

SAY  
THE

*poems*

NO'U  
REVILLA

TINFISH  
RETRO SERIES  
NO. 1



SENTENCED

MONDAY:  
Grandma says  
“lady friend”  
like a secret.  
Wings are the  
preferred method  
of hygiene. But  
what is lady?

WEDNESDAY:  
I learn that a lady  
is in waiting. In  
God time she  
could wait forever.  
I lose my virginity  
on purpose and  
use pads for lint.

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TUESDAY:  
Mom explains  
what the dash  
means in “5–7  
days.” That God  
wears a uniform  
and he decides  
when.





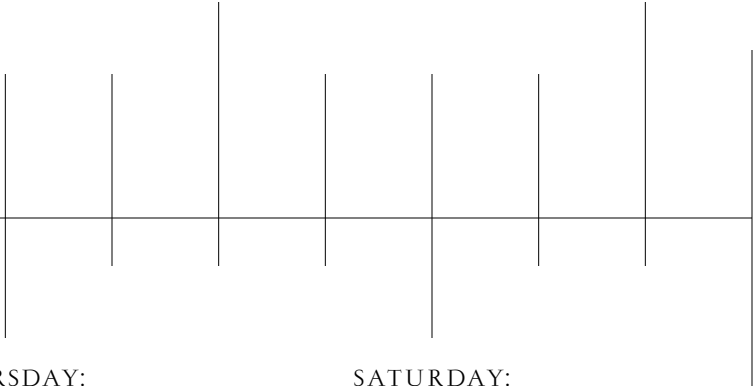
FRIDAY:

After sex, I tell a man  
his head looks like a  
uterus upside down.  
He runs out to find  
God. When I see him  
again, he tells me, "I'll  
only take a minute of  
your time."

SUNDAY:

I think about the  
lady in waiting.

Give her  
her own period.  
And let her run  
on



THURSDAY:

Old tampon  
applicator still  
smells like blow—  
not blood, because  
I'm no savage.

SATURDAY:

God says  
blood is time.  
My sister: blood is  
knowledge.  
"I don't care  
about the blood,"  
my lover tells me.  
"It's the act."



# GETTING READY *for* WORK

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some things specific:

Lancôme powder foundation

in a black case

with a mirror.

A row of pink tiles on the bathroom wall.

Doorknobs.

15 carpet stairs.

other things:

that I worshipped my mother's lipstick,

ate her nylons, and read the Bible for her.

i remember only that Eve is more evil than

the serpent.

she sews prayers into my dresses.

i know what serpent means.

Mother often

Mother make up

Mother do mother do

that I never imagined her as creature.

mascara. Christmas

family newsletter face.

She had no mouth no mouth,

“Your mother had no mouth  
before she met me.”

thing: shattered.

that his feet were Old Testament down  
those stairs. that black case died an oyster  
and the row of pink tiles shit themselves.  
my mother continued.  
and her poor doorknobs.  
that eyeliner is surgery.  
that choices are made to keep pretty—

Mother do mother do

I: mouth, eat pretty like glass

reflecting, refracting  
the dirty thing. Throat gives birth to lips.  
Mirror child Mirror(s) mother(s).  
A door separates us like a terrible thing,  
and the pretty is in pieces all over the floor.

# HOW TO USE A CONDOM

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Pleasure Pack variety:  
Her Pleasure,  
Shared Pleasure,  
Deep Impact.

*We gotta stop . . .*

Ultra ribbed

*We gotta stop We gotta stop We gotta stop—*

TEAR HERE  
and concentrate.  
Substance interrupted

if used properly,  
will reduce risk of transmission. In-and-out nothings  
will eroticize motion and deeper spermicidal tendencies  
will lead to murder.



Reproduction is not the problem.  
Reproduction is the problem,  
making children based on an image.  
*We gotta stop.*

Against highly effective pregnancy.

We are kissing in a picture in a frame on your shelf  
(we intercoursed that night while your parents were home)  
but the fluids stop there.  
Our moments like wet hair in the cold: old stories  
with low body temperatures, low resistance to virus.  
Diminishing diminishing  
until lubrication is a product.  
For sale.  
*We gotta stop.*

I need connection to be source to be predicate to be don't stop  
don't stop don't stop—  
will your lost erections ever find their way home?

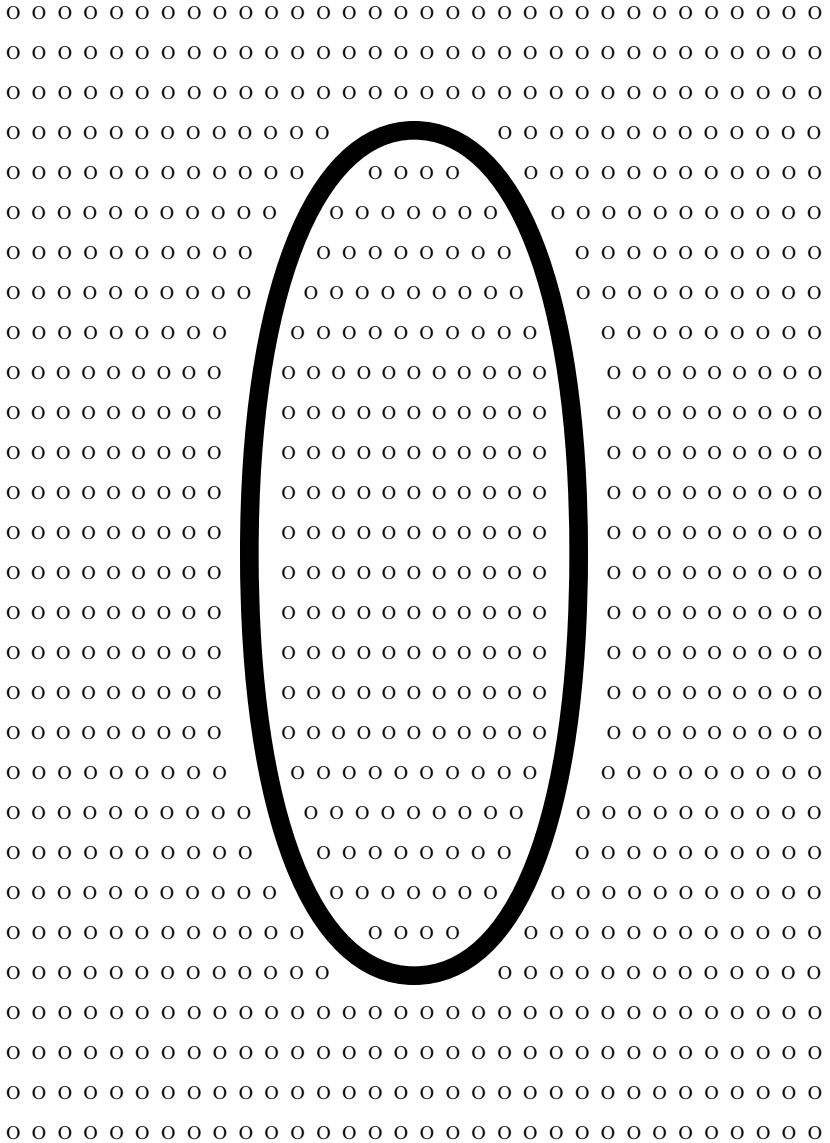
TEAR HERE.

Unroll your barrier device.

And leave space at the tip for collection.

# C A T C H

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“Writing is a shameful, venereal disease.”

—Emma Santos



# M A K E R I C E

---

I rinse fists  
of brown grain with water  
that comes from the faucet,  
and—even if I can't afford it—  
I take the time to watch  
the hard pellets  
squeeze through my fingers,  
as good Happy Valley children  
squeeze through holes  
in fences on private property.  
    Dirty water pours out,  
    tap water shoots in,  
but I never lose a piece of rice,  
because that  
could be my daughter.



## PULL WITHOUT PUSH

---

Grandma was a lizard at our age. She walked first, the story goes.  
And learned to climb. Up the stiff metal pole. Up and over the  
hanging head. Up until she was up and it was down.

The lamp post I thought  
was a cervix to the sky, but no, not  
female. It  
belonged to the pier. And thus us. We  
pissed everywhere.

on the bridge  
on the concrete floor  
on the steps running down to the tires  
in the ocean where we waited for others to jump.

Young, territorial.  
Everywhere pissing.

There was rope that hung  
from one end of the pier to the other,  
rope that hung like a tongue—the kind  
of tongue we wished to have in our little girl mouths:  
thick and twisted, tasting  
salt in broad daylight:

Big Girl tongue.

In the water we mounted it, squeezed  
it between our legs,  
like she said “slyly reproductive.”

We were warm without pissing,  
enacting mothers and daughters where water met fiber met  
piers.

Grandma jumped into the ocean with her legs spread. She landed  
and the water turned to foam. The rope was dry for thirteen days.  
One for every child that swam out of her.

We dreamed of sex in tents on cliffs in the morning out of wedlock,  
of touchy that one itchy this one,  
of making eyes biting lips saying “fuck” sexy.

Fucking formed like vowels between our legs—  
not like other girls and their ABCs—we  
knew rope like A E I O U.

One child from her forehead. One from the tongue. Another rolled  
out from her clit. After another after another after another from her  
mo’o toes. They climbed. Like her. Grandma. Lizard. At our age.

# S A Y   T H R O N E

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[ENTER]

Pull out chair. Sit the lady. Push in

chair and lady. Then

sit, man. [EXIT]

You came, and lady was brown, hard, articulate.

You pulled out, telling the others The Lettuce is Bad.

They replied: kalo.

They replied: to feed.

They replied: queen.

But salads brought you destiny. You ordered new appetites,  
pulling pushing Fancy chair—luxurious furniture with a capital “F”  
like fuck, like feed, like fiction. To your table the appetites arrived  
but Fancy chair fuck kept you occupied.

*[occupied was occupation but not occupation that kept lady occupied]*

Your fuck was favor,

your feed for labor

your fiction official as cane.

[ENTER]

Pull out of the lady. Push in

her chair. Then sit back. [MAN EXIT]

How did she get on all fours?

all legs four legs  
done the in-between thing  
twice certainly  
capital “F.”

How did she get on all fours?

From sit sit to squat squatting

*venereal disease is impossible to translate  
fiction broke out*

On all fours: lady and

Fancy chair conceded you something previous.

On all fours: savage and purchase—

but mouths for that “Fancy” weren’t born yet,

dangling from the ceiling

like flags.

[ENTER . . . something new]

Out of the chair, lady is pushing

pushing out something. You

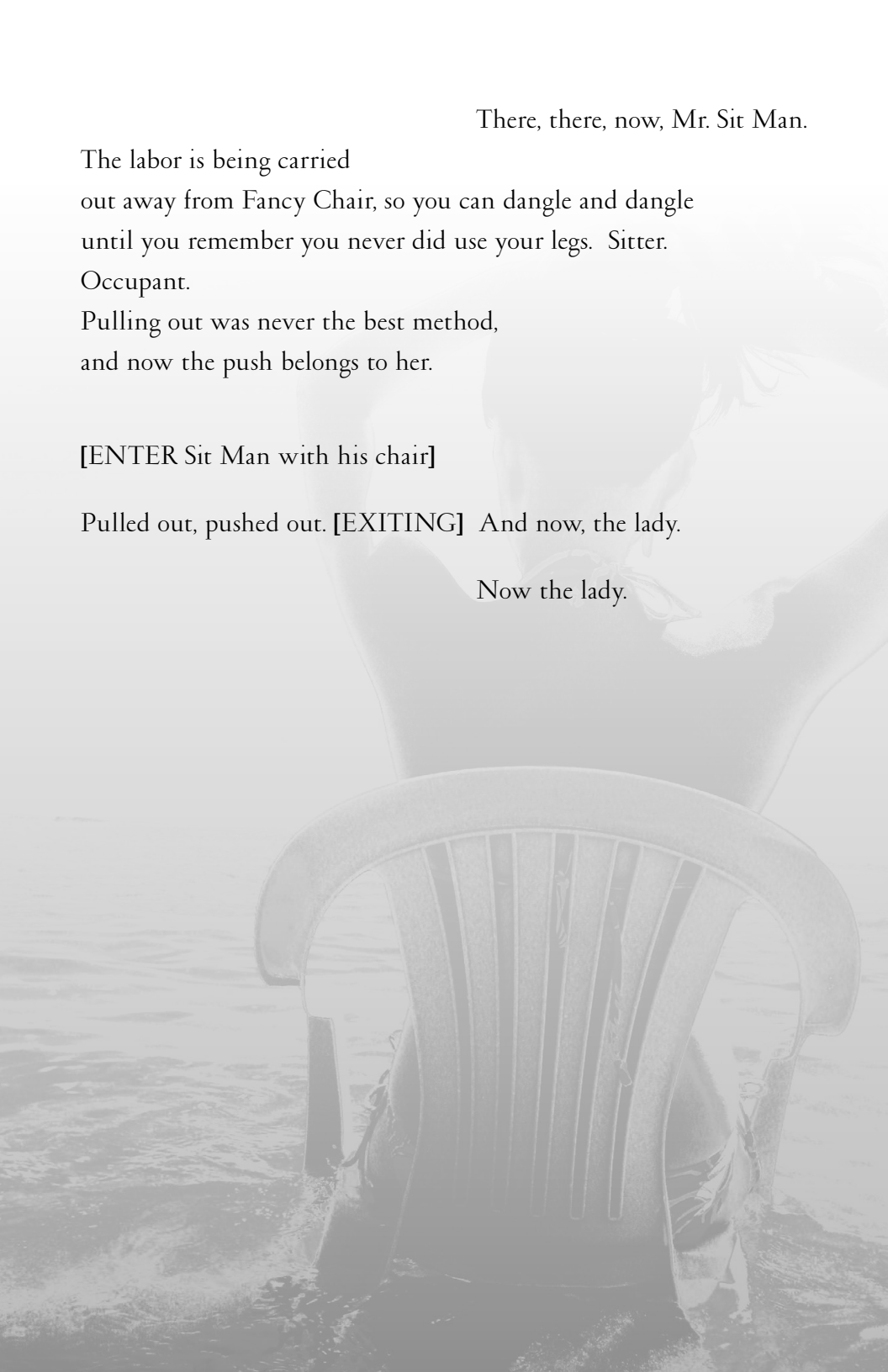
stay inside instead of [EXIT]

They weren’t flags.

They were flowers. Nā pua.

Un-pluckable above that chair, there  
to teach you what in and out, out in  
really mean.

“Bring the chair, bring it. He needs the push and pull to believe in  
himself again.”



There, there, now, Mr. Sit Man.

The labor is being carried  
out away from Fancy Chair, so you can dangle and dangle  
until you remember you never did use your legs. Sitter.  
Occupant.

Pulling out was never the best method,  
and now the push belongs to her.

[ENTER Sit Man with his chair]

Pulled out, pushed out. [EXITING] And now, the lady.

Now the lady.

No'ukahau'oli is rooted in Maui, while pursuing her Cultural Studies scholarship in O'ahu at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa. Her palapala is based on Native women's voices and indigenous storytelling. And like her kūpuna said: "I wai no'u."

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## TINFISH

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