

Wini en Pohnpei

Emelihter Kihleng

my silasil travels with me
from the wet thatch roof nahs
next to the imwen wini
where people go to die from Western medicine
and lack of it

in the nahs
the man bathed my father in green
and gave him the last bottles for drinking
Pahpa, nearly healed, from a week of treatment

he asked me
ke anahne?
do you need it?
round brown wini
grains of earth
I swallowed

he told me
if anyone has done anything to you in the past
it won't work
if anyone does anything to you in the future
the same
carry my silasil with me I must
and never get it wet
never get it wet

kowe mehn Pohnpei
ke pahn kang wini en Pohnpei

it's in your blood

Nohno Elihse, lien Nett
my grandma's dear friend
made me little sennit bracelets
braided with magic words
childhood silasil

to keep limwohdeleng from taking me
eni from touching me
bruises on my skin evidence

Pahpa wove me pahie
from young coconut leaves
to make them smile
only true smiles
whisper sweetness in my ear

watch who you make friends with
and what you tell
especially what you eat
and who you eat with
comb your hair alone

Pohnpeians know
jealousy, competition, evil
a society that thrives
on illness in others

through winahni, causing
deformities, death, making
kihl grow on face, arms, feet
sending creatures like
brown spotted kieil to
crawl around your home
spitting poison

it's in the blood.

EMELIHTER KIHLENG is from Pohnpei Island, Micronesia. She is currently finishing a master's degree in English, Creative Writing, at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she has written a creative thesis of poetry and prose. Her poetry has appeared in *Bamboo Ridge*, *Tinfish*, *Xcp: Cross Cultural Poetics*, *Boundary 2*, and *Chain*.