

Lion Heart

Amanda Chong (1989-)

*You came out of the sea,
skin dappled scales of sunlight;
Riding crests, waves of fish in your fists.
Washed up, your gills snapped shut.
Water whipped the first breath of your lungs,
Your lips' bud teased by morning mists.*

*You conquered the shore, its ivory coast.
Your legs still rocked with the memory of waves.
Sinews of sand ran across your back-
Rising runes of your oceanic origins.
Your heart thumped- an animal skin drum
heralding the coming of a prince.*

*In the jungle, amid rasping branches,
trees loosened their shadows to shroud you.
The prince beheld you then, a golden sheen.
Your eyes, two flickers; emerald blaze
You settled back on fluent haunches;
The squall of a beast. your roar, your call.*

*In crackling boats, seeds arrived, wind-blown,
You summoned their colours to the palm
of your hand, folded them snugly into loam,
watched saplings swaddled in green,
as they sunk roots, spawned shade,
and embraced the land that embraced them.*

*Centuries, by the sea's pulmonary,
a vein throbbing humming bumboats –
your trees rise as skyscrapers.*

*Their ankles lost in swilling water,
as they heave themselves higher
above the mirrored surface.*

*Remember your self: your raw lion heart,
Each beat a stony echo that washes
through ribbed vaults of buildings.*

*Remember your keris, iron lightning
ripping through tentacles of waves,
double-edged, curved to a point-*

*flung high and caught unsheathed, scattering
five stars in the red tapestry of your sky.*