

Stepping Stones

By Albert Wendt

Our islands are Tagaloaalagi's stepping stones across Le Vasa Loloa
small and frail but courageous enough to bear his weight and mana

high enough to keep us above the drowning and learning
how to navigate by the stars currents and the ferocity of storms

Point and sail in any direction as long as you know
how to return home

You have to navigate the space between the borders
of your skin and the intelligence of the tongueless horizon

and learn the language of touch of signs and pain
of what isn't and what may be in the circle of the tides

that will stretch until you understand the permanent silence
at the end of your voyage

and our islands are your anchor and launching site
for the universes that repeat and repeat

like the long waves of our ocean like Tagaloaalagi's
compulsive scrutiny of what is to come and fear

Source: *Poetry* (February 2018)