

Fledglings of Anani

by

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ABSTRACT

The Fledglings of Anani is a universe with an underlying organizing principle of desire, auspiciousness and serendipity, the veiled doors and windows of these realms serve as fugues bridging layers of time leading us through myth and landscape intimately tied to the physical intelligence of earth and character of place. It is a voice that comes to know itself first as being, then in correspondence to nature and her elements, enters into the rhythm of human connection and ultimately circles back to comprehend itself as all these things, varying only in degree. The poems travel further and further toward an allusive center with a contemplative inner eye that embraces the complexity and vitality of life.

THE FLEDGLINGS OF ANANI

By Heather Lea Poole

DEDICATION

This collection is dedicated to the wild spark of divinity
which is life itself, the spirit of Aloha, and to my family,

Martha Rae Poole

who taught me to see love—which is everywhere

my sisters Misty and Krista
beacons of light in my heart,
and Cy—

and to Norman Dubie whose
presence and generosity
are without measure.

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with the grace and galactitude
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and the benevolence and clarity of
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A wreath of gratitude to my beloved
Hawaiian Ohana on Big Island—I love you all,
mahalo nui loa for all you have shared.
To Hawai'i Nei itself and
always, always, the Sea.

He kehau ho'oma 'ema' e ke aloha
Love is like a cleansing dew

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PREFACE

Some things are true

whether you believe in them or not...

DESIRE;

early 13 c from O.Fr – desirrer (12c) ,wish, desire, long for, wish for,
from L. desiderare long for wish for, demand, expect
original sense perhaps...

...AWAIT WHAT THE STARS WILL BRING...

from the phrase de sidere, from sidus (gen. sideris)

“heavenly body,

star,

constellation”

(but see consider).

Amphora

I came with no thought
through a pause in the night

transfigured with open eyes, unburied hush,
beyond the bounds of the celestial and vulgar

“naked women rise either from the sea
or from the bed...” Renoir

into a field of smallness
as if in a casket. Uterus

full of boundlessness, sitting
on the shoulders of my dad

as he swings me above turning waves
shrieking delight as they crash

into this small body growing wild,
refusing nothing of the earth.

Breaking Hunger

Deathless, unexpected
She—barefoot
carrying a clear portioned heart
for thought, appearing
to arrive after gladness
through a lap of mortal darkness

then aware as when
fire lengthens into robes for love
you—luminous long winds
untamed perfumed feet,
seemed also...
I don't know.

Touch. Here.
Come invisible girl pull,
bite, encounter soft longing,
weeping, pleasure looks
that stretch substance of mother-mind
becoming children, unblossoming desire
to a quiet ground. Many feet
carrying evening elsewhere
leaving someone else so very here,

the dream eyes strike yearning
turn back sleep preferring open air,
a transparent pitcher
the weightless core and moist odor.

Beyond the Temple Walls

My hand firm. Wet eyes—
the house is large,
so many corners
and I can't make the ends meet.
In the guest room beyond the closed door,
an open window,

so much light in the closet.
On the east side, a black rock wall
moss glows when the moon is wide.
A pomegranate tree, a hidden tree

bends, gravity ripening in its blush. All among the trees
the clouds blow with the leaves

and above, wrapped in the field
I am heard singing until I am darkness herself
swimming with a crown of white dwarves
spiraling along pink water-flowers
floating inside the river.

Sister Under All of Night

I am confused in the words of God.
She watches me sleep,
places her fiery cords
through the veil of my empty neck,
her hand presses the small of my back
as our voice grows faint.

All courage and desire
have fled. I possess
no more words.

Dark hands from behind
the waterfall reach out to me
wrap me in fern, red lehua blossoms
a name once known as my own
is chanted. I almost remember

my blood—it has become snow-drops
bones tossed like broken hammers
into sky, rearranged. Alone I become again
loose particles of flight.

This time a skeletal stalk
in red dress—I collapse air,
divest myself of thought
and become

now. A fish hook dangles in the pith

of my fingers and palm,
last years moon recorded
in dwindling migrations.

Stretched behind my pelvis
a canary knocks,
accustomed to stars
and builds a cave.

Created

the coming back

I look up among
the shelf of tools, wires, brushes, on a block
of clay, read a name

hear a voice, remember her?
do you recall who you came to be
the return, you will know
when it is time to forget

light and holding.

Ardor

Answering to wetness, drawn
 ashore, taken, as its own
weather forecast calls for light showers, all day light tilting
 descending into whiteness,

 deliberate and feral hands,
braid, needles through flowers reaching a sweetness
 found only from going too far
 weightless in earth's center—sudden and home
 sound displaced in rain, sonar
blue-green kelp, undone, adrift at sunset—

praise and so how does it feel?
 no one left behind
the morning star she is closest to earth
 in our lifetime,
come to—
 forgetting out of darkness

rubbing your thighs: looseness in marrow, wooden prayer beads, the fishing knife
 from a lover, thrown aside,
thick necklace of small beads wrapped in ti,
 crumbles whatever you are into—

I shall love—away from sorrow, turning
 past promises
even of a later time, embodied

adamantine passage, delight,

mine mine mine

tender vision, floating through sandstone

rooted passed light—

will not cleave to the burning

or where it goes

or give breath to it

eyes instead, kissing

wanton among the separated

uncrucified and godly

in the pleasure-bearing

held high in the salt-sea, cadence, sinew and something amused,

faithful

unwrapped and holy.

Fata Scribuna

I.

I remember skin
the unpetalled sky melting
as if I were tasting my own
salts inside the rounded arms
of a stranger.

Sitting inside the cave
feet blister into bone
dry earth, moon-seat
cormorants circle
and I sing and I sing...

dissolved into underwaters,
silt, the light fallen,
finding your lost body
that was meant for perfumed jars
of cassia, palm wine—

an absence of frankincense
sears twilight, old ways sealed
into reliquaries of flesh.

Daybreak is steeped
in red thistles. I await
where a grove of mares
remain.

*

She is a shield protecting children
in the dream of your memory,
north wind dispersing blue men
reaping poppies from the hills.

A black granite statue to whom the stars are responsive
knots at her breasts, lined and weathered
stranded under moon, weeping
oil into blood into water

a young girl thinking it dew
licks her cheek to touch the star
stands in the ashes
and sings.

II.

The hawk is in flight—
it means autumn over fields
of iris and stones I left you.

A winter funerary
boat full of mummies
I slept by myself—a rosary of skulls
turtle shell inside my stomach
whistled with your breath

walked to the well, in it

a hand on loose strings
a bear, woman with a lyre
wearing resin and bees.

Through the frozen water—
trees raise their voice
in the water on rock is a face I know
the way an echo
seeks itself in silence.

Rooted in ochre the woman ignores
the game. I bend to her flame—
as companion.

The years have passed into springs
I come to you on a barge
filled with loosestrife, mugwort
brush amethyst clover
across your eyes
the snake river inside us—
summer beckoning.

III.

When you see me today
I won't yet remember.

Pouring tea above the curve of orchids
across a skirt of grass
steam rises between the hairs on your arm
what is your name,

is it you again... I see you, thin snakes tucked behind
 my ears, their talk stirs
do you get to the east side? *Will you come to see me...*
Fridays we have a market *stand outside of town.*
 Look for me, *look for your lover*
 if I forget your name,
hair of currant, scent of cypress and orange rinds,
 fig beneath my navel of sun—a table of wine...

look for me, I carry a net of shells, a cave of pearl and blush-
colored conch,
 you'll find me—
we'll have tea...

 the net is made of knots,
of pomegranate skins,
 the net is made of holes,
 and nettle stalks,
 the net ushered
weight of longing into a single body...

 ascending detritus—

IV.

On the orange hillside
the men are planting sweet odor
are born from laughing calla lilies

I set hot loaves of bread,
dried apricots, bowls of honey and rose-milk
among the salt breeze

the cormorant's feathers lift.

Long hair of sheep swelling with rain,
a retinue of lotus eaters surface,
sweet lucent hands of emerald valleys
unhindered fig seeds
chime the delta.

The Moon is Burning

She dreamt. He became.

No one was prepared.

Islands of Dark Flight

*In a neighborhood of beautiful fences
a girl, barefoot, walks into a house she doesn't know.*

“Wait for the guide to take you to the gate.
It will be an opening, perhaps an uncommon wind,
tree leaves swaying, nothing else moving.”

I didn't wait, impatient, unthinking
swallowed into flight
among the vast flutter of arms
everything is reply—

the rooms fade inside this house,
snow falls down the stairs, illumines a wall of hands
my back fading into glacier

*In the attic a girl lost to love,
bruised and singing—won't let go,
too tired to die, watches lava
cauterize her sleep,*

there is nowhere I am not.
Silver before rain, the tall grasses mask
the pheasants tail feathers.

*At the gate;
a memory of flowers.*

Broken is the Man in a House Without Love

As the wind blows
out of the chorus
night rings
step by step he moves in the rice fields
approaching the women heard from above,
their laughter curling softness
around the squares of night,

closer, each step falling into confusion, they become lotus—
huge deeply rooted backs arched and swaying
their dark lips holding fast,
—are they women, or lotus.

Aching for the joyousness of love
always one step out or reach
no matter how hard he grasps.

At the pond all is still.

In the dream he is kissed
and sadness washed away
he is led up the stairs
surprised at the return of innocence,
able to see the jewel substance
throbbing around him.

The women's fingers skim the sunlight
for the first time he sees them as they are.

That they are one.

Beyond the touch of the hill their whispers
summon the days into being,
their songs empty themselves
where hearts quicken in the wake
and begin looking,

he is a child listening at their door
knuckles worn from tension
begging for that which already is—
a boy following the same grail of light holding fast

in old women who snore, mothers
crushed into life, wife's hidden flower,
mermaids, daughter-song of mine,

fierce and tender playing in the nexus of dust,
cloaked in the primordial mists
an excessive and flawless wealth of life
heartbreaking and calm—
silken blossom skins, their pleasure-hearts of love.

Confluence

When you heard of the captured Goddess
bound in the market her rainbow feathers fallen,
the priceless being bartered, sold—

you hid your face, came away with sorrow
the streets became dull and narrow, cities grew.

I am at the edge of the bluff
centuries have fallen, Tara from Avalokiteshvara
seawater, Lilith, Eve of Adam and marrow,
bowls are being rung on top of my head
into dragon's breath.

The deep memory etched in blood
must be a ladder, after you cry
we will sing. Wash the chemicals
out of our hair, comb each others,
laugh at the insignificance of shadows
throw our robes back on. Next time
try and remember who you are
the whole way through.

Incognito

How long on the drunk sleep
at the entrance, caught, naming—
I do not know you on looking.

The bedroom is a jar of gravel
hitting the muddied curvature of outstretched skin—
the light always increasing

into petite seashells, marbleized, the dead
have been gathering for centuries,
the living just as long—

all of them gazing skyward,
the ground torn open into lupine beds
and attar—and I uncaught,
keep walking...keep waking.

AUSPICIOUS;

1590, of good omen from L. *auspicium*...

DIVINATION BY OBSERVING

THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS

Counterpoint

~for M, M, K

—Clay, dust, EARTH, loam, real estate, terra firma, globe, earthly concern, world, worldly concern, — element, —
—, hide, hide out, —, ground, dry land, terra firma, —, solid ground, — — —, land, —, apple, big blue
marble, vale, creation, orb, planet macrocosm, creation, star, universe, sublunary world,
terrestrial, sphere. Close associations; clay, dirt, dust, lair, planet, rock.

It is, soft bodied, this moment

She carries—a cardboard box up and down the aisles

helpless, legs kicking, blind alabaster

full of spam, rice and fried egg bundles, water

belonging to the sea—heart

for singers and dancers, their hula offered in earnest

lightness outbound,

whose depths are immeasurable;

guards drink coffee in all the heat. A minotaur

silence erupts over dark-blue storms

comes with the equinox

plovers have left by wind.

carved doors, flashes of quicksilver.

Be not disturbed by the world, your breath exposed

*

flesh rippling over bones, shiver

The beach stinks, seaweed rotting,

cold without you—I did not know it would be like this—

shoeless digging for mussels—We love horseshoe

crabs—“living fossils”,

pails of fading starlight, florescence, sirens in waves...if not...ribs

all us (this is unusual), Mom and Dad on a

blanket with gin,

cracked, they prefer cliffs, kindness opens sleep. Is it all as beautiful

me scouring tide-pools, Misty and Krista throwing sand

as it seems? Rain on my eyelashes

into darkening blue-midnight—their blood is blue

ti leaves shredded from trade winds,

full of copper— if they die Red Knots will too

out of the blueness, sweetness of tuberose

*—The car is full of mosquitoes. **

emerging, not remembering

I drive by the cemetery, at different times, almost every day—

you placed it behind my ear,

the same woman; middle-aged in a fuchsia night gown

am I dead already—

taking fresh flowers from grave sites.

Daughter Concealing Light

In the sweeping lines of twilight
I take off my sunglasses,
the barrette, shake my hair free
perfume and hairspray falling
in the near darkness, the bruised plumerias,
pick one and places it behind an ear
day breaking away, escape into the life
that binds me,

voice that haunts of the sea fills me.
Koa bracelet always on my wrist
gold hoops swing from my ears
an end of days pull me forward
as I climb over the locked gates

into fish ponds holding reflections
of distant layers of clouds that have always been—
did the clouds move or was it me—
somewhere between these places I exist

E hō mai

ka ike mai luna mai ē,

O nā mea huna no eua

a ka Hawai'i ē

the men are shaking
spiny urchins in cages and collect roe

black limpets, conical, gluing themselves to the rocks
where women are breathing softly
on one leg the night heron perches in stealth
hunting in a red circle of sky

billowing or jagged lava
depending on how fast it cools is welcoming
or cuts swift as glass—

*the Milky Way churns her hips into the top edge of blackness
arms extend into garlands of mele, water-sky, transparency,*

*salt spills over the ledge binding her in foamy milk-light
conversions of magma devour her;*

a lone shark fin in the shimmering.

E hō mai, E hō mai, E hō mai ē

Gliding

Pele's after image dances
valley into dawn, rose
find me, am I her

ivory coffee
flowers erupt, landslide of snowflakes
bamboo leaves quiver
sunlight spills the emptiness
appearing solid as it lands

I will wash away
wherever I am carried—
seafoam, ankles enter

your house of long earth fingers bending
to the solitary hollow
of my neck, twist of sarong,
tongue gliding
over clavicle, indent of waist,
lives guiding you to
my lips, hidden
inside the rind of mango
that once filled—
sweet taste
matter, woman

we adhere to one another
among oneiric hooves

sifting dark morning
forging violet into daylight,
a field of centaurs gather our bewildered hearts
flames extinguish themselves;
a mound of feathers
in the middle of a lake

an owl dusts the yard
her left wing dream-pools of lava,
faint grappling as our howls
dilate into daybreak,
the centaurs disperse—
tiny bound birds hang on the tree,
some red, some saffron.

Blue

out of blue leaves, silent rain
tyrian blue?, blue as tyrian purple
in blue, incandescent,
somewhere past lapis,
our hearts uncoil
see them—
in mirrors of Arcturus,

my hand the water
glows, metallic, glacial blue—

a breeze moves the vacant rooms
unwinding I am auroras across a loom.

Skin

Setting a place in the sink—
cup, plate, knife, chopsticks,
I fill a cup with red salt
and taste its iron. On the plate
a strand of maile leaves and prayers
brought from the mountain.
I let the water run all night
to rinse my hunger.

Three coconuts swing in the metal basket
where you placed them almost a year ago.
I see your hands lift and shake them,
we are standing under a tent of light in the market stall.
Their skin, now hard, as it shrivels in upon itself. I couldn't open them,
I can't throw them away—

each time, walking past, I stop,
push the metal basket, whisper your name
back and forth, back and forth, cells rocking
as the boat returning your ashes to the sea.

In the night my fingers are lost to themselves
for longing to stroke your body,
the swell of your shoulders in my hands as we glide
I search for your parched cough,
the roughness of your unshaven cheek on my belly,
the heat of your hand resting between my thighs,
for the scent as you burn.

In a rush of air your voice—
*when season comes go past the heiau gather white ginger,
wash your face with it, rest in our kēpuka til night sun,
Poliabu's mist will cover the mountain
in dew of pink and gold...she will bring me to you...*

*so fragrant you won't recognize me
until I breathe over you
dress you into first light—*

Your absent breath,
is everything I touch,

is now part of something it has no weight in—
our bed, Ka'awaloa's winds in the evening sweeping the hillside,
your ladder against the side of the house,
orchids that need potted, the empty bird feeder
sitting on the washing machine as it turns.

Lanikai

In the dark ages the knowledge
of how to make purple,
then associated with royalty
now with higher consciousness,
from milking or crushing sea snails
was lost.

The human heart wanting to soar
keeps falling back to earth,
gravity is a funny thing holding
nothing in place.

In the park a young boy plays the ukulele
while skateboarding, big men, one scratching his back with a spatula,
walk with small dogs, under a fishing light
someone is changing in a car, a bus waits
for the Japanese tourists who are walking on the sand
some in high heels and all with gloves,
their faces covered beneath hats and umbrellas.
Kites translate thermals, multiply above the iron woods,
man-of-war are strewn along the beach
following the storm.

The homeless woman keeps her ivory soap, toothbrush
and hotel size shampoo at the outside shower which I
have on occasion shared with her, whose name is Ipo
is kissing a man on the grass, both of them falling
out of their swimsuits and shorts.

Her guinea pig sleeps under the corner
of her purple and brown tarp.
She is kissing him with all her strength,
every muscle in her cheek and face visible
pulling all of us into it with her, it's hard
not to watch as we rinse, she pushes harder and harder, their tongues
like octopus trying to wrap around and hold
but slipping away,
kissing him as if her life depends on it
which in this moment—
it does.

The Molecule

Florentino's aged hands cut opihi shells from rocks
between surges, obsidian crabs shiny, motionless until the last second
dart sideways, a man I know keeps trying to convince me
to come and smell the pakalana, his mother taught him about—
as if this will make a difference, growing in his backyard
thinking its scent will drown common sense
draw my body irresistibly to his, today he is going
on about the flowers of pomelo.

Times have not changed so much, although he's just a man
and not Hades, then that is what you learned about Hades he
wasn't it... despite the season, like all of us, Subject to love;
short term-phenylethylamine, dopamine, norepinephrine
or long term oxytocin and vasopressin (maybe both)
not quite as romantic, some would have you believe
chemistry will render Eros an obsolete program.

In the kitchen—gardenia, bright red carnations, a block
of knives, lemon, two soft pink hibiscus—thin as wafers, fuzzy
towering stamens. Ajax in the recyclable plastic bottle, triple action
smells of synthetic orange, undresses himself through my hands
into bubbles and dish-water, outside I join with Nike and listen
to the strong voices of small green honeycreepers
casting delicate brightness from the slopes of Haleakala.

Regina and Herman

Winter

Their bodies climb the road-hill
his shaved head, hat she always wears
the bike with a flat tire that he pedals mostly backwards,
both laughing and out of their minds.

“Can you take these? just drop them at the church mailbox—”
her hands empty two gallons of water into mine
when I stop. Sunlight bends along the rearview mirror
curves over banana leaves, charred kiawe roots, asphalt,
the deserted fruit stand. Their hands together now
steps moving toward the open field
the pull of gravity roaring between them.

Spring

Careening down the hill smiling his broken smile
crashing into the bromeliad patch, forsakes the bike
throws his thumb out for the first ride
that stops

tells me his better half has gone,
when he looks at me—I see he means it.

For weeks I miss them together.

Christmas Eve

Maki in her three inch carmine sandals
walks Hana in the alley, one shadow swerving
their long hair bouncing under sherbet leaves
the thorns of bougainvillea, a rainbow thickens
behind them. I walk through a wreath
of truncated perfume.

On the wood post Santa stands in a canoe
pink cashmere socks, plastic hula skirt
and sun glasses. The little girls
on the lawn, chanting, in ruby tinsel
with purple and gold, their arms laughing,
graze the air as the resident donkey
nudges open their backpacks, steamed taro
apples, spam and melons on the table.

*Aunt Betty, a devoted catholic, watched me in the afternoons.
At school, for Halloween, dressed me as a gypsy;
smearred bright coral-magenta lipstick across my mouth
larger than my lips-then dabbed hers with it, tied a scarf around my head
clipped hoop earrings as large as my hands to my ears,
wrapped a shawl as skirt hanging low on my tiny hips,
pushed the flowery shirt from atop my shoulder to below it.
Is it any wonder I ended up here?*

Hand carved gourds, pikake shell, kukui leis
are draped over the drummers box—
he is moving barefoot over the banyan roots

keeping time through the passing age,
arriving as he falls into brackish golden-bodies
obscured as day overflows into bars of light.
Indra's blanket cloaks our bodies,
everyones thoughts beneath the hala trees
spread out in Akikiki's wings.

Letting Go

-for Margaret & Carlos

A lei around his neck, lambs bleat
with nearness, our eyes glimmer
birds of paradise, broken whale bones,
full and crushed passion fruit line the drive
a box of spotted mauve orchids
stares out at us from all sides.

His wife comes out of her office
didn't know what she was getting into—
neither of them did, picking each other out of the earth
the compulsion to cut through flesh
migrating in their bodies

opening their hearts to one another—
despite themselves. Lifting
one another into the one breathless line
running through it all.

Displacement

-for Bob

One brown leaf, shriveled, holding fast
from a certain angle with no wind
looks like a preening mynah
and catches me off guard,
sometimes things are that way.

The city lights make night visible
on the bus driving through tunnels
of trees, they are still growing out of the ground—
has anyone noticed?

A piece of rose-quartz in his bedroom
he's stopped taking vacations, *the cats*
feel more stable, the trees have their own sprinkler-head,
are wrapped with fencing to keep wild pigs out.

Now he is calling for sharks out beyond the north point
(there are ways to do this) where, separately, we both swim.
I used to do the same thing with polar bears
then hid when they appeared. Confused they asked what I wanted,
I had to think. He wants to hold the fin
gently, grasp the contour through his body.

In a planter weighing more than both of us together,
sits the head of a Buddha. As for the rest of its body,
where the heart has been planted I don't know
or who is sprinkling it—
how it moves through night.

Concert

Told many times *don't* look back, leave off—
the dead are burying their dead, in the cave entirely too long—
it's not that I look back—I *hear* something—
a strain, unable to leave until it turns
into something else—

glints of tongues, a thin spray of jasmine,
peanut butter and glyphs, smashed
flame-colored guavas—sticky, juicy
on the road, egrets on the haunches
of calves,

my pelvis knocks, swarm of canaries banging
upward in recollection—*or is it what*
will happen—always the trouble distinguishing
the two—lime-paper globes, fluorescent—
burning, over large bodies of water ringing
the shell—polished strands of reddish-purple
firmament,

the taxi driver is from Wyoming, calls himself
a desert rat now, "A man jumped from the bridge
here at the airport yesterday, chunks of him on the
cars below, good thing you weren't here then"—
now I am. Wondering about his body traveling...
accustomed to stars, dark-water skin navigates
around me in one long movement.

Accompanied by Mist

Just inside the wooden doors
I reach for candles. Pay for two,
wait for the change that never comes,
watch flames around the votaries—
poles to keep the roof in place.
He sets his candle next to mine
lights them both. I blow one out.

The sun pulses against colored glass
I disappear into the back of the church
away from the litany, voices of response—
move toward the silent woman
cradled above the archway, afraid
it is still not far enough. I keep moving
into the open sky
my body
and its hungry skin
whirl—

steps outside into a flood of sawdust
drifting from the rectory window—
fresh smell of new mown grass,
turn a corner, a locked aviary flanked by tulips
shards of clay, plaster, the pieces of St. Terese
gossip, magpies chase one another
under spring leaves,

nocturne voices bathe me.

Woven strands of silvery
pearl-bells placed into my spine,
low hums wrap a tattered dress—
kapa, dried hala, dog teeth,
taste of brine rising around me,
mamo feathers

my song,

opening...

Sawdust continues to fall
through dusk making anthills.

*

We make the bed,

I can fall no further

he pulls the bed sheet tighter;

angry at my absence,

doesn't think it's very funny

He doesn't believe me—can't,

doesn't believe in “accomplices of faith.”

I kiss his back, caress the turned away side of his face—

step away, my body shudders

while this house with all its composure

falls down around me.

A small harp

accompanied by mist

circles in the foreground

the deep clouds

begin to fade

I reach out with both hands open...

Trajectory

The song again, today coasts
through the singular mourning dove
as it holds to telephone wires
cooing softly

moves to me in pale chords
of morning, amber slipping into day
across the translucent wall
covering me,
yesterday in the children's
voices across the playground laughing
and screaming.

In the afternoon it comes
down around me in a sudden shower
of hail, watch it strike my bare feet
knowing I will be late, waking
with numbness and joy. I can't move
wonder if the faint barely-yet-here
cherry blossoms stretching over the fence
will bloom—

recall pedaling, thick slabs of desire
holding me up, covering our bodies in warm honey
shaking green limbs until their petals shed
themselves of us, the basket buried in flowers
moving through the archway,
the bed always dangerously soft,

a song calling...

I hear it arrive in the dome
of whiteness,

now it is the voice of my mother,
I am sleeping next to a patch
of wild strawberries absorbed
in the fragrance of honeysuckle
calling me to come inside,

voluble in the salt
we rinse from seashells
wrapping itself around us
until I do not know
if the song—

is something else, or her or me
or inside the towel or when we shake it out together,
all of it, folding itself
into this rustle of memory
soaked in flesh, seasons of blindness,
improbable clarity—

you are calling me always
come away, come away
following and never going anywhere
through all these years.

Behind closed lids the seasons percolate—
unborn oak leaves, grey heron's cry ripping morning out of darkness
of all this, life emerges to forget—she wants a horse,
the experience of knowing one—not to own it. She comes to me, mouth grasping,
weightless—rustling gently over vines, crinkled t-shirt, circling over navel.
We won't be this close again, for the rest of our lives.
Does anyone still use dusting powder? Aster and forsythia
along the walkway, where at midnight we blow bubbles
sowing dreams of family, rest our heads on the one pillow
edged in periwinkle, Nannie embroidered—
the crowns of our heads waxing, waters running over us all
expanding beyond the time of ignorance—
an older simplicity advances as our hearts release,
untouched, shelter one another.

Waimea Road

~for Norman

Nape of neck
kind eyes, we stumble
into mellow whirrs.
I've stopped today, mourning
while up a valley
there is a sound
that is true

not sexual, waking
in talons on a crushed
field mouse, thrush of wingspan
behind a mask of owl feathers

one day a peach in the kitchen window,
then a tomato, rotting mango
at long last—
pomegranate

it was yesterday
I called, the birds found
in alternating light and states of decay
free of maggots, all summer

they sit in the freezer,
death lingers through the months
despite flowers, scented wind,
dolphins and silver. Night comes
and with it time. I give up

expecting things to be anything
other than what they are. Pluck feathers

boil bones and lace them together,
both of us continue to find out how far
we can fall in the ruins, this future, that place
while still unmasked.

SERENDIPITY ;

1754 (but rare before 20c.) coined by Horace Walpole in a letter to Mann (dated Jan 18); he said he formed it from the Persian fairy tale “The Three Princes of Serendip,” whose heroes “*were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things there were not in quest of.*”

DWELLING-PLACE-of-LIONS ISLAND

The name is from Serendip, an old name from Ceylon from Arabic, from Skt.,

Scheherazade

Reddish-brown, dirt, crystallized, painting her mouth at the entrance—

studying angels and squalls, falcons without
gloves, an anvil, flies stalking her legs

kohl, pink marble statues line the sanctuary, his voice,

my steps, tufts of grass, hands

curled—the coolness, *I think*

it's closed,

we'll see,

carpet strings; unwoven mapping a path—through starlight on the rusted teapot,

I will be free—were you? in the beginning, at the end?

not about being open—passing, entering the bodies beckoning—

listening in accordance with the whispers,

voluptuous eyes—around us

all

people are talking through me—

echoes fall through the air—

almonds, warmed oil, rosemary, boats in mid-air, men caught

by nymphs, infancy steps into a word, a voice, the parting

locked gates, down the stairs toward the ferns *it's closed*—

changing direction,

brush moss colored elephants, volcanic masses, lavender flames

blazing in harems—collecting moths, half moons

and honeycombs.

The Mountain Opens

~for Karen

At first an elk, so large
the road is eclipsed, then
recognize its shape as deer, a stag
the largest I have seen, the only one I've seen
rack of antlers, thick neck, its strength
penetrates nightfall, left to gaze
into winters narrow creek
disappearing beneath plentiful stars.

The motion of horn arrives beside me
our breathing floats above
draw in his deep earth,
musk heavier than the air.
The wind, now uncertain, stirs—

sometimes the snow is blue
that time is not now

*In a park where I grew up
there was a cage with a deer in it*

*someone had rolled up a firecracker
in an apple and fed it to the deer—
I don't know what they were imagining,
that it would be funny?
It still came close when people visited,
tongue forever hanging,*

*had to stay there the length of its life
and be hand-fed.*

slide onto his back, together
we move through casts of snow
leaves underfoot

I trace the swell of his neck with my cheek
fingertip pads, lullabies surging around us.
I am quiet and warm inside.

*One summer camping in Indiana
sleeping on the grass, behind my head
the forest beginning
late in the hours after midnight
I woke to see a deer glide over me,
then another, I didn't move
held my excitement quietly
hoping there would be more.*

I would like to tell you he took off his deer-skin
keeping the antlers in place, turned into a man,
the most wonderful of men,
that I became lost to myself
as we made love all winter,
and in the spring grew heavy with our child
but that didn't happen—

I'm a woman who has held her wildness
so we are moving through the trees together
into further chambers of the forest

night maidens wail, I'm resting
in the curve of his body
it is the most natural and familiar of things
the drift of his eyelashes,

convex orb of eye, its glistening
in the cold, sing him the two songs
I know before sleeping. In the morning
each of us fully ourselves.

Dawn

Moonlight bounces in slow tempo for two nights
all the while songs beneath the surface
spiraling more than halfway around the earth,
our bodies getting closer, angel trumpet hang
in a thin strata, the pale orange one
almost peach at its strongest—

The first time a humpback swam under me
it stayed beside me, would only have had to extend
an arm to touch it, was taken...

My life became so beautiful with them—
beyond anything I had imagined.
I forgot everything. For many years.

You fear them “...*moving huge through that darkness...*”
The imminent vastness I am guessing—
Come be swallowed up with me inside
that darkness, yawning below the surface
to where their cadenzas touch you,
will call you back, as it has me—
let it...*sing you back*, vertebrae upon vertebrae quenched
with what first it was that called to you—

and though one can't explain about the darkness—
it liberates places inside each of us
grows formless, becomes palpable
appears in a sudden yearning to weep
as the land between us vanishes.

Centrifugal Forces

-for Bill

I love him best now—sleeping,
overtaken, my hand on his chest, his face,
asleep he clutches my arm when I pull away and tonight I will remain
fall and rise over him somewhere between 25 light years
and 12 centuries behind, wanting to run and hide and stay
all at once. It helps me remember the hardest part
is across the channel, are we close, light—
neither of us believes in expected lifetimes or knowing how we arrived into light
but in fish turning around on themselves
summers silhouette of Denab, Vega and Altair
the smell of the sea when we tremble, that the whales
return in their own time, ourselves as debris
throwing off skin, an end of dreaming, rolling
over one another—

Belonging

Later the girl carries a white plastic
laundry basket and empty nylon snorkel
bag at the edge of the tide-line. It's June,
the seaweed is sap-green-brown. As waves ebb
she walks past the tangled bundles, arteries
dislodged from the sea. Past the light
wavering through the centuries
on outstretched fishing lines. She steps
around fugues of silence in the open air,
a dead starfish and into shallow water, beauty
shattered everywhere. Spits as she turns
to watch surfers paddle out in orbital motion
drawn to Venus' gleaming light
standing above the horizon.

Goats Mauna Kea

Then it hits, wash of musk—
gauging distance, pungent an immediacy
or a barely-there
stain of last nights coupling

glands and interstellar clumps shift keys
in the part of day away from sundowns.
Lie down with me—sonic winds
there are griffins in the air tonight, Calypso
alone draws down yellow flowers

from the topmost branches
flaring hips, insects, loam, the advent
of breathlessness radiates.

Gravity's shadow fastens itself in my north eye—
windfall of suppuration owl feathers
the compass of this body
a fledgling—
finally there is only one gesture...

the beginnings of pollen,
bees making great sky-circles
pelagic cells dazzled
open into the garden.

Spider

I wouldn't let anyone get rid of her,
the yellow and black dressed spider has been living in the shower
all summer I call her Empress. *At first it disgusted me,*
it's so big and poisonous looking
even if it isn't. Now, I enjoy her, how water clings
to all her legs, the web drips light, her nimble steps.

Putting her in the bath;
warm water, oats, milk,
scrubbing her gently with coconut
and ginger. We sit on the bed
towels tossed to the side
there is vomit on the floor.
We're home, we are...I almost didn't recognize you,
her hand resting in mine
is she still here, Empress—?
aren't we?
Yes mother, yes, *some heaviness had taken me over*
for... eyes close
listening to her own song.
Wrap one of the quilts she made around her
before anyone awakens.

The neighbor's dogs are barking through morning,
over the pond of carps in orange,
yellow-gold, dark splotches of coral,
lily pads quake when they swim below

Undivided

-for Elena

The further we drive into landscape
touching darkness the better we see—
form of cow, yellowish-orange pockets of monkeypod branches
solitudes assert the days end of distance

glittering shadows hopscotch
across the road, we navigate
around a dead cat heavy in weightlessness
several miles later we'll realize
it has slowed us down but for now
we give into the slow rolling hills
wanting to pull us into them
and to love the world as it is

without rooms or doors
the abandoned house sits roofless
ferns growing from the top of all its broken walls
unable to grasp where the ground began.

Bottom Line

The artifacts of rain
in sea changes embody strange beauties—
selkes that come and go

on land wearing bells around
their ankles to recognize one another
as they clamor through the city tempest
survive on cups of miso, scallions and basil
knowing where their skins are.

Given time and distance
the heart reveals itself
from being—an object of love—
to love itself.

Barbie has been left inverted in a cedar
along the canyon, an emerald and scarlet hummingbird
darts around her, upon reading bear activity
is high in the area my heart surges

its capacity for delight is fearsome
yet so is this immanence—
all of it crumbling, full of life
the day is buttery, coolness
of morning indispensable,

unable to renounce it.

Fused

Staring at the ceiling, I can get up
at any moment, walk right out of here, it
allows me to stay.

I tell the surgeon to wake me

I want to see—

Are you sure, so much warmth in her voice
it makes it difficult not to cry—

Promise to wake me.

Yes. And she will—

Orectic inclinations bringing me from
my own unborn stasis to this, there is no end—
despite all I would like to believe
even able to see through knowing there
is never any real death, sometimes—
it all still hurts.

Lift my head in the fogginess, unfamiliar faces,
a container of more orange than red, liquid
shifts with my movement, the color compelling
it would be perfect in tea cups I have—the contrast,
they are sky-blue and white—white-cloud-dragons
over porcelain, lined with white-gold,
exquisite as this body—

I want to take it back with me, drink, suck
imbibe it back into me—it is me—the craving
drowns my mind, the visceral grasping telegraphed

to my womb, across eons, when I come to
they tell me

not to go into the ocean for three weeks, *as if*,
swaddle me in warm blankets, I ask for another, Lily arrives worried
I feel beautiful—heart not of this world, this life
tears you apart, you are everything—

lighthouse, birds smashing full speed into windows,
lantern that burns my mouth
the world beneath my feet slips away
nothing is without you

every particle is like this, warned not to leave the house
yet keeps being called out, you again, always
what else?, not able to pretend knowing your taste in all things;
Goreki's #3 arcs the gamut—“*from weeping to poetry to song...*” and so this is how it is

musical, leavening this wild dance, swimming
lucid and empty amid corporeal landscapes, aquamarine horizons
in other atmospheres. Come let me hold you,
my arms wide open and immutable—
come love me again. Feed me ripe strawberries,
luscious and red.

We Have Come

~for Ken

I went thinking there would be a change
not knowing others would pretend and feel nothing
become absorbed in half tones of afternoon

medallions of starfruit pull the tree to earth,
she who was crying
finds herself stretched across the table
his hands lengthen, disperse the dust, eyes closed
unhinged, remembers herself as prayer
promises herself
never to be touched other than like this

there are no candles in the menorah, white
rose petals line the sill, things are not as you suppose
there are times when the heart will hurt
walking through cloud, shape of the heart
nebulous, not at all like the sun—

or turning cliffs, flute music eddying
and the texture of love unrecognizable.
There's more than this.

Things Become Themselves

When you come to me you are samba,
flamenco, voice of the blood
and shape of things to come, everything—
I don't want—you; full of wine, cigarettes,
flashes and clanging, aura of cinnabar
—reddish-brown halo and mercury
crashing the stillness of my heart,
where you find yourself at home—

walk the shattered rooftop
with patience, the edges are high
dew-grit smarter than us—
the black bears after chasing salmon
are curled on the boulders,
too full for dreaming tonight.

Did not know I was calling
or how close I came to darkness.
How soft your holding me I've become,
gazes that burn my mouth
warm in season, *all of them*,
submerged in the melodic fragments—
which have been going on always
and no longer frighten me.

A shoal of doves rupture the air,
we shudder and sigh, what else is there to do—
the shell withered, trampled back
into the earth's knotted rim.

Hanging Up

~for Martha

The Virginia Creeper is up high
in the middle of I don't know
in the middle of whatever
there are just now five or six lightning bugs
I like to think they are putting a show on for me
though I know it isn't so

it is almost dark
I can see a leaf, I can see through it
my back is turned from the house
it is very quiet,

it is very lovely

good-night.

EPILOGUE

Reckoning

Now a progression
of perplexed angels and air-sprites, lie intoxicated
and slanted on the balcony.

Who believes anymore, you can't blame
them. It's a volatile position
far from its origins. How many times
have you refused love, even today—
because it doesn't appear the way
you think

it should?

Look up, an eagle is flying
even in the urban labyrinth above skyscrapers,
dizzying in blue.

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NOTES

Anani, Lucayan waterflower

Hawaiian Words/Place Names

E ho mai chant given to me orally. From Edith Kanaka Ole Collection

Ipo sweetheart

Keiki children

Kipuka, variation or change of form (puka, hole), as a calm place in a high sea, deep place in a shoal, opening in a forest, openings in cloud formations, and especially a clear place or oasis within a lava bed where there may be vegetation.

Poliahu, Hawaiian Goddess of Mauna Kea. Caress.

Lanikai, sea heaven

Akikiki endangered green honeycreeper endemic to Kauai

Changes have been made structurally to *Counterpoint* and *Scherazade* to conform to graduate guidelines.