

Pearl Ships

Steaming out of Pearl Harbor,
Warships barely ruffle waves at work.
Behemoth battleships defy the waters,
Afloat in steel enormity.

In a celebrated corner, grim reminders
Mark old memories.
Streams of Japanese and Haoles
Line up for movies, ride the launch,
Peer down beneath the surface at the hulk.

Should outsiders once again
Wage hate against this island,
Besides the undertow and sharks,
Blue bubbles and the coral's razor edge,
We face a deadlier foe that will not cross the Koolaus,
Propellers buzzing early Sunday morning,
But streak silent cross the sky
And by telemetry destroy,
In a zephyr of wind, a shimmering blur.

Like 007, a trumped excuse
Might trigger devastation on the whim
Of some cantankerous colonel.
So I watch the great ships
Slip through the water, mechanical leviathans,
Plodding protectors against a phantom enemy.

—Jim Walker