

POPULATE THE WAVES

Surfer boys and surfer girls are out there in the blue,
catching the frothy cresting waves and riding them.
Not many today, only just a few. Last year saw
a greater abundance—with the tourists gone,
the Hawaiian kids felt free to be themselves,
reclaimed the beach, surfing from dawn to dusk.

It's the life I never lived, but might have.
Had I been born here, not there
in New York City. I can see Melville
nodding in agreement. He was a New York boy
too, fell in love with the South Seas
like I did.

It's Artie Gold's birthday,
so of course I'm feeling a little down.
I never could convince him to come here,
or to Tahiti, or to Fiji, and the list
goes on. I always wanted to share this
with my friends, start an artist's colony
in the South Seas, find a way
to populate the waves. It never happened—
they were all so dug in to the lives they chose,
and, after a while, I gave it up too.

But returned
in later life, when the pandemic was threatening
to freeze my soul, when hiding under the bed
seemed the other best option. Hey Herman,
how about this? I sometimes say, knowing that he is
with me in spirit. And Artie is with me too,
free at last to be a surfer at twelve o'clock high.