

POTHOS

between saltblast zeppelin waves flashed with black sulfur, you might spot her basalt machinery biting the moon, locked on you like some schizophrenic wizard. you might slap the water and scream and go hugging the venomous gowns of jellyfish until your arms swell into stone. but you will arrive when she tells you to arrive. and if you try to quietly fill your lungs with seawater, she will stab your feet into eelgrass and coral and twist your legs into black snakeries of chilled lava. and if you are very good, and if you do not hear the death crack of your sternomastoids or find your intestines wrapped around your legs like some blue-blue party favor, you may qualify for a kindness: you may get your visa, your face, stamped by a soft plot of gypsum-white sand. you may look up into the wizened eyes of a gecko sunning herself on a cockpit door and vomit up a greeting that is something less than blood. welcome.



Shoals of Pothos (detail) by John Elkerr
22" x 30"

Oil pastel, gouche and colored ink
Text by Stephen Eric Berry

the graygreen mosses wait to soothe your feet. renegade mangoes long to feed you. erectile casabas burgeon with rainwater to quench your thirst. peacocks leap from the oleander bushes, eager to imitate your voice. even the jacked-up stinkbugs wait for you to pass on the copse trails, hurrying to one of your spiderhorn hammocks. where you sleep in the trees with avatars of your favorite lovers, all of them. they vapor into flesh and tremor around you. they curse and spit and blossom into climaxes and you taste them through the hot afternoon rains, in the sun's creamy pink embers when you talk about everything in the lilygrass, inside the jet crashing disguised as a world.