

# Aloha Pē: Ka Huliau

Kimo Cashman

**We are the stories we tell. This is the story I tell.<sup>1</sup>**

Fire the Pōhaku Cannon  
 This is the world we saw.  
 This is the world we are seeing.  
 This is the world we want for you.  
 This is our journey to create a world for you.  
 This is the story of our journey.  
 This is the story of the firing of the Pōhaku Cannon!<sup>2</sup>

## Ka Huliau

A series of events that occurred approximately ten years ago had a profound effect on my life. These events occurred within a very short period of time and have set me on a particular path, a life's journey.

### Going Home to Kelemānia

Day one – We are on our way to Kelemānia, the motherland of sorts—the homeland of my great-great grand parents. This is my first visit to Kelemānia and maybe my last. It is, therefore, a very special trip. I feel like I am going home. I feel a strong connection to Kelemānia.

This is also the homeland of my ipo's 'ohana. Unlike myself, she still has a relationship with her relatives in Kelemānia. They will be taking care of us during our visit. I have not met them yet, but I have heard many stories about them and their 'āina and am eager to meet them all. There is a bit of apprehension as well. I am not sure of what to expect from the German people in general. I am a dark-skinned Hawaiian man with long-bushy hair. I am assuming that I look different from most of the German people. How will I be treated? Will the family welcome me? Will my ipo and I be in any kind of danger because of the way I look? I am not sure of what to expect. But still I am eager to visit Kelemānia and meet the 'ohana. I am eager to learn about Kelemānia and maybe find a connection to my own 'ohana. I not sure. I little bit scared.

### Nā Pua O Ingelheim

We meet the 'ohana at the airport and they seem eager to meet us. They greet the women with bunches of flowers that they tell us were picked from their gardens. Most of the younger folk speak a little English so we are able to talk-story. We head to the house where we will be staying. It is located about thirty minutes from the airport in a town called Ingelheim. The town seems to be similar in size to Wahiawā. There are a number of fields with fruits and vegetables growing and old, but well-kept stone buildings. There are also signs of modernization—a Walmart, graffiti, new homes are being built. 'Anakala points in the direction of some of his fields and tells us he will take us on a tour of the area once we are settled in. As we approach our destination, it feels like we have stepped back in time. The cobblestone pathways, barely wide enough for our car, wind between rows of old brick houses. Large brick walls completely surround each house and courtyard giving each a fortress like feel. We drive up to a sliding gate made of wood that is the entrance to 'Anakala's place. He opens the gate and we drive into the courtyard fronting his house.

The beautiful two-story home overlooks the courtyard that they tell us once housed farm animals during the winter months. The courtyard is quite large.

There is enough space for about eight cars. There is a dining table and some chairs set up in a corner of the courtyard. The family has prepared a meal that is waiting for us. 'Anakala, however, insists that we tour his fields before we eat.

### Das Cherries

The fields are about two-blocks away from the house. 'Anakala's mo'opuna lead the way as we walk through the quiet town to the fields. The mo'opuna, two boys who are about four or five years old, run ahead of our group and seem just as excited as 'Anakala to show us their 'āina. We catch up with them a few minutes later. One of the boys picks a few yellow flowers to take home to put on the dinner table. We climb up a dirt mound that borders the fields and are amazed at how big the 'āina is—at least a hundred acres of neatly sectioned fields of cherries, apples, Mirabelle plums, strawberries, asparagus, and a variety of other crops. 'Anakala tells us that the fields belong to different families in the community. He points to his 'āina, his daughter's 'āina, and his son's 'āina. We walk towards his 'āina along the dirt path that runs between the sectioned fields and see some of the other families working. According to 'Anakala, the families try to help each other during the harvest seasons. I also notice huge piles of firewood stacked on every field. 'Anakala tells us that they store the wood for use during the cold winters.

We stop at one of 'Anakala's 'āina—roughly five acres full of cherry trees aligned in rows. Each cherry tree is about ten to fifteen feet tall. I don't know much about cherry trees but it seems like they are ready to be harvested. Each tree is just loaded with cherries. Cherry juice is believed to help alleviate the pain associated with gout attacks. If I have a gout attack on the trip, I know where I need to come.

We return to the house and spend the evening eating, talking, laughing, and singing. The 'ohana is beautiful. I can already tell that they are a strong, proud, and 'olu'olu people. They remind me of our 'ohana at home in Hawai'i. I see personality traits of

members of our 'ohana from Hawai'i in many of them.

### Land and people

Today will be another busy day. We wake up early in the morning and prepare to work in the fields with the 'ohana. It is cherry season in Ingelhiem and 'Anakala them have a lot of cherries to harvest. The 'ohana have already done so much for us. It is good to finally have an opportunity to help them out in some way. This is a chance for us to move beyond just being visitors to actually being a part of the working 'ohana and to show them that helping each other is a natural part of how we do things too.

We load the trailer and the tractor with buckets and ladders and make our way to the 'āina. I sit on the tractor fender as 'Anakala speeds to his destination. I hope I don't fall off the tractor and die in Kelemānia.

We reach the 'āina, and 'Anakala gives us a quick demonstration on how to pick cherries. I set up a ladder, climb up, and begin picking cherries. There are four of us picking the cherries while the rest of the 'ohana collect and carry the harvest to the trailer to be unloaded. I eat most of the cherries I pick from the first tree I work on. The cherries are 'ono.

It feels really good to be working. I feel like I am a contributing member of their 'ohana. There is somewhat of a language barrier but we are all working together. We speak the language of hard work and taking care of each other.

I am overwhelmed by the fact that I am working in a cherry field in Kelemānia. I am lucky to have this opportunity. It is tiring work. Hopefully we can work again tomorrow.

On a much sadder note, I receive word from our 'ohana at home that Grandpa has fallen ill and has been admitted to a hospital. He is not doing well. Our thoughts are with him.

### Hale Pule

We head south today to visit 'ohana in Kotschach, Austria. We'll be on the road for about a week accompanied by 'Anakala and 'Anakē. This is not a good time for 'Anakala and 'Anakē to be away from their 'āina, but they are concerned about us traveling alone across Kelemānia. We'll try to get

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back to Ingelheim as soon as possible so we can finish harvesting cherries.

We pass a number of small towns along the way to Kotschach and see people working their 'āina. There are bails of hay dotting the fields. Their 'āina, like 'Anakala's, are beautiful. Everyone seems to be preparing for winter. We stop at a few of the towns to rest and look around. The towns are all very similar. Each of them has a few shops, old buildings, and a small church. We make it a point to visit each church to aloha what seems to be the soul of the town. There are graveyards in close proximity to each of the churches. I wander about the cemeteries scanning the headstones for our 'ohana names but find none. I think of Grandpa especially while we visit the churches and make simple offerings in his name. I know he would appreciate the mana of these places. He is with us along this journey through his homeland.

### Schonau

In Konigsee, we take a boat ride out to St. Bartholomew's Church. The church consists of three white towers with red-fluted roofs. There is a clear reflection of the towers in the water. The water of Konigsee is a shade of blue that I have never seen before. It is beautiful. Snow capped mountains surround Konigsee. The air is cold but fresh. The boat captain plays a German melody on his bugle that he dedicates to Grandma. The sound from the bugle echoes throughout the Konigsee valley. At Konigsee, Grandma then share stories about their childhood in Kelemānia.

### Reiden

After driving all day, we find our way to a quiet little town called Reiden. The town seems to have gone to sleep for the night. We find a bed and breakfast to stay for the night. Our hui takes up three of the five rooms in the old house. We rest for a moment and then take a walk through the town. We visit the church that is at the center of the town. We go into the dimly-lit church to pule, and then head back to our "old house."

We wake up in the morning to the sound of cows mooing and cow bells clanking. The ground floor of the house we are staying at is apparently a stable for approximately ten cows. We see through the screenless

window, an elderly man walking with the cows through the town. We find out from the inn-keeper that the cows are kept in the stable during the cold nights and taken to the fields in the morning to graze. At Reiden, we listen to 'Anakala tell stories in German. They must be good stories because the kūpuna are laughing. We laugh along with them as if we understand exactly what they are saying. I hope they are not talking about us. My ipo and I listen intently for our names as they talk with each other. We don't hear our names mentioned but they may have already given us German nicknames that we are unaware of. We continue to laugh along with them. I think they are talking about us. Good fun!

### Maria Luggau

Maria Luggau is near the border of Austria and Italy. As we drive through Italy, my ipo notices a display of the stations-of-the-cross made out of wood in a field. We stop to look. The church of Maria Luggau is nearby. The church is beautiful. The exterior is painted white with gold trim. Gold is the predominant color on the inside. The altar is surrounded by statues that appear to be glowing. It is an easy place to sit, be silent, and pule. Grandpa is in our thoughts all the time. As we are leaving Maria Luggau, Tūtū reminds us of a road sign we saw as we drove into town. The message on the sign is a notice to all visitors to take their "rubbish" with them as they leave the town. This is a good message. Our 'ōpala is not their kuleana. It is ours. This is a good sign for home. This is something I can imagine Grandpa saying.

### 'Anakē Mutter

'Anakē Mutter took care of the kids when she was a kid herself. She is our oldest relative and a tough, but equally as kind, lady. She lives alone in her home in Kotschach, Austria but her children and grandchildren live nearby. From the balcony of her house, we can see a church across the valley. The church is nestled in the forest and is barely visible if not for the lone light coming from its bell tower. In the room that we are staying in, there is a black and white picture of twenty-seven young men in German military uniforms. We find out from 'Anakē Mutter that the picture is of the young men from Kotschach who died in World War II. These

men, or these boys, in the picture seem so young. 'Anakē Mutter them share stories about the war, the camps, the loss, and the exodus to Hawai'i.

Amidst the beauty of this place, there is a sadness that I sense, especially when I listen to 'Anakē Mutter, that I am trying to understand. Through her stories, 'Anakē Mutter makes me feel like I have lived her experiences. I almost understand her tears, her sense of loss, her struggles, her aloha for her 'ohana, and her aloha for this place. I sense, as she speaks, that she is telling us that the end of something is near - the end of a life, the end of a way of life, the end of a relationship. I'm not sure. But I think 'Anakē Mutter is looking forward to the end. 'Anakē Mutter's house is a spiritual place for everyone.

### 'Anakē Schwester

The church of St. Hildegard sits above the Rhine river and Rudesheim. You can see it from the fields in Ingelheim. This is 'Anakē Schwester them's church. Miracles are

attributed to this church and its nearby streams.

Grandma tells stories about St. Hildegard, the Rhine, and her childhood. Grandma is now in her eighties and has a difficult time traveling. She shares a story about her fear that her next trip to Kelemānia may be her last.

Our journey in Kelemānia is nearing its end. We are back in Ingleheim and everyone seems glad to be "home." There is much to be done in the fields so we'll spend the next few days picking cherries with the 'ohana. The best part of the trip is the time we spend helping the family in the fields. Helping them is a way for us to mahalo them for their aloha.

We are preparing for our trip home. We are not looking forward to saying goodbye to everyone. Our 'ohana in Kelemānia is beautiful. They shared their homes with us. We shared stories. We worked together. We helped each other. They made me feel like I was one of their own. I feel a strong connection to them and with the places that are dear to them. It feels like I am at home.

As we pack our things for our journey home, there is one gift in particular, amongst all the gifts that we picked up for our family that is especially important.

It is a wooden crucifix inscribed with the names of the churches and places we visited on our trip. The crucifix is for Grandpa. Grandpa is a man of God. The crucifix is a way for us to bring the pule we said for him along our journey throughout Europe, directly to him. We want to give the pule to him. It is our way to aloha him.

From Kelemānia,

We travel to see Grandpa who is still in a hospital in the states.

This is the last time we see him.

This is the last time we speak with him.

The last story he tells us is about fishing in Hāmoa.

He passed away soon after our visit.

He passed away, way too soon.

### We are the stories we tell. This is the story I tell.

There is a mele by Noland Conjugation entitled "Great Hawaiian Man." When I hear this mele, I am reminded of some of the kāne in our 'ohana, especially Grandpa.

Thoughts of him and his life ring through as I hear this mele.

#### A Great Hawaiian Man

We knew a great Hawaiian man, him made of 'āina, of many sands.

And as we watched him walk within the waters off Hōkū'ula,

we found ourselves surrounded in the wonder of his life.

His story continues, "It's a white man's world."

We knew a great Hawaiian man, he was a simple fisherman.

We can clearly see him from the place he told us to quietly wait. He helps us realize the reason why we carry on.

Sail on our soul of Haneo'o. The 'iwa spreads its wings and carries us home.

You are the path, take us home, take us home.

His story continues, "Every Generation has its war." We knew a great Hawaiian man. He is standing with us in a sacred land.

In those final moments, we could feel it in the grasp of his old hands and we understood. We are the children left to carry on. We are tomorrow, we are living here today, holding on to wisdom that he gave us yesterday.

His story continues, "Be proud you Hawaiian."  
 We knew a great Hawaiian man. We watched him  
 walk in the waters off Haneo'o.  
 We found ourselves wandering in the moments of his  
 life.  
 Fly on soul of Haneo'o, take us home Grandpa, we  
 wanna go home.  
 His story continues, "Haneo'o is home."

### Aloha e Tūtū Kāne

He was the po'o of our family. He was an important connection for us to our ancestors, to places, and to a time long gone. Through the stories he shared with us and by just spending time with him, we learned who Grandpa was - his beliefs, his way of doing things, his aloha for people and place, and his hopes and dreams. I realized much later in life that as we were learning about Grandpa, we were also learning about ourselves, our kūpuna, and our home. Grandpa was our connection not only to past events and our kūpuna, he was our connection to ourselves. He was helping us to understand who we are and where we are from. He was also helping us to build and understand our relationship to people and place, and therefore understand our kuleana to people and place.

### Ka Huliau

Grandpa's passing marked a time of great change. Everyone's role in the family was affected by his passing. His children were especially affected as they assumed roles within the 'ohana that we took for granted were his—the leader, the po'o, the story-teller, the kupuna, the organizer, the face of our ancestors. His children became the elders in the family.

With our po'o gone it became all of our kuleana to tell his story and the stories he shared lest we forget who we were. His passing is a stark reminder of how quickly time passes by and how urgent it is for us to seek the knowledge and insights of our kūpuna.

Only a moment after our journey to Kelemānia,  
 Only a moment after his passing,  
 In the midst of celebrating his life,

A daughter was born!  
 Hulō! Hulō!  
 Our baby is here!  
 A little girl sent to us by Grandpa them,  
 A little girl in the likeness of them.  
 Hulō! Hulō!

Reflection: Our daughter is here. And we hold gifts in our hands to share with her given to us by Grandpa them, our 'ohana in Hawai'i, our 'ohana in Kelemānia, and the places we hold dear. Our gifts are our experiences, mo'olelo, connections to people and place, and our aloha. We hope she comes to cherish these things and sees them as integral aspects of who we are as a hui. We hope that an appreciation for these gifts helps her understand her kuleana to care for our hui.

### We are the stories we tell. This is the story I tell.

"He hi'i alo ua milimili 'ia i ke alo, ua ha'awe 'ia ma ke kua, ua lei 'ia ma ka 'ā'ī" (Pukui, 1983, p. 67).

There is nothing more special in our lives than our children. "Ka lei hā'ule 'ole, he keiki" (p. 156). Children give meaning to our lives. They are our future. "Make no ke kalo a ola i ka palili" (p. 229). They are the center of our lives. Children, all children, are gifts to be cherished.

As I was growing up, I heard many stories about our kūpuna who cared for others. Kūpuna who cared for others, especially those who cared for children, were well respected in our family. They were celebrated. Accounts of their lives were memorialized in stories that were told over and over again. They were the kūpuna who were chosen by our parents and grandparents to be remembered. They were the special kūpuna, whose lives and actions we were encouraged to emulate. I ka nānā no a 'ike. They were the kūpuna, through whom, our family's 'ano evolved. They were the kūpuna that would continue to live through stories.

The stories of these kūpuna became part of our lives. From these stories, I understood that the mana of kūpuna and mākuā in our family was based, in part, on how he/she took care of children. From these stories, I learned that the kuleana of mākuā and kūpuna in our 'ohana was to care for the 'ohana, especially our children.

### **Ka Mo'olelo o Tūtū Malino**

Tūtū Malino, we were told, was the kupuna who took care of all of the kids in the family. She was the kupuna who made sure the kids had birthday and Christmas presents. She was the kupuna directly responsible for making sure the kids were safe, piha, and felt loved. From the stories we heard, it seemed like Tūtū Malino thought of everyone else before she thought of herself. She was the one whom everyone was confident they could turn to in time of need—even the adults. She treated all of the kids like they were her own children. And she was the kupuna who reminded other kūpuna of their kuleana to take care of their kids. She had a good-good soul. Stories about Tūtū Malino are told over and over again even though she passed many years ago.

I heard stories about Tūtū Malino but I also have my own memories of her. And from these memories along with the stories I have heard, I know that Tūtū Malino had plenty mana. There are a few in our hui who possess some of her qualities and this is good to see. Tūtū Malino is still here.

### **I see Tūtū Malino**

One day, I rode in the back seat of a car with Tūtū Malino and her ipo. Tūtū Malino was sitting in the front-passenger seat and her ipo was driving. We were speeding along and Tūtū Malino was yelling to her ipo to drive faster. "Hurry up! Hurry up!!!!" Her ipo remained silent as he drove the car—faster and faster. I was scared. We pulled up to a house and the car screeched to a stop. This was Tūtū Malino's sister's house. "Keep the car running!" yelled Tūtū Malino. Her ipo sat nervously with his hands tightly squeezing the steering wheel. He didn't say a word. I think he was scared too. Tūtū Malino bolted out of the car and into the house. I couldn't see what was going on but I heard yelling, swearing, and things being knocked around. I was even more scared now. I watched the front door as the ruckus continued. Then the door exploded open and Tūtū Malino came roaring out of the house holding a baby in one arm and an oxygen bottle in the other. Tūtū Malino made her way to the car while the baby's mom, tattered and worn, frantically chased after her. As the baby's mom got

closer, Tūtū Malino turned back and swung the oxygen bottle in her direction. The oxygen bottle nearly hit the baby's mom in the head. The mother backed off but kept yelling. Tūtū Malino got in the car and in an eerily calm voice said, "Let's go." We sped off with baby in Tūtū Malino's arms. I found out later that the mother was threatening to harm baby. Tūtū Malino went into the house and took baby. Tūtū Malino just took baby from the mother. Tūtū Malino never gave baby back to the mother. Tūtū Malino was relentless, even crazy at times, in her care for children. Long live Tūtū Malino.

**We are the Stories we tell. This is the story I tell.**

### **Mālama iā 'Oe**

You came to us in a flash and we weren't sure about how to proceed, what to do, what to teach you, and what was best for you. We did know, however, that circumstances required us to focus on protecting you and making sure you would remain with us forever. Our focus at the time was not on plotting a life's course for you. Survival, the survival of our family unit, was at stake. A lot of people were sharing advice with us about what we should do and what we shouldn't do for the survival of our family. We considered, however, that the advice we were getting, although most of it offered with good intentions, was coming from people who had never been in our situation before. The stress, the panic, and the fear we felt when you first came to us, were things that people could sense, but not really understand. We had to make major decisions that would affect the rest of our lives based on what we alone felt was correct. We had to overcome our concerns about what others thought of our decisions. We had to be strong. We had to be extremely focused because, again, the future of our family was at stake. Without you, there was no family. We felt we were all alone and in some ways this was a good thing. Being alone helped us to stay focused and forced us to trust ourselves.

As I reflect on those early years, I am relieved that things worked out well. We feel safe now. I realize, however, that we were not as alone as we thought we were. Our kūpuna were helping us along our journey. The stories we heard about kūpuna, like

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Tūtū G, and the 'ike they would send to us through dreams, through chance happenings, through Kōkua who would just happen to appear when needed most, helped us to stay strong and to make difficult decisions during a tumultuous time in our lives. Our kūpuna were watching out for us and in their own way, showing us what to do and when to do things. They were guiding us along a path that led us to our kuleana to mālama you.

“Ka 'ike a ka makua he hei na ke keiki”  
(Pukui, 1983, p. 151).

The knowledge of the parents is (unconsciously)  
absorbed by the child.

We constantly reflect on what we have experienced and what we have seen in our lives, as we care for you. Reflecting on our experiences helps us to figure out what we need to teach you and provide for you.

This is what (the world) I saw.

I saw a man, a fire, raging.

The biggest fire I had ever seen.

A cane fire, full on out of control and just eating up  
everything in its path.

The smoke so thick, I could barely see through it.

Black ash fell from the sky.

I saw a man battling a raging fire.

Doing whatever it took to put out a fire.

Working through the night, without sleep or drink,  
to put out a fire.

Never stopping to think about how hot or tired he was.

I saw a man possessed to put out a fire.

I saw Tūtū Waiāhole, a man possessed.

I saw a mother caring for her mom.

I saw a mother caring for her mom whose soul was  
already gone.

I saw a mom caring for her mom while still caring for  
her young children.

I saw mom, Tūtū Malino, caring for everyone.

I saw celebrations. I saw Merry Christmas. I saw  
Happy New Year.

I saw Happy Easter. I saw May Day. I saw fireworks on  
July 4.

I saw us celebrating the celebrations of the celebrated.

But, I also saw us celebrating each other, celebrating  
our home,  
celebrating the lives of kūpuna.

I saw a people marching. Marching in unison.

A sea of 'āweoweo

Holding hands, chanting, a people marching,  
a people on the move,

amidst a surging sea of red. A call from beyond.

A people and a family all too familiar with kū'ē  
once again, like our kūpuna, marching in the streets.

Amidst a surging sea of 'āweoweo.

I saw, through stories, the people and places Tūtū  
them spoke about.

I met, through stories, a kupuna whom I had only  
known through a faded photograph. I heard the voice  
of Kupuna Kumu, who died a generation before I was  
born, as she shared 'ohana stories. I understood, from  
the stories, their beliefs, their dreams, their kuleana,  
and their struggles.

### **I saw my ipo.**

We were camping with my ipo's family in Kahuku. The campsite was on the backside of the golf course and near to the ocean. It was a rough place to camp. We were basically camping in the bushes. The closest bathroom was a couple miles away. This was my first camping trip with my ipo's family and I wanted to show them, well, mostly my father-in-law, that I was a tough guy and could handle the rough camping conditions. I sensed that my ipo also wanted me to prove my worth to her father. Her father is a tough bull who likes to do manly things like hunt, fish, play with guns, and tease younger men like me. The pressure was on. I was confident that I could handle the rough camping conditions but I wasn't sure to what extent he was going to ridicule me in front of the family and/or how he was going to assess my manly abilities.

After we set up the tents, the cooking/eating area, and the portable bathroom, we all sat under the main tent to relax. It was about mid-day. My ipo, who was by my side, softly whispered to me, “My father them going lay net this afternoon.” “Right on. They like me go with them?” I responded. My ipo, with a worried look on her face, sternly said, “You have to go with

them!" I wasn't worried though. Most of the men on the camping trip were much older than I was. I thought if they could make it through the waves and lay the nets, I should have no problem.

The afternoon came, and the men gathered to prepare the nets. I joined in on the preparation. It seemed like about 10 of us were going to be setting the nets in the water. That was more than enough people to do the job. The nets were tied together and loaded into an inner-tube connected to a plywood base. We carried the nets to the water's edge and I thought, "OK, this won't be too bad. All 10 of us will swim out through the waves, drop the nets, and return to shore." My strategy was to stay on the margins of the group as we swam out, conserve my energy, and make it back to shore alive. We pushed the tube into the water, and we put on our diving gear. I realized then that only three of us were putting on diving gear. "Oh My God!" I thought to myself, "Where's everyone else?" The other men who prepared the nets had no intention of going in the water. They were slowly retreating up the beach and were not about to change their minds. I stood in the water with my diving gear on—my ipo's father and another poor soul stood next to me. With only three of us in the water, I would have to work extra hard to prove to my ipo's father that I was a real man—a man worthy of his daughter. There was no chance for me to hide amidst a school of elderly swimmers.

"What, ready?" my ipo's father grunted.

"Ya. We go." I replied.

I took hold of the tow-rope connected to the inner-tube and began to psyche myself up to pull the nets out through the waves. My ipo's father and the other diver swam ahead. I submerged my body into the water and pushed off from shore. The inner-tube was extremely heavy under the weight of the nets. I put my face down into the water and struggled to pull the inner-tube. But then I felt the weight of the inner-tube lighten as if something, perhaps a wave, was pushing it from behind. I looked back to see what, or who was helping to lighten the load. It was my ipo. My ipo! She, seeing that only a few of us were in the water, grabbed some diving gear and jumped in the water to help out. I couldn't have pulled that inner-

tube out into the surf without her. We took the nets out, set them under the direction of my ipo's father, and swam back to shore. It was hard work and we were exhausted. We swam back to shore and sat for a while to catch our breath. My ipo's father looked at me and then gestured in the direction of his daughter,

"How that girl, rugged ah?"

"Rugged," I replied.

I realized that he didn't care how rugged I was. Only I cared about how rugged I was. He just wanted me to see how special his daughter was and how special she was to him. That day, I saw my ipo and her hui.

### **I saw another man possessed.**

My ipo told me a story about what had happened in front of our house just the other day. Our neighbors across the street were arguing/fighting. They argue a lot. Usually their fights are not too bad—a lot of yelling coming from their house but nothing more than that. We usually don't even see them fighting, we just hear em. But on this day, according to my ipo, the neighbors, a husband and wife, were arguing in the front of their house in plain view of all of our neighbors. The husband was standing on the street yelling to his wife who was standing on their porch. My ipo didn't know what they were arguing about. But she heard the husband yelling, "You like see possessed? You like see possessed? I show you possessed!" My ipo tried to copy the husband's gestures as she told me the story. My ipo even had this crazy look in her eyes as she spoke the words.

"You like see possessed? You like see possessed?"

Then, according to my ipo, my neighbor started acting crazy. He motioned his arms in a forward-spinning windmill type of action and kept yelling at his wife, "You like see possessed ah? I show you possessed! I show you possessed!" My ipo was really getting into telling the story. She spun her arms to simulate what the neighbor was doing. And then, according to my ipo, he began messing up his hair while he continued yelling, "You like see possessed, ah? I show you possessed! I show you possessed!"

As my ipo told and acted out the story, I envisioned the possessed neighbor in my mind. I

could see him standing in front of his house. I saw a man whose frustration level perhaps peaked, which resulted in a “crazy-looking” street performance. I sort of understood his frustration.

As my ipo told the story, I thought of another story involving that same neighbor. A few days prior, I drove into my garage after a long day of work. As I got out of the car, I saw my “possessed neighbor” walking across the street in my direction. I walked towards him and we shook hands at the edge of my driveway.

**Possessed neighbor:** Wassup Hawaiian.

**Kimo:** Hey, how you Hawaiian?

**Possessed neighbor:** Good, good. Ah cuz, we making one fundraiser to bring my daughter home from school for the holidays. We selling pasteles and Gandule rice. If you like pick up some, let me know. The ting 'ono.

**Kimo:** Yeah, yeah, shoots. Where she going school?

**Neighbor/Father:** She go school in Washington. I assumed that his daughter was of college age and was attending a university in Washington. But he explained that his 10-year old daughter, who was legally deaf and blind, lived with relatives in Washington and attended a “special school.”

**Possessed Father:** We going bring my daughter home for Christmas.

Where I live, we don't ask our neighbors to help out with our fundraisers. There is an unspoken rule that we don't ask each other to buy stuff. We kind of just keep to our selves. But this possessed father was going to all of our neighbors to sell pasteles and gandule rice. The possessed

father was doing what he needed to do to bring his daughter home.

#### THE STORY I HEARD:

**Father:** You like see possessed? I show you possessed! I going bring my daughter home!

I saw a space in need of transformation.

One day, I attended a meeting with other faculty members at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's College of Education (COE) in which a representative from the federal government inquired about the efforts of COE faculty to address the educational needs of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, including Native Hawaiians. I chose to attend the meeting hoping to share aspects of our program and to see how the feds could support our efforts.

I realized just how big the college was as I sat in that meeting. Only a few of the COE faculty members in attendance were familiar to me. As we spoke about our respective programs, I heard, for the first time, about the multitude of programs within the COE that were intent on helping Native Hawaiians. My colleagues were talking about programs dealing with Native Hawaiian health issues, Native Hawaiians and Special Education, Native Hawaiians and science education, culturally relevant Native Hawaiian curriculum—just a wide variety of programs. Some spoke about their desire to ultimately empower Hawaiians. Empower Hawaiians?

None of my counterparts at that meeting was Native Hawaiian. I was the only Hawaiian in attendance. I knew they were not Hawaiian by the way they spoke about my people. By the way they spoke about their projects. They use words like, “them, they, theirs.” I did not hear words like, “Us, our people, my 'ohana.”

And as my counterparts spoke, none of them looked at me—the only Native Hawaiian in the room. They seemed to be speaking only to each other. Perhaps they were not concerned with what the only

Native Hawaiian in the room had to say about their individual projects to help Native Hawaiians? They knew I was Hawaiian because I told all of them I was. But they seemed to be more concerned with what the others in the room thought of their efforts to “help” my people. They did not seem to care about the fact that, as they spoke about Native Hawaiians, they were speaking about me and my ‘ohana. And I was sitting right in front of them.

Perhaps to them, my ‘ohana, Native Hawaiians, were mere subjects in their little projects—Not real people with the capacity to think and determine for themselves. Perhaps, deep down, they were not thinking of me and mine as real people—just problems to be dealt with. Or maybe they were just concerned about advancing their academic careers on the backs of my people.

But there in that meeting of select COE faculty members, sat a Native Hawaiian man named Kimo. I listened as my colleagues spoke about how they were attempting to save my people. I listened to them speak about what they thought was best for me and my ‘ohana. I thought to myself, “Who do they think they are?” “Who do they think we (Native Hawaiians) are?” “They forget where they are!”

So I waited patiently for my colleagues to finish their sermons. I waited for just the right time to remind them that I am Hawaiian and that we (Hawaiians) determine for our selves what is important for our people. And we determine how we take care of ourselves.

“Any final comments before we close the meeting?”  
said the meeting facilitator.

“Yes, I want to end the meeting by thanking all of you  
for the work that you do  
for my people. Mahalo Nui!!!”

Mahalo Nui!

I used the word mahalo purposefully. Mahalo is a powerful word. It is commonly used to acknowledge the generosity of others, but it can also be used to claim, to show ownership over something, and to protect mana.

“Mahalo to all of you.”

“As you folks spoke about your projects and efforts to help my people,

I kept hearing you folks use the term Native Hawaiian. When you folks talk about Native Hawaiians, you folks are talking about me and my family. When you talk about Hawaiian communities, you are talking about the community that my family lives in, the community that my daughter plays in, the community that I will drive to when I leave here today.

My name is Kimo.

Every time you think about or refer to Native  
Hawaiians,

I want you folks to think about me and my family.

Think about Kimo Them.

And any time you think of a project or program that might affect Kimo Them, obviously, you need to talk with Kimo Them about it before hand.

If, for some reason, you want to know how you can help Kimo Them, then you ask

Kimo Them how you can help. Ask Kimo Them.

Kimo Them will determine what is best for Kimo Them, as you will determine what is best for you and yours. If Kimo Them feel that Kimo Them need your kōkua, then Kimo Them will ask you for help. But don’t do anything that will affect Kimo Them without getting Kimo Them’s approval.

If you need to talk-story with Kimo Them, just stop by Kimo Them’s offices.

Kimo Them’s offices are right next door to yours.

Mahalo Everybody!

Kimo Them, are right here!

Native Hawaiians, are right here!

At the University of Hawai‘i.

And here at the University of Hawai‘i,  
Kimo Them will address the concerns  
that are most important to Kimo Them.

Mahalo

I saw hope for the future. In a dream, I saw mo‘opuna running around and playing and laughing. I saw little mo‘opuna eyes looking at us and wondering how big the world we saw really is. I dreamed we were looking forward at our mo‘opuna. Pairs of old eyes serving as cloudy windows between generations of kūpuna experiences and keiki who will soon reciprocate to us things that we didn’t know we didn’t know.

He 'elele ka moe na ke kanaka.  
A dream is a bearer of messages to man.

Aloha Pē,

We reflect on the dream.

And listen closely to the messages being sent to us.  
The message that is most clear, is that the world we  
need to create for you,  
is one that is simply full of love.  
And hopefully, when it is your time to create a world  
that you dreamed about,  
you will see too, that it need simply to be full of  
aloha.

Ua ola loko i ke aloha.  
Love gives life within.

When I met mom's family, I was surprised how close-knit her family was. They all lived in close proximity to each other and were a part of each other's daily lives. Mom and her immediate 'ohana lived next door to grandpa them. It must have been nice for her to see her grandparents everyday, to have them pick her up from school, to take her cruising, and to be able to go to their house whenever she wanted to eat their food. Mom's aunties, uncles, and cousins would visit on almost a daily basis. There was always extended family around to help one another unconditionally, to irritate each other, and to just talk story and live life together. From the stories I heard, it wasn't always a happy place, but what a good way to live. The aloha was unconditional. What a good way to grow up.

Daddy grew up in a good place as well. We didn't see our extended family as often as mom saw hers. But we had a tight hui with Daddy, Papa, Tūtū, 'Anakala, and 'Anakē. We took care of each other and as you know, we still do today. You can call on them whenever you need kōkua. "Ike aku, 'ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohona 'ohana" (Pukui, 1983, p. 130).

One day, I was talking with 'Anakala Nā. I was talking about you and he was talking about his kids. He said this as we were talking.

The kids gotta have the love, to want to take care. They gotta have the love from the hui and for the hui to go after what they need to take care of the hui.

Hopefully the kids will one day say to us,  
"Daddy and mommy, how can we help you?"  
"Daddy and Mommy, this is what we can do for you  
and our hui."

"This is what we will do to take care."

**We are the stories we tell. This is the story I tell.**

We are on a journey, Pē, to help you understand through story, our kuleana born out of love, to mālama our hui. These are the stories we tell.<sup>3</sup>

## HO'OLAUELE

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This caption was inspired by a phrase used by Thomas King (2003), "The truth about stories is that that's all we are." (p. 2)
  - <sup>2</sup> According to Gregory Cajete (1994), "Humans are one and all storytelling animals. Through story we explain and come to understand ourselves. Story – in creative combination with encounters, experiences, image making, ritual, play, imagination, dream, and modeling—forms the basic foundation of all human learning and teaching." (P. 68)
  - <sup>3</sup> I agree with Cajete's (1994) statement regarding the importance of helping kids to understand story and context: "The difference between the transfer of knowledge in modern Western education and that of indigenous education is that in Western education information has been separated from the stories and presented as data, description, theory, and formula. Modern students are left to re-context the information within a story. The problem is that most students have not been conditioned by modern culture or education to re-context this information. Their natural sense for story has been schooled out of them. They do not know how to mobilize their imagination to interact with the content that they are presented – they have lost their innate awareness of story." (p. 139–140)
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