

Sucking Sounds, Pōhai Street

I try to open the sliding glass door at grandma’s old house.
It used to make a slow sucking sound,
the way ‘opihi cling to rocks at low tide
when even children can safely harvest.
The suck reminds me, now, of Aunty Puni in her 60s.
Skinny legs crossed, t-shirt tucked
beneath the elastic band of acid wash jean shorts,
the longest painted fingernails on Pōhai Street—
right there, in front of grandma’s kitchen window,
there she was, sucking on Virginia Slims.

The doors I have opened will not lead me
to the kind of woman I wish to be.
The glass has spidered.
If you’re a parent, the spider is eye level.
If you’re a child, the spider hovers above you like a storm.
When the sliding glass door to grandma’s house
refuses to open, my eyes flash
to the broomstick handle wedged in the sliding track.
I’m a child again,
and every aunty hero ever sucked into this house,
this hot rock on Pōhai Street,
I hear them cling to one last drag.