

Peter Morgan

Sekala Niskala at the Tanjung Sari¹

The rough-hewn beach bar overlooks the Indian Ocean
evening lanterns sway, gamelan
soothes the sea.

on sand, Bianca dances the dark away;
inscrutable gods catalyst for the erotic and profane.
a last pirouette, then spirits summon a humid breeze
and retake the night.

at dawn, I walk volcanic stones; down by sea.
Frangipani petals scattered, as if by plan
the stone gods resolute still; at arms. Even the morning
still finding its bearings.

the disordered shell beach; I, the swimmer
salt-layered tang. Wooden prows loiter on the horizon,
dawn-perfect light, gold-saronged women:
white lime, red betel-nut and the green sirih
a silence. Before

clattering efficiency; as the barman-now-waiter
behind the bar-now-counter, sets order to the day.
fresh guava and granular coffee materialize,
overlooking the beach, the sheltered bay,
the softening sun.
the ocean's alchemy is already
forging the day.

¹ "Sekala Niskala" is the Balinese philosophy of the seen and the unseen, blending earthly and magical worlds. The Tanjung Sari is a modest, family-run hotel in Sanur, Bali and was the one-time haunt of the famous, including Mick and Bianca Jagger.