

# The Messenger

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## Moorea

Giavanna Palermo

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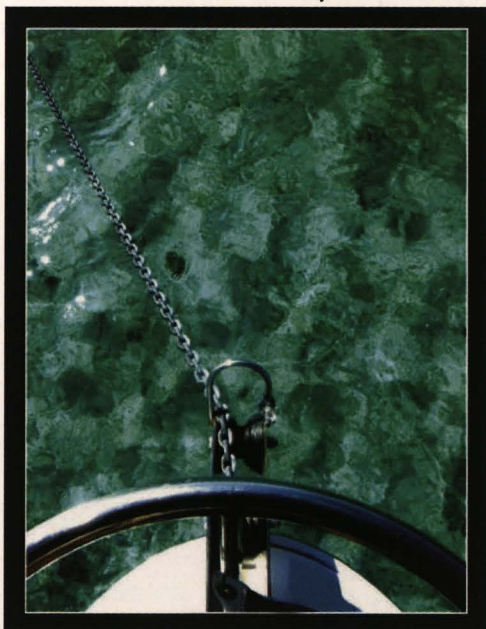
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—Garrett Pinder

Moorea

Giovanna Palermo

It's been  
since she's  
bed. The  
fresh and  
tress is soft,  
warm and  
snow is  
dark  
She's safe  
and her  
of the grass  
her mother  
everything.  
iarity  
and she  
eyes. Then,  
ing, her mind



five months  
been in this  
sheets are  
cool, the mat-  
the room is  
outside, light  
falling in the  
November sky.  
and clean  
sheets smell  
laundry spray  
puts on  
Sweet famil-  
envelops her,  
closes her  
without warn-  
takes her back.

This bed is hard and damp and smells like salt and earth. The sky is smoky blue and the only thing that obscures the stars are the clouds coming over the mountains. Oh, those mountains, those green mountains that rise out of the sea. Outside, the roosters screech, though it's hours till dawn. Packs of dogs, wild and roaming, move underneath the windows. Those sweet dogs that would follow them to the market when they bought baguettes and lead them back, avoiding locals on scooters, zooming along the island's only road. A lizard chirps inside the thatched roof and a mosquito buzzes in her ear. Her hair is coarse from the ocean, her skin is brown and everything is wet from humidity. She lays there, the promise of the day before her, of turquoise water and parrot fish, of the women loved by Gauguin, their round bodies, bright flowers in their hair, beckoning her and her outstretched thumb to jump in the back of the pick-up. And always there is the endless horizon and the waves crashing beyond the reef-break. Then, suddenly, her eyes fly open, and she's back. The house is quiet. The walls are thick. She is safe. How can she feel so homesick if she is home? Hot salty tears run to her pillow. She tastes them. She is drowning.