

Sovereignty

I.

No shadow falls across
those volcanic labia
of fern and spongy
cliff, flooded
by the sun
of revelation.

Nā wahi pana:
the sacred places.

At midday
gargantuan blades
dismember our peace:
twin-engine Americans,
amphibious marine
assassins.

II.

Aztecs called winsome
Montezuma "the whore
of the Spanish," bringer
of betrayal.

Before the conquerors
could finish their duty
all the children
lay dying
from the pox
or the sword;

all the women
lay silent, mouths
stuffed with their own
breasts; all the men
had fallen, in pieces,
to savage hounds.

III.

Now, our own Montezuma
goes pandering: Waihe'e,
"runny squid water"

slithering across
the land, slime and
pestilence in his wake.
Plunder

After the noise
of commemorative
helicopters and je

metal rapt
come to fea
on our dea

In 19
the St

and monstrosities:
snaking freeways,
Japanese resorts,
the fester of Native favelas:

Kalihi, Wai‘anae
Mākaha.

IV.

After the noise
of commemoration,
helicopters and jets:

metal raptors
come to feast
on our dead.

In 1993, poisoned islands
the stench of treason:

Waihe‘e, Kamali‘i,
Kamau‘u, Akaka.
“Hawaiians” promising
deliverance

with the whine
of betrayal.