

92 — THE TREMBLING OF A LEAF

When your ship leaves Honolulu they hang "Leis" round your neck, garlands of sweet-smelling flowers. The wharf is crowded and the band plays a melting Hawaiian tune. The people on board throw coloured streamers to those standing below, and the side of the ship is gay with the thin lines of paper, red and green and yellow and blue. When the ship moves slowly away the streamers break softly, and it is like the breaking of human ties. Men and women are joined together for a moment by a gaily coloured strip of paper, red and blue and green and yellow, and then life separates them and the paper is sundered, so easily with a little sharp snap. For an hour the fragments trail down the hull and then they blow away. The flowers of your garlands fade and their scents is oppressive. You throw them overboard.

W. Somerset Maugham

93 — THE ENLIVENING POWERS OF NATURE

Men who have lived in crowded, pent up streets, through lives of toil, and never wished for change, men to whom custom has indeed become a second nature, and who have come almost to love each brick and stone that formed the narrow boundaries of their daily walks, even they with the hand of death upon them, have been known to yearn at last for one short glimpse of nature's face; and carried far from the scenes of their own pains and pleasures, they have seemed to pass at once into a new state of being, and crawling from day to day to some green sunny spot, have such memories wakened up within them by the mere sight of sky, and hill, and plain and glistening water, that a foretaste of heaven itself has soothed their quick decline.

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