



PNA World Tuna Day Art & Talent Quest

**RUNNERS UP PRIZE WINNING ENTRY**

*Marrow in Your Bones*

**By Schneider Yasi (Papua New Guinea)**

Legends spoken in forgotten times  
Carried on from ancestors and adhered to mind  
Of Gods and Creatures both wet and dry;  
Never to be lost or left behind;  
A Grandfather's tale told many times  
To kindred ears and evolving minds  
Of water feral creatures now so brutally mined...

“...no Scales for skin but gills to lungs  
Fins to limbs and eyes apart;  
Such a God we once lived upon  
Surrounding our Island home front...”  
“...They move in groups, not just two or three  
Swarming in the Deep Pacific Sea  
From the East to West, great miles they swim  
Following the currents, looking to feed...”

“...You may hear their splashes  
You may peer their fins;  
Blue or yellow or those in between  
As you set sail to travel,  
As you set sail to angle  
They tell the season when they are near;  
when rain will fall or sun appear.  
In our clan they are truly revered,

Symbolizing fertility and good cheer;  
Loving neighbors; and together persevere...”

A catch meant success and nobility  
For they were hard to fish back in the day;  
Muscled and stretched for pure agility  
So, only luck could lend you a prey.

Now, vessels move with added mobility  
And this talisman is easily dismayed  
One can see thousands poured at the pier;  
Yet we troll for one or two each day.

Black oblongs along the horizon, even near  
Oh! How to make them go away?  
Swelled-chest men in funny clothes twice came here to say  
everything would be okay.

I dread the day they disappear  
Our culture’s loss and life forever veered...

“...When the moon is out and the ocean clear  
We pull out on the water to hook and spear;  
Emperors and lobsters may fill our canoe  
But the Tuna will always have more value...”

“...Pandanus leaves folded into mini-trays  
To about the size of a palm  
Filled not to the brim with coconut marmalade  
And a phone-sized piece of Tuna flesh inlaid  
Over heated coral embers arrayed.

A meal sought by many a day  
But only on our island per se' ...”

I grew strong from food from the sea  
I remember Grandfather once told me;  
It remains fresh in my memory...  
“...Small is our Island home  
With little means to feed our own  
Wherever you may go  
and whatever you may sow,  
Tuna will always be  
The marrow in your bones...”