

THE DREAM OF SEA PEOPLE

COLLECTED ENGLISH POEMS, 1992 – 2011



MICHEL LIPPITSCH

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About the Poet

Michel Lippitsch first stepped aboard the research vessel *Heraclitus*, a three-masted junk in ferrocement, in Miami in 1995, and has spent much of the decades since sailing her across the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the waters of Southeast Asia — voyages of marine research, reef survey, and exploration that carried him from Guam to the Solomon Islands, French Polynesia to Tuvalu, and on through dozens of ports between. Poetry travels alongside that life at sea: written on watch, in ship's cabins, and in the towns between passages, in the same hand that also paints, sculpts, cooks, and, more recently, teaches children in Teluk Bakau, on the island of Bintan, Indonesia, to build and race the traditional sailing model boats known as jong. He has also worked as a marine conservation officer in Indonesia. The poems collected here span nearly twenty years of that life on the water.

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The Dream of Sea People

*The dream of sea people,
Living with the elements,
The caress of the wind,
And all sails up,
Singing the song of the rigging,
The smell of fresh bread in the
oven,
And Orion high in the sky,
Telling us where we are.*

*Nature's way to teach,
Observations of the patterns,
Strategies to program the visions,
Tuning to the beat of the earth,
Refined energies and vibration
grids,
Creating moods and secret rituals,
On old tested ground, with old
tested methods,
To create new mythologies,
Carrying out the evolutionary
game,*

*The play of gods and deities,
The miracle of life.*

THE EXPEDITION

*Witness in a whirlpool of change,
Searching for the vanishing sea
cultures,
And the creation of a sea people
dream.
Create the dance that will follow
the beat of the oceans.
Recondition, restructure the path,
Abandon to the elements,
Become the wind,
The warmth of the sun, the clouds,
the scent of freedom,
Become the plants, become the
snake,
Become the shark, become the
dolphin,
And finally, learn to be human.*

*From the foam of the sea,
Rose a child from our dreams,
He gave the ocean his soul,
To watch over the minds of lost
seamen,
Reborn they incarnated the spirit
of the dolphins,*

*And the spirit of the dolphins
dreamt the birth of a new man —
What is man dreaming of?*

Sea Poets

*A sea man feeds and lives through
the elements,
Faces in the sea reveal his degree
of attention,
Spoken clouds, and the cast of
light,
Shaping, reshaping our illusionary
realities,
The wind plays the skin,
A cocoon that lazily tells you
where you are —
Nowhere and everywhere,
Not in or out, not in any
projection,
But that ethereal certainty of
reality
That sea people like to call home,
The dwelling place of their
freedom,
And the freedom of the seaman
lies in the form of the universe.*

*Melting pot of cultural dimensions,
Intersecting at crossroads,*

*A network of networks,
Constantly reshaping their
structures,
The emergence of a synergetic
culture —
Some will move up to the stars,
some into the sea,
But sharing in common
The essence of a life's kingdom.*

*Stand still, smile,
And everything unfolds,
Get carried by the wind,
Let the waves play your mind,
Dance, dance,
Keep on dancing the sea.*

*Like a huge sleeping dragon,
Batu Tara is barely asleep,
Puffing smoke through her nostril.
From the center of the earth she
keeps a connection,
And nature's work is on me — I am
one with it.*

*We are all habit-forming
creatures,
The way we stand, move, play,
affects our way of thinking,
Different attitudes, different
experiences,*

*Molding your body to fit the
lifestyle,
I become water, I breathe the
open sea,
Wind in my mind, stars in my
dreams,
Freedom the ultimate utopia,
Homo creativus, Homo delphinus,
Homo oceanus.*

*Mad, mad for the world,
No wisdom, no, no, no,
Nothing there, everything
everywhere,
The play in the labyrinth of
information,
The word transforms, language
grows,
And poetry will always rule.*

Tao Hommoceanus

the way of the man of the ocean

*Inside, outside, only concepts,
Everything connects,
Most of the time we are reactors,
But when a conscious actor takes
the stage,
He can guide his play — there is
no control over reactions,*

*Control is illusion.
Guide and be, be what you believe,
Between the sky, the ocean, and
you,
Universe unite, everything
changes,
Rules are concepts, and concepts
are not realities.
Under the stars, certainty of truth,
Your soul speaks the languages
beyond the words.
Space and time have come to try
to rule us —
We are creating our own
boundaries,
Within the power of play, with
mind body and body mind,
Gifts from sea angels,
Free to create the myth of our
imagination,
Creation, discipline, to survive.*

*As much a kid as a sage,
Naive and full of insight,
We juggle the roads of the mind.
"Come back to reality," I hear
voices calling,
And in the depth of my soul I know
they do not know.
Is the road always lonely?*

*Can the way of understanding
move without man?
Gods, are you still playing with
me,
Why do I think that some gifts go
beyond reason?
Love is real, an intensity hard to
bear,
The courage to love, to love,
Beyond the judgment of cultures,
Man-made grids of illusion —
Can one know, and still be willing
to play the game?
Under the spells of oceanic
beauty,
And the love supreme of a woman,
The earth becomes my lover,
Orgasmic shining calls,
God of nature, part of me, part of
all,
I bow to your mysteries.
I might be laughed at, creator of
laughter,
But my love will reign supreme,
Because it can only encompass all
and everything.*

*In the eyes of a whale I saw
wisdom,
An exchange of unspeakable truth
—*

*Where can I go with what I know,
Where can I go with what I don't
know?*

*My ignorance can be bliss, in the
realm of the dream warrior.*

*Still hunter-gatherer, information
organically collected,*

*Infinite — I am nothing in
everything.*

*Song of a bird, the flight of the
albatross riding the winds of the
high seas,*

*Visions of forgotten lands,
forgotten civilizations,*

*Knowing the limitations, riding
them to the road of the unknown.*

Voyages, inner and outer,

*For the love of traveling —
necessities, addictions,*

Masturbations, illuminations,

*A mind gone wild, but with the
harness of a form,*

Synergetically bound to the whole,

The insanity of the real sane,

*The dreamers, past present and
future.*

*Silence of the void, sheets of
delicious ecstatic hallucination,*

No reality, only realities,

*Chemical transformation,
mutation,*

Simply the certainty of being alive,

*Within, the passion burns,
Eternal fire for a lifetime or for a
day,
Water-spirit mentality, fluid,
hydromania,
Tribal aquatic thoughts, the
ivresse of grand follies,
Like the civilization of a sea
people,
Roaming in the illusionary
freedom of its own foundations,
Doomed to fail or succeed,
An experiment for the eyes of the
world —
Enchanted playground of
psychedelic mastery,
Lush coral garden, dolphin
conspiracy, aquatic magic,
Essence of real.*

Theater

*Theater — ancient Greek word
meaning to see —
And how can man use,
synergetically, his senses to "see"?
Incarnation, with the help of
visualization, intention, and
attention,
Studying history, studying the
evolution of man.*

*I sit on the bow; I could be a
thousand years away,
Past or future, gazing at the stars,
Without communication with
mankind,
And no information available but
reason and feeling.
I see that the stars move,
And after a day I can locate an
island
And safely return to my starting
point, using observation alone.
But how much of that comes from
know-how, from mathematical
programs,
From theories already integrated?
The evolution of a newborn is
formed the same way.
Through theater, man can mold
himself into different forms,
Losing, or forgetting, the "I,"
To tap into the many "I"s —
Many eyes, many ways to see,
Theater, the art of different
seeing.*

*Causes and effects, our human
perceptions,
The play of our senses —
A magic mushroom helping some
apes?*

*A few artists in a cave in France,
A few skulls and artifacts here and
there,
And theories on the move.
Reason, faith, imagination,
Man the creature able to lie to
himself,
A labyrinth of a mind gone wild.
Why do we want to know?
Existentialist — knowledge only
through experience?
Are our intellectual games
useless? They have a wild power.
Dreams have moved mountains,
brought man to the moon;
Dictatorship killed millions;
revolutions and ethics;
Liberté, égalité, fraternité;
And god, nature god, the all-
encompassing,
The sum of everything, creator,
Man in his footsteps, imitation, a
creature observing,
Good and evil, dual forces in
equilibrium,
Theories, then strategies, then
questions —
Man the creature that asks why,
and sets himself to find out,
Still in his infancy, riding the
evolutionary wheel*

*In a mad race for the survival of
humanity.
Eden is in the mind, realities and
realities,
The question of what is truth,
Thoughts, the power of thoughts,
Shiva's dance of destruction, to be
reborn in a new light,
Only to get destroyed again,
shaping new, always the new,
So as not to drown — create and
run,
Or it might catch up with you.
Obsession, desire, passion, fuel for
our dreamy illusion,
Magician, creating realities out of
illusions,
Creating a world in his own image,
losing himself in the process —
But out of sleep you can rest,
Keep the attention going, don't let
it drop,
Or the big brother will hypnotize
you in.
Eden is here right now,
everywhere is a light,
Don't let the sun not shine with
you,
Simply alive, miracle, supernature,
simply nature.*

Silent Night

*Silent night, the wind sleeps,
While the stars are dancing,
The moon hides,
But my heart rides the waves of
eternity.*

*Got to make wishes tonight,
Shooting stars, superstition or
wishful projection.*

*In the depth of night, when my
soul is longing,
A caress of your love,
My Aphrodite,
I like to believe you hear me —
Compared to the stars, you are not
so far,
Just a few light-seconds away,
And still closer when I hear my
heart beat your song.
Love is alive. I dream of you, my
muse, my goddess.*

Dolphins

*Dolphins,
Brothers from the sea,
Friends of my mind,*

*Somehow I am not dreaming
When you come to greet —
My soul is feasting.*

Love Is

*Love is scrubbing the heads after
someone puked his brains out
from seasickness,
Love is god,
Love is life,
Love is all and everything,
Love is knowing you are there,
Love doesn't exist,
Love is everywhere,
Love is king of my heart,
Love is swimming in the deep
ocean,
Love is love,
Love is the arms of a woman,
Love is the arms of a man,
Love is the full moon shining on
the sails,
Love is me,
Love is you,
Love is we,
Love is eternities,
Love is infinities,
Love simply is.*

A Sailboat Is a Love Affair

*A sailboat is a love affair with the
wind and the sea,
You can't know where you will
land,
The elements, the masters —
Like a love affair, you do not
control, you ride,
You ride till the end of your
dreams,
Or the beginning of a new door,
Behind the door, another door,
Till you realize there are no doors
—
You created those doors.*

The Black Ship That Got Away

*Oh, the black ship that got away,
Let the song of the wind play with
the rigging,
A solo of fragrant, linseed-oiled
blocks,
A rope keeping the tempo on the
mast,
Whistling through the booms,*

*And our natural voices filling the
night.*

*Cry, sky, cry,
And let your sweet tears wash
The salt from my oceanic skin.*

*Fly, eagle ray, fly,
Current flowing by,
A dance of jacks and man,
Choreographed by nature's will,
I let the fluid mind go,
Space, dream of space,
A liquid rite of passage.*

Diving on the Storm

*Diving on the storm,
You can hear the rain
Hitting hard on the doorway.
Right down here below,
The waves run the flow,
And my mind is on the go.*

*Diving on the storm,
A whirlpool in the glow,
And all the fish will know,
While the light is getting low,
And my mind is on the go.*

Being Human

*Being human,
A process, evolving,
Culturally bound, as a social being,
Traveling the world, inner and
outer —
I have never met two humans, one
and one, that would seek conflict.
It takes three to tango.
Two beings will not fight, because
there is nothing to fight about.*

*I am a citizen of the biosphere,
planet ocean.
The country I was born in has built
foundations
That don't allow certain
manifestations of being.
I couldn't live off a beach, fishing,
living off the land —
It isn't a possibility anymore.
A few places still exist, far, like
remote islands in the Solomons,
Or deep in the jungle, and even
then...*

*I am a man, and I still don't fully
know what that means.*

*Navigating through a web,
Seeking the places where one can
be, just be —
Liberated spaces?
And for those you need to fight,
And for those you need to hide,
Run, run, run as fast as you can,
Because if you stop, you will be
caught.
Irony — run to stay free.
Even by concept I might be caught
by my own sense of freedom.
But I am trying to stand, if I can.
I know I want to, and how strong
my will is
I am discovering, stretching,
strengthening.
Utopia — dream no small dream.
I will die, and I know it as a
certainty.
I am alive, and I know it as a
certainty.*

*The gift of life,
And catching up to find her a
meaning.
She might not have any, but to
exist, to exist —
Like a gift, an ecstasy, a bliss,
And that in itself is a meaning.*

*We played with our hands,
dancing hands, steering the air,
creating geometric structures,
Painting with the invisible,
And somehow the invisible
becomes visible.*

*We play with the hand before the
tool,
Enjoying, information pouring in,
Touch, surfaces, textures, heat,
memories.*

*Nothing of it is new, and at the
same time everything is always
new,*

*New, new, new,
Always reborn, but with a memory,
Interacting with the world as
always new, but with a memory.*

*That acting class, we just
reactivated our hands, retracing
the connection,*

*Breaking the pattern, breaking in
to seek out —*

*Not the hands and fingers of a
monkey,*

*But the hand of man, the hand of a
man without culture.*

Experience.

*I am nothing on the scale of the
universe,
But that is only through the scale
of size.
I am unique, as every man on
earth is unique.
Some seek wealth in experience,
evolving beyond, but not above,
That strange, miraculous, complex
system that I am, being with the
world.*

Time Is, Time Is Not

*Time is not.
Time is.
Time is not.
Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock,
Timelines crisscrossing, a
weaver's art,
Knots of time, knots of timelines.
Time is. Time is not.
Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock.
Is there anybody in there?
Is there anybody anywhere?
Is somebody everywhere?
Timelines, meet me there on my
dolphin dream line,
Then we can meet on my space
line,*

*And then let's go to the crossroad
of the time line,
Where we can go anywhere, in any
time, all the time.
Time is. Time is not.
Tick tock, tick tock, tick tock.
Caught on the same line?
Can you read between the lines?
Have you been racing with, or
against, time?
Zoom, flash, whoosh — dive in
time.
Time is. Time is not.
Tick tock, tick tock, tick tack.
Tsack, tsack.*

Washington, D.C.

*Washington, D.C. —
A table dancer,
Miles Davis and death metal,
A back room where Afghans plot
the next war
Under the nose of the White
House,
While the statue of Lincoln
wonders when the American
dream left the building.
Lucky me, I found it in the street,
in parks and individualities.*

*I learned to dream big, the birth of
the big,
While Miles gave birth to the cool,
And every revolutionary wants to
give birth to a revolution.
America gives birth to dreams,
It gives birth to new spaces,
It gives birth to freedoms,
The American spirit came to free
the world.*

Caribbean

A hurricane had just passed through southern Florida — Hurricane Andrew, famous for being the costliest hurricane ever. It was my third, and not innocent anymore. In Bermuda I'd roamed outside, playing at weightlessness with the wind, while trees came down, electricity poles collapsed, and roofs flew off to unknown destinations. Wild and fearless and naive, I sought the adrenaline that only the grand powers can give you — the play with death, the grand spectacle of nature in full fury. I felt alive, playing with my most worthy possession, my life.

But in Miami, with too many friends, a wife, and more sense, we hid inside, only hearing the wind take over, and the torrential rain. Miami Beach lost its beaches, its trees, and a few old houses. Paul, a friend I grew up with, visited during this time; we came back from New

Orleans, the only ones driving on an empty road while there was a traffic jam on the opposite side, moving away from us — we were heading into the center of the evacuated zone.

We helped during the aftermath at a school turned into a giant dormitory, with bus after bus of homeless people arriving. They gave us plastic gloves and we lifted old people out of their wheelchairs, three days without a shower, urinating on themselves in the school. The basketball court was lined with beds, row after row, the room divided by ethnic group and language, but everyone helped each other — disaster does bring people together, once they have no possessions left to hold on to. After three days we took a plane to Jamaica, our conscience selfishly clear, because we'd done our good deed.

As we landed in Jamaica we went looking for a peaceful place, and found a family fifteen minutes from the beach to host us. Then all the Jamaican goodies arrived at our doorstep. There wasn't any music yet — that would come in the evening. From then on there was no chronology to our expedition, only a melting pot of sensation, thought, experience.

The stars are out, away from any electricity. We watch the sky from the edge of the Blue Mountains, home of the most famous coffee in the world, and of the Rastafarian, without the paraphernalia. A man, dreadlocks to his waist, slow, not talking, religiously smoking his plants, his hands smelling of earth. No words

get exchanged; we sit under the stars, being there together. God became all and everything, not my childhood church's cross and bible imprint — our church was the universe that night, and we were the children, among the breadfruit trees and flower blossoms. The man left before the sun came up from behind the mountain, without a word, without a sound.

We're on a bus, an estimated three-hour drive; we'd asked beforehand for a cake, the oiliest cake ever, dark, jet-black. The ride lasted several eternities, and arriving at our destination I crawled out and sat six hours on the pavement, unable to move, without the desire to move, aware of everyone passing by, no one disturbing me. I can still taste that cake in my mouth if I recall it hard enough.

The reef became a sanctuary, helped along by freshly picked mushrooms — psychedelics meeting psychedelics. The rasta who disappeared, only to reappear hours later with his latest discovery: one word, respect.

Jamaica

*Jamaica, hummingbird and flower,
The run, the true wild,
Not giving up,
Standing up to fight.
Plant a seed. Keep planting seed.*

America

I love America. For a European nowadays that's almost a taboo. I love to stop at a truck stop, watch an oversized waitress pour weak coffee into my mug, the grease of fat slabs of bacon with eggs and white toast, hash browns on the side, the sun just waking up outside. The drivers who cross the country show a kind of wisdom, the wisdom of the American road, hours and hours of open space.

I love America — a bar in the middle of nowhere, a band playing accordion and violin, dancing bodies. Mountains of crayfish and shrimp and fried catfish with scented Creole spices, the French *joie de vivre* kept alive, the wild spirit of the bayous, alligator boots and roaring laughter, larger than life. All you can eat; nobody leaves here hungry or sober. I love America — jazz, jazz, jazz. I love America. Movies, pizza delivery, drive-ins, flea markets, painted license plates. I love America.

America mixes, and mixes, and mixes. I love the American dream — dream no small dream, dare to dream, don't let the bastards grind you down. I love America, ten thousand people telepathically connected, dancing, free, creating their own thing, a Grateful Dead concert, a joint passing around — I love America. The wild open spaces, swamps and canyons and rivers and gold rushes and golden dreams, individuality, man given his chance to be. I love America. America is new, bigger, wilder, bolder, naive and ruthless, coarse and

rough, like her heart. America doesn't take no for an answer. I love America.

Cairo

Cairo, Egypt, 2000. Cinnamon, clove, cumin, pepper, saffron, sweet-smelling tobacco, sweat and perfume, roasting coffee, leather, dust — a labyrinth of smell, in a maze of streets, a run through human history. No other city binds time so well; there's no visible jump, it's all here to see, smell, touch, sense, think. The gestures are old, as old as civilization. Allah ever-present, social forms respected. Getting lost only to find yourself in the present, and the present here is the sum of the past and now.

The pace turns frantic; in a few minutes comes the first prayer, breaking the fast of the day. Everyone stops, and together, millions of people bring their right hand to their mouth. It's an incredible, unique feeling, to know you're sharing, as a human being, a moment — the primordial act of survival, eating, drinking, breathing. The whole town goes quiet, a meditation, a communion among men. For a moment we are united, and whether that's in the name of Islam, or Allah, or whatever else, the reality of that unity is almost telepathic, ecstatic.

Cairo, the city that never sleeps, activity and markets open twenty-six hours a day. I still don't know how they manage to bend time to find more of it. It always feels like there is time,

like time can be arrested — the way you'd fiddle with the controls of a video player, freezing an image, pausing, fast-forwarding, slow motion, all of it at once. You can hold your attention in one place, over a chicha or a string of beads, or fly off on some inner expedition while still holding a conversation about the war in Afghanistan.

Command Room

RV Heraclitus, 28 July 2003

The light picks out the plotted snake-line on a blank chart of the open sea. Pacific, Pacific. A colored wind rose in pink, green, and yellow, color-coded for status, like a set of traffic lights: green and you win miles, go ahead sailors, you're on go; yellow barely earns a smile; pink brings boos, most likely a few steps back. Too much pink and you despair. A weatherfax spits out lines of highs and lows, fog lines and wind directions. The skin spits out its own information too, cold snaps off the northern arctic wind, caresses almost from the south.

The barometer becomes a habit, a tic — the needle sticks sometimes, and a gentle tap, under a sign that says "tap gently," brings it round to the correct reading. Man, a creature of habit, has conditioned himself to that tap; like a lure, the fingers get drawn to it the moment the eyes land there, the gentle sign long since forgotten. Mounted on a plywood wall, behind which a sleeping bunk waits, the noise resonates right beside a sleeper's head — in an

edgy mood the tap turns to thunder, answered by a mug banged against the bunk side, an attempt at communication without words. It takes five minutes for the warning to be forgotten, attention lost again to the mechanical program of a nasty little habit.

The GPS becomes the most-read numbers on the ship; the voice can't resist it. Mounted on the same thin plywood wall, the bunk's occupant gets instant word of our course and speed, a choice of thirteen other voices layered over it. Overhead, the satellites hand us our position in space and time, the dots on the snake-line. An eraser lies handy for the mistakes of tired bodies and tired eyes, slipping off the longitude lines. The radar stays on standby, no landmarks to ping, no other ship on the rare, clear horizon.

The helmsman steers his course, eyes fixed on the compass, the mariner's mandala. Most sounds betray their creator; the helm sings in his own style, ballads, sometimes a frantic grunge tune. Occasionally he steals a glance at his own distorted reflection in the stainless mirror of the main engine throttle, while a few squeaks from his yellow foul-weather gear compete with his singing. On top of the chart table a Balinese Hanuman mask stares down — are we his army of monkeys? A Chinese coin, nailed to the wall in Sarawak, testifies to the superstitious nature of the sailor's mind. The portholes let in the light, in the constant battle of light and dark. Drawers full of charts sleep their dreams of exploration; the medical drawer

waits for the recovery of attention lapses, painkillers for cold-induced headaches, vitamins and bandages; cupboards full of secrets from old times, unmasked by missing minds; the satellite phone stands by, a possible direct line to "the land."

Voices fill the room. How about flamenco? Yeah, would be great. There's the upcoming date-line party — the line we thought we'd never reach, the crossing that hands us an extra day, twenty-four hours of the illusion of gained time, saved hour by hour over the last few decades. What should we eat? Polenta with a trickle of olive oil and garlic, or bacon and parmesan? Bacon and parmesan, the bacon cut in tiny strips please. We need DJs, one hour each. How about drinks? I want to put a bar together in the lab, but I need an assistant. Me, me.

A moment of rest between the voices, filled by the swell-induced rattle of the rigging. The life jackets hang there uselessly for now — in this freezing water they'd simply become floating devices for corpses; falling overboard at these latitudes is a rendezvous with death. A started baggywrinkle decorates the table; clouds come out with every breath. I thought it was a psychedelic party, no? I want to come in as an obnoxious hippie. Obnoxious isn't necessary. Straight away, some taboos here. Why not let the event unfold, just be ready to put stuff out. Yeah — poetry.

All at once the bodies disperse, finding their own niche around the ship, most of them under a mountain of army blanket still performing after eight years of good service, donated in Miami, having seen every kind of weather, abused under every storm, but more appreciated now than ever, given what survival actually requires. Eight degrees of breeze paints our noses red and numbs the tips of our fingers.

Chuuk, 2003

*Wind pushes waves onto the hull
of the Heraclitus,
Against the dock,
Eddie's hand at the right time, the
right place,
A fat tire in his hands,
The dock eats a piece of the ship,
A transfer of history read through
Eibes's eyes,
Telepathy, or brain hacking?
Hugo was his name,
And Hugo took the ship down.
The threat of a fall is always near,
But this time we came out clear.*

Simbo, October 2002

Kue, kue, kue, kue,

*Feet stomping the earth,
Rattles shaking,
Skulls, axes, shields,
Kue, kue, kue, kue,
Ensemble,
Spirit of the warrior,
Strength gathered from the leaves
of the tree,
Muscles contracted,
Painted by the ground from the
top of the hill,
Eomba, ahead, come on, aomba,
Voices rising, projecting with
intent,
No mercy, no fear,
Nigai ia na igamu,
More skulls for our shrine,
More strength for our ancestors,
Stone age, stone age,
I am not of now,
I am not of before,
And I am not of after,
I am from within,
Savana Kongu Vaniao,
Ooo.*

*The axe has its own mind,
The shield protects my body,
Attack, defense, all at the same
time,*

*Because there is no time,
The body moves, body moves,
Who is this me now,
Feet stomping, rattles shaking,
smell of the leaves,
The whole body moving together,
Then you are your own creative
self,
With your own style, no one the
same,
Feet stomping, rattles shaking,
Eomba, aomba,
Keeping the rhythm, keeping the
breath in breath,
Eomba aomba,
Experience gathered for future
need,
Experience gathered to remember,
Part of the origins, the origin
within us,
Ooo manja ia na mua nange, ooo,
The song comes down onto the
stone,
Be careful of tumbling on the
wrong stone,
Weather-making magic,
Ooo manja ia na mua nange, ooo,
Mantra the words, get it, shield,
go, take it, take it,*

*Flashes, a mound of skulls, jungle
greens, jungle sound, sulfur
fumes,
Bright yellow, pure yellow,
Red, hibiscus red, blood red from
the pig,
Screams, laughter, bellies, eagles,
flying foxes,
Faces, more faces, a pearl of sweat
on dark night skin,
Smiles, with strength, sun
burning,
Rasa tuni bangara,
Jump, jump my friends,
Always there at the right time, the
right place,
Totem — I am a dolphin walking
on land, you are my spirit,
Rasa tuni bangara,
Jump my friends, jump,
remembering what got me here,
Jump, jump, rasa tuni bangara.
Surprises, kekeleke,
Sparkles in the eyes, kekeleke,
Surprise, full moon on the rise,
No rest for the wise,
I wish. I am.*

16 July 2002

*Rolling swells, breeze unsteady,
The rigging sings a lament,
Clouds floating, birds gliding,
Open sea smelling of salt, no trace
of land.*

*Surfacing experiences —
An edelweiss in the Austrian alps,
The smell of leather in my
grandfather's shoemaking shop,
Hazelnuts with tiny holes,
becoming cookies under a
grandmother's expert hands,
Trout in fresh mountain lakes,
Flowers, mountain flowers of
every kind, blue trumpets,
Mushrooms, red-topped, white-
dotted, flashing their beauty,
calling out,
My grandmother nodding, in
secrecy, that they are poisonous —
but with the tone that says they've
been eaten before, only by the
witches,
A deer running away, stalked
through the forest,
An opium pipe in a Thai hill-tribe
hut,
And timelines, my feet following
the rice fields,*

*A magic show in Indonesia, raising
funds to rebuild a school's
collapsed roof,
A killer curry with a Tamil refugee
in Switzerland, rivers of yogurt
poured over it to tame it,
The kiss in a field — a field of
poppies.*

26 May 2002

*Full moon bright,
Breeze on light,
Waves' tempo song,
Bodies asleep, dreaming, positions
curled, straight, some heavy, some
light,
Kolombangara's volcano cone
exposed to the stars,
Some birds that can't sleep, a
rooster out of time,
The crew missing their senses,
epoxy paint exploding in the
bosun's locker,
Kerosene leaking in the galley, a
kid crying,
But the songs remain in the body,
the mind,
A perfect dance gesture, fresh in
memory.*

Crossing the North Pacific

The open ocean, an open pathway to memories. In the comfort of my bunk, everything the same, time unfolds both ways — crossing the North Pacific becomes its own odyssey. So inevitably you came to my mind, because it's some mythical quality that brought us together. We created, consumed, and died, to be reborn. I could never hear a word from you, but my mind holds enough memory to never let you die. Still, I would love to hear from you. I keep sending my journal.

Waves

*Waves —
There are no two waves ever the
same,
A wave rides on its own,
Pushing in front, getting pushed
from behind,
The first wave, the energy builder,
The one that will impact hardest,
Coming as the surprise, loaded.
The waves, created by forces,
Winds — the stronger the wind,
the higher the wave,
The wind rides on waves, air
waves,
Attracted, repelled, gravity,
cosmic shapes,*

*Galaxies, air molecules as stars,
Acting the cosmic dance,
The strongest forces, always,
almost contained.*

Looting of Planet Water

*The smell of rotting shark
carcasses on the beaches of Oman,
Fishing armadas with their
driftnets, raping the sea mile by
mile —
Everything in their wake gets
caught, turtles, sharks, dolphins,
They are everywhere.
Bujan village stripping the reef of
everything edible;
What will they eat in two years?
Tomorrow?
One fisherman and a thousand
bombs dropped in a year, easy to
do —
All you need is a bottle, some
fertilizer, and diesel. That'll do.
Boom.
Every day, just a few fish less.
Tomorrow, nothing left.
There's no rest. Humanity is
hungry.*

*The Tokyo Tsukiji market alone
moves about five million pounds of
seafood a day.*

*In less than a century, ninety
percent of the whales and dolphins
are gone — a holocaust.*

*We are the first generation to
explore the ocean floor.*

Do we want to be the last?

*The truth is, we can never prevent
oil spills — they are the price we
pay*

*As an oil-driven civilization, the
way death on the highway is the
price a mobile society pays.*

*We saw boats emptying their
bilges into the sea, dumping tons
of oil and chemicals.*

*We saw trash floating for miles in
the middle of the ocean, trapped
within the currents, forever
floating.*

The Ocean Is Sick

*How can some men be so dumb,
To kill the very thing that keeps
them alive.*

*The ocean is sick,
The ocean is sick.*

*When are we going to stop,
Are we ever going to stop,
Can we ever stop?
How long till we catch all the fish
in the sea,
How long till we can't even swim,
How much trash will we dump,
Till the beaches become trash
beaches,
How long are we going to hide,
How long, how long.
The ocean is sick,
The ocean is sick.*

Picasso Trigger Fish

*Picasso triggerfish,
Monet damsel,
Andy Warhol clownfish,
The Leonardo da Vinci coral,
Gauguin unicorn,
Matisse grouper,
Michelangelo dugong,
Miró's butterflyfish,
Dalí trumpetfish.*

Can't Sleep Without the Memory

Can't sleep without the memory of the shooting stars your eyes cast upon me. Infinite desire to touch your skin. My eye hunts a glimpse of you, and mourns an empty try. I do not want to ask why, for there are questions that do not require answers. As divine muses do, you take hold of part of my soul. I am almost melting from the heat I burn with my passion, so I give it away.

I do not care about your past, for only sorrow would be fed to the image the gods created of you.

Blossoms

*Blossoms,
Moonlit waves induce forms,
The taste of breath,
Grasping resurrections,
Blossoms again.*

*Find your gems,
Sharpen your tools,
And cut for the best light, the best
refraction.*

*Can I find god?
Only if you look for him.
For who knows how to see.*

Dance

The sea reflects all.

*Mirror,
Curious,
Frightened,
Cautious,
Explore,
Free.*

*Two,
Contact,
Entwine,
Separate.*

*Three,
A shell tells the tale,
Shares the tale,
Written.*

*Become,
With the blue silk.*

The Ship

*Winds in our sails,
We've got spirit in our ship,
She rides like a majestic being,*

*On an ocean of dream,
Out of dream she was built,
And with dreams, the incarnated
dream of sea people, she keeps
alive.*

Always Looking for the Other

The light delights in caressing the sea; the sea delights in being caressed by the light; he delights in the sun and the sea delighting in each other. He peeks into his bunk, the only space where he has the right to call himself king of his own nation, fighting off intruders, making his own laws, all for the benefit of his own ego — and how he should take care of that peculiar thing, the source of his own actions. Without its help, he'd often wonder what to do, and then it would start again.

Does she love me, or not, and how much — so he runs to ask her. They've made a special pact, an alliance between their two countries; he can enter any time, without a spoken word needed for admission. He roams free in her land. Now that the question is asked, all he can do is ask her. But she isn't in her own country. He roams the world to find her, finally, on the steering wheel. Half in awe, because every time he looks at her he sees a different person, he asks whoever he thinks she is: do you love me? Of course, she says.

That came too fast. He had to think a while first; she'd had her answer ready, so ready there was something too ready about it. And what does it even mean, of course? Then again, he might have asked the wrong her. So he thinks he should ask again — by then somebody else might have arrived. Do you love me? You already asked me, and I already told you. Now there's something to ponder. Either she's lying, which is always possible when a person is steering — you lie so you can concentrate, so you can fend off the invader of your attention, gently, if you can, gently if you can manage anything else. This time she couldn't manage anything else. It just isn't a good time to ask why.

He doesn't know any of that. He goes back to his own country, wondering if she really loves him. But then again, he might never meet this particular her again. He consoles himself that you can't have it all, all the time, and if one of her mes doesn't love him, there are still enough of them left for him to relax for a few days — otherwise he's going to have to work at seducing the mes all over again, if he still wants to keep her thinking that she loves him. His ego, at least.

She gets off duty after four hours; the world needs to keep turning, or it would never go anywhere. One of her co-workers running the world serves her a coffee, towers and spirals of smoky, coffee-scented cloud reaching up, and for a moment she retraces, without knowing it, the whole history of thermodynamics. It's

easier to see when the coffee steams. Then her thoughts wander off, sparked by the caffeine, chemically induced, without her realizing it either — her body has already taken over automatically, all she needs to do is supply the coffee. If she doesn't, the body sends pain signals straight to the brain.

Some ghostly demons hover overhead, taking over one of the mes. There's extra tension in the air; the mes are losing control, reactors, all of them activated — get out of the way, because even the gentlest word will be enough to spark a fire, so the only option is silence, since words can't collide if they're never spoken, nothing there for the demons to grab hold of. Unfortunately, she doesn't know that one of her mes has already made contact with one of the demons.

He asks her again — do you love me? Yes, she says, but it's a sharp yes, manufactured and delivered by the demon-activated me. What's wrong with you, he asks. He doesn't know you're not supposed to ask that of a demon-activated me; he's just handed it a great opportunity, and demons never miss a chance, get it while you can. What do you mean, what's wrong with me? You really want to know what's wrong with me? I'll tell you what's wrong with me — why are you even asking if I love you? Are you insecure? Don't you have anything else to do? I'm cold, the helming was a bitch, I'm tired, I didn't like breakfast, I didn't get a chance to wash my hair today, and nobody says a word to me. Everyone senses the demon overtaking one

of her mes, and feels, more than knows, that they need to get out of the way, in silence.

By now he's finally woken up and realized he doesn't stand a chance this morning. She keeps exhausting her demons, tiring them out, so they either leave or fall asleep. Do you think it's easy, she asks, coming every day to your country, and all you see is the same face, over and over — the demon-activated me can't recognize the multitude of mes in a single face. See you later, alligator, he says. He's finally realized that the best option right now is to be away. He'll be back once another her takes over.

Without a Ship

*Without a ship, there is no
expedition,*

*Without people, there is no
expedition,*

*Without resources, there is no
expedition,*

*Without goals, there is no
expedition,*

*Without dreams, there is no
expedition.*

What do you want? What don't you want? Is there a space and time where you can get it? Do you want to expand — like the universe, knowledge, being, energy refined — or do you want to contract, like dying?

I am here right now as an energy transformer. For what purpose? Is there a purpose for man beside man — like creating consciousness? Does he live beyond what he believes himself to be? Why does man ask why? Man, or some men, seek to form a logical, comprehensive map of the universe through laws and belief. Not believing is itself a belief.

Rituals keep structures alive. A culture grows and takes over — is that transformation an atrophy of man's potential, or is it growth? On board right now I feel like some cultures, some individuals, are trying to transform or take over, but the change would be an atrophy to the existing culture in place, the synergetic culture that's already here. There isn't any constructive, creative input to it, only a quest for power for power's sake, and it isn't understood that power is energy — energy for its own sake has little value if it isn't directed toward goals, dreams, action, development, evolution.

The dream is sea people. A civilization. But to remain alive, the quality, the values, the vision of the dream need energy to feed on.

You First Look

*You first look, then you see, then
maybe you might know.*

*Good conversation is free, but so
hard to find.*

*Music in the soul can be heard by
the universe.*

*There is only one corner of the
universe you can be certain of
improving, and that is yourself.*

*Sign of our time: the most common
objects sighted at sea are trash.*

*Deep in the sea are riches beyond
compare, but if you seek safety, it
is on the shore.*

Two Fragments

*Treason, overture, overdrive,
Plan, assassin of mindfulness,
Soulless.*

*Synergetic —
At one time I realized that
everything conducted to this point,
All fitted into the concept,
Readiness.*

*Simple truth, a lot of nonsense to
get there.*

*Put negative energies at the
service of the dream,
Don't waste them fueling the
wrong fire.*