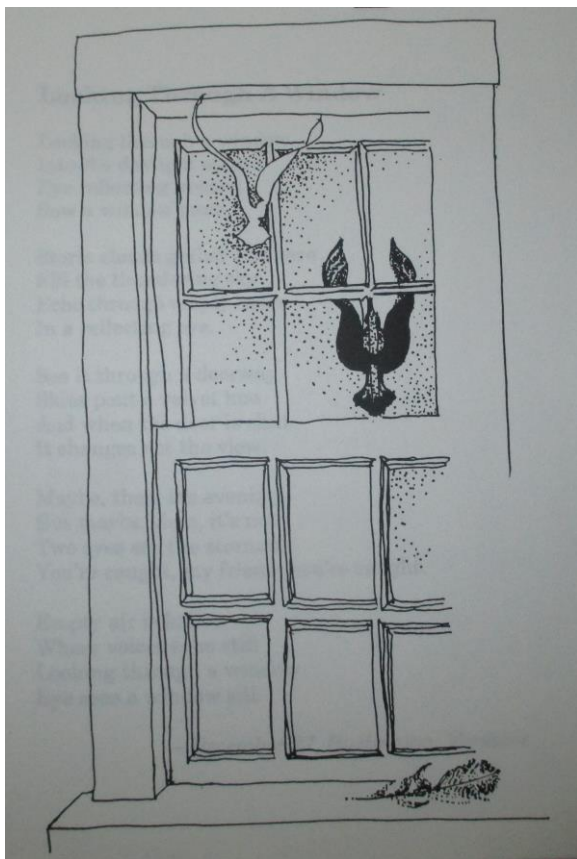


Looking Through A Window

Stevaki Che Lobb



In Memory

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Places Stevaki lived, visited and sailed.

Stevakis was born in 1970 in Honolulu,
Hawaii and died in 1990 in Amherst,
Massachusetts.



Stevaki copying “Requiem” by Stevenson
In Western Samoa

Looking Through A Window

Looking through a window
Into the daylight stain
Eyes reflecting inward
Saw a window pane.

Storm clouds gather nowhere
Fill the thundering sky
Echo through empty halls
In a reflecting eyes.

See it through a doorway
Skies pout a velvet hue
And when the door is shut
It changes not the view.

Maybe, then, it's evening
But, maybe, then, it's not
Two eyes see the stormsky
You're caught, my friend,
 you're caught.

Empty air is hollow
Where voices echo still
Looking through a window
Eye sees a window sill.

-December 27, Burlington, Vermont

Things are said from time to time,
For all the world to hear and see
I put them in this book of mine
And store them there for you and me.

-childhood journal



Haven

There is a place I know,
It is a pretty place to show
There is a boat to row,
And a field to plow.

-1979

Happy

I am happy,
I am sad,
And I can be very bad,
And I am glad,
To be with my Dad.

-1979



Stranger

Your hands are callused,
Burned and blistered,
That means you have been traveling, Mister,
Just one look,
I could tell for you to get here,
How long it took
And when you passed over that rise,
The spirit of adventure, I saw in your eyes.

-1979

What a sailor said in an inn:

I don't know what I am proving
I don't know what I am doing,
All I know is that I am crewing,
Even if it is a sin.

It doesn't seem wrong,
To hear an old sea song,
Or to go every time you hear
 the ship's bell gong,
But even if it is a sin, I will go anyway.

Ho, what is that you say?

A man in the inn said:

I know what you are doing,
And I know what you are proving,
But I am not so sure you are crewing,
But even if you are, it is not a sin,
It is not wrong,
To hear an old sea song,
Or to go every time you hear
 a ship's bell gong,
But you will do it anyway, as you said.

Now you know it is not wrong,
To be anybody you want to,
Even if it is to follow
 the old ship's gong.

-1979

The way the world is

When one goes up,
The other goes down,
And that's how the world spins around.
From the sea, to the sound,
I have always found,
The hardest trip,
 is homeward bound.

-1980

Lonely Adventurer

He who passed through
 the cave of the winds,
He who walked through the giant's limbs,
He who defied the Lord of Death,
Is not a Myth, but a living man,
And it is he who will save you
 at the death sands,
And win honor he has searched for,
 through all lands.

-1980



Hiking in Haleakala, Maui, Hawaii, 1973

Nighttime

I like the night,
All the stars,

it's a pretty sight,

Sometimes I get the itch to walk around,
But what I have searched for,

I have never found,

Though I have followed every sight
and every sound,

I can't search for, for I always have to be
homeward bound.

-1980

Clipper Ship Sailor

I set out across the sea
A hundred foot of clipper under me,
The place I am going is my destination,
In my holds are ten carnations,
And a thousand tons of tea.

My crew is a jolly lot, and I pay them well,
Against all seas they have held
A swig of grog is all they ask,
Then they will do any sort o' task,
They will face the mighty, roaring sea,
Whip a hurricane, laugh at a gale,
Struggle desperately to get into a lee,
Or nimbly dodge a rampaging whale.

Sail my friends?

They know how to sail!!
Across every ocean they have left their trail,
The Indian Ocean, the Baltic Sea,
Cross the Tasman, with graceful ease,
This, my friends, is the sailors' race,
The weathered, leathered, grinning face,
And whether a Jack Tar or Viking sailor,
It is not a captain who sails the ship,
But the muck-eating, brunt-taking sailor!!

-1983

Shells

Shells from Hawaiian and Fiji beaches,
Shells from far-off places and reaches,
If they had voices,
 they could tell some stories
Of hurricane winds, and monster waves,
Of placid moonlight, and silvery caves,
Or how they fell into some tourist's hand,
Who picked them up,
And took them away from their sand
 to far-off lands,
Just to be thrown away and forgotten,
By some master's child
 who was spoiled and rotten.
Yet perhaps, by some twist of fate,
He was picked up again,
 by some person Great,
But probably by a blind man who could see,
Who brought him home,
 to the beach near the sea.

-1984



Birthday Poem for Dad

Well, it's that time of the year again,
When I get out my paper and pen,
Limber up my fingers and begin,
To write about things in life,
Of happiness, and sunny days,
Of sandy beaches, bars and bays
Of geological features, or different ways,
To cook a peanut, or kernel of corn,
Or how a ceremonial headdress is worn,
By savage cannibals who plan to eat,
Someone, in their very next feast,
Or the way to make a card,
One not too easy, but not too hard,
You just put together words that rhyme,
That swing along in good time,
And in the end you write something to say,

Happy Birthday, Dad!!

-1984

Mom's Birthday Poem

I ran with my card full of shells,
Past the shops, the tower full of bells,
Through the golden fields of wheat,
Past the palace where the old men meet,
Around the corner, out of town,
Over the hills, up and down,
Through the countryside I went,
No one knew where I was sent,
Over a castle, through a moat,
I leaped a hedge, into a boat,
Letting a wholp into the sky,
When I saw dead ahead, the yellow Melekai,
I went inside to present,
 the card I wrote to say,

Happy Birthday, Mom!!

-1984



Stevaki grew up on Melekai between 1974-1986.

Happy Birthday

Happy birthday, happy birthday,
 happy birthday today
Happy birthday, happy birthday
 is all I can say,
Happy birthday, happy birthday
 screams in my dreams,
Happy birthday happy birthday,
 a happy birthday it seems.

Why, where and when?
Who is it, how long has it been?
Pray, dear fellow, tell us too,
So we will know what we can do!!
Quick, gather 'round, and shut that door,
It is my grandmother's birthday today!!
We will give her a party like never before,
A great, grand one, what do you say?
What do you say?!

 Three cheers and hooray!!

We will have a cake as big as a mountain,
Soda will flow in an endless fountain,
With presents and balloons,
 and merry-making everywhere,
We will get a few presidents,
 and a king to be there.

There will be pink icing on a creamy cake,
A massive punchbowl as big as a lake,
Where we can ski in a donut's wake
And relax on a beach of cherries and grapes.

I am a shoemaker,
 and I will make here some shoes,
Of leathers and lace, and satin blues,
With soft and comfortable, cushiony insoles,
And sandalwood bottoms
 that will never wear holes.

I am a silversmith and I will make,
That silver punchbowl
 that is bigger than a lake,
I have five miles of silver
 to make it just right,
With faceted surfaces to reflect the light,
The graceful curves that angels sit on,
An elfin child playing
 on a silver-green lawn,
Shaded by mighty green-leafed trees,
That rock gently in a foreign breeze,
With a quietly chuckling stream
 that goes by,
In perfect harmony with the breezes' sigh.

I am a carpenter,
 and I'll make the tables,
They will be rough, but sturdy as stables,
The good feeling of unpainted pine,

Logical shapes and level lines.
Hammer and saw, and chisel and plane,
Shaping and fitting, joining the grain,
Gluing the joints and that kind of stuff,
I will make them and make them,
 until we have more than enough.

I am a printer,
 I'll print what you need,
Red wrapping paper of flowers in seed
Clever invitation cards
 that will warm the heart,
And bring on the visitors, cart after cart.

Ah, my friends, what a party that will be,
But what I did not tell you,
 and what you don't see
Is my Grandmother, she doesn't live here.
But over the horizon, way over there.

So if you put the party on paper,
Where she can keep it forever,
Maybe she will see the child by the lake,
Maybe she will taste that creamy cake,
Her heart might be warmed
 by the invitation card,
And oh, if you try a little, it won't be hard.

But there is something that we feel,
Something not imagined, but very real,

That is, dear Grandma,
we are thinking of you,
And wishing you Many Happy Returns,
And a Happy Birthday to you.



Driftwood Dreams

Bits of driftwood, on a shore
Drifted from Malay, or Ecuador,
Many fine stories I think they must hide,
From experiences of drifting
on a wandering tide.

Look at this shingle off some
fisherman's hut,
Which was by a giant tidal wave struck
Dashed away from where it once stood,
And released from captivity
this little bit of wood.
Or maybe it was, some critical part,
In some kid's hotrod go-cart,
Which in the heat of competition gave way,
And ended quite short in the go-cart race.

Here is a bit, it looks like a plant,
Off some mighty ship
 that gallantly sank,
While fighting for the English star,
In the battle of the Nile, Barbar, or Trafalgr.
Or off some merchantman,
 it could be as well,
Snapped off in a living hell,
Of howling winds that scream and lash,
Thundering waves that hiss and crash,
And as the ship rises to meet the next wave,
She's ignorant of the piece of her
 she lost on the way.

So the bits of driftwood that line the shore
Drifted from Malay, or Ecuador,
Are many fine stories that I invent,
 and they hide,
From experiences of drifting on the mind's
 wandering tide.

**HAPPY SAILING AND HAPPY
BIRTHDAY MOM!!**

A Silversmith's Song

I spied an elf in the forest wood,
Dressed all in lincoln green,
Over a workbench he stood,
And while he worked he would softly sing.
He worked as if on a task of love,
So sweet and soft his hammer rang,
Creating things like the heavens above
And all the while he softly sang.

Many beautiful things that he made
Creating scrimshaw of a different shade,
Cunning tools to work the land,
And brass was polished by sacred sand.

He made clever pots, and useful pans,
Silver rings that graced many hands,
Golden cups that kings drank from,
And pewter tankards, good for rum.

Yet of all those things of beauty and grace,
of all those things, I must confess
Those verses he sang,
Those were the best.

-1984



Stevaki and Ano holding Ahi while sailing

Auntie Jean

We were all talking of days we had seen,
Dropped a comment about some food,
And who should appear, but Auntie Jean,
Auntie was armed with her usual crackers,
Tasty foods and cold drinks for the heat
All of it for us thoughtless yackers.

And a feast it seemed on
 that Port Villa beach.
“What a kind lady,” we thought in our mind,
“What a kind lady,” and indeed,
 she was kind,
But despite the good things we had to say,
We forgot all about it the very next day.

But it happened again in Port Resolution,
And by now she had quite a reputation
As the wonderful lady
 who brought us good things,
And everything else good kindness brings.
Then we moved on to some other place,
And Auntie Jean became a familiar face,
And now we are bosom friends,
And that we will remain until the end.

-1984

Auntie on the far left, Stevaki on the far right in New Zealand



Christmas in New Zealand

Christmas in New Zealand

None of your graceful palms in the breeze,
None of your gentle beaches of sand,
But forests green of coniferous trees,
And meadows of glades throughout the land.

Instead of tropical islands in tropical sun,
Sun-burnt tourists, having sunburnt fun,
Rolling hills, and sheep by the ton.

And instead of gentle south-easterly winds,
A raging tempest down here spins
Lashing against all in relentless fury,
Striving its utmost to completely bury,
In a gold, cool, snowy mass,
Man, woman and beast,
Tree root and grass
Distinguishing none in its heroic feat
To cover the whole world in white!!
(not quite, but it sounds right)

-1984-1985



Stevaki with Ano in Glacial in New Zealand



Stevaki riding in the Highland Farm

Highland Farm

Over thills green, under sky blue,
There lies a farm, from hither to
A garden of Eden from west to east
A paradise to say the least.

It is a glorious morning,
The ground is frozen,
A stand of pines rustles in the breeze
The hills around like a still-standing ocean,
And on an autumn ground lie
 bright colored leaves.

A dog barks
A cycle is roaring
A songbird larks,
It's another day's morning.

A truck goes past empty cattle stalls
The herds of deer ore ready for feeding,
"Come on," "come on" a deer keeper calls,
Encouraging timid, shy yearlings.

A couple of stags are locked in a fight
Whilst the rest of the herd is
 in graceful flight,
A hundred hooves make a solid drumming
Nothing quite like a herd of deer running.

Sheep are grazing in grassy green fields,
As the shepherd opens the gate with a creak,
His dogs, for now, are walking
 obediently at heel
But soon they be expertly
 rounding up sheep.

Then the shepherd shouts out “Get out,”
And the dogs go madly rushing about,
Herding barrel-shaped bodies into a knot,
Going where they’re wanted,
And sometimes where they’re not.

Then if one looks, over fields fair,
Crafted out of bush by loving hands,
A half-century of work, represented there,
A caring, loving heart and devotion
 to the land.

Then the sun sets in, to a western sky,
The lengthening shadows are twisted awry,
As she bids goodnight to another day,
And to the Highland station,
And the Ford family way.

-May, 1985

A Beggar's King

A trader am I, of silks and teas,
A raider am I, a pirate of the seas,
A shipper am I, of foodstuffs of the world,
Reliever am I, of gold stuffs and pearls.

I am a most respected man,
Who can count on a decent life-span,
But I am free, as free as I please,
To do what I want, and rob the high sea.

Free, says you?
Well, free I am too!
I live my life, and do what I want,
And never fear I, of one day being sunk.

But fear you do, and fear I do not,
Whether of death, of half-submerged rock,
Too many storms, braved have I,
Of too many hurricanes,
 I have spit in the eye
I have laughed at seas
 that have touched the sky,
And to me life is a battle,
 between He and I,
But immortal you are not,
 and one day will die,

And over your body, no one will cry,
You live in a cold and heartless world,
And to me life is precious,
not to be imperiled.

I am a rock against whom all fail,
I am a king, whom only beggars hail,
But I am a king, a king in my day,
And that is more than
you'll ever say.

I travel to London, Paris and Rome,
I live in comfort and have a good home,
I have a family, kids and a wife,
To live and to love is my goal in life.

Peace for you, war for me
The things I do you'll never see,
Protected are you in your life,
And never will you see worldly strife.

So I will live mine, you will live yours,
I will have my life, my silver doors,
You can have your action,
your murder in the night,
And god only knows,
Which of us is right.

-1985

A China Shop

I chanced upon a Chinaman's shop
It is across the street from the bus stop
And inside there are things to suit
every taste,
Regardless of sex, age or race.

There were beauty creams for
the ladies vain,
Flutes and hoots to call the rain
Wooden swords, the child's delight,
And a silken wedding dress
of creamy white.

There was a jade necklace that a prince
once wore,
That is on the counter near the door
And a beautifully carved mahogany chair,
The old man says an Emperor once sat there
And if you look in the bin for tea,
(He'll give you a taste,
if you ask, for free)

You will find an herb,
procured from the Hun,
That cures the cramp
you get when you run,
And guilty feeling you get
from having too much fun.

There is a book with golden letters,
But the price for that is for betters
A priceless jade that he was selling,
For half a dime or a quarter shilling.

There was a shrunken head from
the Amazon,
An ivory chess set with 22 pawns
A wooden canoe made in Brazil,
And beautiful earrings of dried fish gills.

He has some hair tonic,
and lots of cure-alls,
A magic spell to save you from pitfalls
A clear potent to cure your warts,
And a pair of silver corduroy shorts.

It is amazing what you can find on
those shelves,
A book he says was written by the elves
A golden vase that has no prices,
And a perfect rat trap guaranteed to
catch mice.

He has a loaf of bread that will never mold,
He says it is at least a thousand years old
It might be true, I have seen it there
for a week,
That is one loaf of bread I will never eat.

Look inside, you will be surprised,
Of all the things you might find
And if there is nothing there
 that you might like,
He will tell you a story like
 you have never heard in your life.

-1985



Stevaki and Ano in Tonga

The porpoise I see swimming in the sea,
I think they know great secrets,
 yet they seem so carefree
Hunting for food and wandering the ocean,
Their years are spent in graceful motion.

Then the log is washed away
 to sail the seven seas,
the feather on my knee is taken
 by the breeze,
The gull flies away with no good-bue,
And the waves recede with a grateful sigh.

So my brothers, they are now gone,
To travel over the ocean, on and on,
The beautiful, monotonous, day after day,
And I am stuck here, and here I must stay.

-1985



Stevaki steering Melekai

Dawn On the Pacific

Morning breaks cool and grey, greeting an almost empty ocean. Almost empty it is... for nestled among the white cresting seas, the rolling combers of the Pacific, there is a small white pyramid of canvas. In a quarter of an hour will be able to witness the faintly pink-tinged clouds in the east.

But, right now it is peaceful and the lone boat bobs along her way over a lonely sea. If anyone were able to take a close look the boat would show to be a catamaran. Under full main and spinnaker she is broad reaching across the faithful trade winds, clipping along at no mean pace.

At her helm is the lone occupant: a young man with bloodshot eyes and three weeks' stubble covering his face, he sits huddled over the helm. He has been steering for four hours and begins to feel the physical sensations of a dawn after night watch... a dull ache behind his eyeballs, a growl in his stomach calling for breakfast, and a think feeling in his head. He glances down the companionway almost longingly; for his bunk, rumped and soft, seems to beckon him.

However before he can sleep he will have to take in the spinnaker, set the jib, set the autopilot.... a long list of chores to make the boat take care of herself – and him – while he sleeps. For the moment it seems easier to just sit, steer and daydream.

Besides, it's beautiful sailing ... the big red spinnaker, shifting a bit, wafts the cat forward, eating up miles and leaving them in the wake that seems to stretch to the horizon. Billowing across the grey morning sky, blotting out a few dying stars, the spinnaker appear to take the cat in tow. Occasionally the boat plunges down the

faces of the waves. The young helmsman no longer glances at the red light of knot-log, when it surges into the high teens and twenties, the helmsman, part of his ship, can feel it.

But there is another reason why the helmsman denies himself the sleep he longs for. It is manifest in the presence of the early morning seabirds that hover around the rigging. The great solemn creatures, wanderers of the empty wastes of open oceans and every dawn's welcome companions, hail an intruder on the voyager's realm of existence and personal ring of horizon: land.

It is the reason why the young man does not sleep. For three weeks he has sailed, unable to escape the horizon's center that encircled him, or the strange and exciting monotony of the open sea. His only sense of movement had come from the endlessly ticking knot-log, infinite mass of water streaming by, the arbitrary numbers he procured from his sextant and plotted on his chart.

This very morning, land would appear. At first only a dark blob sitting on the horizon, with indistinguishable borders, then slowly developing character and shape. It would prove the accuracy of his navigation, break the spell of the ocean passage, and restore human contact.

For the moment he is willing to be alone, content with his quasi-comrades, the silent and thoughtful seagulls, and to sail across the sweet weariness to swamp his senses, and to sooth and refresh his mind ... and sleep ... sleep ...



Stevaki and Ano in front of the red spinnaker



Stevaki windsurfing in Fiji



Caught fish while windsurfing

Prayer

If ever the Gleaming Sun
Would hide Its Smirking Face
Behind the truth of laden skies,
Perhaps then i would have Faith.

but no.

Every morning It comes creeping up
Drenching us all in Honeyed Insolence
Etching Its images in apparent perfection,
Yet all is mere buffoonery.

The truth of the Light likes
Shattered in the dewy reflections
Of yesteryear's mourning.

If ever the bedraggled Prophet,
Tacked to a wooden cross, had burnt
Through the shadows of my doubt,
Perhaps then i would have faith.

but no.

Were He a Michelangelo, and all the world
The Sistine Chapel, frustrated genius
Could by right only blacken the catacomb,
Its Beauty but all of murdered humanity.

Why, and i ask You in all humanity,
Can i not make sense of this
Disjointed world plan of Yours?

My God, my God, why have You forsaken
me?

-March 13, 1989, Amherst College

Cracks in the Pavement

Slender green sward
Reach for the sky.
If all has its time
Yours now, is to die.

It is no strange thing
To turn Autumn grey,
But the killing white
Will not melt away.

All that was yours,
Sun treasured lawn,
Fades beneath footpaths
Forever gone.

Dream of your triumph
With blade so small,
We exit in apocalypse
We take with us all.

For to build we must
God only knows why,
Your tombstones are towers
That scratch the sky.

-April 30, 1989, Amherst College

Winking willingly,
the beacon drops beneath the sea,
Fading fanatically behind the frantic
flag of fortuna,
(Which frets foolishly in the flagging flame)
And is ashamed to be its sun.

Then I am freed, for just a moment,
From the metaphorical meanderings
of mise-en-scene
An empty poet, a sightless painter,
Contemplating the setting sun, by th seaside.

-May 24, 1989, Apopka, Florida

In times gone by there was a much
different house,
Full of poetry and bright laughter,
before everyone went out,
Strong sunlight flowed willingly
through the gaping window.
But now, in sublime tragedy,
there is only growing darkness,
And a timelessly flowing taunting,
and bitter winter wind
Which teases and toys with
the flickering flame.

But the darkness is pressed out
by the candle's flame.
And yet not only sightless night
rules here in the little house,
Perhaps refreshing and rejuvenating blows
the clear cool wind,
And ancient wisdom flickers content over
the backs of those now out,
Maybe peace, and rest, and quiet is found
in the gathering darkness,
Not an empty eye, but a blinking window.

But with a deathly pallor grins
the empty window,
In merciless ease the cold breeze
slaps the flickering flame,
Threatening to quench it unwillingly
In the doubtful darkness,

Stevaki wrote his experience of our crossing the Tasman Sea and it was published in a Multihull Magazine.

The Different Spectrums of Cruising

Awesome.....The word fills my head as, looking over my shoulder, I see thirty feet of water wall itself up behind me. Climaxing in a ten-foot breaking crest, it forms itself into a gale-driven wave. I look forward over the twin hulls of our catamaran as she rockets down the face of this Tasman Sea wave. I do not have to glance at the knot-log to know that it is registering into the high teens. As we swoop into the trough of this open ocean wave, then rise to its top – I have time to look around.

I see through a haze of a greyish-pink hue. Nothing marks a clear horizon, and around me are stands of white caps, the feathery

tops of powerful waves below. A mile off, to my left, is a small squall. Its tall columns of rain are no more than a quarter mile across, supporting a cloud that appears to be no different than the rest: a small, harassed, low-flying cloud, hurrying eastwards.

Geographically speaking we are eighty miles south of Norfolk Island, and some 300 miles north of New Zealand. I am standing my four-hour watch as we run before storm force winds. Below decks, in the warmth and illusionary safety of the cabin, my mother, father and brother lie sleeping.

In storm conditions life is a collection of only a few things: food, sleep, wind, waves, and the dancing compass card dominate everything – not necessarily in that order. Eating and sleeping are rationed very carefully to keep the mind constantly sees the small white number ‘90’ drifting ghost-

like across the face of the compass. And always there is the crashing of the waves in the background.

The day passes quickly. And if the day seems incredible, the oncoming night is a hundred times more so. Blackness swamps everything, and one can only hear and feel the coming waves. Then the foaming crests, shining a dull white, coming into view heralding the approaching rush of water...a half mile wide...slithering forward...then descending. It comes on irresistibly, like the marching of doom. Even as our catamaran gathers speed, its greedy fingers of foam grip the sterns. Only then does the catamaran leap forward, like a frightened gazelle, riding the impossible forces which are wildly out of control. Dancing away from the giant's grasp, she settles into the comparative safety of the

wave's trough. The wave passes harmlessly by and boat, as if alive, poses a moment and prepares to meet the next colossus of water.

For three days we ran before the storm, before making it into the safe port of Noumea, New Caledonia. There we rest and recuperate, to resume our voyage later refreshed state of mind.

Even now, quite some time later, I can stand at seaside early in the morning, face the wind, and still remember the impressions of the Tasman Sea Gale. Especially those waves coming on, shoulder to shoulder; first to seize us...then to play with us...toss us aside...and then to resume their endless march...rank upon rank, into the rising sun.

Ano (16) wrote when his brother died (20)
in Amherst College, Amherst,
Massachusetts in 1990.

Staring in bland bemusement,
Through misty panes of shattered pain,
For half my half soul I mourn the loss,
Yet dare not weep in vain.

Those eyes that taught my own to see,
Now lightly closed in sweet repose,
Those hands that taught my own to grasp,
Feel not so much as nothing's touch.

Yet still I find within my mind
A lingering strain remains to sound
A peal of laughter long and strong,
To melt the ice within.

The sea of tear-drenched eyes I see,
That weep the loss we grieve,
Bewildered hearts, so lost in mind.
We are all brothers in our grief.

Yet through the pain the warmth remains,
Of the raging heart that scorched us all,
So deep are brand, as by God's own hand,
Those memories built shall never fail.

And so my brother you are now gone,
To traverse eternity on and on.

-Ano Lobb
April, 1990



Stevaki standing on the WWII wreckage in Kiribat



In Sri Lanka



On Mount Hood in New Zealand

Thanks to Barbara Elsbath for the image on the page i, and Tim MacLaughlin for the map on the page iv.