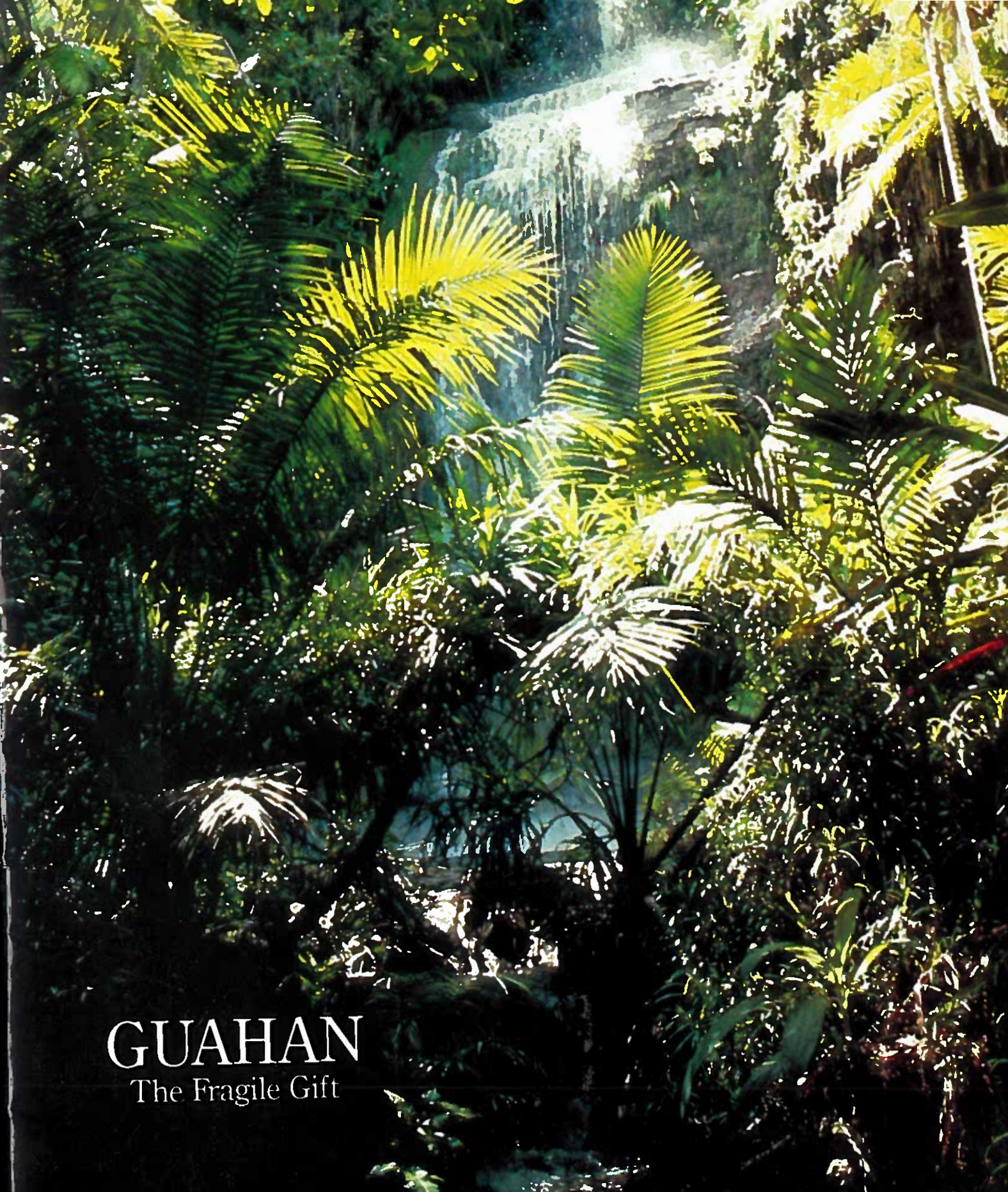




GUAHAN

The Fragile Gift

GUAHAN

THE FRAGILE GIFT

SEPTEMBER 1984

THIS GUIDE WAS FUNDED BY
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
OFFICE OF OCEAN AND COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
AND THE
GUAM COASTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
(PRUGRAMAN MINANEHAN URIYAN TASEN GUAHAN)
BUREAU OF PLANNING
(SETBISION MAMPLANEHA)
GOVERNMENT OF GUAM
(GUBETNAMENTON GUAHAN)

PHOTO CREDIT

Abbreviations: T = Top of page
B = Bottom of page
C = Center of page
R = Right side of page
L = Left side of page

Front cover and Back cover: Terrell Murrell

Pages

Terrell Murrell: 21BL, 22TL, 31C, 33, 34, 35BL, 35BR, 36BR
Susan Ham: 13T, 15, 19, 39
Robert Myers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10T, 11, 14B, 22TR, 24B, 31B, 35TL, 35TR, 36T, 41B, 42B
Mark Farnsworth: 38T, 42T, 43T, 44
Gary Wiles: 36BL, 37TL, 37TR
Rosita G.P. Cruz: 32T, 41T, 43C
David Lotz: 10B, 12, 16, 17, 18B, 20, 21T, 21BR, 22B, 23B, 24T, 31T, 32B, 43B

*Department of Agriculture,
Division of Aquatic and
Wildlife Resources (DAWR): 13B, 14T (G. Harrison), 18T (Anne F. Maben), 23T, 25,
26 (C&B Anne F. Maben), 27 (T = G. Harrison, C = Gary Wiles),
28 (Anne F. Maben), 29, 30, 37B, 40 (Anne F. Maben)

*Individual photo credit for DAWR pictures is given where available.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE SEA	1
TRANSITION	9
THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH	18
SAVANNA	21
THE BEAT OF LIFE	25
INLAND WATER	29
COLOR AND TEXTURE	35
LIMESTONE FOREST	36
PLEASURE	39
SOLITUDE	44



THE SEA

I am the sea; cool blue and restless. I was there to help sooth the angry, forming Earth, and I shall be when Earth is done.

I walk the sunken plains of Earth and climb her deepest peaks, in search of land to touch. Where my fingers probe, there is life. Where my breath blows soft against firm ground, there is life. But where my power is ignored or where disrespect is shown me, there is death. I can be injured, even gravely, but where I die all else dies, too.

It is I who brings the cool winds and gentle rains. It is I who brings the wild winds and torrents that flood the land. The wild and the gentle are the same to me.

Within my self, confined only by the ocean of air that presses against my back, is life I bore. Here is my consciousness and my conscience. The movement within me is a dance, performed in light and color, with a grace that only I can fully savor. The movement within me is a play, with actors speaking the same lines their forebears spoke more than five hundred million years ago. There is music, but you must listen closely.

I am life-giving life, and I share the mystery of my bosom with the creatures of the earth. But only one can appreciate, and only that same one can destroy me. Come fly, with outstretched arms, and let my life touch your heart and mind. Come and look . . . and listen . . . and caress . . . and be a part of that which is a part of you.



Above the sand on feather fins I ride, churning sand into clouds, aware of the world around me. I am food, and I am beauty. That is the role I play.

Harlequin-painted, skittish and wary, I live my life among the cracks and crevices that offer protection. I am a link in the chain of life, as strong as the link called whale.



My gait is not apathy portrayed, but security in motion. My walls cannot be breached, for I am the fortress and the defense. Do not touch me, but admire from afar. I am the lion and the scorpion, and my graceful jewelry is my warning.

We are small and seemingly inconsequential. But nothing in nature exists without meaning or use. We are essential, as you are essential, to the plot of the play. Without us, the ending must be rewritten.



I am a scavenger and wear that name with pride. My host is not my friend, but my protector. I gather food for my host to harvest, and together, silently, we share our meal.

My preposterous costume, with trailing line, delights you. I am pleased. But do not come too near, for you and I are of different worlds, and to survive I must keep my distance.



My colors, like those of my fellow creatures that swim or glide or crawl within our liquid world, are not designed for your amusement. These are our warnings and recognition. In our marking is purpose.

I am fish that looks like snake. My jaws open, sharp teeth bared, is fearsome to you. But I am merely breathing, yawning at your passage. It is when you try to take what is mine that you must beware. I am not generous with strangers.

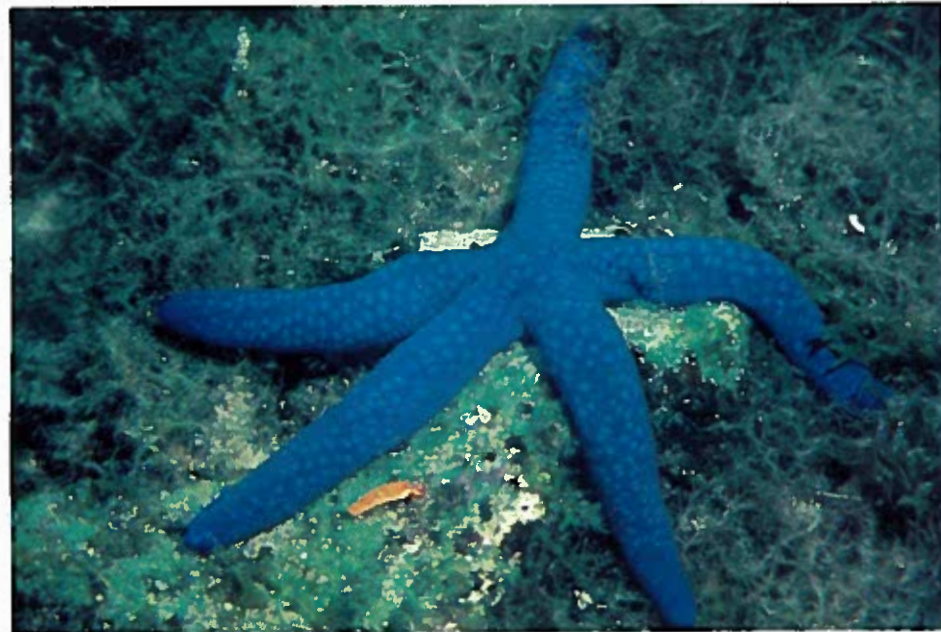


The sand on which you walk is the home on which I live. I have my defense, but it is annoying rather than painful. I discharge my innards to discourage, then rest while I renew myself.



I move cautiously in my world. There is no sharing of kinship, or friendship, or fellowship. There is only relentless pursuit and the only reward is survival ... for one more day.

I am unique ... a member of a small fraternity of life ... a regenerator of self. An arm, torn away in an attack, will grow what is needed to produce a whole self.



I live among the coral, home to many, hunting grounds to many more. Here I find my food, my shelter, my life. But I am dependent, and in that dependence may be my downfall.





The sea provides us with food in never-ending supply. The corals cushion the waves and protect our shores. The creatures beneath the waves delight our eyes and remind us of our place in nature, for we are a part of and not apart from the environment.

The sea is our heritage. Our forefathers rode the back of the waves to reach Guahan's shores. But our heritage is in danger.

A handful of individuals act without thought to the results of their actions. Fishing with dynamite and chlorine kill the corals and fishes, leaving barren what was once bountiful. It is your heritage and mine that is being stolen from us.

You and I, if we care about our home and our future, must help to stop this needless destruction. When you see someone using chlorine or dynamite in our waters, call the Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources at 734-3945 or 734-3897, as soon as possible. If we fail to stop this today, there may be nothing to save tomorrow.

TRANSITION

I am the shore. Born from the bond of sea and mountain, I exist where they hold hands. My body is firm, but not so firm as mountain. My flesh is cool and moist, but not as the sea is cool and moist. The creatures to whom I give life take sustenance from their mother, Sea, and refuge in the arms of their father, Land.

I am the shore and I am not the same to all men. To some, I am the harsh coast, the fighter. Here, the sea rushes at me in an attempt to reclaim what is rightfully hers. Here I am rugged and strong. In another place, the sea walks on tip-toe and lightly kisses the land. Here I am soft and inviting.

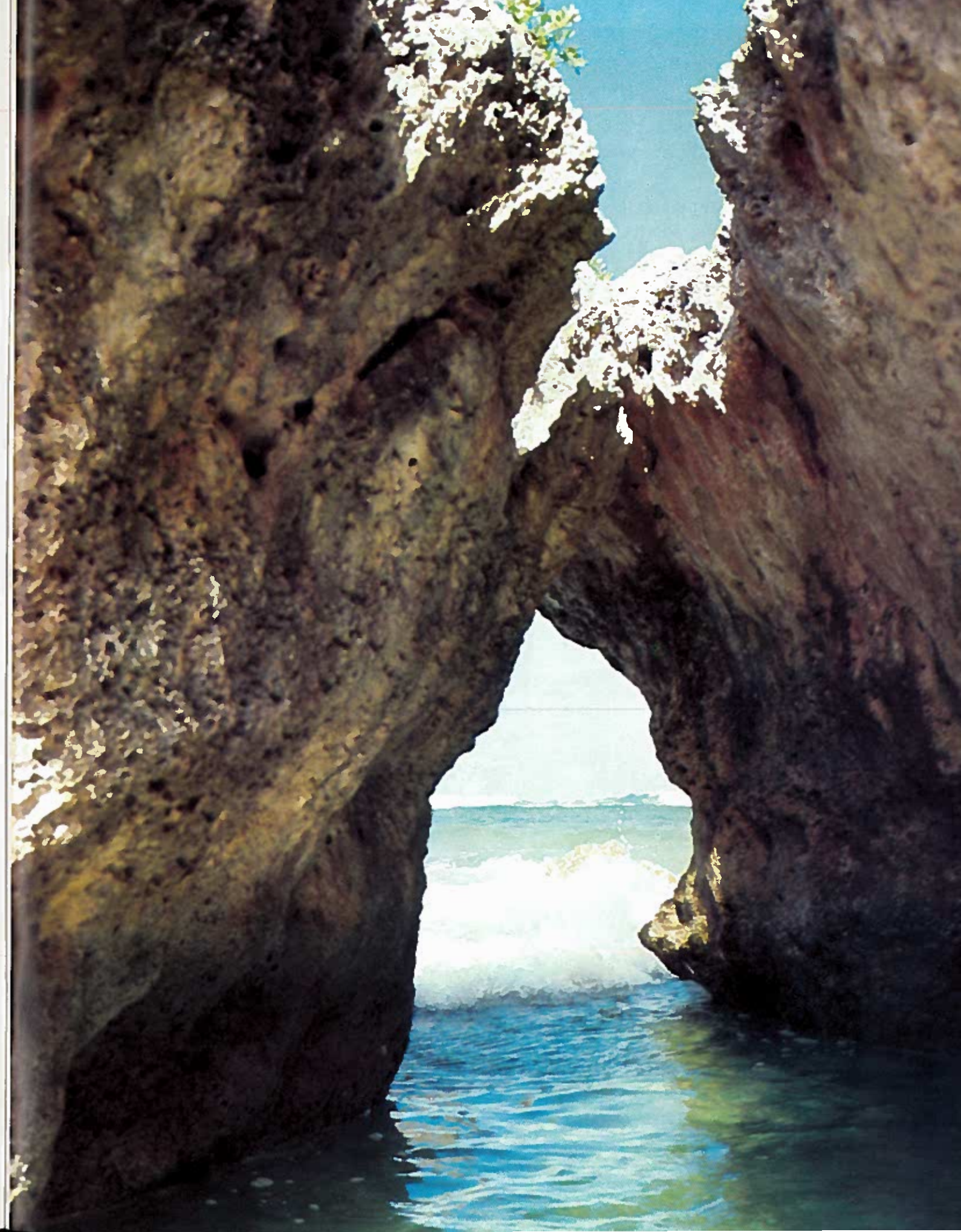




*"Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed."
—Francis Bacon*

The sea gathers strength in her anger and lunges with salted talons to claw and rip at my defense. The lanky palms bend, their fronds reaching in desperation, grasping for a solid hold. White froth bubbles across the fringing reef, tumbling over itself, running to steal the loose sand pebbles that make my skirt. I feel the tears of the sea-driven sky, peppering my fragility, as the moaning wind cries in its flight.

In these moments, I require solitude, for I must face the anger alone. The folly of standing upon my infirmness and laughing at the power before you carries no reward. Now is the time for shelter.



I am the shore, and I live. The rhythmic movement of the waters at my fringe is my breath. My clothing adorns and protects. In many places, I lie in easy access, beckoning you to use my gifts, and in that access is pleasure. In other places, I hide and keep my beauty to myself. In those places, my welcome is as freely given to those who seek it.

Come taste my breath upon your feet and drink of the warmth of my sands. I am that which links you with your past. I am that which speaks to you of your future.



The shore is the utilized of our resources. Our shores contain our clean, white beaches; rough carved limestone platforms; our river outlets; wind- and water-carved caves; and the bones of our ancestors. In sites along the shore, we can touch our distant past and eat from fruit descended from the fruit that fed our forefathers.

Our shore is also our most abused resource. Litter covers our shores, not because that is necessary, but because individuals do not think of your right to enjoy this resource. A clean and unspoiled shore is your right, but you must demand it.

When you see someone littering, report that to the Guam Environmental Protection Agency at 646-8863 or 646-8865. The shore is our home; insist that it be respected.



Now my highest point stands firm beneath your feet. What once loomed large above you diminishes in the picture of your journey. As the parts become a minor segment of the whole, so does the image of yourself..

I am mountain, and my gift to you is perspective. I dissolve your hubris, and in that dissolution I give you awe. You are the wardens of Earth, and into your hands is placed the fate of your home. Take care with this responsibility and you will succeed. Be driven by the rule: The guarded should always be loved by the guardian.

SAVANNA



Breeze blown, tossed heads of grass sway to the rhythm of the wind. Level fields and gentle hills stand in mute testimony to the grace of simplicity. I am the savanna, and my form is that of quiet.

Upon my plains, small trees stand above the grass, like giants in Lilliput. Color and form blend, from one to another, giving me my character. Come walk my fields and feel the pace of life slow.





I touch the edge of the forest, then move slowly away. The lush, full green of the island ravine gives a splendor to my countenance. Mine are the fields of soft summer days.



Lazily gazing at the panorama before you, the world presents itself as a feast to the senses. But I am more than mere beauty.

I am that which holds the soil. I am that which creates a habitat in which movement is easy, as is the ability to remain undetected. I require very little from the elements, asking only that I be treated with thought by man.



Let the velvet of my carpet lull you. Smell the damp . . . cool . . . mustiness . . . of my earth.

The grasslands are in danger. Ravine forest and grasslands are deliberately burned by a few, because hunting then can become less a sport and more a slaughter. Report all fires and incidents of arson to Department of Agriculture at 734-3948 or Department of Public Safety at 646-8801 or 646-8802.





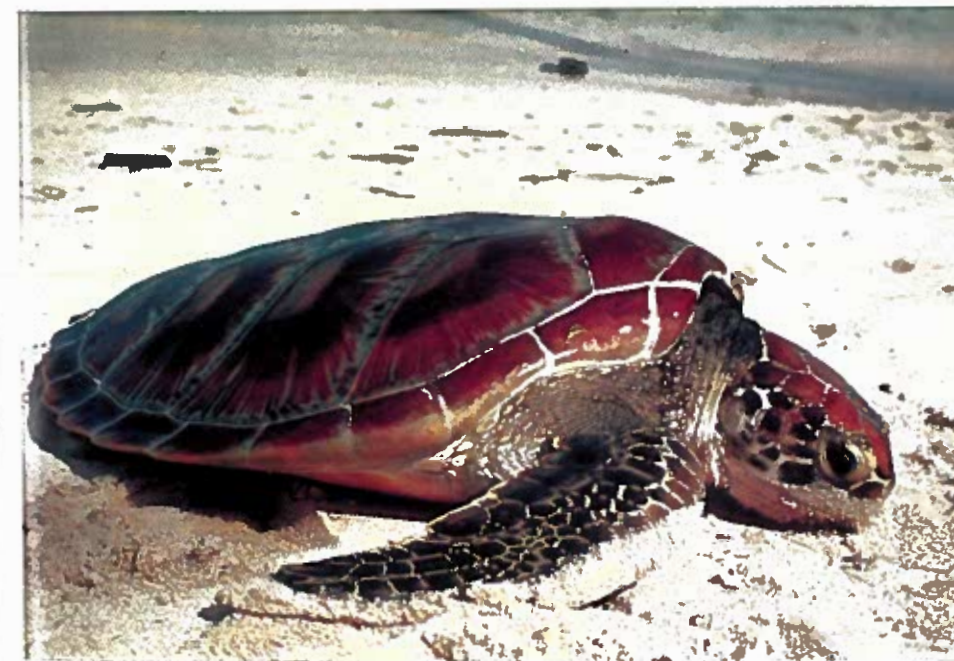
THE BEAT OF LIFE

There was a time when I alighted on your Plumeria looking, to the eyes of children, like an ornament on a Christmas tree. But now I am memory, a part of your past that exists no more.



We once existed in multitude beyond belief. Our cries and our beauty filled the air. Our flesh fed your flesh. Our shapes and colors and sounds fed your senses. But we are gone now, or quickly going. We are the creatures of your forest, and beaches, and mountains and grasslands. We were pleasures of your youth.

"When a man has pity on all living creatures then only is he noble."
—Buddha



My journey is hard and I am helpless to defend myself. I leave my young in your care, but you have abused that responsibility. Hear my cry. Hear my sorrow.



What once was plentiful is now rare.

I am spectacular in my size. The limestone forest is where I dwell, but my home is disappearing. Look now, for one day in the future, I will be gone.



What once was rare is now gone.



I am more gentle than my appearance would indicate. I am your beast of burden, your transportation and the symbol of your agricultural past.



What now is gone is lost forever.

Your laws have helped to save me. I provide meat to your fiesta's and delight to your children's eyes. Night hunters, if they continue, may cause me to disappear.





INLAND WATERS

Flowered pads lie suspended on the glass smooth surface of a hidden spring-pond. In the stillness of the moment, when only a hint of a light, summer breeze plays tag with your awareness, it is not impossible to hear your heart sigh with contentment.

Across the island a small lake sits idle beneath a noon-day sun. The surface reacts to a breath of air, blown by a passing cloud.

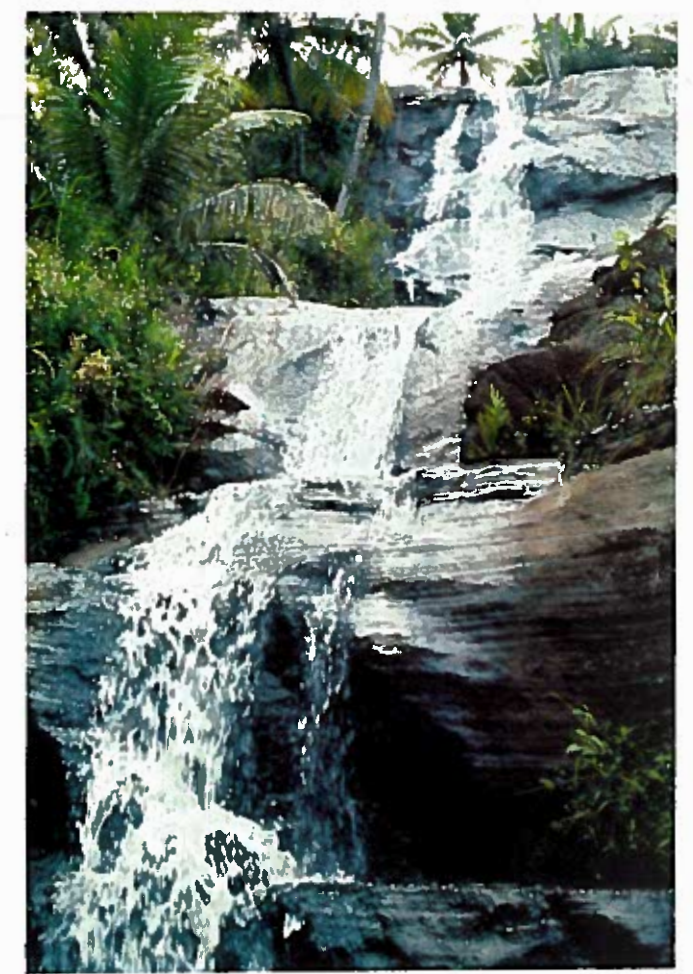
I am the inland water. I sustain life and offer myself to your pleasure. With care, I will be yours forever. Without care, you cannot exist.





White water rushes over volcanic rock, smoothing as it runs. The animals of the ravine forest and grasslands gather at the water's edge in the first pale light of morning, or beneath the claws of Cancer.

At last, the bed falls away, leaving the speeding water suspended, until it once again is overtaken by gravity. Now begins the falls: Talofoto, Sigua, Fintosa, Laelae, Imong, and Agaga. These are the names of our fathers. These are the waters of our mothers.



The water, unrestrained, save for the confinement it creates for itself, draws near the end of its journey. Now it pools and calms and leisurely winds toward the sea. The mountains and hills have completed their connection with their beginnings.



*Tonight's moon!—
Unthinkable
That there was only one!
—Ryota*



COLOR AND TEXTURE





LIMESTONE FOREST

Listen! I speak to you of your origin. Here are your remains. Here is your history.

I am the limestone forest, dark and unknown. I walk with the ghosts of those who knew my nature. Gone are the men and women of discovery, leaving only traces of their passing. They left me unscarred, unlike the strangers that followed. Slowly, I go the way of the dead.



Partake of my unique beauty. My trees climb for the sun and find footing wherever they can. My greens are dark and my air is dank. In death, my trees feed life. Enter my world, but leave me undisturbed. Those that follow you are also entitled to my mystery.





Look closely, as you weave your way through my barrier lined paths. Beneath the palms are signs of passage. My vines and ground and my air itself are filled with the stories and scenes of love and sorrow, greed and giving, revenge and forgiveness. It is your story that is speaking. The author runs in the blood of your veins. Reach out, and touch from where you came.



PLEASURE

My gifts to you must be protected, but that does not mean they must not be used. I know man and his ways. I know he needs to change the land when necessary. I know he needs to harvest his food. I know he has need of his pleasure.

My gifts are yours to use, but use them wisely. Take your enjoyment from my color, my texture, my smell, my taste, my sounds. My gifts are given only once. If man wastes or destroys what is freely given, those gifts can never be replaced.





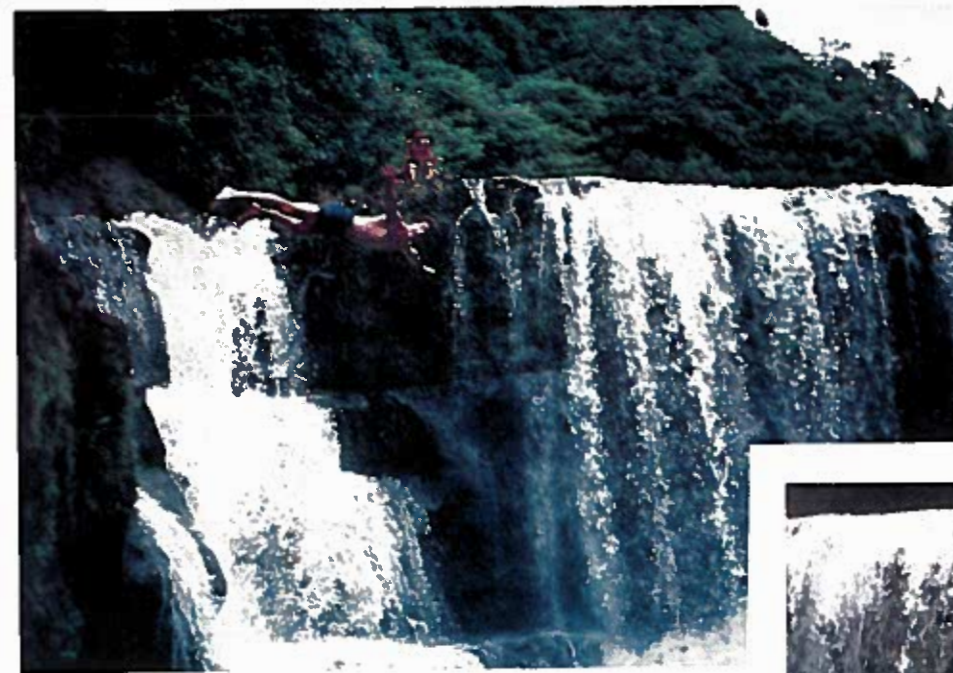
Fish my waters, for they are yours. Take what you need, no more. Take properly, not destructively. Take with pleasure and with gratitude. I ask little, but demand that my warning be heeded.





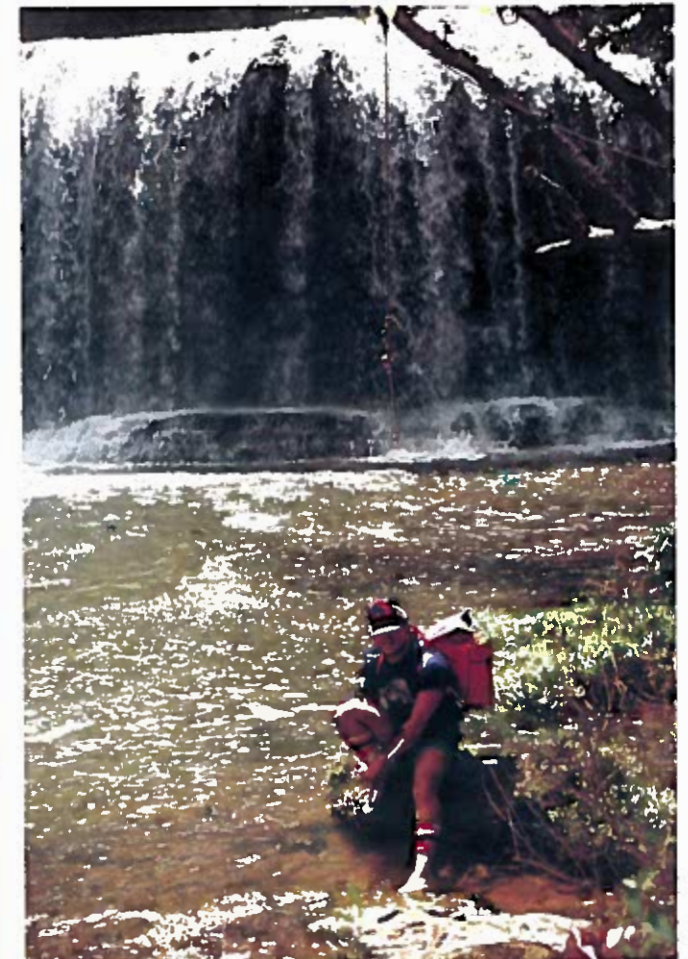
Walk across my mountains, within my forests and grasslands. There is much to discover, not only about me, but about yourself as well. Hunt the wild pig, the deer, and the game birds; but hunt them with thought toward tomorrow.

Enjoy my waters, but leave them clean. The life of my waters will determine the life of your children. Give love and love will be returned.



Give flight to your better desires and you shall be rewarded.

My gifts require only your imagination and appreciation to make them worth your efforts. Diamonds cannot buy what I offer... Your desire can.



Refresh yourself in me. In return, I will caress your soul.

SOLITUDE

"Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. Comes into us at midnight very clean. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday."

—John Wayne

Take my gifts, for they are yours.
I am the island.
I am Guahan.
I am you.





"The way we treat our resources reflects the dreams we hold for our children"

— W. L. H. n