

# RAMROD



Number 6

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## JEAN CHARLOT'S PRIEST WITH GOD-STONE

A white-headed, white-bearded kahuna  
delicately dresses in blood-red cloth  
a rough vertical cropping of rock,  
as if he were tending to the whims  
of a mighty and dangerous ali'i.  
He kneels before the ragged, faceless mass,  
offering a scarlet sash,  
as if he expected the stone  
to reach out and take it up.  
That this rock is not itself a god  
the kahuna well knows.  
He thinks of it as a kind of dwelling,  
an inn for a night  
that will outlast any ordinary man's living.  
The kahuna loves the stone,  
as I love the Charlot print.  
This scene has lived so long on my wall  
that it has become a part of me, of us,  
of our little girl's growing.  
This picture's careful worship  
is a kind of hosting of the great ghosts  
that move through us all,  
much as the heavy trades  
breeze through the leaves  
and aerially rooted staves  
of the hala tree,  
under which a kahuna crouches,  
chanting a falsetto song  
that wants to become  
a part of the wind  
and what the wind means.