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 by **JAMES PENHA**
FROM THE ARCHIPELAGO
LESSONS

Origami Poetry Project

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poems by
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LESSONS
FROM THE ARCHIPELAGO

A BALI DANCER
A NEW WORLD

My mask
 faces dead moons
 breathing breasts
 sun bursts
 eruptions
 of language
 when you stare silently
 into the corner
 terrified of your seeing
 my geometry
 I turn away

THE SALT EATERS
IN SOUTH TAPANULI, SUMATRA

the family
 shares a dinner
 of rice
 and salt
 a few grains each
 of rice
 and salt
 a main course
 of rice
 and salt
 abandoned orchid.
 The hummingbird tastes nectar
 to weigh. Bees rejoice.
 along a branch too loose
 The flower attracts a squirrel
 I know the river,
 birds, the wind, and you.
 In absolute silence
 MOUNTAIN STEPS

Because I sit here at home
 with nature
 my arms in line with the grain of the wood
 my mouth open and yet knot
 my hand dripping with the resin,
 I seem some Romantic ideal.
 Because you find me so,
 you see
 in every plank
 in every tree
 some one
 much like me.

ODE ON WOOD
IN BORNEO

Because I sit here at home
 with nature
 my arms in line with the grain of the wood
 my mouth open and yet knot
 my hand dripping with the resin,
 I seem some Romantic ideal.
 Because you find me so,
 you see
 in every plank
 in every tree
 some one
 much like me.

ART HISTORY
IN NORTHERN SUMATRA

The Kotanopan jungle
 mountains are cut
 in the foreground
 by the rapid river
 and so shimmer at sunset,
 like a pointillistic painting until
 every tree shakes
 and the sky itself explodes
 into a guernica
 of bats: dark night
 before night
 when the landscape fractalizes
 into pollack drips
 and daubs de kooning
 and bits of landscape
 in my cubist eyes.