

THE SWEETNESS OF MOTHS

We were at the place they called “the end of the world,” where the road stops dead at the eleventh hole of the Kona Country Club, where waves explode against a steep wall of black lava. My date parked the car. “Push your seat back,” he said and reached between my legs for the lever. My head lurched back, already his pants down at his ankles as he squirmed over the hand brake and on top. The moon lit his body aglow, reminding me of a reptile with lizard tail; his tadpoles ready for release, eager to swim the length of my channel.

I could smell the ferment of the sea at high tide. Over the boy’s shoulder I looked for the hidden road I knew led to my father’s favorite fishing grounds. This was paternal territory: salty, volcanic, prehistoric. My father had brought me here many times. Trailing behind him under the hot sun, I carried his bucket and learned that by focusing on the oily shine off his back, I could ignore the thirst, calluses, even the dizzying feeling, and follow him up the coast and back, without fainting.

“You look so adorable in this,” the boy interrupted my thoughts and lifted my skirt. He stuck his fingers in me, scratching on the way in, clawing on the way out. He pulled down my top, suckled on my nipple like a gecko on a sweet moth.

“Wait, wait,” I said, pushing against his tight amphibious skin. His cold feet suctioned to me like limpets to a rock. Then I heard the waves pounding and the roar of the sea’s retreat, and I thought of my father fishing along that same coast under the same moonlight on that very night, every night, and I could hold so very still and obedient.

