

The Mangroves Speak

Tinchi Tamba Wetlands

Sean West

If there are no mangroves, then the sea will have no meaning.

It's like a tree with no roots, for the mangroves are the roots of the sea!

—Quote from Mad-Ha Ranwasii, a Thai fisherman and village headman, 1992.

We can't help you. We're sorry but
we can't help you. His bones have
slip-ped our grip. We have con
-sult -ed the tides. They have been
of little use. They bring us silly
gifts: a baby's boot, a set of
keys, a crush -ed beer can, no
-thing of con -sequ -ence. We wish
we could offer more. We have been
wat -ch -ing and listen -ing long
-er than the water police, the journ
-alists, even your grand -mot -her. We
still rem -em -ber see -ing her
turn back to shore, leav -ing the
rest to fate or the black mud.

Sean West is an Autistic poet, support worker and workshop facilitator based in Meanjin (Brisbane). His debut chapbook is *Gutless Wonder* (Queensland Poetry, 2023). He is the founding editor of *Blue Bottle Journal* and works for *Ruckus Slam*.