You are playing barchet with a ram. You will soon get a broken head.
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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.