

Poems from Tusitala Hotel creative writing workshop participants, 2023

Below is a selection of poems produced by participants from the Remediating Stevenson creative writing workshops for adults, held at the Tanoa Tusitala Hotel in Apia in July 2023.

These workshops were led by our project poets Caroline (Sina) Sinavaiana Gabbard and Selina Tusitala Marsh, and involved a variety of exercises, including:

- (i) Using Stevenson's fiction as inspiration for creating new poetry and narratives about places and experiences significant to each individual participant
- (ii) Creating 'blackout' poems (where participants were invited to circle key words of their choice from the opening paragraphs of Stevenson's adventure story 'The Beach of Falesá', and to use these key words as the basis of their own new 'found poems')
- (iii) Free and timed writing exercises, with material used as inspiration for new poems and narratives

Audrey Lee Hang

Vivid

sacrificed, cast, drifted
scuffling skins roam forgotten.
A dream, harsh; heavy

He cried

Guilty, foreboding
Again, noble reason, repaid
listen, in time, support.

Vague

A pillar inked down the back of the islander.
Ateuila imagined in a dream.
Clouds assuring bad weather
A sweater distracting from the cold.
A coconut drawn from her memory.

Jocelynette Leilua

Solitary Island Journey

Island solitaires,
Chill breeze,
Dawn sparkled,
Daystar leaped with ease
A peeped breach
An orbit eighteen,
Amidships, binnacle,
A sight unseen
Neither night nor morning,
A moment pause
Sneezing and shivering,
A chilly cause
Abreast with the waves,
A solitary quest,
Inquired within,
A seafaring zest
Discovery lies
In the endless sea,
A journey of courage,
Yet to be.

Ana Maria Lui

EARTH WAS KIND

Greetings and smiles
Love and warmth
Sights and sounds
Revives one's heart

A word or two
A giggle and a wave
Sweet and sound
Brightens one's day

I came with sorrow
And spirit so down
Life did best
It saved my soul

My heart was gone
And mind so lost
But Earth was kind
It touched my spirit back to life.

Rooney Mariner

The Pink Diamond of Falesá

- a found poem from The Beach of Falesá by RLS

I saw that first
pink diamond
living among natives
fresh and rare
black, brown, white
Stands high.
in the South Pacific
Soft and changed
couldn't get on with the natives
was dead
buried beyond
asleep, whimpering, shivering,
thrust, swathed in black
grey face tattooed
frightened, old, vanished
the cross
bare.

UMA

- A found poem from The Beach of Falesa by RLS

Made believe words
tempted to confess
signatures and all
out, uma
illegally married
for one week
to hell
hide away
this deception
I wished,
Farewell

Leatiogie Malolo

(A poem in Samoan about the impact of European/Western cultures upon Samoan culture):

Afi Musaesae

O le po'u e avea ia ma papala,
Ua na'o le fao foi e pi'o pe tau sese [macron on final e] le samala
O pesepesega ia o lo'u agaga,
La'u aganuu anei liaina i ala.

Tu ma aga mai fafo ua e soona saafi,
E te manumaloina la'u Samoa matalasi.
Talofa i le aasa o lou fotua'i mai,
O'u nei moomooga ia numia oe e le tai.

E!! La'u aganuu o le a mou atu,
Ae faapefea ita nei, ua ta'e lo'u fatu.
Fo'i mai la'u aganuu ia te a'u,
Lo'u sei oe le pelega o o'u manatu.

Faatumauina lou tamaoaiga i lau gagana,
Se'i e faatoilaloina suiga ua alaga.
Ia faavavau oe la'u maasoama,
La'u aganuu, lo'u faasinomaga.

Afai ae e galoma atu,
Aganuu ia e faamagalo a'u.
Ou te le [macron on e] tuua oe e te alu,
O le teu fegalaau oe i le taulotoaiga o lo'u fatu.

Tala Toamua

Spur of my village Childhood life

Origin village of mighty warriors
Our bus to look out for its my last name too
The spare tala-dollar for an icy block n fare
Chores skipped. I'm off to swim with my cousins
The salu- coconut broom, my mother on my mind could be standing on the other side
Hurry let's go damn! There's homework too
Nice warm-water, excuses swim away.
Ulufale-curfew bell warning, the paipa faitele-extended family shower occupied
As I'm ready to cross the road
I can see my cousin Ono smile, Catch and carry me to my mother
I went to sleep, No homework for me.
The next day, I went to school
The morning bus ride wind blew in my hair
Pass by factory smokes of fresh roasted coconut

Next the brew of Samoan very own beer
Just when I arrived to school that I remembered my homework to do

Filifilia Tuivavalagi

Majuro Beach

I am the Beach
I am upset with some people
They throw empty beer bottles at me
And empty tins of tuna, corned beef and coke
Shouting, screaming, and stumbling drunk
Unconsciously acting like they have lost their mind
So much misconduct, yet
I am peaceful, calm and aware
Of what is going on at all times
I admire those who appreciate my beauty
And the compassion I have
I am the calmness of the sea
Namaste

Nacanieli Tuivavalagi

Unconditional Love

Loving all
All day long
Amidst coconut birdsong
Abundantly loved
At all times.

Sina Va'ai

(A poem produced during the haiku-writing workshop run by Selina Tusitala Marsh):

Thinking South

swollen ocean booms
black ash blanketing Tonga
echoing silence

(‘Found poems’ produced during Selina Tusitala Marsh’s workshop focused on ‘The Beach of Falesá’):

Colonisation

Tempted by gold

deception and desires
farewell the quiet way

Progress

Bridal Night moon
plain fresh woods
renewed South Pacific