

Nativity in Tahiti: Paul Gauguin

by Jerry Ratch

The young girl has given up, and lies sprawled out upon the yellow cover on the bed, with her blue sarong wrapped loosely around her body. One arm lay back up above her head, where it was thrown during the exertion of birth. Her yellow halo surrounding her head, while she lies sleeping with her hair still damp, curling over her ear. Her upper lip blue, and the other hand lying limp over her breast.

Her legs are still parted slightly.
The cat lies near her feet as if in vigil,
looking away. One of the cows in the manger
looks over toward the bride, while chewing on a mouthful
of hay.

And a wet nurse holds the child,
with its green luminescent halo, as she stares
past the carved totemic pole, rising behind
the new mother's head, into the deep blue
and dark green Tahitian night.

