

sports meets, music, English and Latin classes, and the ever-present family. These more celebratory images certainly counter expectations of a Fiji-Indian presence in perpetual decline, instead suggesting a resilience similar to the one that prompted Derek Walcott's observation of the *Ramleela* (the epic dramatization of the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*) in the Caribbean: "this shipwreck of fragments, these echoes, these shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, these partially remembered customs . . . they are not decayed but strong" ("The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory," Nobel Prize in Literature lecture, 7 Dec 1992).

Inevitably, the act of writing itself becomes the focus of this text and an exploration of literature as a transformative medium. Serving as more than simply a stopgap measure to resist the exclusion of the Indo-Fijian experience, writing, Kavita Nandan argues, "can be a way to make meaning out of the rupture of the past. Writing allows us to give some structure or recuperate wholeness" (301). In many ways, the "Fijiindian fragments" of this collection symbolize the larger literary movement by colonized peoples to recover and recuperate their right to speak for themselves; from the Pacific Writing Forum in Fiji, to Bamboo Ridge Press and *Ōiwi* in Hawai'i, the desire for self-articulation is one that can help unite authors and critics as they explore new pan-Pacific avenues to address some of the darkest and some of the more illuminating moments in Oceanic history. For this reason, *Stolen Worlds* makes an excellent companion to such

anthologies as *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa* (edited by Michael Molansky and Steve Rabson; University of Hawai'i Press, 2000) and *Whetu Moana* (edited by Albert Wendt, Reina Whaitiri, and Robert Sullivan; Auckland University Press, 2003).

SERI I LUANGPHINITH
University of Hawai'i, Hilo

* * *

Waa in Storms, by Teweiariki Teairo. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 2004. ISBN 982-02-0368-6; xvi + 114 pages, figures, photographs, appendixes, written in English and the Kiribati language, glossary. US\$25.00.

Waa in Storms (Canoe in Storms), Teweiariki Teairo's follow-up to his first anthology, *On Eitei's Wings* (2000), marks the growth of an important Pacific literary voice and visual artist. Teairo elegantly weaves together the poetic traditions of his home island nation, Kiribati (pronounced Kiribas), with those of the West and the "Niu" contemporary Pacific emerging from urban centers such as Suva in Fiji. *Waa in Storms* also grew out of a particularly challenging period in the author's life, and many of his pieces convey this turbulence.

The collection, containing a mixture of poetry, narrative, and nineteen ink-on-paper drawings, is divided into four "waves" or movements: "Pond Storms," "Lagoon Storms," "Ocean Storms," and "Calm again." The use of waves to represent time is a trade-

mark of the Niu Waves Writers' Collective, based in Suva, of which Teaero is a long-term member. "Niu" is a pan-Pacific term for the coconut and an important symbol of cultural survival. The name of the collective is also a play on the word "new," reflecting the postcolonial, diasporic, globalizing Pacific (see also the drawing titled "Niu life" [66]). Niu Waves regularly gathers at the Oceania Center for Arts and Culture at the University of the South Pacific, where Teaero is a lecturer in the department of education. The center's art exhibitions are often designated as particular "waves." Throughout Teaero's collection, one certainly gets the sense of rising and falling and rising again.

In his acknowledgments Teaero reveals that some of his writings are stories that others requested and so they are shared in the tradition of *taan ootoo*, the composers of songs (ix). The composers are the poets and storytellers in Kiribati culture and Teaero straddles these roles in both the Western and traditional contexts. Half the poems are in "Kiribatese" (after "Gilbertese," ie, the Kiribati language) and the book is dedicated to three *unimwane* (male elders) and master orators—*Taomati Nakibae Taramatang*, *Bauro Teteki*, and *Kiratanuea Teitawana*.

While the overarching theme is one of tumult, it is Teaero's weaving of words and visual symbolism, his engagement with many sources of knowledge, and his obvious love and care for the process of learning and growing that, as the foreword indicates, keeps "fatal submersion" at bay (xv). Humor, celebration, and

survival ply those waves of discontent. The writing and artwork are carefully laid out by graphic designer Mark Garrett so that the reader experiences a sense of turbulence, pause, reflection, and recovery in between visual and textual movements.

Waa in Storms begins, like any proper I-Kiribati event, with *te katoka bau*, a garlanding of the reader. This is offered visually through the image of Teaero's daughter, *Itabero*, moving to place the flowers on the reader's head. The first wave, "Pond Storms" (*Buakan te nei*), then reflects various phases of difficulty in Teaero's family life. The death of his father, a car accident that injured his youngest daughter, and feelings of loss, confusion, or insignificance particularly shape this section. He grounds his lament in the oceanic environment, in the journey of the *waa* or canoe, and in the return of *te man te tangira*, the "love bird" (22).

In the second wave, "Lagoon Storms" (*Buakan te nama*), Teaero begins to engage with issues beyond the personal context. In "*Maneangin ara mwaneaba*" (Shaming our traditional meetinghouse), he gives a word of advice to the Kiribati members of Parliament to maintain respect for the *mwaneaba* or meetinghouse system, which for centuries has shaped Kiribati social and political life (27). Such warnings for those in power are balanced by another poem, "Elegy for *Tewareka Tentoa*," which pays tribute to the deceased representative of the island of *Onotoa* and former vice president of Kiribati (31). Further in the section, though, are two lambasting short stories about a "fictional"

Republic of Abantaai, the land of the sun (Kiribati lies right on the equator), casting sideways jabs at the government of the day, somewhat in the tradition of Epli Hau'ofa's *Tales of the Tikongs* (1983).

During the period in which the poetry was written, Teaero was in the capital of Kiribati, South Tarawa, and in this second section he also engages with particular incidents that shocked the nation. One of these involved several young children who were victims of rape. Children, like his own daughter Arieta, are also increasingly victims of road accidents involving vehicles driven at tremendous speeds along the one narrow road that links the islets of South Tarawa. Kiribati is made up of atoll island chains that are often less than a kilometer wide from lagoon to ocean side. Speeding is thus a hazard to drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and houses alike. Teaero reflects on this problem in another poem, "Busy buses" (29), and a short piece, "Crowded buses" (55). Overcrowded minibuses traveling at top speed give way to a general situation of overcrowding and "Living tight" in the rapidly growing capital (33).

A piece in Kiribatese, "Biitiko I," reads as a letter to both a particular Peace Corps volunteer and to the corps in general (36–38). Here the writer reflects on the friendships between volunteers and locals. The cultural differences between Americans and I-Kiribati are often stark, and despite the ability of the volunteers to dress, eat, and sleep local style, the poem highlights the American sense of individualism and solitude in contrast to the Kiribati preference for communal life. But in the

short poem "Quiet Moments," the author seems grateful for the same solitude that earlier characterized Americans (40).

The short satire, "Merrily verily messing with missing milkfish," in which we follow the adventures of a thieving civil servant, includes some choice sentences that most I-Kiribati readers will savor: "They merrily went into a Government-owned pond and merrily helped themselves to the now wary milkfish. The *reberake* milkfish got caught. The shy ones escaped" (43). (The word "reberake" means overly curious or inquisitive and is often used in everyday contexts to tease or reprimand nosy people.)

In the third wave, "Ocean Storms" (Buakani marawa), Teaero moves into a regional context and reflects on our increasingly endangered natural environment. It includes "My way your way," a loving tribute to his Uncle Kiratanuea, a healer and interpreter of dreams (67). This section is the shortest and feels the most transitory, moving from botanical gardens to hotel rooms as if the author cannot wait to get to the fourth wave.

"Calm again" (Manga raoi), the fourth section, is about the same length as the second wave and begins with another welcome, "Kanenei" (75). There is a sense of starting afresh, relishing beauty, and getting back to the business of everyday life. Some pieces are tributes, again, for people Teaero holds in respect.

"Te fāika" is written in both English and a Tuvaluan style of speaking Kiribatese in which the l's replace the r's (83). It recalls a special method of deep-sea fishing, *te kaneati*, involving an intricately crafted mother-of-pearl

lure that few young people know how to use today. There are three other tributes worth mentioning here: “Wordsmith” and “Te boto” are for Taomati Nakibae Taramatang of Rabi Island in Fiji (94–95, 97); “Golden chord” is for the late Alphonsus Kanimea, who composed many popular Kiribatese hymns that can now be heard in churches throughout Fiji and Kiribati (98–99).

In this section is my favorite of all of Teairo’s drawings. Titled “Dancer,” it depicts half a female dancer’s body from the right breast to midway down her black skirt, which is held by ornamental belts (92). Frigate birds are outlined against a dark wall and only two tiny flowers—one yellow, one red—interrupt the brown, black, and white that mark this simple, elegant piece. The frigate bird is one of the most important Kiribati motifs and I-Kiribati dancing is based on the movements of these birds.

This collection is a visual joy and I appreciated the opportunity to engage poetry in the Kiribati language, which rarely appears in a regionally accessible form. Many thanks to my father, John Tabakitoa Teaiwa, for discussing each one with me. It is my humble opinion that Teairo’s voice in Kiribatese is grounded well within the ancient poetic traditions that characterize Kiribati culture. His voice in English, like his waa, is just beginning to break through the storm of popular literary models.

Storms
are rude visitors
that come uninvited
bursting into our pacific lives

from across the eternal ocean
breathing restless hurricanes
and sweating heavy rain . . .
and when they hit
they hit hard

so listen too
to the loaded
silence

(Teweiariiki Teairo, “Storms”)

KATERINA MARTINA TEAIWA
University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa

* * *

Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege, 56:40 minutes, VHS and DVD, color, 2004. Produced and Directed by Puhipau and Joan Lander. Distributed by Nā Maka o ka ‘Āina. Information on price and ordering is available at <<http://www.namaka.com/>>

“Clashing Cosmologies.” Manu Aluli Meyer uses these words to describe the conflict between Western scientists and Hawaiians regarding the use of Mauna Kea, the subject of the documentary *Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege*. The film articulates the opposing interests of scientists, who have built and wish to continue to build telescopes on the summit for scientific research, and Hawaiians, who want the sacredness of the mountain acknowledged and the abuses resulting from the telescopes and their use to stop. With music performed by Brother Noland and striking footage of the mountain—its majesty juxtaposed against the telescopes—this documentary not only captures the importance of Mauna Kea to the