

A N A H O

STEPHANIE V SEARS

ARTEIDOLIA
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New York

To the one of birch forest and purest rivers

POEMS in ANAHO

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*Japanese term for a blurred luminous background in photography

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MOANA

Savai'i

The ocean
we rush to it
with polished bodies, in fresh bathing, despair.
In our blue sense of space
we dart like fish
beneath lucent waves,
above fluid floors
braced against basalt walls and powdery strands.
Loving with fragrant digits –
humid buds sundered from tropical loam –
we sit dark-limbed in yawning caves,
happy but listless infants under a spell,
in ceaseless bliss, wishing to drown.

Little Island

Evening reclines around the bay's
pellucid plait of reef and silence,
strewing blossoms on the sand,
pink feelers darted red,
collecting the inconstant dole of dreams
lured from the alluviums of the mind,
honoring all of them utterly.

The sunset sheds gold and red
west of a sister isle.
On this side, palms quiver,
coal black
against the vast wager of the sea.

Flop, rush. Rolling out bantam tides,
parrotfish, black-tip sharks, bonito
tune their scales, thread silver and rainbow
into the night set with moon and stars
whose godly imprints
intangibly prevail.

Pacificus

Trees disheveled and lank,
their foliage sings and scuttles
in animal ways.

Nuts drop
with blunt wisdom,
appointing leisure to the day.
The ocean steadies the cadence,
driving over coral
what once was lost
or promised.

The sky cruises along,
puffing cheroots.

At disputed boundaries
do palms lean on the stars,
are stars upheld by fronds?
Is it wake or trance?

Haven

We were summoned by pelagic mystery
through a thousand fronds
blown through by trade winds.

Cutting greens and blues like a prow,
the room had myriad suns and shadows,
gold, dark wood, pantheons, disciples,
the perfumed prowess of heaven.

Palm Tree

The horizon's lungs fill with light
for islanders to live carefree.

Ocean rolls into sky
seeding pink robin dawns

and solar dusters,
alkalescent between swell and star.

A nut's porcelain falls
to sapphire soliloquies,

to the black marble of dorsal fins,
soil's salt and shell.

Dream swash-buckles here and there,
then turns the tiller

towards tousled isles
registered in Eden's log.

In soporific bays, like children,
coconuts roll about in sand,

until solitude touches their palms
with the hurt of an expanding sky.

Capture

Farthest reach of farthest island.
Savannah pitched by
salt wind wild.
Horses smelted from basalt
exhaled by mist.
For the soul's ecology
ocean mirroring sky's glower.
Midday draws the recumbent line of *Fiu**
even though stars know the way
to this demiurgic land.

The swift exactitude of riders
captures sunlight
when they gallop in a sheen of muscle.
Then night gathers them
around her like campfires
before fears of sorcery bewitch them.

Possession

Alone in the swank of silence
on the great highland above the sea
where none live.
Satrap to that province
between her blood and soul.
Through fog's raiment she walks
beside her body.
Chaste in a spring pool by the trail
as before and after the birth of being.
Planets whisper and pull.
Under the fairy terns' wafting
she staggers into nostalgia
unable to rescue the instant
when the glittering sea and
cliff-sprung trees
beset by spirits
part for a view of Neverland.

Escape

Her feet touch the cargo deck
pentacle of escape
quiet in a black brimstone bay
where time reaffirms itself.
The ship greets her errant ways
absconding her
while those left ashore
fade back
into a banyan's abiding shade.

**Fiu: boredom, melancholy*

Islander

Big and skillful,
eyes sliced slim and
sidelong on his face
made words go numb.

The simmer of violence, if any,
nature disciplined.

His island was predisposed to silence
through the lone hoot of the *Karavia*.
We both drew on that quiet
like sailors on halyards,
feeling our hearts' hemp
twist and tighten.

Once apart, we called out
over the unselfconscious miles,
returning language
to its numinous form.

We summoned each other
across star-distilling hills,
lunar bolts of sea.

It even happened that, overcome
by distance, we carved initials
in the pulp of trees.

Basalt Princess

Pacific lunges for the valley.
In stares see-throughs,
in fuchsia dawns and hell fire dusks.
With a latent thrust of impudence,
outer space beckons to the sea trench.

This once was her isle –
with its quenching guava scrub,
manioc, taro fields, mango orchards,
decorous breadfruit trees –
glugging the sky
between Capricorn and Equator.

She opens the shadows of her house to me.
Looks me up and down until
I ebb into remoteness.
Ninety years have streamlined
her down to timelessness.

Crowned with island rose and
porpoise teeth weaving buds
with their mortuary ivory.
Glory still nestles in the furrows
of her face smoked in tattoos,
a Brueghel blue of soot and thunder
from head to toe.

Her voice, a blast of surf,
a dark inclusion in a storm's crystal.
I can see her as then,
draped in royal *tapa*,*
one splendid smooth arm
fanning the drowsy air.

Then my own time topples
when, suddenly clairvoyant,
she predicts that money
will devastate the world.

**Tapa*: white mulberry bark cloth

*Haka'iki**

Large looms this figure of a man,
anonymous in yellow waterproof,
though, about him,
crowned and sceptered,
a stark quiet commands.

From Ua Pou to Hiva Oa
we are too many on board.
Each swell amplifies
signs of bad luck.

In night's bucking brine
and onrushing space
the boat shackles me
to windlass and capstan.
I reach for the sky's cosmic wallpaper,
kite heart cannoned upward
on a string of destiny.
Knees and feet grow wings
over the next soaring crag,
casting a pall over the stars.

He stands as barbican
against the livid depths
fathoms down in my imagining
their indifferent swallow.

Even as exhaustion seizes mind and flesh,
prepares them for drowning,
a thread of rebellion
weaves through me,

seesawing off the shoals. Safety
was never part of this scheme.
He makes that clear
with battlefield arms
lathered in salt and tattoos.