Ma'alaea Harbor, Father's Day

My sister and I sit on rocks, watching sails and glass-bottom boats, but you are nowhere, so we wait. Waves glide slowly toward us, crash, then run away, carrying the unstrung lei we made for you this morning. little white buds of plumeria, gardenia. We will stare until they fade, when we remember more of you and the sea you loved, what you carried in your pockets:

cloudy shells, hazy beach glass. On our visits every other weekend, you led us to the beach, retrieved pebbles, pieces of driftwood, lifeless angelfish, frail as ashed paper—whatever the water had enough of, spit out.

Once, a whole bottle, salt-etched green, unbroken, let sunlight spark a fire in your hands. Over our young heads—a faint flash—today's sun, falling fast into the waves, your lei still floating toward a horizon pierced with the night's first stars.

—Brandy Nālani McDougall