

Does Hawai'i have Christmas?

Enormous bunches of hot red poinsettias
mingle with bright purple bougainvillea
in densely colored clumps up to the eaves.
Even here it is the season of bright red.

Of course there's sun and surf and wind and rain
and always wide vistas of mountains and sea;
and lately "vog," newly coined term for
volcanic smog, the latest source of sniffles.

In colder worlds the color of one small pot
and a few fire red leaves cheers dark winters.
In Hawai'i an abundant and luxurious tree
does the color of the month in flame red.

What Christmas "means," here as everywhere,
is sales, and discounts, and statistics that show
us, we the buyers, do not buy as much this year
as the experts predicted we would — or more.

Stores must store the fat from this month
to get through leaner shopping seasons;
as we're supposed to remember the words:
Peace and Goodwill, for more turbulent times.