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STORY DETAILS

Title:

ginen the micronesian kingfisher [i sihek]

Author:

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Publication date:

May 28, 2019

Place:

Guåhan (Guam)

Summary:

A moving meditation on the disappearance of the Micronesian kingfisher (i sihek) by the Chamoru poet Craig Santos Perez from Guåhan/Guam.

Author bio:

Dr. Craig Santos Perez is a native Chamoru (Chamorro) from the Pacific Island of Guåhan (Guam). He is a poet, scholar, editor, publisher, essayist, critic, book reviewer, artist, environmentalist, and political activist.

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Publication information:

This story was originally published on the website of the *Living Archive of Extinction Stories from Oceania*. This archived version is available from www.thomvandooren.org/extinctionstories.

GINEN THE MICRONESIAN KINGFISHER [I SIHEK]

[our] nightmare : no
birdsong—
the jungle was riven emptied
of [*i sihek*] bright blue green turquoise red gold
feathers—everywhere : brown
tree snakes avian
silence—

the snakes entered
without words when [we] saw them it was too late—
they were at [our] doors sliding along
the passages of [*i sihek*]
empire—then

the zookeepers came—
called it *species survival plan*—captured [*i sihek*] and transferred
the last
twenty-nine micronesia kingfishers
to zoos for captive breeding [1988]—they repeated [*i sihek*]
and repeated :

*“if it weren’t for us
your birds [*i sihek*]
would be gone
forever”*

what does not change /

last wild seen—

You can learn more about the kingfisher and hear its call [here](#).

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