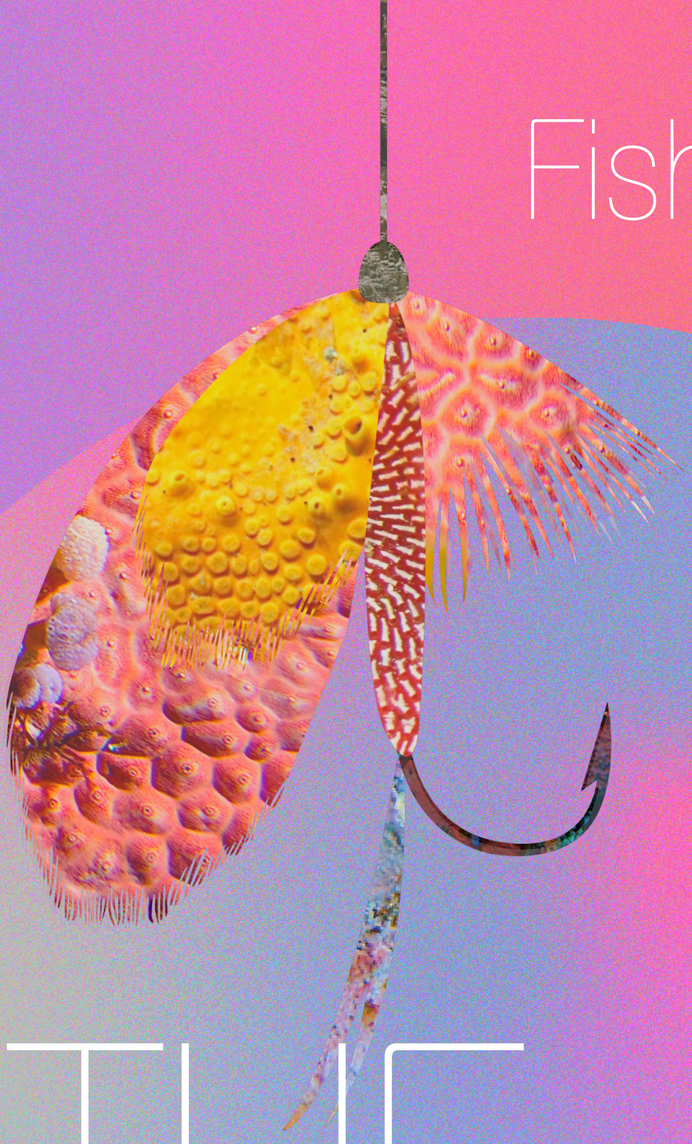
Fishing Fly
#4



THE FLYING EYES

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I have salt stuck to the nerves woven throughou
my body. My limbs stretch out 11 feet in diamet
into a perfect circle, although most of the time
I lay limp across a shoulder or on a hook. I hav
several arms, legs, and feet, but these are noth
compared to my eyes. I have many, many eyes.
My human calls my eyes *maka*. They sit in the
spaces between the lines of my body. My eyes
all exactly 2-inch wide. I know this because the
human used a wooden gauge to space out eac
maka precisely as she wove me into life.

My human knotted these eyes throughout my
body so that when I am thrown into the sea, I
sink and entangle the gills, fins, and mouths of
sweet fish. It's quite magnificent being tossed
up toward the clouds, my body dilating like a
mushroom so that my many feet kick out in righ
I am in my most glorious and exhilarated state
when I am full, expanded, and perfectly spheric
My heavy lead feet spread out at the ends of m
many legs, which are actually also my arms. Th
I drop gracefully but heavily with a violent splas
through the surface of the ocean, surprising all
below me. Sometimes, I even surprise myself.

My weighted feet pull the rest of my string bod
down, scraping my knees and elbows as I desc
upon rocks, reef, and sand. I know these seabe
well. I love them with all my heart, and I love to
hug them close to my body. Most of the time I
embrace fish and seaweed, sometimes small ro
and turtles, but my human always frees everyth
from my embrace. Except for the fish, of course
The fish are why she throws me. The fish are what
she wants my many maka to seek and find.

One gusty morning, when the sky and sea blended into each other through the frequency of dawn, my human entered the garage and yawned. She shoved her feet into her black rub shoes, rubbed her eyes, and plucked me from m hanging place on the wall. She slung me over h shoulder, as she did every morning, and we be our short walk down to the sea.

“Morning Tiana,” the old human who lives nex door muttered to my human.

“Good morning, Uncle Joe,” my human responded with a tired smile. I bounced against her lower back as she walked us down the sand path. “I’ll be sure to drop your sh in the outdoor fridge on my way back.”

“Mahalo nui, my dear, lovely Tiana,” the old human whispered, as he always did.

Tiana. Uncle Joe. Humans seem to nd comfo in naming things. ey have names for each othe for di erent types of sh, plants, and even the stars in the night’s sky. If they give something a name, they can discuss and analyze it. I prefer to remember the names I hear humans call eac other, animals, or even me. My purpose is simp My purpose is to see. I don’t need to know the names of the sh or the stars for that. When I’m thrown, hovering above the ocean’s surface, my many eyes see all the things I have no names f Yet, because I see them, because I simply obse and pay attention, I understand how they t together. I see the patterns in the movements o the sh, the rhythms of the waves rolling in from the horizon. I hear the streaks of currents, I feel fragile bubbles rising to the surface, and I taste

the oating bark from the shoreline trees. Even though I have a skeleton of synthetic shing line when I look with my many, many maka, I dissolv into the space around me. I become part of the seascape.

My human can become part of the seascape, too. To e ectively sh, humans have to stop bein human. What I mean is that they have to stop engaging in what have become “normal” human behaviors. ey have to still their busy bodies, quiet their chattering tongues, calm their swirling minds, and look.

When my human crouches low over the jet black rocks, I know she is ready to transform. She sits, watches, and listens. A few of my legs drape over her left elbow, the rest of my limbs are divided between the ngers of her right hand She breathes slowly. She watches with her eyes and I watch with mine. While we are waiting to transform into lava rocks, I listen to the sun mov up into the sky. Burnt black crabs scurry cautiou between her feet. Muscles taut and stable, we wait. We watch.

Slowly, the obsidian rocks rise up and into the soles of her feet, and she is connected. Now sh can go undetected by the sh, birds, and limpet. If she needs to move closer to her shing hole, she waits for a wave to splatter white foam acro her lava rock body, and then she moves inside the wave, unobserved. Inevitably, sh will emerg from their holes, no longer detecting human vibrations or scents. With the next wave in the s my human will spring up, unwind her torso like a corkscrew, and release me up and forward. Up

y and spread as every one of my eyes dilate. I everything with my many, many maka wide ope and free.

at morning there was something di erent about my human. Her shoulders sloped downward, which meant I kept slipping o her back. She walked with less ease, stumbling several times on the rocks as she headed towa the point where she likes to sh. “Damn it,” she released between her clenched teeth. Her big le toe started to bleed.

I remembered the conversation I heard betwe her and the other human in the house the night before. eir voices were elevated and sharp. “I c keep some good food on the table,” my human pleaded. “I always catch something.”

“Tiana,” the other human shot back gru y, “this isn’t about what little sh you can catch. We hav bills. A lot of bills. And that’s not even taking int account our student loans.”

“So are you telling me to quit graduate school and put on some high heels for a corporate job?

“No,” the other human lied.

While listening, my eyes focused on a cluster salt crystallines sitting very still on the skin near one of my arms. It sat tall, just above one of my eyes, which is why I was able to notice that it w swaying ever so slightly, even though we were sitting in an enclosed garage.

“Look,” the other human continued, “this doesn’t have to be permanent. Just until I nd another job myself. I can’t help that this pandem has shut down the entire world and now my company went under.”

“I’m not blaming you,” my human said in a very tart tone. “I’m just saying I don’t want to…” She stopped. I heard a bottle pop open and then land heavily down on a table. My attention turned back to the salt crystal. I looked at it, rea looked at how it shone and shimmied in the still dark of the night. Suddenly, I realized it was a star. It was from both the sea and sky, which ar interconnected after all. It had attached to my arm as I was pulled from the ocean. I had looke at many salt particles on my body before, but th night I saw its origin. e salt crystalline looked back at my maka with just as much attention. I stopped listening to my human’s conversation a focused on the salt. It told me it was pre-culture pre-life. It was stardust. “Am I stardust, too?” I asked. Yes.

My human bent down to inspect her toe, and several of my limbs slid o her back onto the rocks. My human growled like a provoked wolf. She yanked my body back onto her shoulder. W walked to the edge of the rocks and looked. It was always so peaceful and magical to look ou over her shoulder at the vast sea. ere was nev another soul around in these early hours. As we stood in the chill of the morning, my human began to slowly transform from the wolf into the wind. Her muscles soften and she slowly inhale and exhaled the crystalline stardust blowing o the sea. en I saw something occur I had never seen before. A drop of water with small specks stardust rolled out of her eye and down her che She immediately wiped it away before I had the

chance to see what it was trying to say. But I kn it was important. I knew it was big. Maybe as bi as the ocean before us.

is drop of stardust water seemed to make the wolf want to come back. She was upset aga and she started separating my body with quick movements, preparing me for casting. But she was yanking and tearing at me so hastily, I forg myself. I forgot I was meant only to see. Not to talk.

“Why did that water fall out of your eye?” I sai out loud before I had time to remember.

My human cocked her head toward me with her mouth ajar. Her eyes didn’t blink, and they were wide. I looked back at her, uncertain if I should disown my mistake or continue.

“Hello,” I kept going. “I have a secret to share with you if you’d like to try.”

My human froze. She wasn’t breathing, as if she was silencing herself in order to hear inside di erent world.

“Hello,” I repeated.

“Oh my God,” my human stammered. She dropped me and backed away, but her eyes remained xated on mine.

I lay there in a tangled pile of limbs and feet, quiet until she nally found her curiosity.

“Hello?” she whispered, leaning her head tow me.

“Hello,” I whispered back.

“What…is going on?” she said under her brea “How are you talking to me?”

“I suppose I’m talking to you because I have something important to ask you.”

After several more minutes, my human slowly stepped closer to my sprawled body. I continue “I saw the water with salt crystalline stardust fal from your eyes, and although it surprised me, I’ realizing that maybe you and I are not so di ere We look di erent, but if you have stardust inside your body like I do, then I have an idea.”

“What?” my human was struggling to be with me in that moment. I could see she wanted to run. I could see that she was afraid because all along she never thought I had a voice, or any stardust inside me. She assumed I was inanima But I knew she would stay and listen to my idea knew my human well enough to be sure of this. simply hadn’t had this idea, nor the need for thi idea, until then. But here was an opportunity for change.

My human sat down on the cool rocks, crossi her legs in front of me. e sun hadn’t yet risen above the line of coconut trees behind us. “Oka she said with a quivering voice, “I’m listening.”

I told her how I had heard her conversation th night before. How I had spent all my life watchi and listening, and how this practice had taught me a lot. When I saw what she called a tear fall from her eyes, I realized she too had stardust inside her.

“Stardust?” she asked.

“Yes, the salt crystalline told me it was made stardust, and that so was I.”

“What does that mean?” she asked. “Did you decide to speak to me because you think I’m made of stardust?”

“All of the many, many eyes that you have

knotted into my body, help me to see above and below the sea much better than you. When you toss me open, I can see the birds' tongues icki in and out of their mouths. I can see the arms o the octopus extend forward and then curl under it like strands of seaweed nestling in for sleep. I can see the colors of the coral blending togethe with the currents. I can see the sh hiding in the holes. Would you like to see what I see?" I aske hopefully.

My human blinked. She thought and then said "Yes."

"Alright," I began. "You'll have to trust me. You have to let all your old belief systems die. You'll have to let go of your logical mind, as well as yo physical body."

"I think that's already happening," she said as if she were making a joke. en she exhaled and furrowed her brow. She grasped her hands together in a nervous gesture, rubbing her thum back and forth.

"Alright," I continued gently. "Close your eyes. Now, think about all the maka that you have tied in my net. See them, how they're shaped, how far apart they are from each other, and how they open and close as I move."

I waited for a long while, letting her inner eyes nd mine. e waves were lapping and crashing i our ears, and the sun was beginning to warm o skin. Finally I asked, "Do you see my maka?"

She nodded, still closing her eyes. I knew she could see me because I felt her eyes hovering around mine. I wasn't exactly sure how I was going to help her cast this spell, but I knew she

could transform, I saw her do it every morning. knew she could become my maka, too. “Feel m eyes with your ngertips,” I said, “and then climb inside.”

She cautiously raised both trembling hands, and began pulling open part of the air in front o her. She was spreading out my body in her min so that my eyes were wide and inviting. en she did something I did not expect. She deliberately brushed her ngers against her two eyes, as if s were picking diamonds from a tree, and placed them into mine.

“Fantastic,” I whispered.

My human smiled, and asked, still with her ey closed, “Should I throw you out now?”

“Yes,” I answered a bit distracted at the sensa of having two human eyes inside two of my ma

She stood up and she prepared my body as she had done thousands of times before, and then we watched together through my net-body. We waited and watched, and then we both saw a large school of sh outside the reef, a zone her eyes hadn’t been able to see from the shore before. She moved into the water, walking, stalking, sliding her feet in rhythm with the current, until she unwound and cast us both out and over the surface. We soared, eyes never leaving the large school ahead. en we descended rapidly and heavily, imprisoning all the sh beneath my arms.

Her body waded out to us, smiling like a child experiencing the delight of playing peekaboo fo the rst time. Her arms pulled mine into a ball, and as her legs walked us back to the shore, sh

shouted over the waves and wind and seabirds
“ at was incredible! Absolutely amazing!” She
threw her head back and laughed from deep
inside her belly. “I could see everything! Oh my
goodness, I saw the surface of the water slippin
along pathways. I saw colors inside the air! I sa
hues of blue and green, mixing and owing into
yellows and oranges. And the sh, oh the sh! I
cannot believe how seeing the sh allowed me
to understand them. I just knew where they wer
going to turn. It was like I was inside their brains
How did I know that? What just happened?”

Laughing like a madwoman, my human
scrambled up the rocks and rested my back up
the warm lava. She was holding my feet togeth
keeping me upside down in a ball so the colorfu
bouncing sh wouldn’t dance their way out. We
were both silent, dripping water and salt, both
gazing out at the sea, which held all the answe
to her questions.

“Can I get my eyes back?” she asked humbly.
do I stay part of you, and the sea forever?”

I thought about this question for a moment.
I had never imagined my eyes as being separat
from the sea or the land, or even from my huma
I didn’t know what she meant by getting them
“back.” When I observe with my eyes, the world
becomes my mirror. e ocean re ects the
blue star sh back into me, and the moonlight,
too. When you watch something, like a strand
of seaweed, for a long time, you realize how
connected you are with it. You realize it is talkin
to you, in the same way I am telling you this
story. You cannot hear me narrating unless you

really see me. So, when my human asked me if she could get her eyes back, this is what I said, “I cannot tell you how to separate from me, the ocean, or the sh in your hands. But I can tell yo that your eyes are still with you. ey never left. ey just expanded and connected.”

My human stood still for a long time. She was listening to the white birds circle above and to the whales singing in the deep. She was feeling the ocean’s crystalline particles. She was smell the octopus’ ink. She was tasting the greenness the algae. en she raised her hands into the air and carefully, but with a knowing she didn’t have before, picked her eyes from the ether and plac them back into their sockets. She opened them slowly, squinting into the brilliant sun. en she smiled from inside her chest, cradled me tender in her arms, and we walked up the sandy path home. But not without stopping to drop ten large sh in the old human’s outdoor refrigerator.

My human and I continued to set out together every morning to catch nets and nets full of sh. She started to sell her sh at the daily sh marke in town, and was soon making more money than she and the other human in the house had ever made before. All the humans from the big island we lived on started coming to the small sh market to buy her sh because hers were th biggest, tastiest, and most abundant. Humans started to call her “ e Fish Whisperer.” ey even came with cameras down to the shoreline with u at dawn, watching her watch the seascape with her eyes inside mine, and then throw us into pil

after pile of sh.

“How do you close your eyes and know where to throw your net?” people would ask her again and again. Some of these humans had video cameras and others voice recorders. Others were young humans who’d run alongside us as my human shed. Each time my human responded the same way, “Seeing is really from the inside.”

At rst it was hard for my human to put her eyes into my maka when other curious humans surrounded us at the shore. She practiced thou We would go down to the edge of the water at night, when the wind seemed to bite more ferociously, and the black water’s surface rose i small, sharp peaks. We would just watch, sitting together until our bodies merged. Soon her eye could travel immediately into my maka, and the she’d throw us in. Not trying to catch sh, she would just let me sink to the ocean oor and be still. We would observe, sometimes for hours, a surges would rock us back and forth, setting us rhythm with the sea. e dark reef we laid upon swayed too. It was very slight, we had to watch the coral beneath my feet and limbs for a long time before we could tune in to its ow. Tiny and glistening sh would dart in and out through my maka, while the bigger ones approached curiou then darted away. Deep purple and pink urchins waived their spikes, inching sideways as they nibbled on algae.

is is how she learned to forget the noise and distractions. e more she saw in the seascape, the easier it was for her to become it. She learn to just witness the world instead of having

opinions about it. And because she could see s
much more, she could connect to so much mor
She realized that everything she needed to see
was already inside her. Catching sh became a
bonus.

One day a large human walked noiselessly into
garage. I had never seen him before. I watched
eyes dart around my home. I saw fear in them.
skulked over to me and began to poke, pull, an
rub my arms and legs anxiously. His eyes rolled
around in their sockets like a crazed robot. ey
were moving too quickly to see anything, but th
were intense. I tried to connect with them, but
they were too anxious. He yanked at my feet ar
then he took out a knife and sliced through thre
of my arms, taking three of my feet. en he ran
away.

When my human found me in my injured state
she clasped her hands around her mouth. She
stared at where I had been cut until I said, “He
came to understand, but he couldn’t.”

My human nodded her head sadly, then gentl
picked me up and brought me inside to mend m
three legs and t me with three new feet.

“We don’t need to install an alarm system,” my
human said to the other human in our house as
she worked to mend my body. “It was just one
person thinking my net had some kind of freake
out technology in it.”

“But it’s not just this guy, Tiana. e whole town
is talking. ey are saying you’re some kind of
witch, and people are no longer enamored with
you. ey’re scared of you.”

My human exploded into a tense laugh. en she re-centered, stood, and gave the other hum a hug. She carried me outside and we walked down the sandy path to the ocean under the fai sliver of the moon.

We reached the end of the rocks and I could feel the stardust raining down from the crashing waves before us. “Someone is going to nd out about you…and about my eyes,” my human ha tightness in her voice.

I didn’t respond right away. en I asked, “Whe you put your eyes into my maka and we dive in what else do you see other than reef and sea li

My human was silent.

“When your eyes are in my net, are you worri about anything that happened in the past, or might happen in the future? No, because all yo are doing is seeing. ere is only now. You are ju a witness. A living, timeless witness of the pass seascape. You are witnessing yourself not reac to any other human, or sh, or distraction. You a just seeing yourself inside the seascape. You a just seeing connections and that means you are seeing possibilities.”

A few mornings later, my human and I stood quietly again at the edge of the sea. Gentle wav licked at the rocks. e wind was only whispering blowing me quiet gifts of last night’s stardust. My human said to me, “Let’s submerge.” Her ey joined mine and she unfolded my body beautifu like a blooming sun ower over the glassy sea. We sank slowly, and my eyes focused on the thousands of grains of sand rolling together in

one direction, pause, and then back in another direction. ey rolled back, and then forward, again and again. I listened to them chattering about how peace lives inside them.

Suddenly, I was jerked upward by a pair of gloved hands. My legs and eyes were squeeze together and I was dumped into the bottom of a rubber boat. I heard the roar of a motor and white water sprayed down upon me as my body bounced ferociously against the ocean's surface

It didn't take me long to realize that I had been snatched by someone other than my human. I turned every one of my eyes toward my human which were still nestled between two of my mak I had never felt such pity for something. Her eye were shaking, ghost white except for the coal black speck of her retracted pupils. We jostled and skidded around the oor of the dingy, stolen violently from our own selves.

"Remember, we are all made of stardust" I whispered as comfortingly as I could.

e humans tore us from the boat as it skidded up onto a section of the beach I had never seen before. My limbs leaped in confusion as a hand dragged me across sand and rocks up to a sma shelter. One of the humans burst open the door and the other followed inside. e door was locked behind us.

We entered into a yellow living room tted with a small rattan couch decorated with oral print pillows. e couch sat behind a roaring re. ere was no re place. is re was in a small metal container, clearly a temporary feature in the hou My human's eyes were xed on the bright red ar

black ames that danced eagerly and ercely in the dim room.

e two humans were breathing hard. I'm not sure if my human's eyes were asking me to spe to try to talk these humans out of what they wer about to do. I am sure, however, that we were going to transform. So I did what I was created to do, I watched. I watched the ickering ames bite my skin as I was brought closer and closer its many pointed tongues. My eyes were soft as they entered the multiple mouths of the re. I sli crackling and smoking, into a black soot at the bottom of the container.

"Be brave, my human," I shouted over the roa "You have already learned how to see. You do n need your eyes anymore. e world is now your eyes," I said. en, I transformed into re. So did my human's eyes.

I lay in the black soot that was once my body. e stench of burnt plastic sat low and heavy in the room like an apocalyptic fog. A few of my maka remained as the re wasn't hungry enoug to eat all of me. My feet were scattered about the bottom of the metal container, under and on top of the soot that was once my limbs. Some of the knots my human had tied around my feet remained, but I could not see, feel, or smell my human's eyes. I then felt something I had never felt before. I felt lonely. I felt disconnected. I felt incomplete.

I sat in my sooty self as the sun was overtake by the moon. en the gloved hands returned. ey picked up the metal container and carried me outside. e human dumped the container

upside down into some low-lying bushes a good distance behind the small house. My soot and metal feet tumbled into a newly scattered pile on the ground. The human walked away, and I looked up at the night's stars. I am stardust. After watching the planets shine powerfully above me I reconnected. A small salt crystalline blew over on the breeze and landed on one of my feet. I am stardust, too.

The gales grew in strength and blew much of my soot away through the night. When the sun had circled around the bottom of the world and began rising over the ocean, I saw a group of people approaching. They were searching for something. They pulled back bushes, and kicked at the ground. Suddenly the other human from my home stepped on one of my feet. He lifted his rubber shoe, looked at me, and picked me up.

"Tiana!" he called excitedly. "Tiana, I think I found it!"

I saw my human hurrying in my direction. She was wearing black sunglasses. In one hand she held a long stick that she anxiously tapped against the earth. Her other hand was held by another human, guiding her toward me. Stumbling and buzzing with laughter, my human dropped to her knees and felt for me on the ground. The other human in our house placed my foot in her fumbling fingers. She stopped immediately and let her skin sweep down over me, feeling each straight and curve. She smiled and said out loud, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't keep us safe."

My human, and all the other humans began collecting every scrap of fishing line and each

have arms, legs, feet, and many, many eyes.

After several hours of questions, photographs, videos, and careful documentation of my human working, all the humans said goodnight. Soon after, the other human who lived in our house fell asleep on the nearby couch as my human continued to weave knots that spaced out each new maka.

"You know," she began to speak softly to me as her ngers worked diligently, "I was terri ed yesterday. I didn't know how to run after us. My body was frozen in place without my eyes to se for it. But I saw who took us. Two guys I actuall grew up shing with, believe it or not. at's how I found you. I knew where to nd them, and I was hoping you'd still be nearby. I'm sorry it too as long as it did. It took my brain some time to nd the audacity to speak about what really happened."

My human mu ed a laugh under her breath. Without her sunglasses I saw her closed eyelid icker and dance with expression as she spoke. Her eyes were still in her sockets but they were blank. ey had burned in the re. I knew she could weave herself new eyes, just as she was weaving my maka in that moment, but I wanted her to gure that out on her own. I knew she would in her own time. And that time was near. She was already using her inner vision of imagination, and expansion, and stardust.