

Winter 2020

It Is Relentless, This Way Crossroads Keep on Forming

Hari Alluri

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Alluri, Hari (2020) "It Is Relentless, This Way Crossroads Keep on Forming," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 93 , Article 16.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss93/16>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

HARI ALLURI

IT IS RELENTLESS, THIS WAY CROSSROADS KEEP ON FORMING

There are so many days I forget to begin with wonder.
This day I begin wondering what time
I switched last night from beer to sleep. When I get to my homegirl's
she offers a glass of water. I finish, pour some more, lie down
beside the bowl. More water to begin: atop a table

an ocean's reach of time away: clay vessel, still soft, mouth like a frog,
receiving incisions
on its lid, incisions that multiply to begin.

Rice: it could be what I'm from. No, I've not been told
what those repetitions say. Beware hunger that exceeds terraces
cut in mountains: it might drown you. To begin, here, I ask them, please,
call back a loved one, one whose body can no longer be found.

Here: a mainland city, an island to our people. *Shuffle*
these cards. I shuffle. Afraid
because an island is a form of leaving, I could be
made of distance to begin. When a card leaps out the deck
in one pull, my homegirl stokes a vision. An elsewhere
dawn, a cove to begin. Rattan

at rattan. The warmth of collective exertion to begin. In every triangle step
aside

and swipe—isang baksak!—a sound to begin. Archipelago, so these are echoes

to begin. I am on my back. She senses what I can't sense—my homegirl: my
guide.

A figure floats above the shallows, their starcloth
dipping ripples to begin
what is below. The figure accepts

homegirl's tired head at their left clavicle. I don't see the sinking
even though my eyes are closed. The expression I miss to catch

on my guide's good face, it appears to begin the coming days: *although you
miss*

your brother whom the waters took, the ripple to begin remains.

The part of ourselves continuing undrowned: kapwa.

She waves a hand like my kapwa
shifts all around. Lid to begin, of clay. Necklace to begin. Tree bark
faces, rain-touched to begin. Amulet and scar. Each of these
the shape of divination. To begin to tell me
what she saw, tears above laughter: *it cradles, like a residence
for spirits, what seeks you.* My homegirl listens

in ritual time. To begin. To begin. And, appearing on my inner eyelids,
the only vision is a shadow, hopping across,
in retrospect, the longing my homegirl translates—it is relentless, this way
crossroads keep on forming. To begin an island, lava simply breaches
the distance creation flings us. Flings us
so we might join. To begin an ocean,
find a part of you you do not need to seek. Kapwa

might mean the circle doesn't remember to begin—doesn't because
it does not have to. If I must be made of anything,
make me of islands. Of what's between. An origin
symbol to our line, a tattoo
by the hand of the eldest star. As on a living clavicle,
as on a mouth of clay.

*—for Dags, after Chris Abani / after Niki Silva, with
interpolations of Phaniel Antwi, Julay, Shaunga Tagore,
& Jana Lynn Umipig.*