

Such a Full Sea

Posted on Jan 16, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)

I am in Hawaii, my birthplace. But I was born on Oahu, and this trip I am exclusively on Kauai, my favorite of the islands. I am writing this while sitting on the lanai of my rented condo, listening to the waves break on the beach nearby, and I am shaded by some palms, and birds are singing.

I am here with a friend and in our days here we have done a lot of driving, oohing and ahing at scenery, walking on beaches, sipping wine, laughing, etc..all the things one does on avacation wiht a friend. And reading. Here is a picture of my feet on a beach at the north end of Kauai...I was loafing there while my friend did a hike that was a little too rugged for me (I knew that, because I did it ... the famous Kalalau Trail along the NaPali Coast... 30 years ago with Martin. And it was too much for me even then!)

And in the picture is the book I was reading on that beach, Such a Full Sea. I am a fan of Chang Rae Lee's work, though I am not (maybe surprisingly) a particular fan of post-apolcolyptic fiction, and this book is that. (my personal exception has been Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, which I lked very much)

But I am liking this book a lot and also reading it with an odd feeling of familiarity. Many years ago, when I wrote a post-apolcolyptic book called Gathering Blue, I wrote a descritpion of a ceremony in which the people chant, each year, the history of their world (there is no longer any written record). One part of their chant consists of the unitelligible words:

BOGO TABAL

TIMOR TORON

TOTOO NOW GONE

(I think I have that right. i don't have the book here with me) Discerning readers can decipher that and realize that it says:

BOGOTA. BALTIMORE. TORONTO, TOO. NOW GONE.

Chang Rae Lee's book is set in the destroyed city once called Baltimore, now known as B-Mor. So in an odd coincidence it feels to me like an extension, an expansion, of my own reference. And his main character is a young girl who, at the outset of the book, works in the fish production sector, aagain coincidentally like my charater Claire in the book Son, who works in the fish hatchery of her futuristic community.

I doubt very much if Chang Rae Lee ever read either book. I think it is simply an interesting coincidence and it makes my reading of his book even more enjoyable because I can feel the existence of the world that I envisioned, conjoined with the facsinating world that he has created and expanded.



For some reason this photo is inserted sideways. My apologies. But anyway: you get the idea.



Also! Untagged