

Afterlife
By Mihku Paul

Ciksotuwini (Listen to me)

When I end

My skin will be scraped, stretched over false ribs,
make a vessel to traverse the sea so that others like me can
be hunted more readily.

My fat will be rendered to cook savory dishes,
light the darkness.

My bones will be sculpted and pierced,
draped on a hunter's neck, one who desires
only to be something like me;
someone who does not need to
steal or borrow courage.

My teeth will be carved into wondrous shapes,
their substance intricate prismatic crystals,
a hardened canvas gouged and furrowed
with images of ships, women and sea giants.

The human hand will hold the weapon with
an easy familiarity.

My death, it will be written, was a kindness because
my kin had all gone into oblivion before me.