

Dear Matafele Peinam

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Adapted by Fishtank Staff

- 1 dear matafele peinam,

you are a seven month old sunrise of gummy smiles
you are bald as an egg and bald as the buddha
you are thighs that are thunder and shrieks that are lightning
5 so excited for bananas, hugs and
our morning walks past the lagoon

dear matafele peinam,

i want to tell you about that lagoon
that lucid, sleepy lagoon lounging against the sunrise

10 men say that one day
that lagoon will devour you

they say it will gnaw at the shoreline
chew at the roots of your breadfruit trees
gulp down rows of your seawalls
15 and crunch your island's shattered bones

they say you, your daughter
and your granddaughter, too
will wander rootless
with only a passport to call home

20 dear matafele peinam,

don't cry

mommy promises you

no one
will come and devour you

25 no greedy whale of a company sharking through political seas
no backwater bullying of businesses with broken morals
no blindfolded bureaucracies gonna push

this mother ocean over
the edge

30 no one's drowning, baby
no one's moving
no one's losing
their homeland
no one's gonna become
35 a climate change refugee

or should i say
no one else

to the carteret islanders of papua new guinea
and to the taro islanders of the solomon islands
40 i take this moment
to apologize to you
we are drawing the line here

because baby we are going to fight
your mommy daddy
45 bubu jimma your country and president too
we will all fight

and even though there are those
hidden behind platinum titles
who like to pretend
50 that we don't exist
that the marshall islands
tuvalu
kiribati
maldives
55 and typhoon haiyan in the philippines
and floods of pakistan, algeria, colombia
and all the hurricanes, earthquakes, and tidalwaves
didn't exist

still
60 there are those
who see us

hands reaching out
fists raising up

banners unfurling
65 megaphones booming
and we are
canoes blocking coal ships
we are
the radiance of solar villages
70 we are
the rich clean soil of the farmer's past
we are
petitions blooming from teenage fingertips
we are
75 families biking, recycling, reusing,
engineers dreaming, designing, building,
artists painting, dancing, writing
and we are spreading the word

and there are thousands out on the street
80 marching with signs
hand in hand
chanting for change NOW

and they're marching for you, baby
they're marching for us

85 because we deserve to do more than just
survive
we deserve
to thrive

dear matafele peinam,

90 you are eyes heavy
with drowsy weight
so just close those eyes, baby
and sleep in peace

because we won't let you down

95 you'll see