

'UA TIFATIFA LE 'ĀTAFĀ (FOR PAULO)

Lufi A Luteru

'o le tufuga tātatau
vessel of forebears
keeper of knowledge
son of Tilafaigā and Taemā
recording the lineage
of my ali'i since past
adorning
my Sāmoan skin with stories
nifo cut
tap my spirit awake
arise from
my unconscious slumber
melodious tapping
conjures up my ancestors
through agonizing pain,
wisdom is received
Paulo, proud silent witness to
my rite of passage
these gogo fetū fingers
convey my sadness
body gone but spirit soars
he flies and dives
through my fingers as I write
he thrives in my malu
amongst fetū o le lagi
embedded in my skin
he whispers to me
'ua agi mālīe le matagi
he swims freely with
his mothers in the calming sea
he glides with Tagaloa
in the fierce roaring sky