



# Iep Jaltok: Poems from a Marshallese Daughter (Sun Tracks)

*Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner*

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As the seas rise, the fight intensifies to save the Pacific Ocean's Marshall Islands from being devoured by the waters around them. At the same time, activists are raising their poetic voices against decades of colonialism, environmental destruction, and social injustice.

Marshallese poet and activist Kathy Jetn̄il-Kijiner's writing highlights the traumas of colonialism, racism, forced migration, the legacy of American nuclear testing, and the impending threats of climate change. Bearing witness at the front lines of various activist movements inspires her work and has propelled her poetry onto international stages, where she has performed in front of audiences ranging from elementary school students to more than a hundred world leaders at the United Nations Climate Summit.

The poet connects us to Marshallese daily life and tradition, likening her poetry to a basket and its essential materials. Her cultural roots and her family provides the thick fiber, the structure of the basket. Her diasporic upbringing is the material which wraps around the fiber, an essential layer to the structure of her experiences. And her passion for justice and change, the passion which brings her to the front lines of activist movements—is the stitching that binds these two experiences together.

*Iep Jaltok* will make history as the first published book of poetry written by a Marshallese author, and it ushers in an important new voice for justice.

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