Transplant

Children from northern regions
Remember November as first snowfall,
Houses, solid in summer, suddenly
Porous, as the first frigid draughts
Seep beneath doors and windows
Double sealed against the dark season.

What freedom in those first Hawaiian winters!
Opulent, tropical air lavished our skins
Through always open windows, doors,
Single walls,
Houses masquerading as shelter
Against nothing more hostile than warm rain.

Twenty years of Hawaiian Novembers
Have blunted the bubbling joy
In the pure fact of midwinter summer.
This morning, rain glazes the sides
Of old moldy buildings, rusted gutters
Defeated by decades of tropical downpour.
This morning, the bay is gray, the sky is gray.
Only the break wall marks the boundary
Between the earth and not the earth.

What am I doing here, half my life later,
Lost between home and somebody else’s home,
An alien transplant,
Like a sycamore left in the yard untended,
Root ball bound in burlap?
One root snaked through the bag,
Wound down lava tubes searching for nutrients,
And fastened itself to a place I never intended to stay.

©2005 Kenith L. Simmons