



Paradise of the Pacific: Approaching Hawaii

Susanna Moore

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The dramatic history of America's tropical paradise

The history of Hawaii may be said to be the story of arrivals—from the eruption of volcanoes on the ocean floor 18,000 feet below, the first hardy seeds that over millennia found their way to the islands, and the confused birds blown from their migratory routes, to the early Polynesian adventurers who sailed across the Pacific in double canoes, the Spanish galleons en route to the Philippines, and the British navigators in search of a Northwest Passage, soon followed by pious Protestant missionaries, shipwrecked sailors, and rowdy Irish poachers escaped from Botany Bay—all wanderers washed ashore, sometimes by accident. This is true of many cultures, but in Hawaii, no one seems to have left. And in Hawaii, a set of myths accompanied each of these migrants—legends that shape our understanding of this mysterious place. In *Paradise of the Pacific*, Susanna Moore, the award-winning author of *In the Cut* and *The Life of Objects*, pieces together the elusive, dramatic story of late-eighteenth-century Hawaii—its kings and queens, gods and goddesses, missionaries, migrants, and explorers—a not-so-distant time of abrupt transition, in which an isolated pagan world of human sacrifice and strict taboo, without a currency or a written language, was confronted with the equally ritualized world of capitalism, Western education, and Christian values.

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