

ENGLISH ADVANCED: CREATIVE PIECE

The Pacific

The water, the palm trees, the complete absence of noise, the transparent lapping of water. The Pacific. For millions of years it has surged up Maui Beach, bringing with it, its animal life, plant life, news of war and death, news of life and happiness. Tsunamis and coral reefs, all washed into the same salt washing over Lily's face. Volcanoes rising out of the water. The gentle Pacific carrying with it the souls of the universe, washing Lily's face with Jurassic spirit, World War 1 spirit and the ghost of every whale who's ever died, all of it onto her face – eternity, and that's exactly what it felt like. Eternity.

He has no more protections, he is raw, he has no defenses. They've all been stripped away from him.. He doesn't know who he is anymore. He spends his day in catatonia or in a deep state of panic. He imagines himself being buried alive, killed, he sees poisonous snakes in his room, adders in his bed, scorpions on walls, everything is supremely frightening to him. Though he was supposed to be only 19, still a boy, Jack was distracted by how old he looked, how aged.

Bamako was almost flat. In the distance she could just make out the outline of hills, above her in stark contrast to the blank face of the sky directly overhead, a mass of clouds were gathered, almost black with unshed rain. But ...no rain. Not yet. The ground was a dry, ochre color, already beginning to shimmer under the silvery white glare of the morning sun. As she drove closer to her home, she could see glass and steel buildings poking up here and there above tin roofs; square ugly buildings that looked as though they had been thrown together in haste, often without windows or doors; needle sharp aerials thrust skywards that gave the city a lopsided air of chaos. The traffic was thick and fast – scooters seemed to be the majority, buzzing around the cars. The pavements were crowded with an assortment of hawkers, shoppers, women in vibrant clothes and stunning headdress, children, bicycles, dust ragged looking boys pushing spindly wheels along. Though she had been in Bamako for over 20 years it was still bewildering and chaotic. The city was a combination of dusty, sandy earth and deep green trees, and every spot of shade was utilized by a being – a peanut seller, a shoe mender, a stall covered with exotic silk coverings and oh the noise! The constant buzzing, the shrill honks of cars, people yelling... the sounds of the city infiltrating through every moment of peace, seeping through her window sills and through the cracks in her walls, entering through the pores of her skin and sending her into an abyss that threatened to obliterate her each time. She looked above her, and overhead laced against the sky were thousands of wires – telephone, electricity all entangled into a complex web. She often looked at this sight and it reminded her of her heart, the tangled web of emotions, the heart wrenching ache she felt every time she stepped outside her house and entered the streets of Bamako ... a million miles away from the peace and serenity of Maui.

Maui. Her home land. Her sanctuary. Her past life. It was all taken from her when she had her first child, Jack. For reasons she is still unable to fathom, her son never adapted to the lifestyle of Maui, the resplendent ocean, at times invisible under billows of foam and tendrils of spray, the absence of noise which allowed for the placid dreaming quality which overlay all human activity and endeavor. He simply did not agree with this lifestyle and often plunged himself into despair, where the soothing voice of his mother, the chirp of the colorful Maui birds, and the powerful roar of the ocean would not bring him back from his deep, bottomless abyss.

Lily entered each new day, with the resplendent sun of Maui shining through her open windows intensifying the smell of fresh figs and pomegranate from her garden, she awoke with the complete

absence of noise, except for the powerful bellow of the ocean and shrill caw of the colorful island birds. She entered each new day hand in hand with Maui and its majestic beauty. Although, she loved Maui as much as anything could be loved, it brought her despair. Its drama, its beauty, its very grace, its whole godliness reminded her of its utter and dismal failure to bring light and happiness to the life of her son. The most majestic place ever created, brought her son to the depths of misery. The colorful Maui birds, flowers of paradise and its resplendent morning glory, washed over her son, day after day with no effect, while its enthralling beauty bowled her over each morning. All she'll remember about her two hour morning walks, when everything in the universe seemed not only possible but attainable, was Maui's failure to bring pleasure and satisfaction to her only child's life.

Her love for her son was like a solar eclipse – breathtaking, overwhelming... overpowering and it was because of this deep, unfathomable love that she was rendered blind to all her needs and desires. So she did, what she thought was the only option. The only option, that would open her sons eyes to the world that existed beyond Maui, to a world that encompassed happiness, culture, ethnicity and life, in the hope that culture, ethnicity and exuberance would be reinvigorated into her sons life. So she did the unthinkable. She relinquished the majestic and picturesque landscape that she was so enchanted by, for her sons happiness. And so she traveled with her son half way around the world, until they landed at Bamako in the southern most part of Africa.

Bamako was a land of life, where rhythmic song and dance and the beating of drums could be heard in the early dawn and subsist till twilight. Where there was never an absence of human life. There were people everywhere. Scattered among the dusty roads, clustered in stalls, walking the paths of Africa sheltering from the blistering heat of the sun. There were people, and with people came friendship and solace. Her son drank the culture like a man dying from thirst, he drank in the music, he quenched his thirst with friendship and was hydrated by the many bonds he formed and the African lifestyle of leisure, dance and sport. He was transformed into a man where hope and exuberance emanated from every corner of his body. He was finally the man, Lily wished for him to be.

15 years on, Lily had seen the world turn inside out and go grey, the solid ground that had supported her disappeared and she was struggling to stay upright each day. The blank, barren landscape destitute of nature and the absence of the ocean filled her day with misery and she was slowly plunging into a deeper and deeper abyss each day. She knew this misery would continue, like she knew that every breath was like drinking in tar, that every subsequent day would cut like a knife.

There were days where she revisited her childhood memories in Maui and she relived the spell of the ocean that so strongly captivated her, smelt the salty oceanic air, felt the wind carrying salt and sand against her face and saw the foam and tendrils of spray enveloping the land around her. It was days like this that the life of pleasure Lily thought was so out of reach was suddenly tantalizingly near.

Water she notices as her eyes adjusted to the morning sun, so pure that the translucent jellyfish everywhere in it were like delicate ghosts, covered in the sheerest silk, with long trails of lustrous frill tentacles abandoned to the current. In her enchanted trance, she almost missed the sight that would be rendered unforgettable and imprinted into her psyche for as long as she would live. Amongst the sheer cover of the ocean, a whale erupted into the air so suddenly, that she almost missed the explosion of the water. A beaky head, a small eye that sparkled cognizance, a pair of flippers – it just kept coming up and up and up, its whole blue grey glory meters above the ocean. When it fell it crashed in clouds of spray and disappeared; a moment's breathless wait and the magnificent fluked tail towered, poised like a banner, before it smacked with a clap like thunder amid dazzling tendrils of spray and foam.

After reliving such a heart wrenching memory, she would retire to her backyard and witness the sun setting thousands and thousands of meters above her. She would sit with her arms wrapped about her knees chin propped on them looking up into the crimsoned clouds and witness the fireball above leaving her world to light another world that was so much more tantalizing and alluring than hers. Though its spectacular beauty was not lost on her, it did not draw her in either. This beauty was too timid , too controlled. It was not enough to quench her thirst for the overwhelming and uncontrollable beauty that enveloped Maui. This kind of beauty was too alien, too tamable and docile, while the beauty in Maui humbled and enthralled people. Maui was home ...