



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...”