

Samoa
mana tama'ita'i

Māhea Ahia

The Night Woman by Sia Figiel

for Tere and Mānoa with love, and for Pounamu, that you might understand...

The Night Woman endures
the stares of Day
People who point
fingers at her
throw stones at her
(smiling as she bleeds...)

The hurt of the Night
Woman is buried in her
silence
Her pain hidden
in her laugh

For she alone knows the secrets of the Moon
the stars
the sea
the land

And in that place
Where the sea meets the land
She abandons her Day
Skin to feel the Night's touch

Birthing sons whose gene
Ologies hang
From the faces
Of constellations

Salina Tusitala Marsh

- Born April 1971 in Auckland, New Zealand
- Samoan, Tuvaluan, English, Scottish, French
- PhD professor at University of Auckland
- 2017-2019 New Zealand Poet Laureate
- Published: Niu Voices, Tightrope, Mophead, Mophead Tū, Fast Talking PI
- Dissertation: “Ancient Banyans, Flying Foxes and white ginger. Five Pacific Women Writers” (first pacific female poets to publish in English)



naming myself

“Tusitala”
teller of tales
that i never heard
till yesterday
born away
for another life

today
the tale i tell
is my own
and theirs and yours
a way of seeking
some more
of Samoa
of my sacred self

the tale i tell
will book its way
through tongued histories
timeless mysteries
sanctioned violence
spaces of silence
telling lives

“tala tusi”
tell the book
word the spirit of brown
in theory
in creativity
we make our sound
renown

Marsh on Art & Theory

- artwork about theory and a theory about art
- “process of theorizing my own existence into existence” (338) and the “danger of theorizing the voices of Pacific Islands women, and of myself, away” (338)
- theory - an explanation, **not** merely **description** but also a hypothesis of WHY/HOW
- “poets use island ecology to critique changes in their societies’ (347)

mana tama'ita'i

- mana - power and respect
- tama'ita'i - nonexclusive Samoan word used to refer to a woman
- culturally nonspecific term for Pacific Island women
- to place “feminist” label’s baggage could theorize voices away from culturally and historically specific contexts and to perpetuate the power structures that render Pacific women invisible
 - “multiple jeapordies” and layers of oppressions (348)
 - Q: If trying to be more Pacific inclusive, is it problematic that it’s still Polynesian-centric? Is there a term available for Oceania?
 - Q: How are Pacific women made invisible? How are they re/made visible & intelligible?

mana tama'ita'i

- “Thus, literary feminism can simply be defined as the study and promotion of women-oriented works that are potentially empowering” (339)
 - Just because the subject is woman does not mean it is empowering.
 - Similarly, “Just because it’s Indigenous, does not mean it is innocent” (Gregory Pōmaika’i Gushiken)
- “As a gendered and culturally based paradigm, mana tama'ita'i seeks to reveal complexities that stem from being Pacific Islands “women of color.” This is a term used deliberately to identify with the global community of women who have encountered the colonialism of the West” (339)
 - transgressive bridging stories that can be in conversation with other BIPOC

mana tama'ita'i

- “For Pacific Islands women, we need our voices to be asserted, heard, and heeded. For the colonizers also prescribed roles for us as the sexual servant, the dusky maiden, the exotic native, the innocent savage, the ‘happy-go-lucky fuzzy-haired’ girl” (343)
- Think through the Dillard piece “Sirens of the South Seas”:
 - 1) contemporary (1986), 2) famous writer, 3) woman, 4) reinforces stereotypes and tropes, 5) positionality and privilege: how does she benefit?

Tusiata Avia

- born 1966 in Christchurch, New Zealand
- Samoan, Palangi (NZ Euro)
- poetry and children's books
- MA in Creative Writing
- teaches at Manukau Institute of Technology

- “Wild Dogs Under My Skirt”
- premiered 2002 Dunedin Fringe Festival



Terisa Siagatonu

- born in San Francisco, CA
- queer Samoan activist and slam poet
- MA from USC in Marriage/Family Therapy
- Obama's 2012 Champion of Change
- "Meauli"

"Write a poem where every line begins with the words 'I'm here because'."



Write a poem where every line begins with the words:

I am here because...

I am here because

I am here because

here = spacial/temporal: in this class, in the WGSS department, at UH Mānoa, in Hawai'i, in Pacific/Oceania/Moananui/Pasifika, or wherever you are residing at the moment, online/virtual world

here = in existence: because of genealogy (biological, intellectual, spiritual, etc.)