

Imagined Love Poem to my Mother from my Father

My mermaid, I watched you scaling milkfish.
Your hands and arms were silver,
and your body flecked
with otherworldly raindrops.
You were a silver mine to be mined.
Perched on a high branch of your mother's
mango tree, I saw only a glimmer
of the blade as you scaled the fish, up-
and-down strokes, repeatedly,
gracefully, like an artist whose gift flows
through her veins. A strand of your hair
danced across your forehead, sweat
trickled down the joyous strained lines
of your neck, and your breasts, like twin
bells, I heard their transcendental
sounds. The glistening, naked
milkfish escaped the warm Pacific
for such honor. Kismet, chosen by Neptune,
it entangled itself on the fisherman's
net and beckoned you with its fresh,
clear eyes. You sliced
its stomach, *sweet blade twisting
in me*, scooped out its innards,
the heart, pulled out the gills
from underneath its head's protective plates.
I almost fell off the tree, there was a deep
aching in my chest, and my breathing
was shallow. Crouched beside the spigot,
your brown arms pumped briskly for water
as you cleaned the fish, *cradled
by the softest hands*, blood
and scales streaming onto the earth.
Didn't you hear the fish mouthing my words
as you were salting it: *Do unto me, the spy
up on the thick fruit tree, as you have done
unto the milkfish?* One day I hope
to recite for you these verses
and in my voice you will hear,
from across the oceans surrounding
the archipelago, as if reverberated through
the ages, the voice of our future son.