat in the back pew, came into the Truck Stop for breakfast. Francis exchanged pleasantries with both as though nothing had happened. The healing had begun.

It continued that Friday, the first day of the annual Grace Church Rummage Sale. Francis always volunteered. The church's usual core of workers showed up, those who weren't at their regular jobs, as was Mary Anne, and they all pitched in to ready the hall. Francis helped set up the long tables, then began trekking up and down the stairs, lugging cardboard boxes filled with donated goods that had accumulated over the year, second-hand clothing mostly, and household items. He placed the boxes on the tables for the ladies to disperse and arrange. Elva Plotner, as she did every year, took him by the arm, announcing how blessed they were to have such a strong, hard-working man. Francis, as he did every year, blushed, and hurried back up the stairs for another load. For an hour, two hours, he forgot about the troubles, swept away with his fellow parishioners in the flow of the common chore.

When the last box was down, Gloria Davies asked him to take the sign up to Main Street. He lugged it—a stand-alone plywood sign, *Grace Church Rummage Sale One Block Down*—out of the hall and up the steep sidewalk to the corner of Main, where he stood it on its traditional spot. It was a beautiful late spring morning. He paused to catch his breath. His

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legs were limp, he was damp with sweat, but the weariness felt good and earned. He watched Howard Doverspike, the jeweler, waving from the shadow beneath his awning to a friend driving by, and he heard laughter from two young mothers with their toddlers down the street in front of Sandt's Drug Store. He saw Dave Geer passing by in his pick-up; Dave Geer hadn't been to church in two years, not since his daughter Janey's funeral. Francis' heart jumped, as he was reminded suddenly of his own troubles, but then Billy Knapp, an old school chum, beeped and waved driving by, and Francis was filled with the sudden certainty that this too would pass. The warm sun gleamed off the red bricks and high white dome of the Court House across the street. Dave and Deb Geer would come back to the church, he was sure of it; he would call them himself, again, reach out once more in his ministry. He was filled with peace. All was right with his hometown, the way it had always been, the way it would always be.

Going back into the parish hall, he heard his name, followed by a spirited bout of laughter. By the table of gloves, scarves and winter hats, a group of his fellow parishioners were gathered around Alice Westbrook, a large woolen mitten on her hand, poised just under her nose. Upon turning to see Francis, the group went red and silent, scattering about the hall with the practiced nonchalance of the very guilty.

*

Francis knew that Mary Anne had never much cared for Alice Westbrook, who was young, thin, and pretty, and whose husband, Cliff, not a church-goer, was a long-haired, hard-drinking, truck-driving biker who spent his evenings—with Alice as often as not—in the seedier bars of Hartsgrove. So Francis wasn't surprised that Mary Anne wasn't surprised by Alice's boorish behavior, related to her that afternoon by Francis. She told him "consider the source"; time would heal this wound, this too would pass. But Francis still felt the sting.

Everything changed the following Sunday. Mary Anne was the Lector, Francis again staying home. When she returned, he had their bath prepared, but he could tell at a glance she was distressed. Her jaw was

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clenched, her lips in a line, and she was not humming any of the morning's hymns. When she went to the bedroom to change into her robe, Francis fetched the cheese and crackers and lemonade.

He lit the candles and undressed, settling into the water to wait. A moment later she came in, still dressed, still wearing her crucifix. "What's the matter?" he said.

At first she didn't answer. Her frown deepened. Lowering the toilet lid, she sat, crossing her stout legs, still holding the text bulletin, the insert to the weekly church program. "We're being persecuted. I think they want us to leave the church."

His heart tumbled. He'd hoped—he'd expected—that the healing process would be well along by now, that she would come home bearing pleasant church news, including speculation about when he might best return, when peace and normalcy might reign once more. He'd day-dreamed that perhaps Father Bill would send a message to that effect, concerning the triviality of the whole affair, the need to quickly move on. He'd been so optimistic, in fact, that friskiness had overcome him; he'd hoped that the light-hearted banter following Mary Anne's good news might lead to essey-ex, and now he sat alone, forlorn and bewildered, in the tub.

He said, "What makes you think that?"

"They only humiliated me today. I was mortified."

"What?"

"I had to read this." She handed him the text bulletin. "Here. Can you imagine me reading this? In front of people? In front of *men*? Can you imagine *any* woman reading this? Except maybe Alice Westbrook." It was the second reading from Romans 4: 6-12. He began to read.

"Out loud," she said.

So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin."

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He looked up, puzzled.

"Keep reading," she said, impatiently.

He continued:

Is this blessedness, then, pronounced only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We say, "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised.

"Well," Francis said. "I mean, they say that in the Bible a lot."

"*Francis*," she said. "Exactly *which* part of the body do you think they circumcise?"

"Probably nobody even noticed."

Mary Anne fumed.

"Well it's not like they picked that reading out just for you," he said.

"They have to follow the Lectionary."

"Well they pick the Lector, don't they?"

He tried considering that, but his heart wasn't in it. Instinctively, he doubted they were being persecuted, but when it came down to his instinct versus Mary Anne's, he tended to get out of the way. He was weary. "Aren't you getting in?"

"*Francis*." Shaking her head, she stood with a not unfamiliar sound between a cluck and a snort, and left the room.

He leaned back in the tub, becoming as still as he could, letting his

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breathing lift the water. He looked at his own circumcised part, previously so playful, now shrunken, shriveled, and shameful. He was having difficulty staying afloat. Drifting back, lower and lower, he allowed his face to slip beneath the surface, where he stared at the candle, at the fire flickering through water.

*

The younger, meaner trucker takes out a knife, and opens it slowly. Francis tries to remember to breathe. The trucker begins to clean his fingernails with the knife. The blade is sharp and shiny. Francis fights the urge to tell him not to clean his nails over the cup, as the dirt might fall in the coffee.

Francis approaches with the pot. "Refill?"

The smirk is gone from the trucker's face. His eyes, shaded by the bill of his hat, are dark and cruel. "If I want some God damn coffee, I'll ask for it."

Stories flash through Francis' mind, stories he hears every year of prostitutes vanishing from truck stops and women disappearing from disabled cars, found slain along the highway hundreds of miles away. The hours of isolation on the road, the pills to stay awake, can twist a man's mind, make him do strange things, and some of these truckers are misfits to begin with.

His gaze falls from the trucker's face, dropping to the hand working the knife over the cup. It's the left hand. On the finger is a ring—not of metal, but of skin, a white, indented band where a ring is missing. Francis wants to ask about the missing ring, but can't.

"That's a mighty pretty cross there, Padre."

The crucifix on his chest suddenly feels life-sized. "Thank you."

"I could use me a cross like that."

It takes a moment for his response to tumble into place. "I can tell you where I got it."

"Want to know what I could use it for? I could use it to wipe my ass with."

The other trucker snorts, a half-hearted attempt at mirth. Francis

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looks from one to the other, his legs frozen, his mind frozen too.

"As a matter of fact, Padre, I could use *that* cross."

"Beg pardon?"

The words bristle. "I want that cross. I'll give you two cents for it."

"It's not for sale. It's my personal property." "Take it off."

"Take it off," says the older trucker. "Some poor nun's missing her dildo."

Francis' racing mind and heart overtake him. He shuts down, and all the threats—for the truckers keep talking, keep glaring, keep him pinned in place—become a blur, as though he is underwater again, and time is neither stopped nor moving. He sees Doris in the rear booth. She's praying, her white head bowed. Francis has stepped beyond himself to watch, and to listen, detached, observing the truckers' glistening, hate-filled faces, the contrite posture of Doris, head so humbly bowed. But a nod betrays her. Doris is not praying. She's fallen asleep, her head about to drop onto her open word puzzle book. Suddenly she jerks awake. Alarm spreading across her face, she looks up to witness the same scene that Francis is watching.

The trucker rises on the rungs of his stool, leaning across the counter toward Francis, who sees the blade flash in the corner of his eye, sees the other hand coming at him, grabbing the crucifix on his chest, yanking. He feels himself pulled by rawhide on his neck till he is face to face with the man, nearly touching. In the momentary, everlasting intimacy of this odd embrace, Francis sees a vacuum in the cloudy eyes and smells a bitter scent.

It's over in an instant. Doris will say later that he looked like an Olympic diver, rising high on the balls of his feet, bouncing upward, full of grace, arms towering over his head, from where they came down fisted together in perfect precision, swiftly, powerfully, with a sound like a muffled shot. Francis will have to take her word for it. He does not see for himself. He remembers nothing of the time between the cloudy eyes and bitter scent, and the sight of the trucker unconscious on the counter, a puddle of blood spreading away from his face.

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*

Being a humble man, Francis does not consider himself a likely candidate to have been chosen as an instrument of God. He never entertains the possibility long before dismissing it out of hand. The day manager, the cook, and a host of others attribute the feat to a pure, unadulterated, 120-octane adrenaline.

Nevertheless, Francis does entertain the possibility. He can't help it. He frequently finds the lyrics of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" coursing through his mind as he marches through his nightly rounds at the Truck Stop, down the aisles of the Golden Dawn Supermarket, across Main Street in the shadow of the Court House. *He bath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword, His truth is marching on.* Though mostly, far more often, he feels surely the cook is right. He feels himself the same old Francis, nothing special, more waddler than marcher, little-ness padded in fat.

Mary Anne is even more dismissive of the possibility, at least in all her professions and declarations. Yet Francis can't help but notice, and enjoy, the hints of deference present for the first time in much of their ordinary, everyday intercourse, the way she dishes him up the juiciest chop, considers his water temperature preference in their weekly baths, irons his vests so creaselessly, consults with him on television viewing choices.

In the end, there is little doubt in either of their minds that the crazed trucker was in fact smote down by a power beyond that which Francis possesses.

Though he dismisses having been chosen, his faith has been affected. Rote and cant have been replaced by mystery and glory, by a mystery he will never solve and a glory he will never entertain. Francis and Mary Anne have not returned to the church, though the ritual of their Sunday bath remains. Her crucifix stays in the nightstand by the bed. His floats in the water beside them. She makes him a cheese and cracker, her leg pressing against his, hinting of essey-ex.

He likes the way that when he pulls his crucifix to the bottom of the

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tub and releases it, it rises out of the water. He does it several times, to see if it will clear the surface. Then it settles, floating gently. They watch the delicate way it bobs upon the water.

Immortality

I'm not saying that this is true but
What if eternity is something small
Curled up inside the shell
Of a snail that died in your garden

What if you find that shell one day
And put it into one of your pants pockets
And what if as long as you keep it with you
You won't ever die

What if you carry it around for years
Until you no longer think about it then
On a Saturday morning you take the pants
And some other old clothes to the Goodwill

And it isn't until you get home
That you remember the snail shell
You rush back to the store to find
That the pants have already been sold

Over time you grow philosophical about
Your loss you don't begrudge whoever
Has the shell now and figure eternal life's
Just something else that doesn't last forever

Buff Whitman-Bradley

Missed the boat

Not for the first time I arrived at the dock
Out of breath to find the berth empty
I scanned the blue expanse and spotted it
Too distant to tell at first whether it was
Coming toward me or moving away
I watched it for several minutes
Until it disappeared over the horizon
Then I turned to go

Friends who made the trip wrote me postcards
Describing the splendors of the new place
Telling me about a brilliant and lascivious woman
Who would have been a perfect match for me
About a publisher who was looking
For exactly the kind of work I do
About a band of young revolutionaries
Who needed someone with my talents
And sense of history
To organize the revolt
That would finally overthrow capitalism

I keep all the postcards in a shoebox
And take them out from time to time
To admire the gorgeous pictures on the front
And read the wish-you-were-heres on the back
And imagine how different my life might have been
Had I been just a little more punctual

But in the life I got my children are
Beautiful and brave and they seem to like me
The woman I married is fierce and passionate
And always two steps ahead
I can install a toilet fix a leaky faucet grow lettuce and peas
I have my own bullhorn and write a darn good leaflet
And if the FBI has some questions to ask me
They can find me today sitting on the dock of the bay
Watching the tide roll away
As I ponder all I would have missed
If I had not missed all those boats

Yesterday's weather

When it happened your friends said
You should have seen it coming
It was so obvious to everyone else
And the warning signs were hard to miss
But you're the kind of person
Who might very well see the elephant in the room
Yet fail to notice that it is sitting in your lap
Until it gets up off you
And lumbers out the door to rejoin the herd
If life is a movie you're so taken with the scenery
That you can't keep up with the plot
You never pay your bills on time
You're down a quart of oil your tires are treadless
Your canned goods have expired
And you always dress for yesterday's weather

Still you're inclined to look on the bright side
You've made many new elephant friends
You plan to trade in your old clunker for a bike
And buy only freeze-dried from now on
And you always do your best
To take the weather as it comes
One yesterday at a time

A POET, NO CHRISTMAS PLANT

I

The Season over, altar daffodils
sometimes visit the bedsides of invalids
until, skin and bones, at best they're dropped on
the fertilizer bins at gardens' ends.
Usually though, potted, they end up at
the town dump, never to see light again.

II

They're called fools who replant exhausted bulbs,
lending to ingrown roots a newborn hope.
It takes years, often may not even work.
What's the point? Stores and nurseries abound.

III

Coddled, forced, depleted, revived.
None of that. The poet was, is, will be
healthy, strong. Pissed off, yes. Wondrous poems,
doing everything right, save the one thing.
He founded no magazine to publish
editors, they him. The horn he blew
was so muted that when his books saw print
they asked how much he paid, especially those
who did pay, and he never did. He moaned
at poet laureates' self-promotions--
seeing that newspapers did well by them,
unconcerned for those who publish but not
by the big houses, and maybe they weren't
for sale at Border's. He'd never learned
how to be invited much for readings.
He's so good, so very very good.
He just hopes that his strong roots and full bulb
will be seen because once you're dead not everyone's
Emily Dickinson. God damn their eyes.
Do they think he's a Christmas daffodil?

Reihana MacDonald Robinson

“Huzzah for Otaheite”

Landfall:

Coupang, Timor—true vernacular
Of unsung heroes
Scraped lean and dreadful.

Rainswept Mother England welcomes her sailors
Three. Three! Head back to sea, tempt Providence
To search for Vermin already released
Sailing with musket and cutlass to Pit Kern

Queen Iddeaah and King Tynah
Turn on a big welcome.

Pandora’s prison
A floating Guantanamo, awaits
Loyalists and confused mutineers.

Lovers and children swim out.
Knife-sharp shells score breast and face
Blood stains the gentle waves
Howls stain all ears
Premonition of ultimate loss
Grief unknown to sailors

Unmapped reefs
Tear the hull
Wrecked.

A boatswain’s mate
Tosses the bolt, flings the scuttle
And into the waves, crew and Prisoner are loosed

Drunk on seabird blood
And their own urine
Timor sits solitary
More home than home.

Reihana MacDonald Robinson

COME OUT (for Mike Meads)

Weta walk this way
Come out of your log cave
Demonstrated your scabrous skeleton
Make the tourist shudder
Kiore was the beginning of the end for you
Gorse may save your skin

Weta ancestors show up in the Triassic strata
Weta lineage predates the gristly tuatara
Weta face like a car from the future

Fragrant almond to the taste
White puffball on the tongue
Now we need to demonstrate your ardour
Are you sure you want to survive?
The clean and green
Is not at all pure
You dice with death powdered into life
In far-off Alabama, yes
Someone is driving down the Tull Highway
Blasting religious rock and chewing gum
This Someone is renting a DVD
After playing all day in a petri dish
Crafting fresh death, export-quality death
1080 skewered to your cave
Are you clever enough, feral pig-like
Can you vomit up the poison?
Or you birthing malformed shapes through that spiny
Ovipositor? Nymphs re-assembled without
Ballet shoes, nymphs who can only tap-dance
Painful arthritis jiggering their segments.
Come Out weta give us a kiss

Her Sister Advises, “Call Dad.”

She phones over two thousand mile. In tears.

She’s dented her mom’s new car.

It’s prom night. All that perfect afternoon

she’d played the leading-lady-attended-to

in the beautician’s chair, having saved up

for new curls and make-up. Seductive

as pages she studied in *Cosmo* and *Glamour*.

She’d driven to town alone in her mom’s new car. A victory

of fast-talk. She’d parked in the library lot and returned

—having tipped the beautician judiciously—

with change in her pockets, a brighter blonde.

Maybe so stunned by her new face

in the rearview mirror she “can’t exactly recall”

twisting the keys in the ignition and backing

square into the bumper of the man backing

behind her. And now she calls,

sobbing. It’s prom night. Her eyes puffy,

mascara ruined. The man wrote down her license,

her address, her name and her mom’s too.

“What will happen? What will he do?”

I’m sorry for the way wishes seldom come true.

I tell her the guy’s likely bluffing; only weaklings

bully like that. She cries as if her dreams

had shattered. A pumpkin, some mice, a glass shoe.

In This Room

Somebody slept.
Somebody wept.

Somebody woke.
Somebody broke.

Somebody faced
the mirror-mirror on the wall.
Somebody paced this floor.
Paced the hall.

How many Nobodys
pried at painted shut
windows for air?
How many Anybodys
stood to stare?

Notice how rooms and windows repeat
in rooms and windows across the street.
Did Anybody
see Somebody,
and when he saw her she looked away?
Who could imagine
what she might say?

*Cold day, she says, cold town.
I watched a strange man watching
and writing something down.*

A Journal of Forgetting

(November 1917)

I

They fight wars like civilized men,
even shaking hands over the trenches
on Christmas Day;
and signing treaties with a sweep
of the pen.

Combat is their ballet,
an art form to them;
the rules of strategy apply
and a certain decorum.

They are not savages, no;
they guide their battalions
where they are told to go.

They celebrate their victories
with china cups bloated with tea,
and snifters of the finest brandy:

little Napoleons that pose
for portraits with hands tucked
over their bellies, smug expressions,
dressed in his shadow;
their enduring glory
that may never come.

Journal

II

I am not a strong enough soul for this life;
I want to go home,
the home I dream of
when I sleep in stinking foxholes
of mud and loam,
while water floods my boots
and rots my feet down to the bone,
while bursts of artillery fire
rattle my skull like a feral beast.

I want to feel joy again,
and return to the country
from where I came, to the home
where I grew to be the man that I am.

The mustard gas eats my breath;
I can feel my lungs dissolve,
my throat fills with blood and pulp;
it burns, it turns,
it blinds me.

Last night I slept standing up;
lying down will drown me.
Now I drown in my own body,
a far sea issues its briny fluid
from within me;
and if I survive I shall exist
as a wastrel, an invalid.

III

Each day stretches, outnumbering the last;
pearl light pales the window I stare at
day after day, waiting
for your familiar face to wander past.
A ghost image against the glass:
it is not you,
just the neighbour walking through
or the postman bringing me letters,
the ones that come from you,
the ones that tell me you're coming home
and to wait for you;
you know I do.

I dream of you, wherever you may be:
dancing in the cafes in Paris,
or sipping wine in Burgundy
or gazing at stars over the Seine,
one last time before your deployment
to fields unseen by the strong
and the ordinary like me.

I try not to think of the improbability
of your return, wrapped like a mummy,
a flag for your burial shroud,
reposing in a foreign grave.
Wherever you rest, whatever you've seen,
you remain far, much too far
away from me.

IV

We are not permitted to view the caskets;
the hounds are thrown a bone or two
to gnaw upon, their shutters clapping
like a Cyclops' eye;
one final snap and they are gone.

Sometimes a wife or mother
will throw herself upon the lid,
mourning the times she could have saved him
from where he went and what he did.

The coffins are planted like seeds in the earth
in the hopes that something benevolent will grow;
while in the foreign land, on foreign soil
another family buries their own;
flowers massacre themselves upon the stone
where boys as young as ten
grew in death to becoming men.

Every little kindness will be stitched
into their epitaphs.
The dead depend on it
so they will not become the last
or the lost
in a journal of forgetting.

A Mother's Worry

Now I am in my twenties, the busiest time of my life so far, working hard to balance my time between school, work, a boyfriend, and occasional contact with my mother. It's not that I don't get along with her; it's just that our schedules keep us from meeting often and having long conversations.

On the rare occasions when I do bump into her, she is always doing house chores: sweeping, mopping, cleaning, cooking, washing, organizing... Still, within the few seconds of breathing time she allows herself, I hear her mumble as I pass by,

“What will you do if I die?”

I always just pretend that I don't hear and move on, yet her concern haunts me. She is much more than the keeper of the house; she is my mother. And yet I know nothing of her. Well, I know all the things that she *does*, but I don't understand *why* she does them.

Why did she abandon her comfortable life in Hong Kong to live in a foreign country that speaks a language she can't even understand? Why does she bust ass during the day at a Chinese restaurant for minimum wage and then attend night school to learn English for the nationalization exam? Why does she rest here on the sofa at two o'clock in the morning waiting for my brother to come home, knowing that she has work at seven? Why doesn't she just *go to sleep*?

A Mother's Worry

"Go to sleep, Mom." I complained as I passed by the living room on my way to the bathroom.

"How can I sleep when not everyone is home?" she snapped back.

"He will come home when he comes home." I surrendered and slowly disappeared into the darkness of my room.

"Even if I did go to sleep, I won't be able to sleep well." She raised her voice a little in agitation, not at me but at the situation. So once again, I could only pretend that I didn't hear. But she continued, "Wait till you become a mother, then you will know."

And then it happened. No, I didn't quite become a mother, but something like it—I met my boyfriend. He is very dear to me, and I've found myself becoming increasingly concerned for him over the years. I call him in the morning so that he can get ready for school. I remind him of approaching appointments and birthdays. I nagged him about his health until he gave up smoking and drinking. Once I woke up in the middle of the night when I knew he was working on a paper.

TEXT: "You done with paper?" (01:42:01 AM)

TEXT: "No, go to sleep love you" (01:43:41AM)

Go to sleep. Those words sounded so strange to me. Go to sleep. The very words that I had told my mother. Go to sleep!

I felt the urge to text my boyfriend the very same line my mother told me: "How can I sleep when your paper is not done?"

Then I imagined him replying with my words: "It will be done when it is done."

And I would continue with: "Even if I sleep, I won't sleep well."

So I gave up on the thought of telling him that I couldn't sleep. I just lay there and couldn't help but smile. I kept smiling as if I had found the world's most precious treasure, afraid that if I laughed out loud the world too would know the secret. I finally understood a part of my mother.

I don't know what I will do when she dies, but I do believe I'll fully understand her one day. As she said, "Wait till you become a mother, then you will know."



Lilliana Marie

acrylic on paper, mounted on canvas

(there is a conversation in my mouth: dry, salted,
common as peanuts, leaving me thirsty;
whilst another in my HEARTheart, HEARTheart,
can you hear it?)

do you have a match to help me set this rice candy ablaze?
the japanese manufacturers conceptualized an edible wrapper.

"mommy sprayed the keyboard with too much lysol,
so w cnt typ vry wll nymor."

you are in the distance making art from nothing.
will you send me some french blue paint?
a photograph of yr mother?

(yr eyes are on my wall:
UNTITLED, Rothko, 1969

do i have enough money to buy a stamp for this letter?
do we have enough gasoline to make it through the mountains?)



CONTRIBUTORS NOTES

Jonathan Barrett currently works in banking and lives in Kansas City, Missouri with his wife and three sons. His poems have appeared recently or are forthcoming in numerous literary journals including *The Literary Review*, *The Minnesota Review*, *North American Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *Pavement Saw*, *Phoebe*, and *Subtropics* among others.

Buff Whitman-Bradley is the author of two books of poems, *b.eagle*, *poet*, and *The Honey Philosophies*. His work has appeared in numerous journals. In addition to writing, he is the producer of documentary videos and audios. His interviews with American soldiers who have refused to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan can be heard at www.courageto resist.org. He lives in Northern California with his wife, Cynthia.

Raena Campos is a student at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa.

Earl Cooper: After serving in the Air Force as an 'electronics intercept op' (read: translating radio transmissions out of Mainland China), he found himself majoring in Chinese Lit at UH Mānoa, then got into fiction writing under Phil Damon (who liked to sit *zazen* style atop the teacher's desk); and spent 12 years teaching English in Japan while 'camping' in an old 'obake house' outside Kyoto (where many creatures other than 'gokiburi' freely came and went). He now spends his time between Hawai'i and the ABE Immigrants & Refugees ESL program at Edmonds CC north of Seattle.

Craig Cotter was born in 1960 in New York and has lived in California since 1986. His third collection of poetry, *CHOPSTIX NUMBERS*, is available from Boise State University's Ahsahta Press. Poems from his new manuscript *AWAKE* are upcoming in *Global Tapestry Review*, *Lung-full*, *Poetry New Zealand*, *Alimentum*, *Dalhousie Review*, *Court Green*, *Mudfish*, *Van Gogh's Ear*, *Inkwell*, *Eleven Eleven*, *Euphony & Margie*.

Darrell Epp: A collection of Darrell Epp's poetry entitled *Imaginary Maps* was published in 2009 by Signature Editions (www.signature-editions.com)

Greg Evason keeps involved with LIFE via his various art projects: poems, novels, visual work and plays piano.

Keala Francis is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Hawai'i. She is a creative writer, freelance journalist, and associate editor of several short story anthologies.

Sarah Fulmer: Born in upstate New York, moved to Fiji with her family at a very young age. After growing up in the lush tropics only worrying about where to find the best stick to play with, they moved to the steel jungle of mid-Michigan. Even as an adult she is still an island child at heart. After graduating from the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa she plans to pursue a career in photography and teach high school science in order to spread her love for beauty of nature among those that may not see it very often.

Rich Ives has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Artists Trust, Seattle Arts Commission and the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines for his work in poetry, fiction, editing, publishing, translation and photography. His writing has appeared in *Verse*, *North American Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Northwest Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Iowa Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Virginia Quarterly Review* and many more. He is the 2009 winner of the Francis Locke Memorial Poetry Award from Bitter Oleander.

Lowell Jaeger teaches creative writing at Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Montana. His poems are forthcoming in *The Iowa Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *The Coe Review*, *Poetry Flash*, *Georgetown Review*, *Big Muddy*, *Antioch Review*, *Louisiana Review*, *Pacific Review*, *Poetry East*, and *The California Quarterly*. Jaeger's first two collections of poems, *War On War* and *Hope Against Hope*, were published by Utah State University Press. His third collection of poems, *Suddenly Out of a Long Sleep*, was published by Arctos Press in 2008. Currently Lowell Jaeger serves as Editor of *Many Voices Press* and is busy compiling *New Poets of the American West*, an anthology of poets from western states. He is the winner of the Grolier Poetry Peace Prize and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Montana Arts Council.

Joan Payne Kincaid: Writer, published internationally, 10 books of poetry, Pushcart nominee; painter, many exhibits on L.I. and in Manhattan, former opera –concert artist, mom; live/work in Sea Cliff with Rod, a rescue tabby, and a Parson Russell Terrier; avid birder and gardener. Current work in *Limestone Poetry Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Santa Clara Review*, *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, *South Central Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Georgetown Review*, *Edgø*, 88, *Modern Haiku*, *Iconoclast*, *Lynx Eye*, *Yalobusha Review*, *Mother Earth Journal*, *Tule Review*, *Cairn*, *Origami Condom*, *Unexpected Harvest*, Anthology from Kings Estate Press. Book of poetry, with Wayne Hogan entitled *Blue Eyes Wise and Dancing*.

Matthew Lany lives in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, with Nancy, his lovely wife, and his silly daughter Eloise. His work has appeared in *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and various other publications. He teaches at Florida Community College at Jacksonville, where he has been a faculty member for a number of years.

Lillianna Marie likes words and the colors red, yellow, and blue. Today she planted lettuce seed (Romaine) in her yard. Perhaps by the time you've read this they will have sprouted. Or, perhaps, it will be the end of the Romaine period.

Gavin McCall grew up on a farm on the Big Island of Hawai'i, but has spent the last eight years in Honolulu, where he studies and teaches English. He won *Hawai'i Review's* Sudden Fiction Award in 2008, and his work has been or will be featured in *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Nimble*, *Lesser Flamingo*, *Paradigm* and *Six Sentences*.

Dennis McFadden: A project manager for the State of New York, lives and writes in an old farmhouse called Mountjoy on Bliss Road, off Peaceable Street near Harmony Corners in upstate New York where, when he's not managing projects, he's usually working on a novel and more stories. His debut collection of stories, *Hart's Grove*, will be published next year by the Colgate University Press, and his fiction has appeared in dozens of publications, including *The Missouri Review*, *New England Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *The South Carolina Review*.

Caroline Misner was born in a country that at the time was known as Czechoslovakia. She immigrated to Canada in the summer of 1969. Her work has appeared in numerous consumer and literary journals in Canada, the USA, and the UK, most notably *The Windsor Review*, *Prairie Journal* and *Dreamcatcher*. Her work can be viewed on line at www.thewritersezine.com, www.truepoetmagazine.com and www.bewilderingstories.com. Her short story *Strange Fruit* has recently been nominated for the Writers' Trust/McClelland-Steward Journey Anthology Prize. She currently lives in Georgetown Ontario where she continues to read, write and follow her muse, wherever it may take her.

Shintaro Okanaka moved to Hawai'i at the age of seven. He developed an interest in art in high school, and started college as a design student. During his time there he grew weary of studying design and took an interest in exploring different art mediums. His current interests are in photography, digital imaging and ceramics.

Kenneth Quilantang, Jr. currently lives in Wahiawa and wakes up to chickens early in the morning. He is a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the English Department. Ken is also trying to figure out how to incorporate those chickens into his MA project.

Kristel Rietesel-Low received her MFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This is her second publication.

Reihana MacDonald Robinson is published in the USA and Pacific. She lives and works in both the USA and Aotearoa New Zealand her homeland. Her work explores social and environmental issues. *God of Ugly Things* considers the death of an indigenous invertebrate, the weta, which is killed by 1080, a toxin dumped from the air into the wilderness by the Department of 'conservation'. She is an artist and writer and organic farmer. Auckland University Press published her collection in *AUP NEW POETS 3, 2008*. Her poems and stories have appeared in *Landfall*, *University of Otago*, *Cutthroat*, *Melusine*, *Takabe*, *Legible 5 Roses*, *Printout* and in anthologies such as *Te Ao Marama Contemporary Maori Writing*. She is the inaugural recipient of the Te Atairangi Kaahu award for poetry in New Zealand.

Evgeny Saburov (1946-2009): Poet and playwright. Born in Yalta, he graduated with a doctorate in economics from Moscow State University in 1970. He had a distinguished career as an economist and a bank director, including a stint as minister of economics under Yeltsin. He began to be published abroad in the 1970s. In English translation his poems also appear in *Circumference*, *Poetry International* and the *St. Ann's Review*.

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Eric Paul Shaffer is author of five books of poetry, including *Lābaina Noon*, *Living at the Monastery*, *Working in the Kitchen*, *Portable Planet*, *Rattle-Snake Rider*, and *Kindling*. His poetry appears in more than two hundred local, national, and international reviews and in the anthology *100 Poets Against the War*. Shaffer received the 2002 Elliot Cades Award for Literature and a 2006 Ka Palapala Po'okela Book Award for *Lābaina Noon*. He won a 2006 Fellowship to the Summer Fishtrap Writers Workshop in Oregon. *Burn & Learn*, his first novel, will be published in Fall 2009. He teaches at Honolulu Community College.

Man Wa Shing is a student at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. *A Mother's Worry* is a short story inspired by Amy Tan's article "My Mother's Secret."

David Spiering has two degrees in English from the University of Wisconsin system. He has been a college teacher, a cook, a producer worker, and a baker. His latest book is out from Sol Books of Minneapolis MN called *My*

Chris Waters, poetrywise, is the author of "Senegal, Poems on Africa," "Outer Banks Sonata," "Hatteras Symphony," and, forthcoming in 2010 with March Street Press, "Ghost Lighthouse./Hatteras Poems." His proseworks include "Paul Claudel" and three books on black franco-phone literature. He's recently finished two other manuscripts, "King Philip's Talking Head. Amerindian Poems" and "Bestiary of Alfonso the Wise," adaptations from Galitian of the Spanish king's animal-miracle "cantigas."

John Sibley Williams has an MA in Writing and resides in Boston, where he frequently performs his poetry, though summer 2009 he is moving to Portland, OR to study Book Publishing at Portland State University. He is presently compiling manuscripts composed from the last two years of traveling and living abroad. Some of his over sixty previous or upcoming publications include: *The Evansville Review*, *Flint Hills Review*, *Cadillac Cicatrix*, *Juked*, *The Journal*, *Barnwood International Poetry*, *Concho River Review*, *Paradigm*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, *Aries*, *The Alembic*, *Phantasmagoria*, *Clapboard House*, *River Oak Review*, *Glass*, *Southern Ocean Review*, *Miranda*, *Language and Culture*, and *Raving Dove*.

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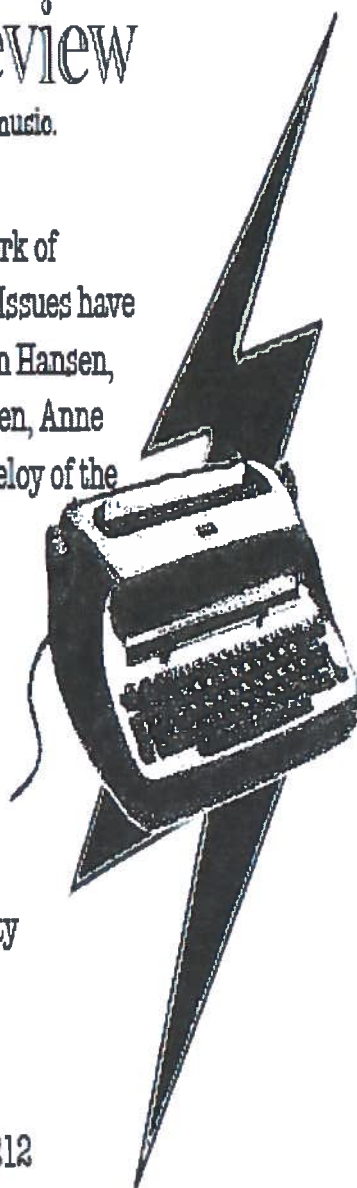
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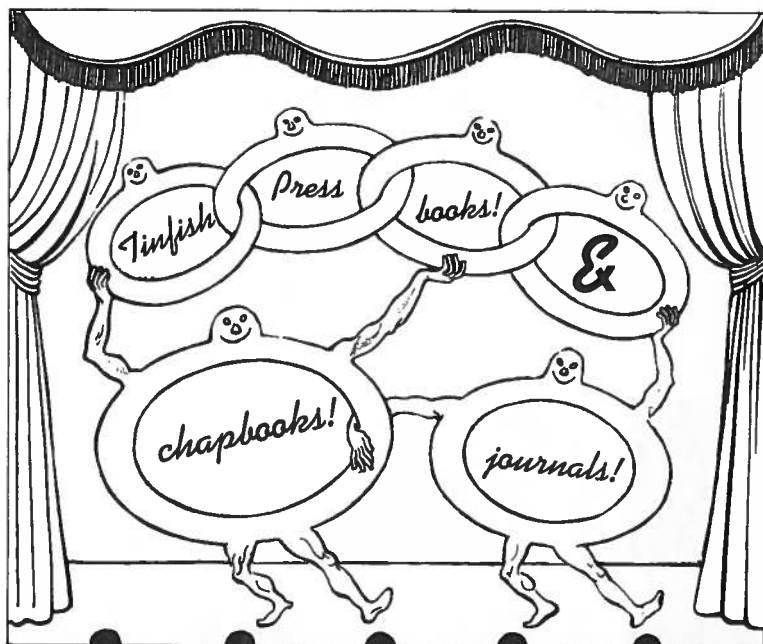
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