

## GETTING FOUND (A PACIFIC PRUFROCK)

*Julia Wieting*

...And indeed, there will be time  
to wonder and sit, to practice  
a craft of appropriation. A cool  
and natural iteration, a simple feat:  
Steal it all. Memorize and repeat,  
in muttering retreats, this truth of mine;  
Like a thief: take, and own, and speak.

And how should I presume?  
Steal a song of fear, or the briny scent of night, or the sigh  
of the woman you've tired of as she sleeps  
close in the early morning light:  
write all the ends into each other.  
The words and the world are yours.  
I see, I steal; I speak, I am.

Do I dare disturb the universe?  
Impose my voice upon this verse?  
Bridge the sound between kiss and curse?  
Do I dare  
stare at mountain, ocean, sea, and sky  
inhaling the scent, exhaling an I(land),  
a me made  
of basalt bones, undertows, surf slapping at strata  
deep underneath, and the full moon's glow:  
that round round face, pinned above, a white eye  
buttoning horizon to black black sky.  
In a minute there is time  
For revisions and collisions that a lifetime  
must traverse.

And how should I begin?  
I sing a song of love, this hymn,  
To catch between cupped hands—  
water for drowning, for solving and dissolving in.

Shall I say, I have gone to this island,  
escaped the Middle's wide, its far flung sky?  
Exchanged a sea of corn and beans  
for a sea of salt? The edges stay,  
today, where they always were:  
palm fronds like ribs breathing  
cloud drift like pupils seeing  
ridge lines like hair streaming  
my geography stretched like a lover on a bed,

wondering when the next time will come.

On which instrument are we strung?  
With which voice do we sing?  
Arrange these themes of life and death as map or symphony,  
So, mo'olelo'd, be a ridge to ride these stories down.

*Ke mele, ka moku, ke mele.*

I have seen them, these hill sledders.  
I have seen them riding homeward on the grass  
Combing the red hair of their heads thrown back  
When night lava lights the hills yellow and black

We have lingered on these flows  
in meanders wreathed in memories red and brown  
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Let us go then, you and I,  
where the hills recline, smiling to the sky  
Like a lover spent upon a bed,  
Let us go through certain half-mapped whys  
of heart and mind  
the routes traversed in and out:  
each breath, each mouth follows with unspoken intent  
to ask the hardest question....  
Years after, we still do not ask, "What are we?"

I have heard the stories singing, each to each  
I do not think they will rest with me.

And indeed there will be time, yours and mine.  
*Inā e lawe 'ia au e ke po'i 'ana o ke kai, make au*  
if I am carried off by the breaking sea, I die.