

'AFAKASI CHAMELEON

'Afakasi means half-caste:
half-blood, mixed race, two pasts.

But even if one eye is brown,
the other eye blue,
no one is ever just two.

You can't cut in half
blood that streams
or splice in two a river that teems
with tiny currents
running this way and that.
You can't divide mata i pusi: the eyes of a cat.

An 'afakasi is a chameleon
blending in,
coloured by genealogy
and its different skins –

a great-great-grandfather from Tuvalu
a great-great-grandmother from Peru

a great-grandfather from Italy
a great-grandmother from Fiji

a grandfather from England
a grandmother from Scotland

a father from Aotearoa
a mother from Sāmoa.

Cultural chromatophores,
pigmented geographies,
mixing the bloodlines
with poly-hued biographies.

Whether from Nauru or Australia
Israel, Greece, or Mauritania

Papua New Guinea or Ghana
Mali, Wales, or Grenada

Kiribati, Ireland, or Estonia
Costa Rica, Canada, or Ethiopia

France, Tonga, or Namibia
Somalia, Chad, or Nicaragua –

an 'afakasi is a chameleon,
fast, agile, free

it knows who it is
as it blends with the soil
with the stalk
with the tree.

The chameleon is you, the chameleon is me.

We are all
'afakasi.

Selina Tusitala Marsh



'Afakasi Chameleon

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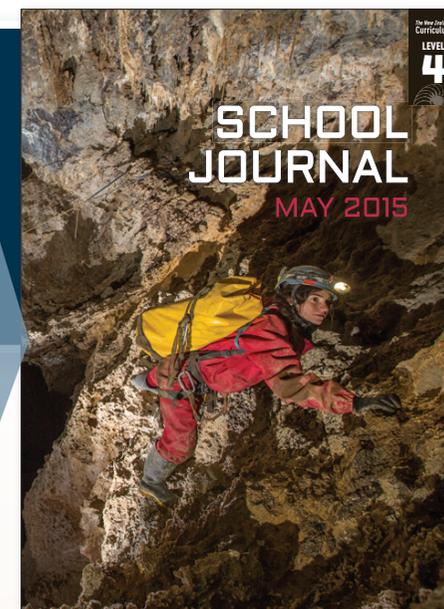
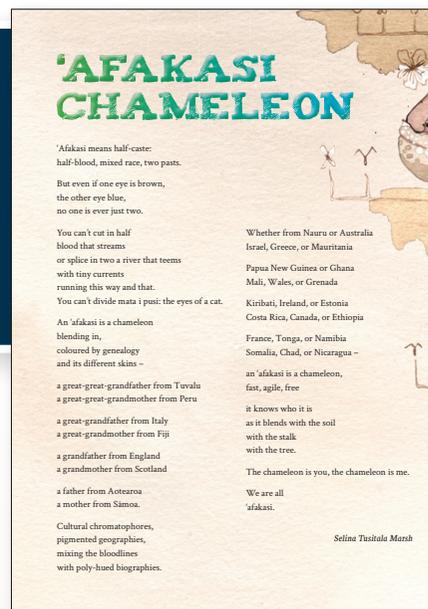
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