

Nafanua goes to Nashville

She goes with him to Nashville
as if it were some place you could go to easily on a bus
he takes her to an outcrop of rocks and says:
This is where the Mississippians mysteriously disappeared
and then the Cherokee and the Chickashaw
and the Shawnee followed.

Nafanua sits like the single white resident
in a tiny settlement called French Lick.
Zero point zero percent Native Hawai'ian
and other Pacific Islanders
are stuffing the holes in their houses to the sounds of ghosts
and their quiet piroguing down the Tennessee River.

Eleven thousand Kurdish are joining the cult of angels.
This is not what she was expecting
they'd been heading for a place of amusement
and lost the trail
the guy in the hat is called Joe Cheek
and not a Nashvillian at all.

From far, far out in the wilderness comes a noise
that sounds like honk-a-tonk-a-tonk-a-tonka.

Photo: Martin Hunter



Tusiata Avia is an acclaimed poet, performer and children's writer. Her solo stage show *Wild Dogs Under My Skirt*, premiered in Dunedin in 2002, has since been performed throughout New Zealand and overseas. Her first collection, also titled

Wild Dogs Under My Skirt, was published in 2004. In 2005 she held the Fulbright-CNZ Pacific Writer's Residency at the University of Hawai'i. *Bloodclot*, her second book of poetry, was published in 2009.



phantom
billstickers ltd.

13thhead@gmail.com