

## **Lessons From Fire and Water**

Fish jump in the canal behind the trailer park where I rest  
my feet on a plastic bin, let the sun warm my neck.

This is not a park on the outskirts of a declining town but a haven  
for those fleeing winter winds, returning each year to this community

where friendships grow as days melt over cocktails  
and the sun sets over western lands.

I visit my sister whom I haven't seen since fire stole her home in Lahaina  
and she seems ok, enjoying activities with neighbors

and in quiet times, knitting hats to sell in her daughter's shop, except  
for a certain lassitude that has settled in the depths of her eyes.

They used to sparkle with the same blue green of the ocean  
but now have darkened, reflecting a change in tides.

We launch paddleboards in a quiet cove of the Indian River. Accustomed  
to the feel of shifting waters, she leads us through mangrove forests

into a tranquil lagoon. Later, I lose my bearing as mercurial winds  
threaten to sweep me into turbulent waters. Every muscle tightens,

fear drives my breath away. I dig my paddle frantically into the water  
as if I can dig myself a tunnel out of trouble. She comes to my rescue,

reminds me to stay calm when navigating rough waters. With a gentle push,  
she returns me to the safety of the cove.

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