

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Tristes Tropiques

William Zinsser · Wednesday, June 15th, 2011

One day in the fall of 1956 my wife and I were waiting on a dock in Suva, the capital of Fiji, to board a flying boat to Tahiti. No other air service to that island paradise was then available; the seaplane that was to drop us in Tahiti wouldn't come back for two weeks.

Among the waiting passengers I noticed a slight American man in his late 30s who looked tremendously alone. I introduced myself and he said he was Ernest Lehman, a screenwriter from Hollywood. At that time I was the movie critic of the New York Herald Tribune, and I asked Ernie what movies he had written that I might have reviewed. To my relief he mentioned *Somebody Up There Likes Me*, a boxing film starring Paul Newman, which I had recently seen and liked.

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