

Owed

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Go away to get your degree . . .
We are not ready for you here (UH Mānoa, 1996)

I went . . .

A Hawaiian on the moku
Of a “younger sibling”
To write in exile

Dusty lit halls on Symonds Street
Red brick, stuffy airs, empirical snobbery

But you...

A familiar spirit in a book-laden office
Brown lavalava, English tea, indigenous affinity:

You are in the right place
Māori concerns are not yours
Focus on home

Expand your native voice
Prove them wrong
Discard self-doubt

Tell our story
Use their rhetoric
Change their presumptions

And so . . .

I grew roots beyond Hawai'i
Deep into Oceania
Feeding me as I returned home
To create warriors
Armed with mo'olelo

Glossary

moku: island, district

mo'olelo: story, history