

MELISSA WEAVER

## Saudade

For Bethany, who returned to serve where little, and much, has changed.

*. . . A vague and constant desire for something  
that does not and probably cannot exist,  
for something other than the present, a turning . . .*

— A. F. G. Bell

Pedals propel the Ferris wheels  
that lift her from the fog  
of foreigners descended on the beach.  
Atlantis has risen where fishing boats,  
she was, once rocked to sleep.

Palms, plumeria, groves of mangoes  
shimmer in the heat  
like the husks of beetles  
she had pinned from these fields  
with tinier hands.

Here their burning calves had wrapped 'round  
the broad backs of bawling calves,  
had raced, leaving wedding-rice showers of sand  
where hotels stand  
like glittering temples.

At the guest-house tonight,  
they will ask if she's been here.  
With pale-face and tongue-Thai'd,  
she'll evade. The AC breaks likes waves  
where the cows once could watch them.  
Within walls that were not, what to say?