

**STRANDED ON NIKUMARORO ISLAND, AMELIA EARHART WATCHES HER
NAVIGATOR FRED NOONAN GET UNDRESSED**

Until I laughed,
 I've seen
 a naked man before,

he walked the beach
alone to strip
a half mile from the camp
each day to take
his
 air bath,

until he was just a figment,
a blur,
a wavering mirage.

Within a week,
he sat nude as Adam
beside me,

swearing easy as you please
about
 Those worthless shitty charts!
 Those damn monkeys
 didn't even top off
 the fuel tanks
 in New Guinea.

Beach sand
caked his ass.

His sex sniffed at the grit
like a sad bloodhound.

He didn't sense a thing
when I soothed him –

Fuck it, Fred.

I grabbed a stick
and stirred the fire.

**STRANDED ON NIKUMARORO ISLAND, FRED NOONAN WATCHES HIS PILOT
AMELIA EARHART GET UNDRESSED**

It took a week of slipping
into the bush
to change her clothes,

a week
of scratching her calves
on the brambles

before she finally muttered
To hell with it,

unzipped,
unbuttoned,
unbra'd before me.

Her rib lines sharp
as latitudes.
Her spine knobs
trailed off
like a gull's cry.

When she turned
she didn't chide
Don't stare
but towered
open as cloudless sky,

the twin moons of her breasts
hoisted and wheeling
above me
on their invisible filaments.

**AMELIA EARHART AND FRED NOONAN DISCARD MARITAL CONVENTIONS ON
NIKUMARORO ISLAND**

It was a month before we decided

Yes.

It wasn't an act of love,
this spark and flame

against each other
like the internal circuits
of a shorting radio.

We knew

we would never

be seen

again. We surrendered
to the knowledge,

fused
like smelted copper
in the heat
of our knowing
we.

were going to

die.

The hammock creaked,
a rowboat,
with our rocking.

It carried us
over the deep face
of the water

in its tiny sliver
which shadowed
all beneath
with its fragile passing.

Paul David Adkins lives in New York and works as a counselor.