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Trask/Night Is a Sharkskin Drum

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I

**BORN IN FIRE**
Born in Fire

Born in fire
    you came through
    the mountainous dead

to find sandalwood
    forests, skeins of fern
    the plump pulu
    of the hāpuʻu.

Flickering lehua
    guided you here.
    Stay, now, within

    the trembling breast
    of Pele, steaming her
    breath into the trees

drawing your fires
    to her craterous womb

    consuming your passionate heat.
Who Would Find the Midnight Rainbow

for Damien

who would find the midnight
rainbow, lei of Pana‘ewa?

who would follow
Hōpoe’s forest,
shimmering with Hina?

who would seek the woman
of Kīlauea, smoldering
in her caldera?

who would oli
in the bosom of Pele
wreathed in flame?
Night Is a Sharkskin Drum

Night is a sharkskin drum
    sounding our bodies black
    and gold.

    All is aflame
    the uplands a *shush*
    of wind.

From Halema'uma'u
    our fiery Akua comes:

    *E, Pele e,*

    *E, Pele e,*

    *E, Pele e.*
Hiʻiaka Chanting

Glistening tree snails
miraculous light gleaming
ʻōlapa leaves

in Pele’s uplands.
   Elegant hāpuʻu, translucent
       as her eyes. And

our flitting iʻiwi
   nimble beak sipping
       love’s lehua

buds. Winter moss
   sponging the earth. Hypnotic
       mist. Hiʻiaka chanting

on the wind.
   Step lightly, dancer.
       Look up, look up.
Nāmakaokahaʻi

Born from the chest
of Haumea, moʻo
woman of kuapā,
lizard-tongued goddess
of Hawaiʻi:
Nāmakaokahaʻi,
sister of thunder
and shark—
Kānehekili,
Kūhaimoana—
elder of Pele,
Pelehonuamea.

Kino lau on the wind,
in the yellowing ti,
sounds of Akua
awaking in the dawn:

Nā-maka-o-ka-haʻi,
eyes flecked with fire,
summoning her family

from across the seas.

Sharks in the shallows,
upheaval in the heavens.
From the red rising mist
of Kahiki, the Woman of the Pit:

Pele, Pele'aixonua,
traveling the uplands,

devouring the foreigner.