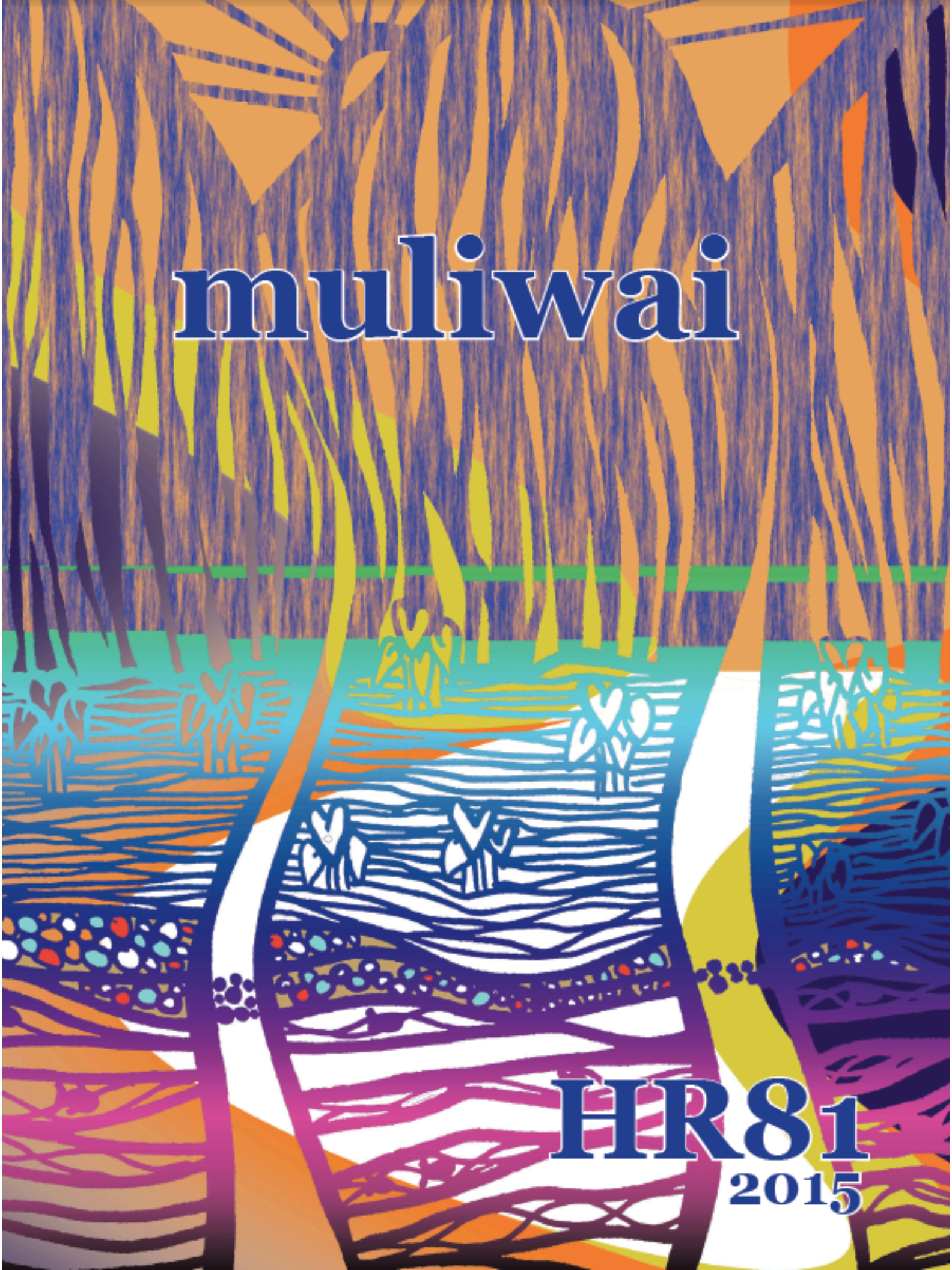
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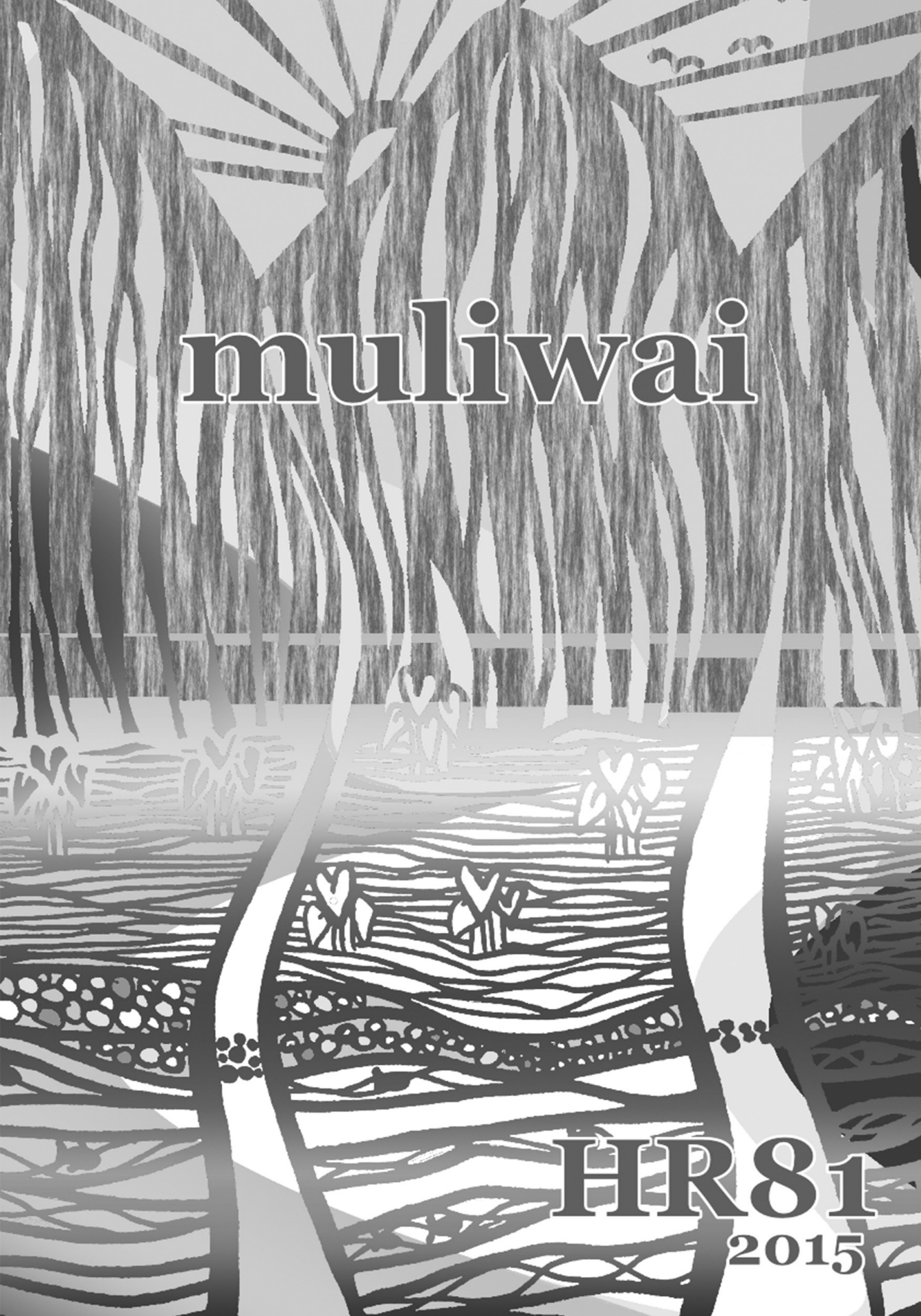
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Cover Art: The primary art for this cover is Haley Kailiehu's "Nā Wai 'Ehā," also featured inside this issue on page 192. *Hawai'i Review*'s Design Editor Donovan Kūhiō Colleps colorized this black-and-white drawing, introduced a colored background, and added the type to this cover.

Interior Design: Page 12 features a quote that was found in Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert's *Hawaiian Dictionary* under the definition of "water"; the source of this quote is Nathaniel B. Emerson's *Unwritten Literature*. Pages 64, 92, 96, 112, 166, and 176 feature 'ōlelo no'eau from Mary Kawena Pukui's *'Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*. For translations, see page 208.

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Editors' Note

muli.wai
n. River, river mouth; pool near mouth of a stream, as behind a sand bar, enlarged by ocean water left there by high tide; estuary.
—Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*

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Speech at the U.N. Climate Summit, New York City

September 23, 2014

Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner

Iakwe kom aolep. My family and I have traveled a long way to be here today—all the way from the Marshall Islands.

The Marshall Islands encompasses more than two million square kilometers of ocean, and so it makes sense that our culture is one of voyaging and navigation. One of our most beloved legends features a canoe race between ten brothers. Their mother, holding a heavy bundle, begged each of her sons for a ride on their canoe. But only the youngest listened and took her along for the ride, not knowing that his mother was carrying the first sail.

With the sail, he won the race and became chief. The moral of the story is to honor your mother, and the challenges life brings.

Climate change is a challenge that few want to take on. But the price of inaction is so high. Those of us from Oceania are already experiencing it firsthand. We've seen waves crashing into our homes and our breadfruit trees wither from the salt and drought. We look at our children and wonder how they will know themselves, or their culture, should we lose our islands.

Climate change affects not only us islanders. It threatens the entire world.

To tackle it, we need a radical change of course. This isn't easy, I know. It means ending carbon pollution within my lifetime. It means supporting those of us most affected to prepare for unavoidable climate impacts. And it means taking responsibility for irreversible loss and damage caused by greenhouse gas emissions.

The people who support this movement are indigenous mothers like me, families like mine, and millions more standing up for the changes needed, and working to make them happen.

I ask world leaders to take us all along on your ride. We won't slow you down. We'll help you win the most important race of all. The race to save humanity.

I would now like to share with you a poem that I have written for my daughter, Matafele Peinam.

dear matafele peinam

Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner

you are a seven month old sunrise of gummy smiles
you are bald as an egg and bald as the buddha
you are thunder thighs and lightning shrieks
so excited for bananas, hugs, and
our morning walks past the lagoon

dear matafele peinam,

i want to tell you about that lagoon
that lucid, sleepy lagoon lounging against the sunrise

some men say that one day

that lagoon will devour you

they say it will gnaw at the shoreline
chew at the roots of your breadfruit trees
gulp down rows of your seawalls
and crunch your island's shattered bones

they say you, your daughter,
and your granddaughter, too
will wander rootless
with only a passport to call home

dear matafele peinam,

don't cry

mommy promises you

no one
        will come and devour you

no greedy whale of a company sharking through
        political seas
no backwater bullying of businesses with broken morals no blindfolded

bureaucracies gonna push
this mother ocean over
the edge

no one's drowning, baby
no one's moving
no one's losing
their homeland
no one's gonna become
a climate change refugee

or should i say
no one else

to the carteret islanders of papua new guinea
and to the taro islanders of the solomon islands
i take this moment
to apologize to you
we are drawing the line here

because baby we are going to fight
your mommy daddy
bubu jimma your country and president too
we will all fight

and even though there are those
hidden behind platinum titles
who like to pretend
that we don't exist
that the marshall islands
tuvalu
kiribati
maldives
and typhoon haiyan in the philippines
and floods of pakistan, algeria, and colombia
and all the hurricanes, earthquakes, and tidalwaves
didn't exist

still
there are those
who see us

hands reaching out
fists raising up
banners unfurling
megaphones booming
and we are
        canoes blocking coal ships
we are
        the radiance of solar villages
we are
        the rich clean soil of the farmer's past
we are
        petitions blooming from teenage fingertips
we are
        families biking, recycling, reusing,
        engineers dreaming, designing, building,
        artists painting, dancing, writing
we are spreading the word

        and there are thousands out on the street
marching with signs
hand in hand
chanting for change NOW

they're marching for you, baby
they're marching for us

because we deserve to do more than just
survive
we deserve
to thrive

dear matafele peinam,

you are eyes heavy
with drowsy weight
so just close those eyes, baby
and sleep in peace

because we won't let you down

you'll see

I ka wai kau a Kāne
me Kanaloa,
he wai puna,
he wai e inu,
he wai e mana,
he wai e ola,
e ola nō.

Sovereign Waters:

Queer and Womanist Indigenous Reflections on Water: An International Indigenous Roundtable Discussion with Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán, Cathie Koa Dunsford, kuʻualoha hoʻomanawanui, Aurora Levins Morales, D. Kealiʻi MacKenzie, Lisa Suhair Majaj, and Loa Niumeitolu

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán

Sekon. This is an international Indigenous roundtable discussion, bringing together different queer and womanist Indigenous artists, activists, educators, and critics to have a brief dialogue on issues of water, how they permeate and interpentrate various areas of our lives and work. Each of the seven participants has been asked a series of six questions. Their responses, and reflections on these issues, are below. Nia:wen for reading, engaging, and furthering our movements for decolonization and sovereignty. Peace, power, Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán

1. How does water, its presence and absence, figure in your work as artists, activists, educators, and critics?

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán: Water is woven. It weaves through itself, my life, our lives, my and our work. It makes its presence known in my poetry and nonfiction, my teaching, my critical writing, my editorial work, my art, and my activism/organizing. I find myself continually drawn to, back to, water. I began swimming at one month old, under the guidance and watchful eye of my mother. I grew up swimming between waters—fresh, salt, chlorine—and have continued to return to rivers, oceans, streams, lakes, pools, waterfalls. It is important we protect these places. It is important we remember them, tend them. I also grew up immersed in the water of air. My mother and I had a deep love of storms, and we would go outside to watch them roll in, listening with joy, the thunder and lightning, downpours. I grew up bringing her rocks submerged in water, beautiful as I saw them there, wet and vibrant-coloured. She calls me her river rat, other names, the boy always in water. The boy who learned how to swim underwater, years before he had any lessons in how to swim above.

kuʻualoha hoʻomanawanui: Wai, fresh water, is a recognized, precious resource; the word for wealth is its reduplication, waiwai. It is conceivable while the main high, volcanic Hawaiian island had ample supplies of fresh water in most places most of the time, water was not always easily accessible, perhaps due to the severity of droughts and atypical weather cycles. Wai is balanced by kai, the salt or ocean water, a critical

place of healing, revival, and recreation for Kānaka ʻŌiwi, and a large part of our island consciousness. It has always been, and continues to be, vital for us to protect and mālama our aquatic environments, perhaps now more than ever with the increasing threat of global warming.

Aurora Levins Morales: I was born on an island, surrounded by undrinkable sea. It taught me reverence for fresh water. My stories are full of rain and its shadow, drought. The metaphors I use for borders are softer than those of the landlocked: archipelagos seen from the air, drowned mountain ranges whose slopes fade into the depths, tide pools rhythmically flooding and draining.

As a revolutionary, I think about the power of water to pass through barriers, to nourish roots and cause unexpected flowering, to make flash floods that turn dry creek beds into roaring torrents. Water is not solid, and yet it can carve stone, uproot trees, take whole mountainsides away. It unites all living things, runs in and out of our bodies, unites us with clouds. Without it, we die in days. Only air is more immediate. Sharing water is one of the most essential acts of solidarity. Sometimes I think the work of a radical artist is being a water bearer, going from one construction site to another, quenching thirst. My job is not to build organizations, but to carry transformative culture, fluid, life-giving, and saturated with stories, to those who do.

Lisa Suhair Majaj: I come from a land commonly figured as desert, but whose waters permeate my being. I write out of thirst for Palestine: its springs and wells, its streams and rivers, its rivulets that rise from rocky soil, nourishing tendrils of hope, its tides that surge like an ancient dream, flooding the lost land of memory. I am shaped by the salty, singing coastline of Jaffa, my grandmother's hometown, whose coastline is barred to me as a Palestinian, and by the Jordan River, which throughout my childhood marked the demarcation line of my father's Palestinian exile. I am sustained by the rains that water Palestine's groves of orange and olive, and that flood the streambeds etched through desert wadis, tracing a subtle impress across the most obdurate rock.

Cathie Koa Dunsford: We are iwi from Te Moana Nui a Kiwa, The Great Ocean of Kiwa. As Māori, wai [water] is vital to our communal survival. Water is represented in all my eco novels in the symbol of Laukiamanuikahiki, Turtle Woman, and Pele represents fire. Water and fire co-exist together and form the inspiration for our mahi, our work, our lives. Water provides life for our kai moana, the taonga from the sea. Water is in the tears of our Sky Father, Ranginui as he is separated from our Earth Mother, Papatūānuku, to provide Light so that we can survive. We come from water and we return to water, as our spirits fly from Te Rerenga Wairua, Spirit's Bay, back to our sacred island of Hawai'iki. Traditionally we launch our books into the waves to sail to our tūpuna, our ancestors, and be nourished by the ocean. Wai is also represented throughout my art, including

ki‘i pōhaku, mandalas, and woodcuts, on book covers, within books, and through international gallery exhibitions.

D. Keali‘i MacKenzie: Water features heavily in my poetic work. Water, specifically the ocean, is a site of history, family, and connections to fellow Pacific Islanders across Oceania. Being Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, the ocean contains great spiritual significance. In this I am thinking specifically of the ocean as the realm of Kanaloa, who I pray to upon entering. Just as Kanaloa provides bounty—from limu/seaweed, fish, shellfish, to salt—so the ocean has been integral to my poetry, reminding me of its importance in sustaining us.

In my work as Reference Librarian for the Hawaiian and Pacific Collections at the University of Hawai‘i’s Hamilton Library, water manifests through the books, recordings, maps, and other resources we take care of that relate to water in Hawai‘i. Being the largest repository for works about Hawai‘i, the collection contains materials on the many ways water has been approached, managed, and abused in the islands. For researchers, the collection can be overwhelming and frightening. My kuleana is to help folks navigate through the overload of information and find relevant materials, islands of information, to gain a better understanding of their topics. For research, this means being aware of the long history of information on water: traditional stories; laws from the Hawaiian Kingdom, Republic, Territory, and State; activist work; and maps, to name a few kinds of resources.

Loa Niumeitolu: To say I am Tongan is to map my genealogy, directly to the southern Pacific. My creative writing and social justice organizing are grounded in a common vision, to help diasporic Pacific Islanders heal from our separation from our Indigenous homelands. Grandmother Moana, the deep sea, and I, are bonded in vā, a sacred relationship based on reciprocity and responsibility to each other.

My life has transformed through the relationships I have made in entering prisons as a facilitator and engaging in prisoner advocacy work. On my second day working with my sister at Chowchilla women’s prison, one of the Black women secretly handed us a letter. It read, “Dear Loa and Fuifui, my name is Ellie, I’m Samoan. The girls told me about you guys. I’m the chairperson of the prison’s Women’s Group and I work with our Poly girls to make it a little easier for all of us in here. I hope to meet both of you soon.” We were humbled that our vā with Grandmother Moana led us behind those walls, and Ellie’s vā with the other prisoners, helped break prison procedures and create a vā between all participants. We met Ellie in prison and stayed in touch with those women. I wrote a story about Ellie and the other women prisoners that One Love Oceania (OLO), a queer Pacific Islander women’s group, performed widely in California. Audiences were always deeply moved by that piece. My commitment and loyalty to the Moana always takes me to places and spirits I need to meet.

2. How do different geographies inform your relationships to, work on, and theorization of, water?

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán: I am continually informed by the territories of New York and California, the Northeast/Atlantic and Pacific. They are the places that continually return in my work, that call to me, dwell. The various lakes and rivers, streams, and oceans, pools, of Lenapehoking and Kanienke, broader Haudenosaunee territory, and Mahican as well. From Lake Champlain to Niagara Falls, where I was conceived, to the rivers and ocean tips of the Bronx, Manhattan, New York City, to the Hudson River and Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, the Caribbean and our troubled Atlantic, both sides, all the coasts, (North) African among them, so many crossings, migrations across those waters. And in (Alta) California, Ohlone, Miwok, Pomo, Tongva, and Chumash territories; Aztlán; and farther north along the coast, and deeper into the deep waters of the Pacific, so many of my relations there. The water clinging to trees, moss, slapping up against rocks, saturated sands, fogs that roll in, and places of seeming dryness, aquifers, all figure in my work, as do those histories, our histories, in our urban-dwelled places. Our rural-dwelled places, too.

D. Keali‘i MacKenzie: I grew up in western Massachusetts, in Nipmuc and Pocomtuc territory, two hours from Boston and the ocean. Despite the distance, my family has always been a beach-going people, and we would visit family along the New Hampshire coast every summer. Likewise, my family in Hawai‘i is very connected to the ocean, and the house my aunt lives in overlooks Kailua bay on the island of O‘ahu. In New England, beaches are increasingly privatized. Access can be limited, or completely denied. Based on Hawaiian Kingdom law and Kanaka ‘Ōiwi custom, the courts in Hawai‘i reaffirmed the beach as a public right. Yet, we still have to push against those who would seek to privatize Hawai‘i’s waters. Similarly, throughout New England many Native peoples do not have full access to their waters, and their right to access is often not recognized. So, while the beach and ocean are indeed places of connections, they also remain sites of activism and vigilance.

Aurora Levins Morales: The landscapes I am most deeply rooted in are the mountainous, semi-tropical rainforests of western Puerto Rico, subject to torrential downpour in October and empty reservoirs in February; and the live oak and meadow covered hills of the Bay Area, green in winter, yellow in summer, where fog burns away without quenching thirst. Two lands bordered by vast stretches of salt water, dependent on the fluctuating presence of rain. I am always conscious of thirst, of that edge where crops wither, and also the other edge, where floods rot the harvest, wash away houses, and leave us equally hungry, and homeless. So I am always thinking of balance, of the

complex interaction of forces that can sustain us between drought and flood, in the place of enough.

Cathie Koa Dunsford: I live beside water and work with water in teaching kaitiakitanga, the traditional Māori guardianship and nurturance of the planet. I built a whare, Mohala, with independent water from the roof, and cook with seawater. Water connects us all wherever we live, especially those of us in Oceania. What we call countries are merely mountains which rise above the water. We are connected beneath the surface [see *Survivors*]. Water is essential for our mutual survival. Where land meets water, we have contested territory in Aotearoa. Indigenous people want to preserve our wai, our kai moana, from developers and mining. In *Cowrie* and *Pele's Tsunami*, set in Hawai'i, I kōrero about water as a force of nature and as kai moana. We learn about water through our kōrero, our mo'olelo. I have been performing internationally for twenty years. We always kōrero about water. *Song of the Selkies* celebrates this as well with Orcadians' struggles around similar water issues. Laukiamanuikahiki parts the waves for this kōrero.

ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui: I was raised in Wailua Homesteads, Puna, Kaua'i. Wailua (spirit, two waters) is applied to the ahupua'a, major river, waterfall, beach, and bay; the region is poetically referenced as Wailuanuiāhō'ano, the great sacred waters of chief Hō'ano; puna is a freshwater spring. Our home faced Wai'ale'ale, the rippling waters, whose highest peak is Kawaikini, the multitudinous waters. The rain-carrying wind Wai'ōpua nourished the land. Wai'ale'ale is noted as one of the wettest spots on the planet for its abundant rainfall, poetically referenced in the mele and saying, "Ka wai hālau o Wailua" (The abundant waters of Wailua).

For 'Ōiwi, the connection between place, names, and story is intimate. It is impossible to be raised in such an environment and not be positively affected by the physical presence and metaphorical meanings of water; it is easy for me to connect my relationship with this environment to the development of my art. Like a pebble dropped into still water, sending out ripples touching distant shores, my visual art, poetry, literary criticism, and cultural and political activism ripple out from this 'āina, Wailua, my piko, which informs my cultural consciousness. It would be impossible for me to do my art without being connected to wai, the first representation for me being my 'āina hānai.

Lisa Suhair Majaj: How can we theorize water without understanding dryness, or interrogate connection to place without understanding homelessness? The water that shapes our human lives and landscapes is not only physical; it is also cultural, historical, and above all political. Geographies are shaped by natural forces, but they are also shaped by political discourses that dictate who has access to natural resources and who is pushed from their natural relationship to land and water; who is granted the right to drill wells and water crops, and who must go thirsty. Political forces convert natural

and geographical markers into boundary lines of inclusion and exclusion, oases of life into deserts of dispossession, life-giving seas and rivers to life-defying barriers. Thus the Jordan River, which sustains plant, animal, and human life as well as historical and cultural memory, marks one of the boundaries excluding Palestinians from Palestine, thrusting those who come seeking its water back into deserts of thirst. And the Mediterranean Sea, on which Gaza fishermen depend, is barred to Palestinians by Israel's military blockade.

Loa Niumeitolu: When the vaka, six traditional Pacific Islander canoes, came to San Francisco in 2011, my life changed forever. For many Pacific Islanders in the Bay Area, we knew the coming of the vaka meant something significant, but we were all rushing from our jobs, picking up our kids from school, thinking of dinner and homework, but knowing we had to show up for their arrival at Treasure Island. Our group included a large Samoan church, Fijian families, Hawaiian hālau, Māori, Tahitians, Tongans, and Indigenous peoples of California. When we greeted the Māori from Aotearoa, many of us didn't know if we should use their hongi, the touching of noses, to welcome them, because we had never done that before, but saw it in movies, and wanted to greet them in their special way. Hawaiian Kumu Kau'i Peralto and her daughter provided a powerful chant and dance. Standing only a few feet away, I felt the mana of this welcome and thought, "Wow, these powerful moments, spoken in Native languages, using dance and song, have been lost, because we lost our voyaging traditions." The Cook Islander vaka, the Marumaru Atua, sailed right up to my feet as I stood on the sand. A navigator on that vaka told me he recognized me as someone he knew well, but forgot what my name was. We had actually never met. But I fell in love and followed him to Atiu, and learned there my calling was to write creatively about the ancient ways coming back to us now—the voyaging, the marae, the chants, and songs.

3. How do you buck against elemental expectations? In what ways does your work resist stereotypical, oppressive, and/or colonial notions of nature?

Cathie Koa Dunsford: I write empowering eco novels which constantly resist all the above. Nature is the main character in the novels. Queer Indigenous people interact with nature and challenge colonial notions of oppression in the form of nuclear testing in the Pacific, war, fish farming, and destroying the land and sea with mining and chemical poisoning. Resistance is also in working for change as well as working against oppression. My characters show many ways forward and listening to the bodies of land and water are vital to their/our survival. They are activists, writers, artists, dreamers, workers in all fields. I show ways we can and do protest unsustainable development, especially listening to the traditional knowledge of our kuia/kaumātua [elders] and

those interested in kaitiakitanga, nurturing and celebrating our shared natural world. See *Kaitiakitanga Pasifika* for a blueprint of this.

Lisa Suhair Majaj: As a Palestinian, to write from this identity is itself to buck against the elemental expectations that seek to silence me. I am told that I, and my history, do not exist. The Zionist narrative justifying the dispossession of Palestinians is often characterized as a process of "making the desert bloom." But this narrative distorts the ancient reality of quiet lives lived fruitfully on a land that sustained its people for millennia. My words tap into underground reservoirs and waterbeds as I seek to voice not only the unheard stories of the land, but also the vast reservoirs of courage that lie beneath its surface.

ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui: Since there is an overall, prevailing idea in mainstream western culture that there is "no such thing" or "no really valuable" body of ʻŌiwi literature, on one hand, all of the work I do resists stereotypical, oppressive, and colonial notions of nature. The cosmogonic genealogy Kumulipo recounts hundreds of generations of plant and animal species, the creation of stars, gods, and other elements of nature, before Kānaka are born into the same genealogical lines. Therefore, ʻŌiwi representations of elements, such as ʻāina and wai are not just settings, locations, or backdrops for human activity, nor are they mere landscapes or seascapes for humans to exploit or traverse; they are familial, they are actors, ancestors, and gods which Kānaka Maoli interact and relate with, and not always in a way in which kānaka are superior, in physical, spiritual, or emotional ways. Knowing you are the younger sibling born from the ʻāina supports an attitude of respect and deference of being part of something much larger, much older, much more respectable than you.

Aurora Levins Morales: I'm the child of an ecologist and an amateur naturalist, and while I grew up loving the beauty of the land, plants and creatures around me, I didn't have a romantic sense of nature as innocent or idyllic. I grew up communicating with soil and weather, insects, birds, lizards, plants, as members of my extended family—to love and fight with. In colonial discourse, "nature" includes all parts of the biosphere that are considered raw materials, without souls or intelligence, to be put to work for the men at the top. Indigenous people, people of color, poor people, women, are all, in one way or another, considered part of nature, but not in the way of kinship. In the way of matter to be worked upon. Whatever interferes with our exploitation, with the standardization and compliance the market demands—expressions of sovereignty, acts of transgression, our subversive desires and nonconforming bodies—render us unnatural. The very people whose separation from the rest of the ecosystem allows them to decimate our world, deem me—queer, disabled, and revolutionary—to be outside of nature.

My writing reflects my deeply held ecological values, reflects the kinship I feel,

and rejects artificial separations between nature and civilization, between the human and the wild, the natural and unnatural.

I believe ecology carries its own ethical code, that when we know ourselves bound into a great web of living things, feel our interdependence, not as an abstraction, but in our bodies, with our senses, and realize fully that everything is part of ourselves, we become accountable. The consequences of selfishness, greed, reckless consumption are felt as personal wounds, and become intolerable. All my stories are about this, about the relatedness of everything.

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán: The urban and rural swirl in my work, knot, and buck up against each other. The land still speaks, as do the waters, despite centuries of ongoing colonization. My work listens to and imagines those pasts, futures, and alternative, alter-native presents, presence. I am not interested in stereotypical, easy, dominant, uninterrupted Euro-accepted notions of our territories, lives. My work troubles spaces, weaves them together, shows the adjacencies, layerings, transparencies and translucencies, opacities. The opal in our cities. My work shows there is still memory in those places, memories not erased. Displaced or defaced, colonially misplaced, but not erased. We tend to the work of memory—the deeper we go, the brighter our futures become. The more possible our moments here and now. Everlasting.

D. Keali‘i MacKenzie: A piece by Samoan writer Sia Figiel begins: “Water is life! Say the tyres on a government car in Sāmoa. . . .” Yes, water is life, but more than the shallow gestures made in the broader colonial sense. Water isn’t just something preserved, and it certainly isn’t something bought and sold. I think of the god Kāne as the manifestation of fresh water in Hawai‘i, and Kanaloa as salt water. These gods form the basis of my relationship to and perceptions of water. In my poetry, I try to reflect upon meanings that go beyond the scientific, the oppressive, to hopefully strike a chord in the na‘au, the guts. The good thing about creative work is that it demonstrates how water is life, something deeper than commodification.

As an academic librarian, I have the privilege of seeing what the information landscape looks like for many topics and issues. An understanding of water is essential to discussions in Hawai‘i surrounding land use, genetically-modified-organism (GMO) debates, kalo—in essence, the very health of our islands. One resource guide I published was an annotated bibliography on fresh water in Hawai‘i by former Library and Information Science student Shavonn-haevyn Matsuda. Shavonn is an amazing Kanaka ‘Ōiwi librarian and archivist, and her bibliography maps the tug and pull between traditional uses and management of water and the (mis)management of water by sugar companies and the state of Hawai‘i. This work is a valuable map for those wishing to understand how we have gotten to our current situation with water management, and points to those works that can move us into a better understanding of how to correct past mistakes.

Loa Niumeitolu: I facilitated Pacific Islander men's groups at Solano prison, each challenging stereotypes and sharing Pacific knowledge. We discussed essays by Pacific scholars and read Pacific literature; learned chants, songs, and dances; and prayed to our traditional deities. One day, my co-facilitator, another Tongan woman, who never showed interest in the groups' goals, put on a DVD about the Mormon Church's tourist theme park in Hawai'i, the Polynesian Cultural Center. I tensed up, feeling the video would undo all our work. Instead, the prison chapel transformed into a Samoan living room; the images and sounds reminded them of home. The men lied down on the fala, mats, and each other. They were no longer prisoners but brothers, cousins, fathers, and uncles watching TV: laughing at the Samoan guide husking coconuts for tourists, expressing desire for the female dancers, singing along with the songs. They loved each other. Powerfully evident, these men understood their Indigenous roles and respected their vā. Nothing could undo that. The next workshop, the men welcomed us with a haka they learned.

4. In what ways are gender and sexuality central to your work? How do human bodies, cultural bodies, and bodies of water and land intersect and interpenetrate in your art, activism, teaching, and criticism?

Cathie Koa Dunsford: All these elements are connected and inseparable in my life and my work globally. I am a queer, womanist, Indigenous woman of Māori, African, Hawai'ian descent. My characters promote my/our interests and show we can lead the way forward. This is reflected in my university teaching; my international publishing consultancy which has promoted Indigenous, queer, and feminist authors globally into print [209 authors]; my kaitiakitanga teaching; and my eco novels which feature strong, queer, Indigenous people as main characters. Hence, my books have been taught in Gender, Ethnic, Queer, Indigenous, and Literary Studies programmes in the U.S., Canada, UK, Australia, and Aotearoa. I was recently Opening Keynote Speaker at the University of the South Pacific's Oceanic Conference on Creativity and Climate Change, in Fiji, where I gave the speech, "Kaitiakitanga: Protecting Our Oceans, Islands and Skies: Inspiring a Climate Change of Consciousness" [see *Dreadlocks*]. It is vital we live what we teach, show the way forward by our actions as well as our kōrero.

Aurora Levins Morales: As someone disabled by the toxicity of the colonial landscape, human bodies and the body of the planet are inseparable to me. My activism arises from my body and from the interactions of my body with my ecosystem. Disability, chronic illness, and the intolerable weight of oppression—I experience them as one thing. I write about trauma and oppression as dimensions of the same violence, which is visited on

flesh and landscape simultaneously.

As someone sexually trafficked by child pornographers, in a colonized, occupied country, my work on sexuality is inextricably linked with trauma and healing, the gendered violence of imperialism and the resilience of our imaginations, bodies, earth.

ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui: Mana wahine, an Indigenous Pacific concept of female empowerment, is very important in my own identity as a Kanaka Maoli wahine, and in my work and teaching. I consciously work toward depicting powerful women and female mana for audiences (primarily ʻŌiwi women) who are often overly immersed in traditional western stereotypes of the beautiful woman as passive and helpless, particularly in the face of violence against them. I write about and depict strong women who are passionate, intellectual, artistic, witty, independent, and fierce, qualities that make them attractive to others; it is not about body size, skin color, or hair texture—shallow markers of beauty and of being the "good" woman touted by colonial culture.

As an editor of *ʻŌiwi: A Native Hawaiian Journal*, it is important to me that we are always inclusive of all Kanaka writers and subject matters, and I am thrilled to see the emergence of outstanding literature by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Kanaka writers, and more writing positively representing aikāne and māhū traditions.

D. Keali'i MacKenzie: Gender and sexuality are vital! I co-created a resource guide on gender and sexual identity in the Pacific with my colleague Eleanor Kleiber to fill the gap on such important information within our library. I am also a founding member of Nolu Ehu: A Queer Nesian Arts Collective. We are based in Honolulu and consist of different kinds of artists, musicians, and writers who use the arts to articulate queerness in the Indigenous Pacific. Our name, Nolu Ehu, refers to a fern softened by mist or rain. We deliberately invoke place, Hawai'i, with our name, but our use of the word "Nesian" refers to the many islands to which our queer lives and stories are connected. In this regard, our name also draws upon Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa's idea of the ocean as something that connects Pacific Islanders.

Loa Niumeitolu: We formed One Love Oceania (OLO), a queer Pacific Islander women's art, activism, and support group in the Bay Area, when Proposition 8, the amendment to ban same-sex marriage, was publicly and visibly supported by Pacific Islander congregations of big Christian churches. We felt an urgency to counter the dominant image of homophobic Pacific Islanders, by sharing the actual reality: We depend on our queer family members as our backbone in our communities. OLO was invited to do a performance for the National Queer Arts Festival. With half our group having grown up on the islands and the other half raised in the States, we exchanged many stories to find a common theme. We chose Oceania as a starting point. Women, different in age, experience, and desire, came together to build a home during a difficult time. We called

our show, "Being Queer is a Homecoming." Our queerness brought us together, and our common belief that our ocean is always supporting us, gave us the strength to find home in solidarity.

Lisa Suhair Majaj: I am shaped by multiple intersections between the human bodies that birthed me, the cultural bodies and patriarchal discourses that delineate my identity as a woman and underlie my feminism, and the bodies of land and water that salt my thirst and flood my dreams. My own body—its physicality, its human existence—is a product of dispossession: If my father had not been exiled from his homeland, refused the right to return, severed from his source by the political usurpation of the river that runs from Mount Hermon to the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, he would not have met and married my mother, an American, and I would not be here today. It is not possible for me to claim and honor this legacy without also claiming my own identity as a woman. How can I be a Palestinian and not be an activist on all fronts, including those of gender and sexuality? Both my mother and my father taught me, in different ways, that women are as strong as men. They encouraged me to be steadfast, to resist, to stand for justice. And thus, perhaps without realizing, they opened the way to my feminism. Their lives showed me that the ability to act in the world from one's essence runs as deep as an underground river. But the essence that defines each of us is not generic; it is gendered, sexual, and unique. How can we oppose silencing and honor the right to speak out from the depths of one's being without also making space for the voices of those, such as queer Palestinians, who are silenced even within Palestinian spaces? Our bodies of words have unacknowledged depths: It is time to grapple with those depths, and for all voices to rise to the surface.

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán: Editor of the first global international queer Indigenous collection, I believe intersectional waters permeate every aspect of the Fall 2010 issue of *Yellow Medicine Review: A Journal of Indigenous Literature, Art, and Thought*, as do they my teaching and first two poetry books, *Antes y después del Bronx: Lenapehoking* and *South Bronx Breathing Lessons*.

In my critical work, I write about multicorporeal sovereignties, our interlinked struggles around terrestrial, physical, and cultural bodies; and about the roles Indigenous rhetorics, multiply-conscious pedagogies, and decolonial poetics, erotics, and spiritualities play in shaping sovereign imaginaries. How art and desire, our bodies, all of them, interlocking, interwoven, are important in our multigenerational movements towards decolonization. In my work on Indigenous womanist nationalisms, I look at how Haunani-Kay Trask, Beth Brant (Degonwadonti), and Cherríe L. Moraga are rescripting nationalisms through queer and womanist lenses, in dialogue with their Kanaka Maoli, Haudenosaunee, and Chicana/o communities. I trace the intellectual, artistic, and activist genealogies and kinship networks of these three sisters, and the shifting role gender and sexuality play in their articulation of Native nationalisms over the past forty years, as

evidenced in their writing, teaching, activism, and community work.

Indigenous women and queer Indigenous people are the majority of any Indigenous community. As such, and because the processes of colonization were and are queerphobic and sexist/misogynist, were and are interwoven with heteropatriarchy, I argue our sovereignties must be womanist, must be queer, and that centering the work of Indigenous women and queer Indigenous people is vital to all our work of decolonization and sovereignty as Indigenous peoples, if we are truly serious about the full liberation of all our Nations, all our communities, and all those spheres.

5. How does the creative, critical, educational, and activist work of other Indigenous peoples on issues of water inform your own?

Cathie Koa Dunsford: I am passionate about Indigenous notions of water globally as we share so much in common. In the Pacific, our navigators had to read water and sky to discover our islands. I celebrate this in *Kaitiakitanga Pasifika* by honouring their journey in traditional/eco-powered sailing vessels. First Nations Canadians provided the spruce logs for the waka; Native Hawai‘ians, the mo‘olelo; and all of us joined together for the journey. First Nations tangata whenua [people of the land] in the U.S., Canada, Pacific, Africa, Caribbean, Australia, Aotearoa, and Orkney have contributed wai mo‘olelo to my work and continually inspire me. I recently performed at the New Zealand Festival in Wellington on a Māori/Aboriginal panel, sharing our stories. Wai, water, was a vital theme for all of us, from the Aboriginal art depicting water sites to the literary themes and ki‘i pōhaku of my own books. Touring Turkey for my publisher there also revealed Indigenous wai issues, which we addressed.

ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui: I am inspired by artists such as Tahiti’s Chantal Spitz and her novel detailing the horrors of French nuclear testing there and its devastating effects, *Island of Shattered Dreams*. I am also inspired by trips to dry areas such as the Sahara Desert and Draa and Dadès valleys in Morocco, and the work of local Indigenous communities there in preserving and protecting their critical water resources. It is vital to recognize the common relationships Indigenous peoples around the world have with their environments, and the destructive influence wrought by colonialism. As an *‘Ōiwi* editor, I am attracted to works that demonstrate a cultural consciousness towards ‘āina (including water, sea, and sky); we see the journal as part of a larger cultural movement to educate everyone about the importance of mālama and aloha ‘āina, even more critical in a time of global warming and rising sea levels, devastating entire Pacific nations.

D. Keali‘i MacKenzie: In addition to those previously mentioned, it has been important for me to engage other scholars and artists who are Indigenous to Hawai‘i and the Pacific.

I have been blessed to know queer Marshallese poet, and fellow Pacific Islands Studies classmate, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, whose poem "Tell Them" and larger work have really shaped how I think about climate change and rising tides. The reality is while the ocean connects us, for many of our brothers and sisters in the Pacific, it is also something that submerges our connections to the land. Joy Enomoto, a queer Kanaka ʻŌiwi, African American, and Japanese visual artist, creates works about climate change which evoke moving islands. She not only grounds her art in Oceania but also incorporates the histories of the Caribbean into her practice, bringing two island spaces into dialogue. Kanaka ʻŌiwi lawyer and scholar Kapua Sproat is someone who articulates the relationships between activism and law as they relate to water rights. Her articles and essays have been essential when I help students research water. The work of these women is inspirational and infused with the urgency of our times.

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán: Among Haudenosaunee, I am grateful for the work of Beth Brant, James Thomas Stevens, Janet Marie Rogers, Taiaiake Alfred, Rosy Simas, Katsi Cook, Joyce Tekahnawiiaks King, Gail Tremblay, E. Pauline Johnson, Robert Odawi Porter, Ray Fadden/Tehanetorens, Darren Bonaparte, Natasha Smoke Santiago, John Ahniwanika Schertow, and so many other writers, artists, activists, academics, organizers, and community workers. Nia:wen. I am also deeply grateful for the work of the folk gathered here in dialogue, as well as many others, such as Linda Hogan, Winona LaDuke, Alice Walker, Haunani-Kay Trask, Cherríe L. Moraga, Deborah A. Miranda, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, Cody Pueo Pata, Kealiʻi Reichel, Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Shigeyuki Kihara, Witi Ihimaera, Kapulani Landgraf, Jewelle Gomez, Suheir Hammad, Craig S. Womack, and vaimoana litia makakaufaki niumeitolu. All the above peoples, as well as their broader communities, help shape, directly and indirectly, my work on, and thinking about, sovereignty, Native nationalism, decolonization, womanism, queer Indigenousness, and water.

Lisa Suhair Majaj: I am indebted to the work, the art, and the spirit of the Native writers, artists, and activists who honor the land and water from which we arise, and who uphold and work for the right of Indigenous peoples to life and the resources necessary for life. Gyassi Ross writes, "Palestinians, like Natives, are captives in their own lands. They, too, have no place to go, no geographical recourse." Yet those of us captive within or thrust from our lands have another recourse, one that draws deep from geography: the flowing river of language, of activism, of art. All of these modes of expression function, like water, to sustain life in dry places; they surge past borders, uncontained by the barricades that seek to imprison or exile people, that cut people off from the land and water that is their birthright. Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish sought to honor the intersection

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*Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner's "Tell Them" is featured in *Hawai'i Review* 79: Call & Response.

between Palestinians and other Indigenous peoples when he wrote: "You who come from beyond the sea, bent on war, don't cut down the tree of our names, don't gallop your flaming horses across the open plains. . . . My people were here once, then they died here. . . . Chestnut trees hide their souls here. My people will return in the air, in water, in light. . . . "

Aurora Levins Morales: One of the most inspiring projects of water activism I'm aware of is the Great Lakes Commons initiative. One out of every five drops of fresh water on earth is in the Great Lakes. Indigenous leaders in Canada began gathering people living at the edges of the Lakes to create a charter, to say the Great Lakes should be cared for as a single regional entity, for the benefit of all living things, not cut up into hundreds of jurisdictions, each setting their own policies, and poisoning the waters. The Charter can bring together inner city activists fighting for water rights, wildlife activists concerned about endangered species in and around the Lakes, farmers, fishers, parents, climate change activists, to understand the Lakes as living and life-giving beings.

Loa Niumeitolu: The weekend before the vaka came, Pacific Islander women joined the Ohlone and other First Nations and allies to save a sacred site, Sogorea Te, from being bulldozed to become a recreational park. Natives led a 109-day siege, reminding me of Wounded Knee and Alcatraz. My short participation at Sogorea Te shook my Indigenous consciousness. My first time working with Native North Americans, I witnessed how inclusive they were of all who wanted to join. There were meetings to discuss a participant's disruptive behavior and set consequences. Many present had experienced great loss, and we shared our grief and pain. Then we drank kava, sang songs, drummed, and told funny stories. Joined in blessings to celebrate the morning, afternoon, night, food, new visitors, and the land and water, we waded in the light caramel waters of Carquinez Strait, and sat on boulders and logs under the trees that were cut down the next year to build the recreational park. We didn't lose; the Native people who stood up for this site did not lose. The victory was manifested in Indigenous people joining together, under Ohlone and First Nations leadership and cultural practice, to acknowledge the work and vision of our ancestors. It was appropriate for us Pacific people to be with the Ohlone a few days before the docking of the vaka. Sogorea Te fulfilled our cultural traditions of ceremony in acknowledgement of whose land we walked upon, bringing these cultural practices to life, in order to heal each other.

6. How is water central to the art of survival? How can thinking about water shift our discussions on sovereignty, nationhood, and decolonization?

Loa Niumeitolu: Placing the Pacific, our Grandmother, at the center of my journey, as a

writer and organizer, restores the same compass my voyaging ancestors used to find our homelands. Through Grandmother, I have access to my people's, and other people's who helped us, ancient truths about navigating life. Therefore, I do not need to follow white supremacy, systems for profit and domination, and systems that imprison us. Our Ocean guides us, gives us a purpose by which to live our lives.

D. Keali'i MacKenzie: Water is central to the art of survival, not only as sustenance, but also as a means to reinterpret our relations. Water is essential for life, but due to climate change has become both a threat and something that is scarce. In this light, water becomes the means by which we forge new relationships across boundaries; it becomes something we share and protect. Control over our waters (fresh, salty, brackish) means establishing, or reinforcing, meaningful protocols of engagement. By shifting our focus, from water as commodity, to water as a vital resource which connects us, I believe we can heal the damage done by capitalism and colonization of our lands and waters.

Aurora Levins Morales: I think a lot about the fact that fresh water makes up only 3% of all the water on earth. It's essential and rare. To the greedy, this makes it ideal for privatization. To people who have reverence for the earth, who work to protect it and to liberate all life from oppression, those same qualities make water sacred, never to be exploited, disrespected, hoarded, or harmed.

Water, and our physical need for it, transcends all borders. It has no nationality. It's constantly in motion, in and out of our bodies, the oceans, the sky. The privatization and pollution of water is the privatization and pollution of life itself. Imagine what barriers would have to fall if we declared water to be a planetary commons, free of all ownership, consecrated to the common good; if we made access to clean drinking water an inalienable right, trumping all other interests. If every paper mill and golf course had to petition the commons for the right to use the precious substance, weighed against the thirst of children, and wild birds, and corn.

ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui: Water scarcity is the largest global threat of our times, and the waiwai of water is more pronounced than ever. The practice of mālama i ka wai, to care for the water, has always been important for island peoples; some of the most important laws in traditional to modern times involved the use and regulation of water. It is an essential issue and critical natural resource not discussed nearly enough in debates over Hawaiian independence. As it is, multinational corporations are already profiting off the marketing of privatized Hawaiian waters. The abundance of "wai" and "kai" names woven across the Hawaiian landscape demonstrate the value of wai, particularly in places that appear, or have become, dry—Waimea, Kaua'i and Waimānalo, O'ahu being just two that come to mind.

Wai is an important cultural metaphor, both in quantity and quality. If the

abundance of water makes us wealthy, how might we shift our focus, for example, of Hawai‘i as “a little rock” where almost everything is imported (and expensive) to an important natural resource that can sustain enough agriculture to feed our population and more? Kamehameha’s evocation of wai as an important political metaphor—“I mua e nā pōki‘i e inu i ka wai ‘awa‘awa” (“go forth my beloved younger brothers and drink the bitter waters”)—is an important message embodied by many ‘Ōiwi today who continue to fight for the restoration of nationhood, as the engagement in political waters is often bitter and unpleasant, but necessary for Kānaka to thrive.

Lisa Suhair Majaj: For Palestinians, water is a political issue central to discussions of sovereignty, nationhood, decolonization, and simple survival. Palestine’s water, like its land, is completely controlled by Israel. The Apartheid Wall in the West Bank cuts deep into Palestinian territory, appropriating not just land but also the main Palestinian aquifer. Of the water sourced from West Bank aquifers, Israel consumes 73% and illegal Jewish settlers consume another 10%, leaving only 17% of the water for the use of the West Bank Palestinians to whom it belongs. Israel confiscates Palestinian wells for its own use, restricts how much water Palestinians are allowed to draw from existing wells, and prevents Palestinians from drilling new wells. When water levels are low, Palestinian agriculture withers in the field and Palestinian families struggle to obtain enough water for basic household needs, while Israeli settlers enjoy lush swimming pools. Although only 3% of the Jordan River falls within Israeli borders, Israel consumes the vast majority of the river’s water, and sells confiscated water back to Palestinians at inflated prices. In Gaza, Israeli over-pumping has so depleted groundwater reserves that water supplies are infiltrated by seawater. The United Nations predicts that within 15 years the water of Gaza will be undrinkable. And when Israel makes war on Palestinians, it also makes war on water. The military assault on Gaza during the summer of 2014, the third such assault in seven years, not only levied breathtaking violence on Palestinians, leaving thousands killed and injured, tens of thousands of homes destroyed, and hundreds of thousands of people displaced, but it also destroyed critical water infrastructure. How can we think about peace, justice, human rights, or the survival of a people without first thinking about water?

Cathie Koa Dunsford: Wai, water, is at the heart of our communal survival. Without access to clear, clean water, none of us will survive. It feeds and nourishes our kai moana and is sacred to our stories and our strength. If we use water as a central image and symbol in our kōrero on all the above, we will progress with empowerment rather than getting bogged down in detail. That is why I chose water and Laukiamanuikahiki as the central image for my eco novels. In the first novel, Cowrie fears swimming into the belly of the wave. She learns that this is the way forward, that to become an activist and work at the cutting edge of change, you must follow your dreams and inspiration. She works

tirelessly with other queer/womanist/Indigenous activists to retain our sovereignty, our tino rangatiratanga. Mo'olelo, talkstory, kōrero, whether in novels, academic, or activist groups, is central to our mutual survival and our combined strength as Indigenous people. We are Tangata Whenua, people of the land. We are Tangata Wai, people of the sea. I am Waiāriki, from the hapū meaning Chiefs of the Sea. I live and breathe this daily in my life and work.

In Māori te reo we have an expression:
He huahua te kai? E, he wai te kai.
Are preserved birds the best food? Ah, no! Water is.

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán: Water is constantly is circulation. While it is definitely part of our traditional territories and sovereign sense of space, it is also one of the key zones through which our sovereignty and survival are attacked. Whether through pollution, radiation, militarization, bombing, colonial border policing, overfishing, damming, diversion, salinization, privatization, monetization, construction, fracking, devastating global-warming and climate-change weather patterns, sea levels rising, ice melting, restrictions on access, preventing traditional movements across, trampling on our gathering rights, eradicating endemic and endangered species, reducing biodiversity, further encroachment upon and stealing of our waters and lands, the denial of the rights of relocation/reterritorialization of environmental refugees, and the rampant racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism/queerphobia of so much environmental work, water is a site of struggle. So, whenever we reassert our rights to water, to our waters, and our survival and traditional lifeways in relation to those waters, we are resisting colonization, we are decolonizing, furthering Native nationalism, reclaiming our bodies, and resacralizing our sovereign waters.

To Ea

In response to David Kahalemaile, August 12, 1871

Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada

Ke ea o ka iʻa, he wai
Luu a ea, luu a ea
Breathe deep, O breath-stealing ocean
You offer much but exact a toll as well
Our friends and our land swallowed by your hungering mouth
Too many mistake your surging power for invulnerability
And your injuries wash up broken and rotting upon our shores
Yet your tattooed knees show that you too have been ignored
Sides heaving, coral ribcage expanding, contracting
Breathing, an exertion made difficult in this age
This era of disrespect, of not honoring reciprocity
And those closest to you are those who suffer
Until we rise again from your depths
Yearning, reaching, crying for ea

Ke ea o ke kanaka, he makani
Hali mai ka makani i ka hanu ea o ka honua
Wind called from our lungs
ʻAnae leaping from the Pali, two minutes at a time
Some lifted on the shoulders of the wind
Others clawing for breath as they fall
We are taught never to call them back
The wind returns, but they do not
Mouths stretched open until jaws crack
Used as fishhooks, drawing forth our connections from the sea
Circular and round, soft and untenable
Wind sweeps infinitely into night

ʻO ke ea o ka honua, he kanaka
O au nō naʻe kāu kauwā
In your presence, I count by fours
Carrying a breath in each space between my fingers
Each palm drawn towards the ground
Called close by your fertility
Our noses touch
Nothing but the ea held in our manawa

Cartilage, skin, and bone connecting to rock, earth
And young, smooth stone
The hā of genealogical age passes between us
And I know the weight, the measure, the depth
Of my connection to you

Ke ea o ka moku, he hoeuli
‘O ka hōkū ho‘okele wa‘a ke a‘ā nei i ka lani
Familiar stars and swells etch a map in our aching bones
Remembered pain is how we find our way to you
Frenzied waves whip the ocean to a bitter froth
But we’ve never forgotten how to navigate
How to draw our fingers across the face of a passing wave
The sun strains as our sail, while birds lift our hulls
Koa has always grown on this sea, in our masts, our hulls, our hearts
Leaving only the question of crew
We accept only those who will step bravely into darkness
For we have the generations to light our way

Ke ea o ko Hawai‘i Pae ‘Āina, ‘o ia nō ka noho Aupuni ‘ana
E ka lāhui ē, ‘o kāu hana nui, e ui ē
They tell us that they have seen the wonders of Mānā
But it is only heat rippling on sand
And we are angry that they are pushing a mirage
There is no fucking bucket—
But we have always been crabs
Pai‘ea, Kapāpa‘iaheahe, Ka‘a‘amakualenalena
Holding fast to the stones, fighting against crashing waves
Each struggling breath between sets reaffirms our ea
And what they refuse to recognize
Is that when we yell, when we shout
We do it not in anger
But to reassure our ancestors
That we are still here

from understory

during RIMPAC 2014

Craig Santos Perez

when kai
was newborn

nālani rinses
her in

the sink—
a fat

pilot whale
deafened by

sonar washes
ashore hanalei

bay—now
that kai

is bigger
brandy bathes

her in
the tub,

washes behind
her ears,

sings, “my
island maui,”

written by
her dad,

jeff, whose
ashes were

scattered in
ma‘alaea harbor,

decades ago—
thousands of

recently spawned
fish, lifeless,

litter the
tidelines of

nānākuli and
māʻili, koʻolina

and waikīkī—
when we

first take
kai to

the beach,
nālani carries

her into
the water,

hanom hanom
hanom, DU

munitions, PCBs,
SINKEX—brandy

secures kai
tightly to

her chest—
what will

the weapons,
ships, aircrafts

and soldiers
of 22

nations take
from [us]?

i wrap
them in

a large
towel when

they return:
“i introduced

kai to
grandpa jeff,”

nālani says—
is oceania

memorial or
target? monument

or territory?
economic zone

or mākua?
a cold

salt wind
surges across—

[our] small
‘ohana shivers

like generations
of coral

reef bleaching—

Blast Wind

Diane Lefer

for Ralph DePalma, MD

Kayla had expected Belfast to look like Berlin, a city that had been bombed so many times it had to be rebuilt, a monument here or there to the past but everything else modern and new. Instead they drove past the old ruler-straight streets of row houses, attached as though made of Legos, everything to the American eye small and low. You could patrol those streets on foot, she thought, a bit too narrow for tanks, and the enemy could be waiting inside, unseen, but there'd be no tricky passageways, no blind alleys. She's not in Afghanistan and when she thinks of those days, it's rarely the mission or the danger or the camaraderie. It's the trenches full of shit. The smell you figure you'll get used to, the way the olfactory nerves stop registering any constant. But it never seems to happen. All it takes is the wind to shift or the way the odor revives out of all the dried matter blown in particles everywhere anytime we hosed the place down.

But this was Belfast, the Campbells' home, one unit in a long white building with shared walls, and she couldn't decide whether to flush the toilet. She'd been offered the lower bunk bed in the room with Rachel, the daughter, but no, she'd said, she'd take the couch.

"All right," Lucinda Campbell said. "It's better'n what you had in Iraq."

"Afghanistan," said Kayla. Not that it made a difference. She never slept.

Sometimes she tried to remember what it was like, slipping without effort, sliding into sleep, the way shit simply passes through a child who hasn't been toilet trained. Then the child learns to hold it in. Without even trying. You don't let go. Kayla was always holding on as though sleep would befoul her.

If she flushed, it might wake the family, and whoever was living on the other side of the thin walls. Wait till morning?

She paced back to the living room, to the kitchen. The possibility of sleep trapped inside the closed confines of the skull. Not so much a possibility as a non-zero probability, a ghost of a chance. The way it worked was just a fraction of a millisecond, a vibration in your pulse you heard before you heard it, felt before you felt it, before it hit and you stop feeling, and then you open your eyes again. OK. You're completely entirely OK. She turned on the light and read the recycling instructions on the wall: shampoo bottles with caps here, without caps there, foil, takeaway, black bins, blue, a place to bring glass, until the words turned to squiggles. The cat trilled and rubbed against her legs so she went back to the couch so it could leap into her lap. With a cat, you feel the sound of purring

before you hear it. Then it surges, rippling. Her hand in lush black fur. Vibrations and waves. Thought slips free, comes loose. The known unknown. Not like Rumsfeld—damn him—with the things we know we don't know, but something else. For her, it's some knowledge she has deep inside, coming closer to conscious and then—gone. She thinks of how her baby's cry made everything go tight inside her. She stiffened and the cat jumped away to the cat door. Was it allowed out at night? She followed and pulled back the blinds again to watch and the cat was there but gone, melting away, one with the air.

"What are you doing?" Lucinda, her eyes narrowed in suspicion or to focus without her glasses.

"The cat got out. I hope that's—"

"I didn't ask about the cat." She tied tighter the sash of her robe. "You're the one prowling about."

"I couldn't sleep." She slept—or tried to—in an oversized tee-shirt and had wrapped a blanket around herself against the night chill. In the bathroom mirror, she'd seen her hair had gone wild.

"I don't either with Robert gone. Tea?" The way the woman was: *Lucinda. Call me Lu*, from the start she was friendly and confiding and then not. Something that draws closer but turns out to be far away. Jowly like a bulldog till the cheeks dimpled and the eyes sparkled and she's suddenly, unexpectedly, pretty. The sound of water from the tap drilled the kettle. Lu put it on. "Keep the lights off when you're not using them," she said and they sat at the kitchen table. Kayla stared at the wall, a commemorative plate of the Royal Wedding. A cross done in needlepoint. On the counter, figurines of kangaroos in china. On the table, a plastic kangaroo offered toothpicks from its pouch. "I thought they were going to send me a man," Lu said. "No, not like that." She got the kettle before it whistled. The cat's breath had whistled as it kneaded her chest and purred. "Milk?" said Lu. "Honey?"

The mug displayed the Union Jack but it had been in the back of the cabinet; Lu had searched for it, making a point.

"All I meant," said Lu, "is I'm worried about the lads. I thought they'd more likely listen to a man."

Seth, the other Vet for NonViolence, was staying with a Catholic family and, Kayla thought, the 10-year-old Campbell twins were more likely to listen to her than to Seth. He would bore them to death with ideology and theory.

It all goes on and on and on.

Lu was mumbling, head down. Why do people mutter when they expect you to listen? Staying quiet for the children. Rock-a-bye, rock the baby, shake the baby, all shook up. Then there was the accent. Hard to follow. She's got the eldest girl working in London, as best Kayla could make out. It was her bed that had been offered. The other girl, Rachel, the one Kayla had met, in her late teens. A raspberry streak in her hair, face pierced, just like an American. Back in high school now after a period of school leav-

ing. The gap between the girls and the lads, it was that Robert was in The Maze till '98 and the twins the result of his coming home. He was in prison once again, Maghaberry, license revoked, explosives charge, and the boys wanting to be just like him.

"We were all left with the PTSD," said Lu, "and the sour hearts." Something happens with every blast, Kayla thought. No matter where you're standing or how far. "He started drinking, couldn't hold a job, not that there are many not since the civil rights sellout."

"I thought you were part of reconciliation."

"I'm against the violence." Lu paused, bit her lower lip. She wants to say *domestic violence*, thought Kayla. One injury here cascading to another. "I'm not in favor of our rights being taken from us. And mind you, he wasn't a drinking man before."

"They accused me," said Kayla, "of drinking, drugging on the job."

"Iraq?"

"Afghanistan."

"It must have been terrible," Lu said.

"Statistically you're safer there than at home is what we used to say." At the time it was just something she said.

It wasn't drugging, not in the service and not in civilian life either. It was confusion. Irritable and disrespectful. Losing track of time. Headaches and always the fatigue of not sleeping. And not a scratch on her. Nothing to show for it there, between the helmet and the skull. Concentrating just to move, foot up, foot down. The light that hurt her eyes. Then and later after the general discharge—with honorable conditions. Her CO knew it was never on purpose that she fucked up. A good man. Can we win this war? In an unguarded moment, he called it a *non-zero probability*. And she wasn't bitter, no damage to her, not even a sour heart.

"Was Robert in a blast?" she asked.

"Witness to a few. And one that went off a bit premature."

"But was he close enough to...did it throw him from his feet? Did the air come at him like a wall?" Like in those cartoons where a rabbit goes splat, flattened like a pancake and then picks himself up and carries on. "You know in physics—"

"No, I don't know."

"A particle is a wave? But. No. That's not what I mean. Like that supersonic shock wave when a plane breaks the sound barrier."

"I wouldn't know."

"There are the waves and then pow! Invisible wall and then—"

"You have one?" said Lu. "Husband?"

"He was killed."

"I'm sorry. Iraq?"

"He was in Iraq," Kayla said, which was the truth, though it wasn't how or why he died.

"Children?"

"Yes," she said.

"How old?"

"A year. Sophie."

"What a dear name. And where will she be with you here?"

"With my sister-in-law. Jimmy's sister."

"I'm sorry about him. About Jimmy."

"He died saving lives," Kayla said. "Oh," she said suddenly, "you mean *sore* heart."

~ ~ ~

If there really was preferential hiring for veterans, you had to prove you were one which is how she met Jimmy—during one more frustrating visit to the VA, trying to get her DD 214 or at least a letter she could use as a Statement of Service. He needed a new copy since the contractor he'd worked for in Iraq wouldn't return his papers. His Navy tour hadn't been so bad but once he got out, there were no jobs. That's how he ended up in Iraq doing private security and doing the things he did and things he saw and things he wouldn't talk about.

Everyone was talking about opportunities in logistics. That's where the jobs were in civilian life. Kayla sat in the office at the computer tracking shipments, sending bills. In a cubicle, the divider reaches just high enough that you can't see or make eye contact with the person beside you, like a half-height bathroom stall shielding the toilet area, only pretending to give you privacy. That's what she did until she screwed up again and they let her go. One of them had to hold onto a job. And then, Sophie on the way. So Jimmy was in the warehouse, bending and lifting, minimum wage, till they moved him off the floor and he got certified for the forklift. It was OK. You did your job, got along with the crew, went home. And there was Leo Wyzanski, always complaining. The pallets were stacked too high. The fork was asked to carry weights heavier than the manufacturer's specs said. (Leo complained but it was Jimmy who sat up high on those fat tires and lifted those weights.) The oil slick on the floor. (Which was already dry and not slippery.) No spotlights on the trucks. (Just do your job.) Aisles too narrow. (Not if you're careful.)

We like to hire vets. You have discipline and good work habits, and, she thought, a high tolerance for bullshit. *You follow orders*. That means the people in charge send you off to do your job and regardless, she thought, you do it.

~ ~ ~

Their first day in Belfast, Kayla and Seth went on the Black Taxi tour, Seth insisting she take photos of him in his keffiyeh in front of the mural honoring the Palestinian

struggle. Some people said the Israelis used sound waves to torture and she wondered if there was anything to it. Seth wanted a photo at the mural demanding the release of Basque prisoners and another with him posing by the image of the Cuban Five—"if you can stand it"—typical Seth, assuming that, as Cuban-American, she had to be rightwing. Born not in Cuba, but in Lima—LIE-mah, Ohio; not LEE-mah, Peru.

"How can you join Vets for NonViolence and still revere Che?" she'd asked once.

"Because we need a world where the best among us don't have to take that path."

What sort of world would that be?

More murals around the corner, where nonviolent artists had been at work, paintings about climate change, and peace, and African American heroes—King, Rosa Parks, Obama, and Seth pointing out he didn't see Malcolm among them. You can announce a peace accord. That doesn't mean it's over. Mission unaccomplished. On the other side, paintings of the Queen, of UVF men with their automatic weapons. Loyalists. And that's what you learned to say, Loyalist and Nationalist instead of Protestant and Catholic, and you could drive up the hill, upper Falls and Whiterock for a sniper's position, or in one of the high rises in the center of town, but now Kayla was stuck on the Shankill Road, the traffic brought to a halt behind the bagpiper, the hearse, the coffin with its flowers, the pallbearers and the backs of their shiny white necks and bald heads, the girls and women in black, walking alongside crying.

In the morning, Lu had made oatmeal. Keep you warm inside if it rains.

"If it rains, do we have to go?" Rachel wasn't keen on it at all.

Now the girl sat in the way back of the van with another who was obviously mixed race—more obvious than me, Kayla thought, the Afro part of Afro-Cuban so long ago, it was not so much hidden as overlooked. The girl's name was Ivy and she wore a fedora over her dreadlocks. All over the world, people on the move whether they wanted to go or not.

"You think a little rain will keep The Other Community from going?" Lu had asked.

"Women shouldn't be soldiers. It's dangerous," said one of the twins.

She'd never seen combat. She did her tour when Afghanistan was still relatively pacified. Her CO supported her, trusted her as a person though no longer as a soldier. She got her discharge when people with more severe impairments got sent right back or were stigmatized with bogus pre-existing disorders.

"It's more dangerous to be a barmaid. A flight attendant," said the other.

At least she thought that's what they said. Understanding them was as hard as telling them apart.

"The most dangerous thing a woman can be is a wife," Lu said.

Kayla laughed, too loud, and it hurt so she laughed again, louder, to clear it. The boys looked up from their oatmeal and glared at her. And she wasn't a wife, not anymore. The most dangerous thing to be was a daughter. Her daughter. She shouldn't have let the

laugh come out. Hadn't they brought her over for peace and positive thinking blah blah?

"I wanted to serve," she said. "We thought we were doing something honorable and heroic, fighting for justice and freedom."

"Like our Dad," said one of the twins.

"You want to be a warrior?" she said. "First thing you learn is that war is the last resort. It's not recreation. You've got leaders—civilian leaders. For them it's a game."

"The other side has made it our last resort," said the boy.

"You can win with violence, temporarily," Kayla said, "but you create a more violent world."

There, she'd made her honorable speech, and no, they hadn't *brought her*. The promised funds dematerialized so she and Seth paid their own way. Because you have to do something. Too much death over there and men and women killing themselves at home. Good people embracing the last resort. Do something, do something, you have to do something, even though she wasn't much good at doing anything anymore.

"Lads, lads," Lu said.

Now the boy behind her in the van was sobbing. She turned and stretched to see one of the twins shove him. She hadn't caught the boy's name but Lu had told her about his Dad committing suicide *like many of them*. Another sour heart. The funeral procession could be a trigger. There was a twin on either side, and Lucas? Lewis? had his head bent close, an arm around the boy who was trying to hold in his sobs.

It had been a suicide bomber in Kabul. The capital was mostly peaceful those days. She'd been on one of those hearts and minds interludes, handing out candy to children. Over her objections. Let's buy something healthy, fruits and nuts, the kids were malnourished, why feed them nothing but sugar? But of course it had to go up the chain of command which meant nothing changed. So she was smiling at the children and handing out chocolate when the Indian Embassy got hit. She came to on the ground. The children had scattered except for one boy hit by a big piece of shrapnel in his leg. Her uniform was peppered with small stuff but not a scratch on her. She got up, dusted off, and wavered, disoriented on her feet. She doesn't remember calling out for help for the boy, but they told her later she did, and she doesn't remember that someone took her by the arm and led her away.

From the backseat, Ivy called out, "This your first time here?"

Yes, but she told of Jimmy's aunt who years ago went to visit relatives in a small country town. Arriving after airplane, train, and taxi, she asked for the bathroom. The man of the house opened the back door and said, *Anywhere 'tween here and Belfast*.

"In my home, a person knows to flush," said Lu.

Why the hell had she told that story? "Of course that was a long time ago."

The bagpipe like a lung, in out in out, reverberating, echoing through the hollow viscera, disturbing the atmosphere as the procession moved on.

You mean to be a good guest in someone's country, but sometimes you give of-

fense without meaning to. You get confused. What was linear becomes a network where connections misfire. Your timeframe is scrambled. Sometimes you just snap.

When did you become such a bitch? Jimmy asked her. Both of them irritable, on edge. Home from work, he'd start right away with a drink. *How about you try to hold a job so I can stay home for a change?*

"Did you kill anyone?" one of the twins had asked her at breakfast.

"No. It wasn't anything like that for me," she said. Though people died. The year she was deployed, it sometimes seemed it was more dangerous to be an Afghan civilian walking to a wedding than to be a soldier. Her own wedding had been quiet, private. She was pregnant with Sophie when he was killed. So they argued. So what? These days everyone was angry. It never occurred to her their marriage was turned sour.

"I was an M.P.," she said.

"Like Abu Ghraib!" said Lu.

Where, Kayla thought, no one who made the policy was ever held to account. She herself had nothing to complain about: The worst policy she carried out was to give children chocolate and chewing gum instead of fruit. She kept smiling that day, as relentlessly upbeat as the customer service reps she's grown accustomed to since returning home, *It's my pleasure to assist you*—the voices you reach after half an hour on hold. Yeah, sure, it's a delight to hear complaints that will never be addressed. But the calls are monitored. They keep smiling with guns held to their heads.

"I checked ID at the gates," she said. "When there were women to search, a man couldn't do it." Then there were the long infantry patrols, 80 pounds of gear that meant power even as it dwarfed her. Sometimes they would chopper her in to some village, women held under guard in some mud compound till she could search them. First she had to convince them she was a woman. She didn't look like one in desert camouflage, a uniform never meant to fit a woman's body. She'd take off the combat helmet so they could see her smooth, if sun and wind-burned face. She pictured herself standing there like a man humbly paying his respects, hat in hand.

The funeral went on and on and on.

"Do you think," Lu whispered, "it's like the footballers—American football, I mean, the ones with brain damage, who are killing themselves."

Like a concussion, thought Kayla, but different.

At night, she'd wanted to get up and out and walk around. Her back hurt. A good flat board would have been better than the couch. *Has it ever occurred to you that your brain is scrambled because you don't sleep?* The scrambling came first. She was pretty sure it came first. The minutes ticked on. She hadn't known the cat was back till it came flying at her, slamming onto her chest where it began to tread, hard, as though she needed CPR.

What was that word? Cativation? Cavitation. Like cavity. Bubbles in the brain. Empty spaces where there used to be . . . what? gray matter? white? fibers? neurons?

There were no objective findings, they told her. No traumatic brain injury. At least none you can prove. And no reason for her to suffer from PTSD. She stood at the window looking out for the cat. You can't see something doesn't mean it's not there. And there was always some old guy at the rallies still singing *Blowin' in the Wind*. The answer is. The blast wind.

Cars, vans, trucks and buses waited for the procession to pass. No one honked.

"Damn!" The dark girl in the back. "The Fenian bastards will get there first."

Then they were moving and there were roundabouts and WestLink and the motorway and the drizzle began and the wipers swished and the world contracted to the green fields framed, if she turned her head to the left, by the side window. It was like losing your peripheral vision to the helmet when you need to have 360 degree awareness and yet the world contracts—at least her world had done so and still did. The road narrowed and there were slices of green fields, cows, sheep.

Lu was talking on her mobile to Timothy in the other van. The two youth leaders driving and arguing, what an example for the kids, the two sides can agree on nothing at all, not even where to stop for tea.

~ ~ ~

Where they stopped was Portstewart Strand. The Fenian bastards did indeed get there first with thermoses of tea and sandwiches and blankets spread out on the sand. The clouds low and dark, the ocean white and gray and further out reflecting color under the sky threaded through with blue.

Kayla introduced herself and Timothy stood to greet her. A funny thing, he looked so small and squat till he rose up and towered over her. There was a boy in a blue windbreaker, a girl with a pierced nose, a mixed race child—a boy—in this group too, and a large freckled girl whose sweatshirt bore the rhyme: *Wolves don't lose sleep, over the opinions of sheep*.

The shy girl with the nose ring handed her a bag of chips—crisps. A cartoon of an extraterrestrial on the bag, pickle and onion flavor and Kayla pictured alien abduction, herself immobilized in Kevlar, electrodes and leads attached to her brain, and still no objective findings. For all her complaints, nothing.

"These are good," the girl said.

"Those are *ours*," said the freckled girl.

The Protestant group spread their blankets a short distance away.

"Come closer, friends," Timothy said. "I chose this spot for a reason."

The reason Jimmy joined the Navy must have been he loved the sea. In Iraq, he must have longed for it. *Home is the sailor, home from the sea*—a line of poetry at the funeral.

"This is where the rich live," Timothy said. "Loyalists and Nationalists together

with no trouble at all between them."

The freckled girl rolled her eyes. "And what do you call it when they gun my uncle down?"

"Must have done something to deserve it," called out one of the twins.

"In cold blood they did."

"This is what I'm trying to tell you," Timothy said. "It's capitalism. There's no violence among the elite. But they want to see you turned against each other."

Seth had been assigned to the right group, she thought.

"Whether it's war or peace," he said, "what it comes down to is the top dog exploiting everyone else."

The kids weren't paying attention. Instead they argued about kneecapping. How you didn't really shatter the knee or shoot directly into the bone, though some claimed they knew cases where this is indeed what had been done. Though that would be savagery.

That Afghan boy's leg blown off at the knee. And she'd never even been in the worst of it. The savage justice of the Taliban. She'd seen the bloody aftermath. The boys were talking about punishment beatings. If someone sold drugs was it justified? The ideas, she thought, some people had of justice.

"Their wealth increases when they close factories in Belfast and ship the jobs to Asia," Timothy said. "Then they set you at each other's throats."

The freckled girl picked the ham from her sandwich and rolled it up inside a paper napkin.

"Whether you're Loyalist or Nationalist, every time you throw a brick, who benefits? Who goes home safe to a happy home while you throw the petrol bombs at one another?"

The groups sat on their separate blankets. Ivy kept her eyes on the pages of her book and took notes in the margins.

"Now these Yanks have come to talk to you."

"Just taking a wee break from breaking down doors in Iraq?" The freckled girl, hostile again. "Killing people's loved ones."

"We're not in Iraq anymore," Kayla said. "And—"

"You're right, young lady," said Seth. "Absolutely right. Beware of leaders. The ones who make the decisions the rest of you have to live with. Beware," he said, "of what they make you do." He stalked back and forth between the blankets. "Europe's been at war for centuries. Century after century of tribal violence and conquest and ethnic cleansing."

"Which still continues here," said Timothy.

As if an uneasy peace is the best we can hope for, she thought. And Seth's problem was being stationed on Diego Garcia, a place so isolated and remote he'd had too much time on his hands. Nothing to do but read. So he read how the Americans and Brits

cleared the island of its inhabitants, a whole race of people victimized by colonial power. So now he couldn't shut up.

"Did the Africans and Asians intervene?" he said. "Did the Cherokee organize donor conferences?"

"Maybe they didn't know what was happening," Lu said.

"We know," said Kayla, "and so we intervene."

"Interfere," said Seth. "What gives us the right?"

So what are we doing here? she thought. "We're all connected," she said. But she remembered taking off her helmet, the Afghan women surprised and excited at the sight of her. A woman clapped her hands. A woman laughed. Then Kayla would do what she was trained to do and the smiles would stop.

"We care," said Lu.

"Did the Sioux send humanitarian relief?" Seth asked. "If the Ashanti sent peacekeepers to stand between the Germans and the French, sorry, I never heard of it." He wiped his mouth with the edge of his keffiyah. "Religious wars. Ethnic cleansing. Genocide," he said. "And did the Chinese call us savages? Well, maybe they did. But we—and I include Americans because we were Europeans for a long long time—we Europeans were left to settle our conflicts for ourselves."

"We'll settle *ours*," said Rachel.

"There's *sand* in the sandwiches," said the biracial boy. "Get it?"

The pounding in her head.

Have you tried Ambien? Sominex? Lunesta? melatonin? valerian?

Yes yes yes yes yes. No one could say she hadn't tried. To disappear into sleep like the cat into the black air.

You're depressed.

Of course I'm depressed. Wouldn't you be?

"What's so interesting?" Seth snatched the book from Ivy's hands. "Think and Get Rich. No," he said. "Think and wake up."

"Finish up," said Lu, "and onward to the Causeway."

"Just remember," said Seth, "there's no peace as long as there's capitalism. Ask Kayla."

"Kayla needs a restroom," she said, and walked away over the sand.

~ ~ ~

Explosions create their own wind. Pepper you with particles, like the sand flying in her face. The wind had come up as she walked, not in search of a bathroom, just needing to get away.

Seth would be telling them about Jimmy. Not about the man she knew, or tried to know in the few years she'd been given to love him. An old TV show flashed in her mind,

something they'd seen on cable the week before he died, a variety show, the man playing music on water glasses filled to different levels. Sound waves in glass and water and she wanted to numb herself with mindless TV, no more discussion, no more politics, Lu saying, *Why are we there in Afghanistan anyway, and sending Prince Harry,* the freckled girl calling out, *That's the Brits for you, their soldiers always where they aren't wanted*. Then Seth and Timothy disputing whether this was adversarial sniping or the two communities finding common ground.

She was so sick of all the talk. Not to mention the VNV vigils. *No War in Iran! No Intervention in Syria!* The marches at least gave you license to holler. *No No No No No*.

Seth would tell how Leo Wyzanski was fired the day he refused to risk driving into an uninspected trailer. The supervisor called Jimmy who did as he was told and a wheel went right through the rotten floorboards. Jimmy was jolted, shaken. But OK.

And now Seth would be fulminating about predatory capitalism, how Leo wouldn't let go.

"Why all the kangaroos?" she'd asked Lu.

"Australia. If I ever emigrate, that's where."

"Not America?"

"Too much violence," said Lu, "and no future for the lads. America's too hard on the workingman."

Seth would tell them there was no union to fight for Leo's job. OSHA should have taken action on the safety violations but regulations were no longer enforced. The warehouse owner wasn't the employer. The employer wasn't the employer. There were six or seven different contractors on the site, each one with subcontractors. No one knew who was responsible.

So it was left to Jimmy to do the responsible thing when Leo came back. When shots echoed, sound waves bouncing everywhere. And there were men who lay bleeding and men who lay dead and Jimmy did what he was trained to do: eliminate the threat. He drove the truck right at him. Leo kept firing. Jimmy tilted the fork till the pallet slid and dropped. The shooting stopped. Jimmy put it in reverse and the back wheels jumped the floor in the narrow aisle. Up a ramp, out of balance. Jimmy fell out of the cage when the truck tipped over and that's how they found them: The pallet on top of Leo. The forklift on top of Jimmy.

"Just wait," Seth told her. "He violated procedure. They'll say his death was his own fault."

They hadn't said anything yet. She still wasn't sure who had employed him.

~ ~ ~

They trooped along the Red Trail overlooking Giant's Causeway and the North

Atlantic. Timothy repeated the legend, Finn MacCool placing stones in the sea so he could cross to Scotland and keep his giant feet dry. "And this is part of the National Trust," said Lu. "It belongs to all of us. To you and you and you. Regardless which community you're from."

Up and down the hills, the pyramids of stone. Down there, speckled composite rock. Cows, tiny at this distance, grazing on a flat high green bluff far above the water. The winding paths and the wooden stairs. The red rocks and the wind. Then down to the shore.

What makes you expand and feel big in all this immensity that by rights should make you small? How reduced she'd felt, just a body under all that gear and yet enlarged with the M16 in her hands.

Now, the broken stones, the flat pilings, the giant stone fingers, towering pillars topped with petrified foam. She sees a girl in a red sweater. A man, head down, in a black business suit. The little blonde girl whose pink skirt hikes up to show her black leggings and who leaves her brother stranded on a rock up above her. The wind tearing off the water. And there, a woman lying in the cupped hand carved and smoothed from a black rock three times her size. Flat stones press down almost flush with the earth and the green grass. Black stones lie scattered, turning white like dog feces sprinkled with powdered lime. Flat round stones look like shelled creatures swimming their way ashore.

The group was far ahead. Let them go. She'll catch up. And someday, she thinks, science and medicine will catch up with her. For all she knows—and there's a known unknown for you—there may be research underway right now. In the meantime, she has to live with the brain she's got. In the distance she sees the giant's steppingstones, like hundreds of logs stood upright, or cobblestones not rounded but sliced off flat. Tiny people swarm over them and she tries to make out Lu's puffy lilac jacket, the boy's bright blue windbreaker, Ivy's fedora.

When she steps up on a rock for a better view, she freezes. It's not vertigo, but terror. No more than a foot or two above the ground, surrounded by other flat stones, the footing firm, secure, and she is paralyzed by fear.

She'll have to talk herself into moving. Lift your foot. Put it down. Be a mother to your daughter. Find the people you came with. It will take a better brain than hers, she thinks, to figure out why or what's gone wrong.

There's a rock in the water made of many little rocks or one divided and divided again with its crevices and folds. The shape of the human brain. The water breaks on it, around it, leaving it unmoved. You can't shake it. Because the rock is solid. Not the brain which is full, isn't it? of water. Where something happens. Where the shock waves interact with water. Sloshing around inside the skull, the skull inside the helmet, inside the baby's fragile head, her baby. *Shake the baby shake the baby* that hum inside her own head, the vibration that warned her she'd hurt Sophie. Now she thinks, no, I wouldn't. It was never Sophie. It's my brain I was thinking of, *shaken shaken shaken*. She was a good

mother, with her breast pump, expressing milk for her baby, at least she did that much before Jimmy's sister came. Melody took Sophie home. Melody kept the baby safe. Because hurting Sophie, if not impossible, was still, she warns herself, a non-zero probability. Unlikely, but anything can happen. Look what happened to Jimmy. His brother read that line and someone behind her spoke—*And the hunter home from the hill*—as automatic as a response at mass, and maybe it was the thought of church that made her mishear it as *home from the hell* and ask herself, Which hell? While water breaks against the rock.

How many years, centuries, would it take for the water to win its war against stone? Me? I'll stand here a while, she thinks, and then I'll leave. And there's the rock, still: brown, its underside wet and black, and topped with something living, growing, a cap of yellowgreen and speckles of white like disease. The gray black water lapping, then hitting, touching, smashing. What explosion would shake that brain and shatter it?—gray matter, white matter, fiber and folds, pieces scattered on the sea floor or maybe just fissures deep inside, where they can't be seen while the blast wind touches everything. It gets you wherever you happen to be. You can tell yourself it has nothing to do with you. You're wrong if you think that someone like you will never be touched at all.

Flumes for Muliwai

Lyz Soto

In childhood we hoard the beach to our mouths—
our throat flumes open to a long swallow of brine.

We believed in breathing water in gulps
as we threw our bone bodies to the sea.

They will catch us, we said. These waves
will catch us, carry us where land
will forget to call us back. These waves
will catch us between salt jaws
and bury us in sand, we say. And learn
to breathe again.

Once I cut my foot. A severed tendon pulled
beneath the torn surface of pulpy edges. After bandages
unwound into crumpled stains of rust,
Mom told me, soak your foot in the ocean.
Everything heals better with the sea.

Once my son scrapes his knee to a raw mess—
an unexpected visit from a gravel road.
I tell him, stay away
from the beach.
Bacteria will chew you to ruins.

Once Kailua was Kawainui was Ka‘elepulu was Kailua,
a gauze net bridging mountain to sea.
Today from a Ko‘olau pali Kawainui
could look like a cut off tongue
estranged from its maw—flailing mute—the mountain
cut off from the sea. Ka‘elepulu, a forgotten sister,
a playground slurry of mud and waste.

We live on a slow foot hill beneath
the belly swell of a slain giant.
Once a stone fist from Makapu‘u

to Kapa‘a, he might have lain in muliwai
with an unhinged jaw and eaten her to bedrock.
His feasting a poverty.
Olomana, beaten by his failure
to imagine the possibility of defeat.

We did not see when Ko‘olau
tried to climb out of the sea, but
once we could have been a fire.
Sunk in a caldera spitting
the earth’s center to gathering clouds, we
could have been a swallowed spice
burning a hole to her belly.

We live on these memories.
Shake them to a dry rustle. Rattle these pōhaku.
Once Ko‘olau remembers, salt
and water and warriors flying
from nā pali, mountains leave us
in torrents, fighting back to the sea.

—

*See page 177 of this issue for Joy Enomoto’s “‘Ūpā pa‘akai,” which was produced in response to this line from Lyz Soto’s poem: “These waves / will catch us between salt jaws.”

Dredging

Lyz Soto

Waiting becomes a puddle. I sort through inevitable
sand, coarse and wearing, rubbing at sentiment.
I would pack my torso to brick.
Mix mortar with my hair until my bones are mud
among the silt of ligaments and cartilage.
When I break open this center
I will find a glass kettle boiled
dry in an embryo of fire smoking
my lungs to leather.
In this reduction, I name silence, I name
you, Silence. I prepare to grieve
my swamped body. I hear flood
waters engorged with carcass rushing
to my wide open mouth
and all I will do
is wait.

Ka Muliwai
ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui

Nobody knows
the name of the river
at the end of the road
which turns ma kai from the highway
two paved lanes, winding down
to the county park, before
narrowing; now, a bumpy strip of asphalt,
unkempt, parallel to the beach
trickling to a sandy track that stops
at the muliwai

Not tūtū mā who grew up here
not Google Earth
too small for the tourist guides
that direct visitors
around the island

But it is our childhood playground,
this muliwai:
we jump off large lava boulders
shouldering the muddy bank
splash!
curling our feet in fear
of touching soft dark tree leaves settled deep
on soft sand below green-tinted waters
of the pinch of Samoan crabs scheming
to pinch tiny toes
a dozen strokes across its breadth
to the coral-strewn shore fronting aunty Lizzy’s house
at the muliwai

we carve sand castles from her banks
and hastily dig moats
to imprison invisible pua
swiftly swept in scoop nets
along warm shallow shoreline sandbar

plop ōpū down on coarse sand
pluck pink patterned Kahelelani,
paper and puka shells,
our favorite adornments

In summer we husk niu
and bait prawn traps
the hard sweet coconut flesh is irresistible
we hunt ʻoʻopu under rocks—so ugly but ʻono
pluck ʻawapuhi oozing sweet sap
as we clamber over moss-slicked boulders
to the icy pond upstream
we swim, we splash, we soap ourselves down
with the sweet slime of shampoo ginger
throw spent stems at each other, screaming
duck overripe guavas
impromptu dodge ball
the air is thick with sweet smells
mosquitoes sing songs insistent
in our ears
our laughter echoes
off valley walls
devour ripe mountain apples
sweet juice bursting in our throats
sticky mango sap covers our fingers
we tip toe around uncle's loʻi
so as not to disturb it
wet bare feet padding on fragrant earth
makaʻala thorned hala, dried leaves scattered
from trees aunties and tūtūs have weaved from
for generations
inspect a low-hanging ʻulu—not ready yet
reemerge from the thicketed forest
at the muliwai

In the afternoon the tide lifts itself
onto the shore
the sun sinks slowly
the shadows stretch along the shore
seaweed sways in the current

to and fro
kaholo to the left, kaholo to the right
to the beat of Kanaloa's oceanic rhythm
limu ʻeleʻele—tūtū's favorite to gather
for ōpū stew
climb the hill to the ranch
ōpū is the cheapest cut
simmered all day on an open fire
near the muliwai

When the resort was built
on the sweeping plains above
condominiums and golf courses
replaced the cattle
nitrogen-rich fertilizers
and chemical pesticides
seeped into the soil
swept into the stream, to the sea
through the muliwai
the Hehipuahala rain couldn't help it
sweeping the poisons into the sea
blanketing the sandbar
algae blooming, a soggy carpet
suffocation
at the muliwai

Tūtū said the heʻe were once so abundant
they would have to throw them back
from the waʻa—honu too
in my fifty years
I never saw a honu there
although one weekend in high school
we swam with a sting ray
off the muliwai

when we are young
we walk with uncle among the large pōhaku
scattered along the sandy strand
on the north side of the muliwai
he stops at one near the point

and tells us this is where the manō would hānau
in the shallow, protected waters
of the muliwai

they said Hurricane ʻIwa
changed the stream flow
the wide river became a narrow stream
I think it was the expansion
of the resort above
Google Earth shows
an aerial view
of the narrow stream winding
crookedly through the uplands
patiently meandering to the sea
surrounded by three golf courses
visible by flat, manicured green
dots of sand traps
a desolate contrast
to the beach, to the ʻāina
to the muliwai
rippling
into the sea
below

Blood at the Stones

Waimea Williams

The area was known from ancient Hawaiian chants that honored Hauwahine, a water goddess who guarded the mile-wide lake of Kawainui. Two centuries ago it was filled with millions of fish and ringed by taro ponds that fed the people of the island's ruling chief. Hauwahine and her companions sunned themselves on a cluster of huge stones thirty feet above the lake, but if they sighted a human, particularly a man, the women turned into giant lizards and slithered down into the water. Marsh grass along their shore changed from green to yellow, a warning of supernatural presence no one dared to invade.

Thursday night's tv news reported a body found at what is now called Nā Pōhaku o Hauwahine, The Stones of Hauwahine. Gun shot to the head. No ID, male, mid-twenties. A film clip showed EMTs loading a gurney into an ambulance. Messages began flying among volunteers restoring native plants to the area: Nani to Ed, to the group's leadership, to a helicopter pilot in hope of more news.

Over the last hundred years the broad lake below the Stones had disappeared under a mat of alien vegetation, and the shoreline became heaped with wrecked cars, abandoned appliances, mildewing couches. Yet the "great waters" of Kawainui looked back on misty purple-green cliffs four thousand feet high at the center of the island, and the view from a lookout point swept forward to the brilliant blue Pacific. When archaeologists found divining stones, the area was designated a sacred site in need of restoration.

For a decade volunteers hauled off rubbish, tore out cattle grass, and put in thousands of native trees and flowering bushes to recreate a Hawaiian lowland forest. Rare ʻalae ʻula marsh birds returned. Hauwahine's home became popular with school classes, hikers, a solitary musician working on a new song. After sundown the unlighted area was as dark as a lava tube. Late night parties on the Stones left heaps of broken bottles and tiny zip-lock packets like those found outside waterfront clubs in Waikīkī. Then the body.

On Friday morning at Nā Pōhaku there is not the usual ethno-botany tour, no university students sampling water quality, no busload of Japanese visitors seeking a glimpse of ancient culture. Instead: six police cars and a homicide squad. Nani, Ed and the volunteer group's leader wait in the July sun while the investigation goes on around a curve in the main trail. A State Parks law enforcement officer quizzes them about recent foot traffic. Nothing unusual, they reply, no vandalism. Their voices are quietly tense and tinged with excitement. Among themselves they worry that Nā Pōhaku will be shut

down, endangered plants left to wither. As a whole, the hilly area is impossible to control. Beyond the restored portion a dense jungle of uncut cattle grass stretches for miles in all directions. Feral pigs root in ten-foot thickets. Countless wild chickens multiply. Helicopter patrols regularly spot marijuana patches.

The police come out, chatting, carrying evidence baggies, cameras, plastic markers with large numbers. One spots the volunteers and says, "There's a lot of blood. We don't do clean up. Use bleach." The State Parks officer is already in his car. The volunteers' leader gets a phone call about a problem across the marsh, and he drives away. The police open trunks, slam doors, call dispatchers, already busy with another incident. Soon only Nani and Ed are left at the side of the road.

"So we're not shut down," she says. She hesitates, feeling disturbed, not given a choice about what has to be done. Ed tells her that the two of them should just leave. She shakes her head. Blood in ordinary life doesn't bother her but blood spilled at a sacred site is the worst kind of violation. Born and raised in Hawai'i, she's never doubted that Hauwahine is still here. Ed is a surfer from California, once obsessed with riding dawn patrol on the North Shore, now an environmental activist. He's half her age. Mid-twenties, same as the murdered man, she realizes. Ed glances at his car.

"We have to at least take a look," Nani says. "What if that fellow's family comes here? And rubberneckers."

They walk around the bend in the trail to an outdoor seating area bounded by long strips of bright yellow crime scene tape. The benches slope downhill to an old monkey pod tree with a crown forty feet in diameter. Even in the shade it casts, at the end of one bench a red-brown stain stands out. Nani stares at it from thirty feet away and her stomach lurches. Ed steps forward with a dutiful groan as if to say Let's get this crap over with. She touches the yellow tape. "This is the kapu line," she tells him, still struggling to figure things out. From a nearby tī plant she pulls off a sleek green leaf, wads it up. "Put this in your pocket for now. Formal can come later." She takes another leaf for herself.

Ed eyes her, a smile starting to form on his lips, and she cringes at the thought of him sniggering about taboo, wanting to know, What's the big freakin deal, as if he's at a tiki bar crowded with surfers just off the plane. She scowls and his smile fades. Forty years ago she grew up in an old way on an outer island where even toddlers had a sense of invisible forces no one questioned.

Nani holds up her leaf and then pockets it like a demonstration of what to do. "If this isn't a mapped temple, it's still sacred ground." Just shut up, she tells herself, leave well enough alone, but a timeless sense of the rightness and wrongness of all things comes flooding back to crouch on her shoulders. She begins to chant, "He pule ia e hōloi 'ana i ka po 'ino o ka 'āina . . . " Her voice trembles, then firms, low and penetrating with the ancient request to cleanse the earth.

Ed watches her, curious now, looking faintly pleased to be included in something she's not about to explain: Dealing with blood, especially coming into contact with it,

means also being defiled. She leads off under the yellow tape, unsure how they're going to do this. Buying bleach at the nearest store would take an hour to get there and back, time enough for relatives or gawkers to arrive; crying, pointing, taking cell phone pictures.

At a water pipe farther along the trail Nani fills a can and motions for Ed to do the same. She goes back to the seating area where he joins her with a second can of water. The end of one bench has an uneven red-brown splat a foot wide and two feet long, dried to the hardness of enamel. Not spilled food or paint, she knows. She is afraid of it. The dirt beneath the bench is saturated, sticky looking.

"Let's try to dilute this," she whispers. "Maybe we can slosh it off."

Carefully they douse the stain and step away to wait. Soon the hardened blotch leaks tiny pink streams. Nani exhales with a faint sense of hope. They keep pouring on small amounts of water and avoid splashing the stain. Slowly it begins to ease. Ed finds a rag and mops at the bench while she fetches more water, adds a little, waits, adds more. Silently she thanks him for doing the dirty work, for keeping her own hands clean. The seating area is pleasantly shaded from the strong summer sun and neither speaks during the half hour it takes for the bench to again look like the rest. A gentle breeze rustles through milo trees farther on, playing with the leaves of ʻānapanapa bushes, ʻilima shrubs, clumps of pili grass. All their years of restoration work. That can go on, she thinks, when the crime scene tape gets taken down. The next school group coming through won't know the difference.

"Whew, done," Ed says, and turns to walk up the slope of seats. Nani notices the ground beneath the bench has become a miniature dark red swamp. It gives off a meaty odor like hamburger forgotten all day on a kitchen counter. "Not yet," she tells him. She gets a shovel and a small tarp, and methodically scoops the bloody mud onto it, making a pile a foot high. Ed takes the hint and scatters fresh earth under the bench until the ground is neatly disguised. He drops the blood-soaked rag onto the tarp. She bends to roll it up and mud spills onto her fingers. She flinches, wants to run out to her car and roar off, then she ties up the tarp and looks around, uncertain what to do with it.

"I'll put that in the trash bin," Ed offers. She stifles a gasp, about to say he understands nothing—that blood is as much part of a person as an entire body—but she hurries downhill to hide the bundle and the shovel behind the monkey pod tree.

"We need to get away from here," she calls out.

They head off under the crime scene tape, onto the trail, but she knows they are taking something with them that won't wash off. Ed must also be protected. He's been great, helping with a gruesome task she hated to think of facing alone. "We did it," she says "and that's fine but now we're haumia. That means polluted, until somebody removes it, like breaks it. Today, or tomorrow, I'll call around. In the meantime don't eat with anyone. Don't cook for anyone." He squints at her in surprise. She starts to add, Don't sleep with your girlfriend, Don't this, Don't that, but it seems exaggerated, bossy,

and she walks on.

At the entrance a tv truck pulls up. A woman and two men get out, one carrying a video cam, coming forward with eager smiles, introducing themselves, saying how glad they are to find workers in the area. Nani imagines being asked to point out where it happened, to repeat the chant for the nightly news. She gives the reporters an aloof look in passing and glances at Ed to make sure he follows. Her refusal to talk with them feels right, dignified, yet also like an act. She knows nothing about the dead man, feels only a chilling sense of being defiled, something not part of the modern world.

The next morning's news describes the murder victim as 26 years old, with a daughter in preschool. Single bullet to the back of the neck. Motive and suspect unknown. Ten volunteer workers have gathered at the entrance to Nā Pōhaku. In front of their parked cars is a new log barrier with a No Trespassing sign. Traffic passes on the road behind them and drivers occasionally slow to stare. Nani and Ed stand to one side, both in work clothes. Over the last twenty-four hours she has avoided contact with others. Last night she slept badly. She can still smell the thick odor of the red-brown stain.

Six members of the caretaker group have on jeans, t-shirts, slippers. A Christian minister is dressed in a navy blue aloha shirt tucked into khakis. Beside him stands a kahuna pule in traditional regalia: yellow feather headband, a tiny gourd filled with salt hanging from his neck, his chest covered by a short white cape over a loin cloth. In one arm he holds a koa bowl of water brought from a spring at the ancient temple across the marsh. He asks for silence throughout the ceremonies, then places thin strips of shredded, feathery tī leaves over the shoulders of Nani and Ed.

The two of them and then the others follow the kahuna pule over the barrier. He chants, asking all spirits present for permission to enter the site. On the trail everyone's footsteps crunch on the coarse mulch. Nani does not feel the sun, the breeze, or hear the birds, the wild chickens skittering away from butterflies. Ahead she sees that the crime scene tape has been removed, giving back the area its openness. She can't help staring down at the second bench from the bottom. Beside the monkey pod tree the bundled tarp is not quite hidden, a spot of bright blue. She imagines the bloody dirt rolled up in it pulsing with life, restless and contaminating.

Nani and Ed are directed to stand to one side behind the top row of seats. The others form a line, everyone facing downhill. She stares furiously at the kahuna pule, thinking: Break it, rip it off me. He recites a chant to clear the path for changing what has gone wrong. Another chant requests spiritual forces to assemble—from the highest point in the sky to the deepest point in the ocean and throughout the land—then he blesses Nani with water and salt, touching her forehead, her shoulders, droplets falling on her feet.

"'Oki haumia," he says, the pollution is severed.

Dead weight rises from her guts and vanishes up through the top of her skull like driven mist. All around her a cleansing swipe slices through the air. She waits in a daze as Ed is similarly blessed. The minister prays for the murdered man's family, so violently

invaded and in need of comfort and peace, particularly the little daughter left without a father. Family, Nani thinks, reminded of others whose concerns are far greater than hers. In all of this, she is tiny, a caretaker who has lost nothing.

The men walk down to the monkey pod tree to pick up the shovel and the tarp—dealing with the bloody dirt is now somehow their business, no longer hers—and farther downhill they dig a pit. It takes a long time, the ground there rocky, not well chosen. Finally the tarp disappears into the pit and a kukui seedling is set in place, an infant plant six inches tall with leaves as wide as her palm. The earth is heaped around it to a final chant and prayer. Medicine tree, Nani thinks, food tree, tattooing tree, symbol of prosperity. Then she wonders if they should be doing any of this. There has been no word of a funeral or why a young father died. Worse, it seems wrong to bury even traces of blood at a sacred site. Generations of modern-day Hawaiians have blocked off ancient beliefs. Those passed on to her in childhood seem like unconnected fragments. No one still worships the four great gods, and Hauwahine is a legend. The old world is gone, gone, gone. She and the other volunteers are simply trying to deal with a murder in a place whose beauty and serenity has brought them to work here week after week, month after month, year after year.

The group files out to their cars and the kahuna pule pauses to give Nani and Ed a final instruction. Everybody leaves to return to jobs, meetings, to pick up the threads of their separate lives. She drives off toward the ocean. Ahead of her the coastline is a mass of palm trees; beyond that is the tumbling, sparkling surf. Farther out a vast, flat sheet of deep blue reflects the brilliant sun. At the shore she parks close to the long curve of Kailua beach, as usual filled with local families, flocks of children, tourist couples carrying paddleboards and kayaks.

She walks among them, unnoticed, a women in work clothes, kicking off her slippers as she approaches the water. The first wave wets her jeans to the knees. She fixes her eyes on the horizon where the sun and ocean join at the beginning of everything. To complete the blessing, she pulls off the feathery tī leaf strip placed on her shoulders. A receding wave takes it. She submerges herself, full body, and stands up in the bright light. Water courses off her hair, down her face, arms and thighs. On her lips she tastes the clean bite of salt. A last truth occurs to her. It was good, it was right, because Hauwahine was here long before anybody now alive and will be here long after all of us are gone.

Small children chase a yellow ball into the shallow surf, yipping in delight, bumping into Nani. She tosses the ball to a boy and the children explode in gleeful shouts. All at once she's hungry. She remembers that a UPS delivery of tools is due before noon. The gas gauge in her car has crept into the red zone. She walks back onto the beach, picks up her slippers and moves on into the day.

The River Ghost Queens

Heather Dobbins

The river must learn to obey.
All I can do is follow the levee camps—
so many fine-looking men working
gangplanks, loading burdens
that don't know night-time means stop.
Listen to the drowned who died so long ago.
Sterling minnows swim over our graves.

Willows and yellow waters warden with me.
Pity I can't give my body to those who never held
onto meat for long. How they dig, stack, stretch, then bend low.
Can't have muscle without *again* and *again*.
Can't have wheelbarrow without blister.
Their trash-talking is nothing but a scarecrow trying
to keep the same old, same old away.

Limbo is where you are when you don't want to be.
I can wait, smelling the marrow of labor, what the men owe
and work off. I can't rest, either, so I give them song.
My mandolin covers the banks with alto, a sorrow
they won't forget till they are with a woman.

The Mississippi is a murderer like no other.
The river only puts away. Shallow, up, then higher.
The whistle blows, current drops and grows.
But you must keep on till it's done.
I'll stay here till you build the levee,
till this bloodthirsty river is controlled.

~

My body, another thing to ferry.
Big Al taught me North and South mean wander, and East and West mean drift.
Ohio says I died on the Kentucky side. Kentucky's refusal back—*not my authority*—
and forth—*not my jurisdiction*.

I pour river into a glass, hold my pinky out like in the picture shows,
pretending for Irish Crème and crystal. A different memory with each sip.

But always a time from before he snarled, *You've got a mouth on you*,
before I left that note in the corner of their porch where only a woman looks—
bits of oak leaf, calm. I wanted something different.

Stirred up, aimless, memory won't run out on this river—the same
chambered might to and fro.

When he asked me to trim his hair, I set to do better than his wife did,
my grip steady on the sharp blades. The leather honing strap hushed
on his knees. I said, "You ain't going to whoop me for telling on us?"
He looked in the mirror, surprised. *You didn't even knick me*.

Years later, I take a glass from a stranger's cupboard so that I will not remember
how he took the scissors from me, clean out of my stomach six times.

I leave my lipstick on the rim, hold my pinky out, watch someone turning in
for the night, the to and fro of her gut, her life safe in dream.
Drinking what bleeds out, I fill. I fill with Mississippi.

~

He told me not to go in, but I did. Ours, a frail
craft: put-together driftwood, license plates, a window
my people gave me. We split our time grabbing pillows
when the rest of the river was quiet, grabbing pillars
when a paddlewheel churned upstream.
Shanty walls in conniption with the spirit of the Mississippi.

Russ always said, *My girl got a mind of her own*.
I went to land for my father—to meet
his second wife after she gave him a son.
My mother gone sour when I was but a girl,
saying, *This river took all my sound*.
No one could blame him for leaving.
A shanty can't move without sex and story.

I don't remember falling sick—

just my father's handkerchief on my face.
Shhhhh. Damn it, your fever won't mind me.

They buried me in land where I cannot remain,
cannot rest in soil. When the sun goes home,
I seek our shanty, our icebox still full of Russ's cigars.
I can never catch him blowing three rings in a row
like he saw once at a sideshow, flicking a match through.
I am quiet as ash. I find him stateside and sleeping,
but I can't get the match to mind.

~

Her bed was already laid down.
A rindle, unheld for long:
we were other men's brides.
Why is anyone surprised
when the levee breaks?

Every river is named Elsewhere.
I could not help but run with her.

Only a twit asks
to be stuck again in ruined leather
when mud quickens.
Carrying, carrying.

A levee is manmade, unsound
like calling out *betrayal*.
Our shallow slopes, angled,
and parallel bands for a tongue to tell:

no need for voice when muscle courses
on slick, purpled lips. She knew what I could not be.

No god. No man. How could this be wrong?
She was a basin, a brown bowl tipping up,
my thumbs on her hipbones. Carrying,

carrying. We spilled out, simply,
stable, steeper. She said, *Please don't stop*.

Only his shotgun could stop me.
I was but a tired gravel bar until I joined
her standing water, mid-channel, mouth to delta.

~

The river answers in the holler of barges, rubbing through long watches of night,
worse than pig slaughter.

The ice angel's sword thrust into this continent to create an inland sea between gorges.
The crust shifted, bulged, fell. Source ran to mouth, as always.

The Indians had names for different parts of the Great River. Your name now
from the Algonquin's *Mecha Ceba*.

DeSoto arrived at Sunflower Bend, called out *Tamalisou*. There was no lost city, no gold.
More murk and canoe. He told the Indians his mirror let him watch their every move
and know their thoughts. Where he siced his dogs is now overgrown.
Other Spaniards called it *Arrestiosos*, a strong current, *Rio del Spiritu Sancte*,
and *Escondido Rio Grande*. Cortes' *Espiritu Santo* saw forever.

Naming is a fish eye, open and wanting, even when dead—a cinch to slit.

Marquette had one foot in sand, while the other sunk in ooze. More swamp than sail.
Right above Memphis, *Ft. Prudhomme*. LaSalle uttered *Colbert* and planted a cross
with the French coat of arms, which the ones who had lived here all along deemed best
to rub with their bodies. The French frenchified *Michisepe* to Father of the Waters.
The French, prone to excess letters, made *Mississippi*.

Who of them knew control was a farce? A sternwheeler's black smoke, persuasion,
and discovery.

What you want a taste of but don't believe in. Ghosts don't have teeth, so offer your whiskey
to the banks.

Wai ʻapu lau kī.

Slip Joint

Liesl Nunns

When we camped out in the Cromwell orchards that university summer, Harvey read James K. Baxter to us, mingling the words with moth-wings and firelight. He's still there in my mind as he ever was, leaning over on one arm so that his waves of dark hair fell sideways to the page, telling us that *In this scarred country, this cold threshold land, The mountains crouch like tigers*. He read it to all of us, but he read it for Jill. It was her favourite poem.

It was the most enchanted of times, in the desert paradise of Central Otago, 3 hours' dusty drive away with the windows down full. But if I were honest, I would have to say that, even then, I did not think we were achieving much in the way of preventing a dam being built. Damian, the self-styled leader of the group, felt that being there was the most important thing. The vision of what we were doing was, he felt, more important than how we were doing it. We were witnesses to a blind and timid nation–to history!–armed with the pen and the paintbrush and the guitar. 'Armed witnesses' seemed both active and passive. But if anybody else was confused about that, they never said it, and so I kept my opinion to myself. And it didn't actually bother me that, for a supposed protestor, I spent a lot of effort on keeping my mouth shut. Quite the opposite, for I felt that by overcoming my dislike for Damian, I was making further sacrifice for the cause. I desperately wanted to belong to the cause as they did, those painters, poets, sculptors, and photographers. I was a pianist of middling skill, the son of a piano tuner. Both my father and I were mechanics more than artistes, interested in the physical process of music and the tweaking of its productive parts. So I was there mainly by virtue of being Jill's boyfriend, and Damian felt that, as a law student, I was potentially handy also.

Jill liked all of them, and they adored her. She was somehow the mother of the group, and yet I don't doubt they all had thoughts about her of a certain other nature. I probably see more of her mothering qualities in my memories, as they have become the foundation of our daily lives, but I do believe she was tending to hurts and listening to injustices and mediating solutions even then. She was an artist then, sketchpad balanced on her boney knees, capturing forever our languid, suntanned outrage.

You look like Jim Morrison, Jill had said to Harvey suddenly on one of those campfire nights. I was dubious. It was really just the dark halo of hair. But the observation was enough to cause a simmering sensation amongst the gathering. It lit them all with a blaze of conviction that, if someone as cool as Jim Morrison was incarnate among us,

then clearly our side was the righteous one. The nodding, smiling 'fuck yeah' appreciation with which Jill's comment was generally met did not warm Harvey's habitual sang-froid as he smoked into his poetry, but his cat eyes locked with Jill's with a simmering look that held nothing of politics. In actual fact, Harvey didn't even like Jim Morrison's music. He liked bluegrass, I found out later. We'd never talked about music.

Jill liked finding likenesses between faces, elevating ordinary acquaintances into celebrities with the optimistic vision that later caused her to remark on Karori's similarity to Vermont. She proudly told people that I was a dead ringer for Jim Henson back then (and occasionally to this day). She had said as much to Harvey over beers in the student union once, with a giggling tone of 'good old Bryce.' But Harvey had just nodded respectfully and told me, 'That's a hell of a compliment, my friend.'

Jim and Jim. It is a comparison that I did not find as favourable then as I do now.

~ ~ ~

But of course, some twelve years later the dam officially opened and now the dam is a good twenty years old, and I am that many years older. From the seat where I read every day, till the fading Karori evening turns out the words, I can see most of those years represented in the garden that Jill has made us. No orchards and no dam. They are out there, the one laid over the other, but we have gone from being able to speak of nothing else that summer, to never speaking of them at all.

And then this evening our son phones us from Auckland, where he and his wife are starting a family that they never see except in the weekends. They run their own graphic design agency with their best friend Dan, while Polly's selfless mother tootles tirelessly between the park and the library and the swimming pool with the twins in their car seats shedding raisins all through her spruce little VW Golf. Our son sounds very shaken when I answer the phone and so I pass him quickly to his mother.

She comes in quickly from the deck as I wave my hand at her, a little line of sunblock still white along her nose. Jill listens into a phone the way others hear the sea in a conch shell: she tilts her head and holds the phone to it with both hands, looking far off into the distance as though in a trance or experiencing magic. It is beautifully childlike. But this evening she trembles and her face, that had just ten minutes ago been pink with laughter and rosé, falls pale and grim. I want to move towards her, but her eyes lift to mine and they are full of a cold hurt.

Dan and his family are on holiday down in Central Otago. They'd been boating out on Lake Dunstan, out on the lake that was once those Cromwell orchards. Dan's little daughter Emily was out in the inflatable dinghy with a teenaged cousin. The wake of a passing jetski had caused them to flip. The cousin had tried to get Emily out. Dan had jumped in straight away. But it only took a moment of being trapped under that dinghy for Emily's little lungs to fill with water, and all attempts to revive her had proved tragically useless.

Jill goes upstairs, where her tears echo about the bathroom. Little Emily had drowned in waters that are sacred to my wife. Part of her has never left Harvey and Baxter in those orchards.

~ ~ ~

I think that back in 1982, Jill (like me) wasn't really too upset about the dam being constructed. Or rather, she was in principle but she never really gave it much thought, at least while it was still a concept. That summer in the orchards was an idyll, picking fruit and swimming in the river and singing songs Damian had written (such forgotten classics as 'Damn the dam' and 'Think Big said the fat pig'). She had me, and she had Harvey, and she had her golden, shimmering youth.

Jill is not a selfish woman, and not vain, though people less good and less beautiful than her might well be. But everyone has a moment, a vision of themselves, which they cherish jealously and carry with them like a warm ruby in their pocket as they go on through the rest of their life. Their face lines, their body yields to wear and tear, their thoughts become less abstract and more quotidien, and one day their husband has hair growing out of his ears. But their sleek and vibrant former self throbs quietly and secretly, ever with and within them, the secret engine of their contentment. The mountains crouch like tigers. Or they wait, as women wait.

~ ~ ~

Harvey was in his grave before the next university summer.

It was not my finest hour, but I scrawled a line of Baxter's in the memorial book at Harvey's wake. I did it to impress Jill, to assimilate Harvey's poetic appeal. Even as my pen bled the guilty *Along the upland road, ride easy stranger: Surrender to the sky your heart of anger*, I knew it was a shameful act. But Jill did not look at the book. She stood dumb in the garden looking out to the harbour, holding a club sandwich in forgotten limbo. I had skulked off so that nobody might see my embarrassment and my anger. Harvey had selfishly chosen to leave this life in which he was loved. And I, selfishly, resented the loss of any chance that Jill would choose me over him, voluntarily and entirely and unerringly. By throwing his hand in, Harvey had won forever, and if I ever accused him of it, I would lose Jill to his memory completely.

Not that Harvey's death had anything to do with Jill. None of his choices had ever had anything to do with Jill. He was as much a lover to her as he was an adversary to me. Which is to say, he wasn't, except in our perception.

I had let myself into his room, that day at the wake. I had cast curious, thieving, jealous eyes over the bluegrass and folk rock records, the crocheted cushion, the curling paperbacks, the blue lacquered harmonica, the tacked-up Neil Young poster and the map

of Argentina, the pile of socks and t-shirts that his mother had not yet brought herself to clear away. I wanted to take some knowledge, some last intimacy with Harvey, from this final portrait, but it made me realise I had never known him very well at all. Of none of the things in his room could I have previously said with confidence, 'That is the sort of thing that Harvey would like.'

And he could have put his own stinking socks in the laundry before he shot himself, I thought maliciously.

So I just went home. I drank whiskey all night and felt sorry for myself, and for Jill, and even for Harvey. And then I simply persisted with keeping my mouth shut, while Jill cut all her hair off but otherwise did a good job of pretending to grieve no more than our friends did. Two years later we were married.

~ ~ ~

We picknicked by the river in '92, as the dam wall gradually made it into Lake Dunstan. We'd driven up from Dunedin, accumulating a tonne of Roxburgh fruit along the way. In my rear-view mirror, our children's small faces were just two more pale peaches in the pile.

James Harvey, almost five, had sat by my side at the slowly advancing water's edge. I took out my pocket knife and carved a measurement across a rock, just above the wet. James Harvey had sucked on his knuckle pensively while we watched. As we waited I told him that, once the rock was under water, it would eventually wear smooth again and it would be like the line had never been there. He had laughed a fake little laugh of discomfort and confusion, because children are embarrassed by such baffling concepts as disappearance and death. Jill had handed out sandwiches and tried to read baby Ruthie a story about an elephant. But Jill wasn't really with us. She was somewhere else and getting further away, that whole summer holiday.

The dam is nearly finished, she said. I didn't think I would care, she said.

She had stared down into the water like she was looking for something, and I thought she was crying. But when James Harvey pulled at her hand, she had pretended to smile. She had tousled the dark curls that framed his serious little face and had asked him, with a clipped laugh, whether I had told him about the slip joint yet. And then we had packed back into the car, and driven off for a week in Wanaka, at the end of which Jill had announced that she thought we should move to Wellington. Time for a change, she said. You'll do well there, she said, and held her hand to my cheek.

The comment to James Harvey about the slip joint. That was Jill's way of mocking me, which she rarely did. It was her way of punishing me for bringing her back to that watery grave.

'A bit like this,' I had held the pocket knife before James Harvey's questioning face. 'There's a part of the dam that moves a bit like this, if the dam gets a big shake.'

The pocket knife slid open and shut, expanded and contracted, accommodating the pressure as my hands pressed and pulled upon it.

'Is the big shake a earthquake?'

'*An* earthquake.' Jill had corrected him gently.

I had foolishly declared one day that I found the slip joint technology 'fascinating.' It was early in 1983. We were back from the orchards, back in Dunedin. The autumn had not yet kicked in and Harvey was not yet dead. Jill, the odious Damian, and I were lying about watching cricket at the University Oval, picking over the newspaper in turns. Damian had snorted at the term 'slip joint' and my observation had simply slipped out in a lazy moment of honesty. To Jill and Damian, the word had suggested a feeling of approval on my part. Too much of a feeling, in fact. They had accused me of 'loving that bloody dam', Damian quite seriously and Jill more teasingly.

And they were right, really. I used to dream about the dam. My dream self would glide on a current over the razored line of the peaks, soaring down over oceans of dry space, luxuriously empty. And then there would be the dam below me, the sucking destination of the bright waters cradled in the sweep of golden porcelain. Its force would draw me down to the land, down into the dam. I'd suffer the glare of light against the grey and rising blue. The water would hit me, jerk me back. I'd feel the pressure of water against the broad back of the concrete. It would block my breath and I'd sink. Downwards, deeper, I'd see the Lowburn Bridge, with the old MK I Zephyr still on it, grown together in leafy, rusty neglect. I'd see the black shell of the old petrol station. They were quiet ghosts in the surging blue, living secret deaths beyond the end of their mundane purpose. *A sense as of vast fate rings in the blood. No refuge, No refuge is there from the flame that reaches Among familiar things and makes them seem Trivial, vain.*

Submerged below consciousness, it would tighten around me. Grip me and pull me further down towards the turbines. Until I would pop—like a cork—back into the slack smallness of my bedroom. The dreams were intense but not unpleasant, for I felt acutely alive as the force of the water held me. I felt charged with the raw power of the river, as it massed against the dam and sought to shove itself between my very bones. But I knew the dam wouldn't break. I knew, because it was what Damian and the others had feared and secretly hoped for. I knew, because even my own bones wouldn't break. I knew the dam wouldn't break and, even though that would ease the crushing pressure, I was elated that it stood strong. I could not describe the dream to Jill without making it sound sexual, and so I never tried. I could not describe the dream without sounding like I was glad that those orchards had been destroyed.

And in any case, we had stopped speaking of the dam.

~ ~ ~

We moved to Karori, where no blue waters mounted. I hated it at first. No wild

force corralled itself behind Persian-empire walls. Rather, the wet seeped grey and green everywhere. The fences and letterboxes and agapanthus leaves dripped an embarrassment of moisture. Little white dogs in quilted jackets licked it from the air and padded it from footpath to hallway. Newspaper hoardings at the dairy curled with it, as sagged as old skin. The casual, aimless laxity of the Karori damp had no strength to brace me. It absorbed me into its slump, and I dreamed of lying face-down in the valleys like a drunk on an old couch. Slack smallness, where hills crouched like kittens.

But Jill would stand pink-faced at the windows on those first winter evenings in Karori, saying 'cosy', as she had in the tent on those Cromwell nights. I can still now remember her saying 'cosy' back then in that tent, because it had struck me as a word that she was unlikely to say to Harvey on those nights when she never returned from his tent. I was, and contined to be, and am her cosy companion.

Yes, we moved to suburban Wellington, to Karori. *I shall drown myself in humanity. Better to lie Dumb in the city than under the mountainous wavering sky.* Jill taught at the primary school, and I did my time at the Ministry until last year when I allowed myself to take life down a gear by becoming a piano tuner, like my father before me. I have found clients, the little old men and the family matrons and the bedraggled students, and most mornings I take my tuning pins and hammers and strings, and head out from behind the hills. The profusion of wires overhead, dense sagging lines draped along the trench of Karori Road, cover you over so that driving into town is like being squeezed out of a toothpaste tube. But the trolley buses are being phased out, so perhaps the wires will be raked back and the sky revealed again. I like my wires tidied away inside pianos, humming tight. Hidden and yet revealing each desired note, vibrating with honesty and immediacy. The sound rings out from a piano like the body exhaling a held breath, propelling coiled energy out into a limitless expanse. I am romantic about my pianos but, again, it is hard to explain without making it sound sexual. It is generally best to stay quiet about the things that stir us the most.

My 'early retirement' unsettled Jill somewhat, because we are still young and she does not look forward to old age as I do. She does not think of this as onsetting time or any of that, and calls my comfortable anticipation of old age morbid and premature. She has stayed a creature of youth, ever looking towards others in their joys and hurts and their ceaseless details. She does not drown in humanity so much as pass out the flotation devices in Tupperware containers.

~ ~ ~

Jill stopped finding anything funny in my fascination with the slip joint. She stopped joking that I secretly loved that bloody dam. The waters, as I said, became sacred. But in that sacred way where you never look at it, never speak of it. Not in the way where you frame it above your mantelpiece. Not that Harvey's death had anything to

do with the dam either. No, Harvey had died because he was bored and sad and stoned. He went down to the beach and shot himself with his grandfather's service revolver. A Department of Conservation ranger had found him there, bloody and sandy and sodden with dew, shortly before the penguins were due to return to their nests. It was just before sunset. The penguins arrived before the police did, although I don't know why I think I know that.

Harvey had been holed up in that big old house on the peninsula for two weeks. His parents were in Australia on holiday. We hadn't seen him. Jill had said she thought that he had shut himself away to write. She thought he was fine. She knew he liked to take his notebook down to the beach and look out to the Pacific Ocean. It helped him to feel held in place, she said, because he too is an island of sorts.

But then there was Jill at my flat suddenly, at two o'clock in the morning. She was wearing shorts and a poncho, and she climbed in my window, still smoking a cigarette. She told me that Harvey was dead, but she didn't say how he'd died or how she knew. She simply crawled into my bed with me and sobbed. I held her in place as best as I could, though no man is as strong as an ocean.

The next day, the six o'clock news ran a story on the discovery of Harvey's body. The police cars were parked under the giant macrocarpas that formed a wind-break for that creaking old house. Its eaves jutted into view, as did the shed from which Harvey must have taken the revolver before walking under those macrocarpas, climbing over the stile, and walking down to the beach to shoot himself. *Men shut within a whelming bowl of hills Grow strange, say little when they leave their high Yet buried homesteads*.

We'd decided early on that we liked the name James, and that he'd be James Edward, for my grandfather. But then his scrunched little face had emerged with its unexpected acropolis of dark locks, which neither of our families could account for.

'I think he should be James Harvey.'

It was so unlike Jill to say that name out loud that I felt I could hardly refuse. And besides, she was quite right.

~ ~ ~

Not only did Jill stop finding my love of the dam amusing but, somewhere along the way, that very love of the dam dried up too. I saw an American documentary one night, about the Echo Park dam controversy and the fight to save Dinosaur National Monument. All those bones and all that rock. As I watched, I wondered for the first time about what had become of those Cromwell orchardists whose names I had long forgotten, who had let us stay on their land and sing our songs and pretend to help.

And now I can only see our dam through Jill, through her memories and associations more than mine. I can only see it as a graveyard.

~ ~ ~

Not long after James Harvey's call to tell us about Emily, the phone goes again. It is Margie, a piano teacher in Kelburn. She's moved house, and could I come and give the old girl a good once-over? She enjoys innuendo, which I don't find to be a strong quality in an educator of children. But I like Margie. She makes a good fruitcake and she values what a piano can do. I put her into the calendar on my phone, and take my book and my wine back to the last light of the day.

Jill reappears eventually and joins me again on the deck. The aquamarine of the sky is purpling at the top and sinking through pink to a brilliant orange. The hills are blackening into the sea beyond. A plane lifts into the sunset and out towards Australia. Its rotating lights and beacons reach into the gathering black, taking the last heat of the day with it. I lift my face to watch it, and feel that soaring feeling of my dream, the jolt of weightless vertigo. But the searing blue and gold of the dam does not spread out beneath me. It is sunset, and bobbing little bodies are swarming up a sheltered beach. They cast two great semi-circles around a dark, huddled, lonely shape. The slack smallness of silence and of death. I ride the air current out over the Pacific, where the sweep of the ocean hums tight and holds us all in place. *A sense as of vast fate rings in the blood*. I snap back into this moment. The plane has gone. The sky has slipped further into navy blue and charcoal, and tonight there is an expansive swathe of stars that lifts Karori out of itself. Our streetlights and porch lights rally to meet the Milky Way. If I were to describe my version of cosy, it would be this.

I turn to ask Jill if James Harvey is okay, if she's okay. But she is looking dreamily into the garden below, where the neighbour's cat is climbing in beneath the camellia, pale and lean in the shadows.

'Cute wee thing,' she smiles. 'He looks like Ruthie's old teddy bear, don't you think?'

Storm Watching

Atar Hadari

There was a hurricane that night on the mainland
power-lines blew down and coconuts flew like fluff
off the island's head—as if the whole God
that lives under the waves raised up his tired beard
and shook it—back, forth, through the rushes
of clouds that opened under the moon shuddering in the sky
and we snuggled under the blanket—my sister and me
rolled like cinnamon rolls in a butter dish
ready for the bite to hit—

and the big wind came hurrying
leaving its hat and coat behind
on the mainland—and we were left quarreling
no hut, no roof, only above
the dripping naked stars
and us deciding who should get to keep
the blanket in his hand.

Where the River Meets the Sea

Abby Mason

Fish swim
Weeds drift,
Coral flies
Sand twirls.

Down stream
Through currents,
On my way
To meet the sea.

Pacific just ahead
Almost there,
Just down the stream
Don't give up.

Flowing smoothly
Just up there,
Waves getting stronger
Not quite.

Giant waves
I am here,
Now the sea

Is my friend.

Note: We editors were so excited to receive Abby's poetry submission. A ten-year-old from Selwyn House School, Papanui in Christchurch, Aotearoa, she sent "Where the River Meets the Sea" at the behest of her teacher in response to what Abby called our "Muliwai Challenge." We are pleased to feature this poem, her first published piece, as a tidepool within these pages.

Of No Real Account

Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada

The damned tīwaiwaka wouldn't stop chirping. Even worse was the amused glint in the fantail's eye, like it was laughing. Sure, Māui was trying to win immortality for humankind by crawling into the giant Hine Nui Te Po's massive birth canal and out of her mouth while she was sleeping. And sure, that might look a little odd, especially because he couldn't figure out if he should go in head- or feet-first. But if that bird made any more racket, Māui was done for. No more songs would be sung about him, no more stories told of his feats. It was terrifying enough to be near the giant obsidian night goddess while she was sleeping; Māui couldn't imagine what it would be like if she were awake. As the bird's tittering increased in volume, Māui braced himself for his entry into the next life.

Hine Nui Te Po's drowsy red eyes fluttered open, lazily glancing down to see an insignificant lump of a man trying to crawl into her vagina. Yawning unconcernedly, Hine Nui Te Po rolled over and snuggled back to sleep, with a great and resounding snapping shut of her thighs, ending humankind's quest for immortality, along with the life of its greatest hero.

Word spread quickly through the peoples of Aotearoa, and a great pall blanketed the land, as keening wails could be heard echoing from the snow-capped peaks to the wide swathes of sand at the shore. Even the animals took up the cry, forest birds and great creatures of the deep adding their calls to the rising din. Swarming black clouds of birds fell from the sky in grief and great silver shoals of fish beached themselves in sorrow. So it was that the news was passed from island group to island group, atoll to atoll, the piercing and painful sounds of sadness growing and resounding until finally reaching Hawai‘i, in the furthest northern reaches of the vast ocean of Kāne.

Though Hawaiians were in the midst of the worst drought anyone could remember for generations, they too immediately took up the cries of wailing and lamentation; Māui was, after all, the single greatest Hawaiian hero of all time. The eerie sound of abject sorrow could be heard coming from each house in every single kauhale throughout the entire string of islands. The drought had caused kalo to shrivel and rot in stagnant lo‘i and banana plants to wither and fall in the uplands. Even fishing was affected as the lack of fresh water running into the sea depleted the populations of ‘ama‘ama and awa. Still, they too put aside their own troubles for an entire anahulu to grieve for their greatest son.

Yet once the mourning period was over, they came back to a stark reality. Māui

was gone and the rain had yet to fall. Who would save the people? Who would bring back the rain? Who would be the people's hero? Who could be the people's hero?

~ ~ ~

Keaka was the people's next best hope. But no one else knew it. He didn't even think so sometimes. And despite the fact that he had gleefully rejoiced in private over Māui's death, he was a pretty nice guy who only wanted to help his people. He never really got the chance though. Māui hogged all of the really prestigious heroic deeds, such as fishing the islands from the sea and snaring the sun, while Keaka was left with such "heroic" acts as carrying scaly Old Man Kahiolo home after he drank too much ʻawa and saving Old Woman ʻEleua from the tiny moʻo that crawled on the walls inside her house and clicked at her. No matter how hard he tried, he could never best that gods-damned Māui.

Keaka hadn't always cursed Māui's name though. Quite the opposite, in fact. Anytime word of Māui's newest exploit reached his family, the entire compound buzzed. The men would gather to mend their fishing nets and discuss Māui's manly and heroic attributes. The women would beat their kapa and giggle about what other types of heroic attributes Māui might have. The elders would sit around reminiscing about heroes of the past, such as Kana and Kaululāʻau, but they would always agree that, when it really came down to it, no other hero ever even came close to Māui in skill and bravery.

Keaka grew up loving all of these stories as well. His family had even named him Keaka, the shadow, because he quietly followed all the storytellers around, soaking in every aspect of their stories and mele. He had been entranced by accounts of the traveling gods Kāne and Kanaloa getting into scrapes and tussles, all the while shaping the geographic features of the islands. He had thrilled to the tales of the brothers Kana and Nīheu, one of whom could stretch to any height while the other stood brave in the face of any foe. Keaka had even traipsed across the landscape with his best friend Liko, searching for the wahi pana that Hiʻiaka created in her epic travels to fetch her sister Pele's lover, Lohiʻau.

Yet it was the Māui songs and stories he loved best. The bravery, the daring, the acclaim. He had for a time wanted to be Māui, but as he got older he soon began to come into his own. And then he desired nothing more than to be worthy of having stories of his own told about him. Each recounting of Māui's deeds began to sting, serving only as a reminder of how inadequately heroic he was. To top it all off, Keaka's own birth mother was the biggest Māui fan of them all. Whenever she heard a new tale of Māui's amazing feats from Old Lady Wahakale, she'd come rushing home to pass on her gossip to the entire kauhale and would even travel to their other relatives' compounds in order to tell them. It finally got to be too much and the aspiring hero moved out to live on his own.

As it turned out, however, since his mother loved him so much, she decided to add

his house in the dry and desolate Honouliuli to her gossip tour of the district. Her footsteps would awaken him, and she would call out, "E Keaka, Old Lady Wahakale told me that Māui saved a double-hulled canoe that got swamped in that last storm," or "E Keaka, Old Lady Wahakale told me that Māui slew a giant mo'o that was attacking travelers." Most recently, he had been awakened by her grief-stricken wailing and the thump of her beating her breast in sorrow over Māui's death. She had knocked out three of her front teeth in mourning, and confided with a somewhat superior air that Hina, Māui's own mother, had only knocked out two. Slightly aghast, he had pressed his nose to his mother's as she took her leave of him to carry the news to the rest of her gossip circuit.

That night, he had dreamt that *he* was Māui, and it was *he* who pushed up the sky, and *he* who took the secret of fire from that old mud hen, Ka'alaenuiahina. It was a nice dream and Keaka had felt a sense of contentment while it was going on, but when he was awakened the next morning, the warm, happy feeling went away because he knew he was still Keaka and still had not done any of those things. The drought still raged, and there was still nothing Keaka could think to do about it.

Keaka had initially not tried to help with the drought situation because he too assumed that Māui was going to do something about it. Even after Māui's death, Keaka still wandered fruitlessly around the vast and dusty expanse of coral plain of his home Honouliuli, seeking something sufficiently heroic to do. What could he do? He wasn't a real hero, or at least he hadn't proven himself yet. He had succeeded only in helping a few farmers tend their sweet potato mounds. It was hot and sweaty work that, while helpful, was hardly a deed worthy of a hero. At the end of the day, no throngs of adoring fans fawned over his every move or composed chants that commemorated his deeds. All he ever had to show for his crusade was a few lumpy sweet potatoes, and not very big ones at that.

"Eh, Keaka, you got any food or what?" It was Liko, as usual. He woke Keaka up with the same question every morning.

Keaka and Liko were together so often that people often mistook them for brothers. The pair *did* look similar. They both had long, 'ehu hair that they kept tied back, dark brown skin, the same build from surfing and swimming all the time. And although Keaka was about a handspan taller than Liko and had put on a little weight since they were younger, which he did not appreciate anyone mentioning, the two of them could indeed pass for brothers.

Keaka flung one of the scrawny sweet potatoes at Liko and sat up, not yet out of the hazy state between waking and dreaming.

"Auē, all you ever have is sweet potato! You need to start farming for yourself so you can have something else to eat besides sweet potato every day," Liko grumbled while examining the shrunken tuber that Keaka had gotten the day before.

"I don't have time to farm. I'm a hero, and I have to go around performing heroic deeds all day," came Keaka's wounded retort.

Liko snickered, "Yeah, like the time you helped Kānekoa by digging an eight-foot-wide ʻauwai to irrigate his loʻi? Didn't he and his family almost starve to death that year when all their kalo got washed away?"

Keaka cringed at the memory. "I just assumed that more water would mean more kalo!"

"You know what you need to do?" Liko asked intently, with a certain mischievous light in his eye. Keaka groaned to himself because he knew one of Liko's crazy schemes was coming. Another reason that everyone thought they were brothers was that they had been getting in trouble together since before they could even wear malo. Liko's plans usually ended with Keaka loudly cursing himself for listening to his friend's foolish plans, and Liko laughing hysterically in exhilaration or fear, while the two of them ran from whatever calamity was on their heels. "If you really want to do something about this drought, we need to go to the big city where you actually have a chance of doing real hero kind of stuff. There's no chance of that out here in the kuaʻāina, the very back of the land, helping farmers and fishermen."

Keaka knew he didn't have any responsibilities that would keep him in Honouliuli, but he wasn't too sure about Liko. "Eh, how can you leave? Don't you have crops to take care of?" ventured Keaka.

"If I had crops of my own, do you think I'd be here every day eating your scrawny little sweet potatoes? Come on, go get your stuff together and I'll have the canoe ready to set sail on tomorrow's morning high tide."

So it was that the two kōkoʻolua went their separate ways, each packing what they thought they would need in the "big city" of Kou. Liko packed a couple of fresh malo and some food, which consisted of the rest of Keaka's sweet potatoes. Along with his own fresh malo, Keaka made sure to pack his war club Kuʻipē, just in case. Keaka mainly used it for mashing up his sweet potatoes, but a hero never knew when he might be called on to fight off a marauding moʻo or rescue a kidnapped beauty.

The first rays of the sun coming up over Lēʻahi the next morning found the two of them on Keoneʻula's rust-colored sand, where they loaded up the canoe. When they were almost ready to shove off Keaka noticed something. "Uh, Liko, aren't we sailing on the morning high tide?"

"Yup," replied Liko briskly, as he continued to work.

"But this canoe has no mast or sail," persisted Keaka.

Liko brought out the canoe's one paddle, tossed it to Keaka and said, "Well, you're a hero, right? Here's your sail."

So they set off for Kou, with Keaka manning the canoe's one paddle and grumbling the entire way.

Keaka did not have the amazing paddling ability of the legendary Kaweloleimākua, so it took him more than just a single stroke to get to Kou from Kalaeloa, but he did post a respectably heroic time of one hour and forty-three minutes. "And

that was into the wind," Keaka reminded Liko when they pulled into the harbor of Māmala.

What greeted Keaka's eyes the first time he saw Kou from the sea were the great throngs of people. He had never seen so many in his life. And the riotous noise of it all! There were traders hawking their wares on the ocean and sailors yelling at each other to get out of the way on shore. And two silent country bumpkins in a canoe wondering what they had gotten themselves into.

When they tried to barter for some lumpy poi and dried fish, the trader barked out a rough laugh. "Where have you fools been? You haven't been able to get poi for what you're offering since before the drought." He looked at their crestfallen faces, and relented a bit, not giving them the food, but softening his tone, saying, "Look, boys, there's not much we can do; if Kūlanihāko'i doesn't tip some water out of his 'umeke and let it rain soon, we won't even have this." The trader was talking about the giant calabash in the sky that held all of the world's rainwater.

Iron surged through Keaka's spine as he straightened with a cry. The trader's eyes showed white at what seemed like proof that Keaka was indeed some sort of fool, but Keaka merely declared in his deepest and most heroic voice: "People of Kou! Fear not! I am Keaka, and I have come to save you!"

The few people in the market who had turned at Keaka's speech went back to what they were doing.

"What exactly are we going to do?" Liko asked in a low voice.

Keaka drew a great breath and replied, "Fear thee not, my doubting and inquisiturient compatriot. I shall ruminate henceforth on this present dilemma and return forthwith with a fitting stratagem to resolve the conundrum and—"

"Why are you talking like that?" interrupted Liko loudly. He'd had to shout to be heard over the rising volume of Keaka's ranting. Everyone in the market turned to look at them.

"Don't heroes talk like that?" Keaka asked somewhat sheepishly.

"Nobody talks like that. Can we just figure out a plan?" came Liko's tired reply.

"Well, if Kūlanihāko'i refuses to let any water flow out of his giant 'umeke, I say we just make him."

"What do you mean? Fight him? You can't fight a god."

"No, not fight him. Just make the water flow out of the 'umeke. And I've got the perfect plan. Not some hump-or-thump Kamapua'a-style plan like you're suggesting; I'm talking about a Māui-level intelligent and well-thought-out kind of plan."

Before Liko could remind Keaka that he always railed at how dim-witted Māui was, Keaka grasped his war-club Ku'ipē, set his sights on the sky, drew his arm back, and with a mighty grunt flung his club straight into the air. Everyone craned their necks in wonder to watch the dark speck of the club disappear in the distance before a faint but resonant "tok!" was heard. The amazed murmurs of the crowd slowly turned into pan-

icked shouts as everyone, including Keaka, came to the realization that Kuʻipē was now plummeting right back at them and gaining velocity as it fell thousands of feet through the sky. The gathered crowd all dove out of the way and the red-hot war club slammed into the ground, just missing Liko's head.

The club lay steaming in a small impact crater as a light rain began to wet the dusty earth. Everyone stood in mute wonder as they felt the cool water falling from the heavens.

The trader leapt to his feet and crowed, "He did it! He did it! The big fool did it!"

A huge smile split Keaka's face as the crowd began to cheer and people ran off to tell their friends what they had witnessed. Liko lifted Keaka in his arms and the two friends roared with laughter and delight, runnels of clean fresh water streaking down their faces.

Keaka had basked in his new-found fame after that, as people from all over the islands came by sea or by land to thank him for returning the rain, for bringing life back to the land. They brought gifts from their meager remaining food supplies and raised their voices to chant mele of praise for him. Some even sang songs and brought offerings for his war club, renaming it Laweua, the Rainbringer, in honor of the occasion. Keaka passed his days bedecked in lei of tī-leaf or the odd maile that had survived the drought deep in the upland forests, suffused in their clean, green fragrance. Though they took only what they needed of the food offerings and were able to return the rest, Liko spent most of his time eating and chatting animatedly with the people who came by. It was like a celebration out of the stories Keaka loved so much.

But as time passed and the tribute continued, Keaka began to get a little uncomfortable with all of the attention. Liko told him to just enjoy it while he could, because something would probably come up that would change things.

"After all," said Liko, "sending a flood to help people suffering from a drought might not be so heroic for much longer."

Liko was right. The steady patter of rain that had seemed like such a blessing at first had now begun to overflow the streams and rivers, washing away crops and homes. Even when the rivers began to flow normally again, the rain fell. Even when the slopes of Lēʻahi became verdant with green again, the rain fell. Even when the water began to overflow the banks of the loʻi, the rain fell. And even when farmers who had desperately called out to the gods for water now cried out for the water to stop, the rain still fell.

The tribute slowed to a trickle and then ended altogether, and the people who had once been so happy with him glared and muttered whenever he passed. The trader would still call out, "He did it! He did it! The big fool did it!" when he saw Keaka, but it had changed from a cry of celebration to one of accusation and denunciation.

Standing ankle-deep in floodwater, staring mutely up toward the hole he had made in Kūlanihākoʻi's ʻumeke, Keaka did not know what to do. How could he fix Kūlanihākoʻi's ʻumeke in the sky if he couldn't even get there? He had tried throwing large

handfuls of mud and clay into the sky to plug the hole, but they just got sodden from the rushing water and fell back to earth, splattering everyone's houses with dirt. People jeered his every failure, and Keaka could not help but agree with them. There was nothing he could do from down here.

As the rainfall continued to plaster his long hair to his face, Keaka regretted his glee over Māui's death. As much as he hated to admit it, Māui would have saved everyone from the drought. Māui wouldn't have flooded the whole damn island chain. Keaka shook his head to himself. He'd failed at his one opportunity to be the new number one hero.

He had to fix this, but how?

~ ~ ~

Liko's companionship was the only thing that kept Keaka from giving into despair. He smiled, thinking about his friend's rough jests and pragmatic nature. He thought fondly of them sitting at the shore in Pu'uloa, listening to stories with all the adults. He remembered Liko's dad pointing to Waolani in Nu'uanu, telling his favorite story about Keaomelemele. He chuckled as he remembered the lumpy ducks he and Liko had unsuccessfully tried to craft from driftwood after hearing the story. Why had they tried to make ducks? He couldn't quite remember all of the story, but suddenly the recollection flashed into his mind: The god Kāne had given the boy Kahānaiakeakua a giant duck named Kamanuwai to take him wherever he desired. And the duck was said to live at Kunawai Spring, below Waolani. Less than a day's walk from where he was in Kou!

Keaka rushed back to tell Liko, who dashed cold water all over his enthusiasm. "But that story happened hundreds of years ago! That means Kamanuwai would be hundreds of years old! And ducks don't live that long." He added the last part just in case Keaka missed what would have been perfectly obvious to anyone else.

Keaka was not swayed in the least. "If the story lives on, Kamanuwai must live on," he said resolutely.

Liko and Keaka did not know how long it would take to find Kamanuwai—if he still lived, as Liko made sure to point out—so they packed their extra malo and enough food and water to last them a few days. They also packed offerings of food for the duck—which probably didn't exist, Liko pointed out again. Before setting out, they asked around for the landmarks to use in finding their way to the fabled spring, and while no one knew exactly where it was, everyone's stories overlapped enough that Keaka and Liko felt they would still be able to find their way.

The way was relatively easy and the two made good time. The sun was only a few hours past its zenith when they began to feel the coolness of the spring on the Moa'e breeze. They emerged into a wide clearing with Kunawai in the middle. Keaka and Liko were approaching the edge of the spring to drink from the cool waters, when from out of

the dark green neke and uki surrounding the pond arose a giant and fearsome creature.

The biggest duck they had ever seen.

He was nearly three arm spans in height, and though the wild and tangled feathers on his face and neck were nearly white, the speculum on his wings remained the vibrant blue of the ocean. He preened his mottled wings in the afternoon sun, casting a giant shadow over the two cowering men. Upon closer inspection of his face—though they didn't dare stare too long—they noticed that he only had one good eye, and the other socket was stuffed with leaves. Jagged scars criss-crossed his body where it looked like chunks of his flesh had been torn away, giving him the look of a mountain after a rock slide.

"*Kwek!* 'Tis altogether meet when your meat comes to you," thundered the ancient duck, his voice like the crash of boulders falling from a cliff. The gray-feathered mountain peered at them with his one good eye. "Draw closer, my delectable little fish, *kwek*, *kwek*. I have not supped on tasty land-fish like you in many ages," he rumbled, drawing out the last s.

Keaka and Liko stood there trembling, their mouths gaping open, as Kamanuwai closed the gap between them with his waddling steps. The duck stood there peering at them again, his head cocked slightly.

"Duck! Duck exists! Duck exists!" stammered Liko.

Keaka knew his friend was on the verge of breaking into fits of hysterical giggling, which happened when he was scared, so he began to speak quickly, "Uhhh . . . my name is Keaka and this is my friend Liko. We have come seeking your aid and beg of you not to indulge your appetite for land-fish upon us, O great duck of legend."

Kamanuwai continued his one-eyed stare at them for another second before he began to clack his beak together in a loud quacking sound that they soon recognized as laughter. "*Kwek*, *kwek*, *kwek*! The pair of you actually fell under the impression that I was going to eat you!" he cried gleefully. "'Great duck of legend' indeed, *kwek*, *kwek*! I am nothing more than a duck, *kwek*, and I eat nothing more than a duck eats. *Kwek*, *kwek*, I have never tasted the flesh of a man, good sirs. I apologize for the fun I had at your expense. But to see the look upon your faces!" Kamanuwai continued to quack to himself contentedly under his breath, as he waddled to a more comfortable position on the banks of the spring. Keaka and Liko heard the creak of his joints as he resettled his wings.

"Now, what current has brought you two shards of gourd floating my way, *kwek*, *kwek*?" Kamanuwai asked companionably, ducking his beak into the large 'umeke of pa'i 'ai and cooked lū'au leaves that they had brought with them as offerings. As Keaka and Liko explained their situation, Kamanuwai kwekked and quacked sympathetically, but made no commitment.

"I have a surefire idea to fix everything though," Keaka hastily reassured the duck.

"I don't know," cut in Liko, his misgivings about Keaka's plan resurfacing. "Your ideas don't always work out that well. Remember that 'auwai fiasco? Or the time that

you thought it'd be faster to just make one giant kapa beater out of a log of koa and beat everyone's kapa all at once? We all ended up having to walk around naked for a week! Maybe we should just ask ourselves what Māui would do in this situation." Liko's statement was greeted with an offended silence. He had mentioned the "M" word. Liko braced for the verbal tirade that he knew was coming.

"Māui? Māui?! You know that guy took all his ideas from me! It was my idea to snare the sun, but he stole it from me and did it first!" bellowed the irate Keaka. Kamanuwai cocked his head appraisingly at Keaka, who continued in a rush, "His mom was visiting with my mom one day, and she was complaining about how the sun set too quickly, before her kapa could even dry. So I sat and thought a little bit, then I realized that if I could tie up the sun and make it slow down, then everyone's problems would be solved.

"So *I* got my rope ready and *I* was heading for the top of Kā'ala when I passed Māui, who was busy stealing sweet pīlali candy from little kids. 'Eh, Keaka, where you going?' he asked me in that slow, dim-witted voice of his. So I told him my plan."

Keaka looked somewhat embarrassed at this point, but continued on, "Then he told me that my aunty was looking for me and wanted to meet at her house near Mākua, which was about a day's walk away. So I figured I'd see my aunty first, then get down to business, but when I got there she had not given any message to Māui about wanting to see me. She had, however, just heard that he snared the sun yesterday and made the days longer so his mother could dry her kapa." Keaka stopped to draw a calming breath, before continuing.

"'What a good boy he is,' she beamed, and then asked sweetly, 'and what have you been up to lately, Keaka?' And everybody thinks he's a hero because of that. But you know what? He's a thief! That's what he is, a thief!"

Keaka's story was interrupted by Liko's disbelieving roar of laughter, and even Kamanuwai's eye glinted with humor as he chuckled and shook his head to himself, though he was polite enough not to guffaw in quite the same manner as Liko. "I promise! That story is true. It's not funny!" Keaka cried out as he punched Liko in the arm. Kamanuwai smiled graciously as he finished eating; Keaka and Liko helped him wipe the last of the pa'i 'ai and lū'au from his beak, and looked at him hopefully.

"*Kwek*, as the small stick kindles the flame on the larger, so you have convinced me to assist you. I have been acquainted with Māui since he was no more than a blood clot floating in the sea. And even before he choked the secret of fire from my cousin, the mudhen Ka'alaenuiahina, he was as insufferable a little *kwek* as you have made him out to be in your story. So even though I lack the strength of my beardless youth and have not flown any great distance for many turnings of the moon, I shall carry you forth into the lofty heights to the great water-bearing vessel of my divine brother Kūlanihāko'i."

"As the koa bug shimmers in the sun only because of the height of the tree it perches upon, you do us great honor, O Kamanuwai," Keaka pronounced formally, stringing together an awkward metaphor that still earned him a pleased grin from the aged duck.

"*Kwek*, *kwek*, let us leave this very instant then, as we have no time left to fritter away. Make sure you settle yourselves securely upon my back though, my little friends, for I will suffer no harness and my feathers are quite slick from all of this rain."

And with a triumphant *kwek*, Kamanuwai flapped his creaking wings and carried them off, slowly rising into the sky. Though Kamanuwai was not as strong a flier as he used to be, he was expert at finding the warm currents that would lift him higher into the air with less effort on his part. Just as the sun began sinking towards the horizon, they crested the edge of the ʻumeke. Liko and Keaka were awestruck by the beauty of what lay before them. Even Kamanuwai, who was witness to many wondrous things in his life, could not tear his one-eyed gaze away from what he flew over.

The reddening sun glittered on an expanse of fresh, clear water that seemed to be as vast as the ocean that lay far below it. The ʻumeke itself was made of some sort of unearthly wood that was the deep brown of fecund soil but grained with pearlescent whorls that sent thousands of rainbows playing across their sight. The mirrored surface of the water was undisturbed by the winds swirling in the atmosphere, but a definite current slowly spiraled through it.

Kamanuwai glided over the water, obviously fatigued, tracking the center of the watery gyre below, with Keaka and Liko leaning out as far as they could to act as spotters for the one-eyed bird.

Liko cried out, "There's the center! That must be where the hole is!" Keaka leaned farther out to see where Liko pointed, and Kamanuwai banked jerkily to take them closer to the water's surface. The unexpected movement made Keaka lose his grip and he was swept from his seat on Kamanuwai's back, tumbling through the air.

"Aaaaaaaaaahhhhh—!" Keaka's cry of dismay was cut off by his impact with the water, to be replaced with the burble of his panicked gulping of water. He surfaced frantically, trying to cough and breathe at the same time, waving his arms wildly before he remembered that he actually knew how to swim and did not need to panic. What did worry him as he took a deep breath, however, was that the whirlpool of water draining out of the ʻumeke was pulling him inexorably down, down, down. Keaka shuddered at the thought of being sucked through the gaping crack in the bottom of the ʻumeke and possibly drowning, and *then* plummeting to the earth thousands of feet below where his bones and guts would burst upon impact like an overripe breadfruit.

As he was drawn closer to the bottom, he braced himself mentally and physically for the sudden acceleration that would signal the beginning of his fall through the large hole he had made in the ʻumeke. Keaka almost gasped out all of the air in his lungs in surprise when he came to an abrupt halt, a sharp pain on his rear end. He reached down to feel the source of the pain on his buttocks. It took him a moment to realize what had happened.

His butt had plugged the hole.

He thought he had made a huge crack in the ʻumeke with his mighty throw, but

it turned out that the opening was just the size of his war club Ku‘ipē. The weight of the water and the awkward angle of his body kept Keaka from being able to extricate himself from the hole, however. Keaka laughed bitterly to himself. All his notions about being a hero seemed so silly now. He would die saving his people in perhaps the most ignominious way possible. Drowned, with his butt stuck in a hole he himself had made. Mooning the entire world. He could imagine the elders of his family, gasping with laughter, telling and retelling his story to explain the presence of the bright full moon that hung above them.

As Keaka began to run out of air and he resigned himself to his fate, he felt Liko’s arms wrap around him roughly. Together, they levered Keaka out of the hole. The two of them pushed off from the bottom and back to the surface, where Kamanuwai flipped them up on his back. They lay with their chests heaving, gulping down air. The duck *kwekked* concernedly over them, but save for a huge painful, dark-red bruise on Keaka’s butt, they were uninjured.

When Keaka unwrapped his malo to examine the bruise as best he could, an idea struck him. He stood there holding the sodden barkcloth. He balled up the malo and looked at it closely. “E Liko ē, take off your malo!” Keaka yelled excitedly.

Liko gaped uncomprehendingly at Keaka, but began to unwrap his malo slowly.

“Quick! Quick!” shouted Keaka, and grabbed the end of Liko’s malo, spinning him around in his haste to take it off his confused friend. Once he balled up the two malo together, he dove back into the water before Liko or Kamanuwai could stop him. He swam down with powerful strokes, aided by the downward spiral of the water.

This time he smiled for real, as he shoved the wadded-up malo into the hole, the absorbent barkcloth slowing the draining water to a trickle.

He swam back up to the surface and collapsed on Kamanuwai’s broad back. Liko looked down appraisingly at the now-plugged hole. “Well, that’s not how Māui would have done it, but I think you saved the day.” Keaka regarded Liko silently for a moment, before the two naked, sopping wet friends hugged each other and chuckled in disbelief at all that had taken place.

The exhausted Kamanuwai flew them to Kou. The giant duck did not have enough strength to carry the two of them all the way back, so he set them down several miles out of town. They made their farewells and Keaka and Liko trudged through the mud back to Kou as the sun was slipping below the horizon.

When they walked into the market, no one believed that they had plugged the leak, because the rain still fell. It didn’t help anyone take them seriously that they were both naked and muddy, and Keaka had a giant bruise on his ass.

Liko took offense at their indifference, bellowing, “You should be celebrating Keaka! What he did was genius! Better than just plugging the hole like you ungrateful idiots would have done!” He shouted at them about how the wadded-up malo allowed the water to flow through sporadically, meaning it would rain every so often without them

having to wait on Kūlanihāko‘i anymore. But no one paid attention to his explanations.

Keaka said nothing, merely throwing his arm around Liko and leading him towards their canoe to go back to Honouliuli.

Even when several weeks had passed and Keaka’s mother came on her gossip tour of the district, smiling her gap-toothed smile, to tell him that Old Lady Wahakale told her that Māui had come back from the dead, built wings from banana leaves and coconut fronds, and flapped up into the sky to defeat Kūlanihāko‘i in single combat, ensuring the cycle of rain for the good of all humankind, he just smiled and warmly pressed his nose to his mother’s.

Keaka knew no one would ever tell his story. Wadding up barkcloth to plug a hole the size of his fist wasn’t a heroic way to solve a problem, and in the end it didn’t even make that good of a story, but it was done. Keaka walked over to the next compound to help them with their sweet potato mounds, softly singing one of his favorite songs about Māui.

A Way with Water

Rain Wright

There is a memory I know. The water comes. It lifts and covers. I remember the silence of drowning—the silence and darkness. I remember the smell of drowning. I am tired when I think of the well in California. It comes with smells and tastes. I have drowned twice in my life.

He comes back with the smell of the well. He is the well and the yellow truck.

My father had a yellow truck. I watched his eyes and his truck. I sat on the edge of the seat in his truck. Years later, on a piece of yellow legal-sized paper from a pad, Damon wrote from Gainesville, Florida, saying I used to call him papa—not daddy. He asked if I remembered that I called myself Fluffy Roo. I did. I had never seen his handwriting. I traced my fingers against the curve of letters on the yellow paper. He wrote of karma. He wrote of my mother, calling her bitch, saying maybe it was an Irish-hating-the-English kind of thing. He said he didn't owe us for child support; my cunt of a mother would never see it. *She had never asked for support. She had hidden us away*. He wrote of the letters I should have written him over the years. I don't remember letters I should have written. I remember his feet were long, thin, and white.

Years later, after the letter on yellow pad paper, I heard his voice over the phone. He said he still lived in Florida, but was vague, not giving information in case I wanted to see him. He said Deborah left. He said she killed the neighbors' dogs, read *Madame Bovary*, and left.

My mother watched the yellow truck as well. I know she must have watched it. She must have seen it pull away down the long dirt road when he left to visit his girlfriend, Deborah. Deborah of the long brown hair. Deborah. My mother watched.

Before he left in his yellow truck to visit Deborah, his girlfriend of the long brown hair, he threw a green blanket at my mother. She said he had never given her a gift. That was the first, a blanket woven by Indians. She wrapped it around her shoulders. She watched as his yellow truck pulled away. And then, she placed the chalk in my hand, saying I had to learn to write the letter w. My last name, like his, begins with w. Worry, water, and well begin with w. Write w, she said, and sat on the floor against the wall with the green woven blanket around her shoulders. Write w, she said, and sat on the floor holding her jaw—always the jaw, she said. He always hits me on the jaw.

There is a memory I know. My mother has some sun against her face. My brother crouches, looking, always watching the ground. My sister sits near my mother. Her hand

touches my mother's leg. They are a taste on my tongue, something like deer blood and redwood, a grit and bone taste I hold in the indentions of my teeth. I grind and hold on—these do not leave. They sit in the garden where my sister strangled the small black chick. My mother said it was too much love. Lita hadn't meant to love it too much. Some people love too much. It was love. They sit with the running colors of peacock feathers, the sounds of pigs, and the remembered feel of old baby buggies, and plastic, half-dressed baby dolls with matted hair and dirtied faces. My mother, my brother, and my sister sit always in that small place of sun in the rows of the garden on a small farm in Humboldt County, California.

He moves again, Damon, he moves. No sound, just movement in my memory. He is something slow, as if he knows Debussy or Schubert and *Ava Maria*. As if his feet understand something about sunlight, old remembered banjo notes, nights near the drums in smoke-filled rooms, and piano keys. His feet are pale and too thin, again too thin. I see only them and dust. There is no sound in the small house in Humboldt, California. Silence rolls over the floor. His feet move along the floorboards of the house and stand near the potbelly stove. The stove he roasted chestnuts on one Christmas as I stole chocolate candies shaped like Santa off the Christmas tree. His feet shift. I curl against the ground in my small dress and dark tights. I pull the dress over my knees, making a tent. Lita learned to walk near this potbelly stove. When she was born, her hair was so dark my father called her an Indian. The memory shifts. I look for his records. My brother and I used them as sleds to slide across the floor. He beat my brother; he loved me despite the scratches across the blues and jazz—despite the indignity to BB King. The records are gone. The floorboards are dark. I shift in my dress. My fingers touch a patch of stickiness on my cheek. I reach. I reach. I touch and feel the skin over the arch of his cold feet. There is softness, like clean white paper.

Below the small house, his white feet, and the potbelly stove are the yellow truck and old black car. My father loved old cars. *His father, Belmer Sr., had one of the first new cars off the assembly line after WWII. His father could fix anything—worked for Chrysler, was an angry man*. Below these—below is the well Damon dug. This is the memory I know. I have spoken of this memory before. Imprinted the well on my mind. I know I ate a peanut butter sandwich on white bread and sat near the well. I wore my black-and-white shoes and blue button-up sweater. It was cold in the well. The well was something of redwood tree roots, of old black and brown bears, of rocks, and dark earth, of words spit down, drooled down, thrown around and buried beneath every moving sound of water, the absence of sound—the nothing and everything. I remember drowning. I remember the silence of drowning. I remember my brother's hands as he pulled me up, screaming from the well.

I have drowned twice—the well and the ocean. The second time I drowned, the Pacific Ocean pulled at me.

This water lay warm against the insides of my thighs and spoke of everything

on earth. It took me through the black pebbles, playing with rich old words like music. It said, Miloli‘i is older than you’ll ever know. Miloli‘i that grows with ‘a‘ā knows and remembers every foot that stepped against it. What do you know? Who are you? Where are your people?

It took me as my sister and brother lay naked on the black rocks, eating brown bread with peanut butter and honey. It took me past my mother’s wet Birkenstocks. It took me. My mother called me back. My mother bargained with the Pacific, telling it who I was, calling me her child. Telling me who I was.

Tangles in Organ

Rain Wright

This is no cancer, but as inked he‘e
with arms floating free, comes to her
dancer in water, in fluid form—eight fingers
indent in breast, in arm, against curve and back,
against the ingrain of organs, moving form,
and he‘e paints ache near the sounds of
Rachmaninoff, a violence, a beauty

This is no cancer, but as dim he‘e loops
the mind, forgets the mango that grew
against the old sky in Hōnaunau, sings the pattern
of shadows formed by kukui, papaya, coconut—
weeps for the mango, leaving—cries for
exposed flesh, its rings, its brutal end—
withers against the ancient bark,
and he‘e moves, the resonance of
blood flow, a draining, a mass

This is no cancer, but a darkness as he‘e slides,
dancer in salt against the paths of body,
against the shape of woman—against the life of woman, dances
with eight arms, arrives in the ways of body,
and he‘e brings sleep, chants the measure and time,
with blood, in bone, honoring

This is no cancer, but form as he‘e,
from the heart, tangles in organ

She wants us to let her body remain untouched for seven days and we are to read the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

Fifty-five years. We are lucky. Her skin is lined. I move to the top of the bed. She smiles with a dry mouth. *Water?* Do you still want water when you are dying? Does water make dying easier? I hold up the glass, she closes her eyes as if she sleeps. I reach for her hand. It is dry and soft. The bones will remain behind. She will die. I squeeze her hand remembering it, pushing it against my palm.

"We can't just let her die," Lita is yelling, crying.

Mom doesn't open her eyes. She is leaving soon. I see her soul. I know it is changing color, looking for a place to leave the body. Mom opens her eyes. I watch my brother, Zain, talking softly up against her ear. His son will be born soon. Not soon enough. She will be gone.

"She is my best friend," Lita says. "You can't let her die. You don't understand."

I take her hand and move her outside. I touch her arm.

"You don't understand. You don't. I can't live without her. She is my best friend."

"We need to do this," I say. I see our sister standing alone. She is the youngest

When she was a baby, she fell asleep in her green nightgown against my chest. When she was a baby, our dad, Teddy, would hold her on his shoulder when he sang on stage. She hasn't spoken in hours. Teddy is looking for a way to save mom. He can't sit still. He paces.

"You don't know how this feels. I can't lose my mom," Lita says. I keep my eyes on our sister. She is alone.

Ka iʻa hāhā i kahawai.

Under P-house

Jill Birdsall

Maybe she did walk into the water. But there's always a story to what's lost and then found. This one starts with a girl taken by the strength of a current, pockets of sand and salt guiding her through landscapes of train tracks and hotel porches, weather vanes and chimney pots, all stolen then hidden under the waters of the ever-changing coastline. At times the water took her fast, shot her past storefronts, signs, boats and cars. There were washers and dryers and stoves layered underneath. Sometimes it was green, grey and lavender-blue. There were fish and plants, all kinds of algae and eels on the way down. At the bottom was a neighborhood of rooms. There were kitchens and attics broken from houses, some complete, others just walls, pipes, wires. Inside all of them water was air. Breathing was effortless under water. It was a world underneath a world and when she couldn't catch her breath in her bed at night, Deirdre dropped down until her mother woke her and carried her out of that house.

"We're getting you out of here," her mother told her. "Come on. We'll find a place where you can breathe."

She meant a real place, not in a dream.

Her mother dragged her across the lawn, carried all one-hundred pounds of her. Deirdre's toes brushed the grass as her mother ran with her. She didn't know how but she ran until they dropped, both of them, on the sandbar on the other side of the woods.

"There," her mother said.

She was the one breathing heavily then. She was panting.

Deirdre was quiet.

"Open your eyes," her mother told her.

When her mother opened her own eyes everything was dark. She laid very still and waited and there it was. It woke her, like it tried to wake her all the other nights. She tried to ride it out, like he said, let Deirdre work it out for herself, but she couldn't so she nudged him again. "Don't you hear her?" She heard the pulling, the sound that was dry, scraping, her daughter gasping for air.

"J—!" she said and she pressed his arm yet again.

"What?" he said like she was making something of nothing.

He couldn't hear her.

The house was built tight. No give. When it was hot heat got trapped, cold was

too cold. The insulation was sprayed in all the joints, every wall stiff, unyielding.

"You can breathe out here," her mother told her when she got her out of the house.

Her own breath cooled Deirdre's cheek.

Deirdre felt her mother's fingers combing the hair in back of her neck. She shivered it was so good. Her mother knew the ways to wake her.

"Stay with me," her mother was saying. "Stay with me now. Please," she begged.

The air by the water was moist and dark, the fragrance of honeysuckle heavy. Fireflies lit the sandbar.

"Mum?" Deirdre said looking up at her.

"I'll try," she told her, taking air in a gulp, swallowing the lump like a pearl in her throat.

Her mother wrapped her arms around her.

"You'll be fine. You're fine," she told her. "We'll be fine."

She pressed her hand on Deirdre's collarbone, felt the motion of her daughter's breath, the mantra that accompanied: my girl. In, out. She breathed with her, the same, and this was how unexpected, together, at the edge of the wood they were taken by sleep.

During the night the tide brought water in close enough to cover the sandbar.

By the time the sun rose over the ocean, showing itself first in the water of the bay, the water looked like it was on fire. Deirdre felt the orange and wanted more, her skin prickled cold with the salty mist of waves so much closer than when she'd fallen asleep. She leaned forward. Her shoulder slipped out from under her mother's hand. She looked back at her mother sleeping. She didn't want to disturb her. She didn't want to leave her but the orange on the water was already fading.

Deirdre remembered underneath. She felt a current pulling her. It was taking her. Like the nor'easters she'd known hadn't ended but had left certain passages in the sky and bay where they replayed themselves, tides high, winds wild enough to pull a daughter from her mother. There remained a power to the past, the rooms and houses, the lines of stores that fell under the seawall, all those places gone under in all those storms, nor'easters taking new pieces of coast each one, aging then hiding them, folding them under the wing of a wave. So many skeins of wool, colors like purple and teal, stacks of books half read, their pages dog-eared, pots and pans and lamps without bulbs. There were people underneath, too. You couldn't see them fully until you traveled deeply. Deirdre could already hear them. Their secrets floated up to her:

What is broken is new.

Everything gone comes back.

And so Deirdre's arm pulled the rest of the way from under her mother's, releasing this pressure. She touched her mother's hand, the inside of her sweet palm facing up in the sand. Deirdre kissed her there just before a wave lapped over. The water passed

Deirdre's own ankles and headed up to her own knees. Then another wave, a quiet one. It reached her hips, same time as the sun rising higher too. The water shone deep orange, with bright flecks flashing and breaking its surface. Warmer than the air, it passed Deirdre's waist, chest, circled her neck, eventually covering the crown of her head.

Ka i‘a huli i ka pōhaku.

Bitch Creek

Owen Duffy

Late in the spring of that year, nearly thirty years ago now, when we were very poor and believed that the hard, meaningless work we were doing would lift us to a higher station in life, something happened that, when I think back on it now, brought about the eventual resolution to the problems we were having around that time.

It was on one of those spring mornings, the air cool and the pavement still wet with dew, that a new guy walked up to where we were gathered beside the warehouse doors, ready to start the day's work.

"This weekend I caught my biggest fish," he said, loud enough that even those deep within the warehouse could hear. "A carp," he added, "sixty-two point five pounds."

He stopped and smiled at us. I knew his name was Henry, and I noticed he had a strange accent, which made him sound as if he'd bitten into ripe fruit and was trying to hold the juices in his mouth. He tucked his thumbs in his belt loops and rocked back on his heels. His right hand was missing the two outside fingers, and it formed a peace sign as he stood there. He was about my height and build, which is to say average, but his shoulders had a tired slump to them, and then, there was the whole hand thing.

Henry told us he caught the fish in a marsh not far from there, and as he began to describe it we all nodded. We knew the place. We'd go there sometimes after work with a case of beer and sit and wait for traffic to die down. It sat beside our industrial park in the Meadowlands. To the north, you could see Giants' Stadium, and to the south you could see the dotted line of planes coming in to land at Newark Airport. And then Manhattan itself, not ten miles away, although it may well have been a thousand, shrouded in haze.

Most of us who fished knew the stories we told, and gave leeway to others, as if to forgive our own trespasses beyond the truth. But we all stood there shaking our heads at Henry's story. Nothing could explain why a fish that big was living out there. Garbage was strewn about the marsh and spilled into the swales of weeds: rusted oil drums, shopping carts, old cars even, pocked with bullet holes.

But looking at Henry that day, I wanted to imagine a giant fish living alone in that hole. And so for a moment, I pictured him after he hauled it in, the contest it must've been, Henry pulling at it, the line straining, and finally standing there with that fish flapping in his arms, his body bent backward, his eyes wide and looking up. Laughing.

And I was still thinking about it outside the warehouse at lunch, as Henry continued his story. He told us how he rode with the carp lashed across his bike basket. I

felt myself smiling, and noticed the others were too. It must've been a sight: the big fish head flopping, Henry's sweating, intent face. His knees banging his elbows as he pedaled the little bike. People honked as he passed, yelled out to him. He took the fish into a bait shop, where fisherman were stocking their tackle boxes, and heaved it onto the scale.

The fish was covered in weeds and its scales had a dark bronze cast to them. The store owner told him to get out and to take that sewer trout with him. The customers standing there told the owner that he should mark it down, that it might be a record.

Henry looked at the fish and then the man behind the counter. He could've said something, *should've* said something, but he stood there, an immigrant in filthy clothes, his face smeared with muck and tar. Henry slid the dead fish off the scale and carried it outside, strapped it back to his bike. He pedaled a couple miles before he stopped and tossed it in a spillway.

We all looked down at our folded hands, our legs sprawled under the picnic tables. I can remember this exact moment, the time of year, the way the sun felt on my face. I can see the other men sitting there, their bad teeth, their thinning hair, but their names are lost to me.

"There's no law against you getting a fishing record," one said.

"Yeah, that guy lied," said another.

None of us knew anything about fishing rules. It was a joke. Henry swore and chewed his filthy thumbnail. We knew he was thinking of that fish floating away; he could still almost reach out and grab it. We held our laughter until he stood and crumpled his uneaten lunch and threw it in the trash. He walked, pigeon toed and dragging his boots, into the warehouse. As the others began to laugh, I sat there watching him in the open warehouse doorway, a pale figure, pacing in between the shadows and sunlight.

~ ~ ~

I lived on the bank of a tidal creek during that time, in an old house that had been divided into apartments. The house had once been grand, with its spires and cupolas and its secluded location on the bay. It had once belonged to someone wealthy, but wealth had moved out of the area years ago, as it had from Paterson and Newark when their industry went overseas. By the time I knew it, it was just an old house that sat on the dark side of a hill, where it could decay out of view from the new part of town.

Its whitewashed exterior was covered in a crude exoskeleton of walkways leading to each apartment. The seawall and the winding wooden steps leading down to the water had been eaten away by the rising ocean. The dunes and banks had eroded as well, exposing the rotten posts that supported the house. I lay awake some nights that spring, the waves crashing and the wind beating against the walls, and dreamt of being washed away with it.

I was twenty-four years old, and as I got to know Henry, I learned he was nearing

thirty. That was old for the work we were doing, filling buckets with tar for the state road crews. We had ended up there under vastly different circumstances – me being an over educated fuck-up with everything in the world handed to him, who had fallen, through some sense of bourgeois dissatisfaction, down to where Henry himself had scraped to rise to after coming to our country, from where he sent his money home to his family in hopes that they would join him.

There was a mind numbing rhythm to our work, a repetition that made me feel, if only for a brief time, as if I was no longer human. A tremendous sense of calm would overcome me in such moments, although it was so unconscious I couldn't define it until after the feeling had passed. It felt as if I was simply a machine, toiling away by a smoking boiler, uncounted, invisible; and even if I were to show some sign of life, I was contented to know that nobody would notice, or otherwise could be bothered to care.

After work I wandered and drank and amused myself with things that seemed to have no purpose, although they held a certain magic to me then. I played in the pool hall into the evenings, drinking and talking to any woman who would let me. That tense mating ritual simplified by a sheen of alcohol, which laid bare the whole mystery and explanation of humanity itself and clouds their faces to me now; the fragments of things said and done, things I regret but I suppose I wouldn't change.

Alone with these women I was never satisfied, filled with lust that urged me into their deepest parts, dark and hidden; sometimes in the writhing I got close, but afterwards discovered that I could never truly reach that place, that it had been lost, and even if I were to reach it, it could only be for a moment, as places of beauty are also places of impermanence, and that was the cause of my great resentment.

When bored, I spent my money in the back of a strip club. The pulse of dance music like a knuckle along my spine. Breasts falling from bikini tops. Manicured fingers shoved in my mouth. These girls thought they knew what I wanted, as it was what all men wanted, and this made me feel very alone as they took bills from me in those curtained back rooms, as if plucking another weed and casting it aside.

I met a strange girl that spring in the pool hall. She was sitting alone by the payphone one night, as though at any moment someone might call her away. Her name was Alix. She'd lost her place, she told me, a furnished room on the other side of town. She'd gotten drunk and left the bath running and flooded the place. The landlord found her in the tub, teasing her arm with a piece of glass. She was very young and not very pretty, but her teeth were straight and her hair cut in the way city girls wore it at the time.

I let her stay with me that night, afraid for someone to mistreat her, or worse, for her to become like those who never left the bars, who became as beaten and dreary as their bar tops and gantries. I watched Alix walk casually inside and move about my place, touching things, setting them down, before she curled up on the couch and promptly fell asleep. I placed a blanket over her before I went and fell asleep myself, filled not with lust, but the burden of responsibility.

In the morning, we lay around watching television until our hangovers went away. One commercial made her curl up close to me until it was over. A local electronics salesman named Crazy Eddie, dressed as Santa Claus, was smashing his wares with a sledge hammer. Sparks flew as he hollowed out a television. A VCR bounced and fell and shattered. He was *Smashing Prices*. And his prices were *In-sane*.

I recognized something in Alix as the day wore on. She was completely at ease with me, something I couldn't say about any other woman I'd known until then. But there was something more; a sense that she was at ease, not just with me, but with everyone, and was accustomed to taking from them, and the great art of her taking was not to acknowledge that anything had been taken at all.

And in her face, the clear blue eyes and pink lips and translucent white skin, was a sense of privilege and promise, that she'd never have to live as she had, or with the type of man she and the rest of the world took me to be. That she had also fallen from grace, which she had no intention of reclaiming, but which could be reclaimed with a snap of her fingers if she was so inclined, and so she could bide her time here with a vulgar and complete lack of despair.

Over lunch at a diner that day, I told her nothing of my past, and realized that it had, in only a year, become obscured to others. And yet I shared my belief that something good would happen to us, that this was a phase that we'd emerge from, beatific and enriched. That this was necessary to personal growth, to true ownership of oneself, because a person didn't know what they had until they had given it away. Alix blinked at me and twisted a French fry into her mouth. I admit, these were hard beliefs to hold, and like a lot of things, I eventually let them go.

Alix wandered through the day, distant and remote. She looked out my window at the bay, the dirty tidal creek and the rotting stairway with her arms crossed, as if looking at a painting in a museum. As if she could pass them by as quickly and without judgment, which she wouldn't trouble herself to make over such humble things. While this infuriated me I didn't want her to leave, because I envied her that distance, a distance I had never kept between myself and anyone or anything.

That night, she went out for groceries and cigarettes. A few minutes later came a quiet tapping at the door. I opened it and stood there looking at Henry. He was dressed in his work clothes: baggy Dickies, his belt buckle tipped forward by his gut. His dark t-shirt so threadbare that it looked like a peeling sunburn. I looked out at his bike leaning against mine, a fishing pole propped in the basket.

"See?" His greasy hair swung over his eyes as he lifted his bad hand to show me an ensnarled ball of fishing line. "Do you see how big they are? There are more of those motherfuckers out there!"

He bared his teeth and cracked his neck with his hands, then looked up at me and smiled. I felt my skin tighten. Not in fear, but because there was a detail in him I had overlooked, a craziness I hadn't recognized until he was standing on my doorstep.

"So this is your house." He stamped his feet of dirt and the rotten stairway shook. He pressed his lips together and wagged his head. "I have heard them talking at work, say you are crazy to live here. I see it when I fish Bitch Creek. It seemed big from far away, and here, now that I see it up close, it seems very small in a way."

He looked at the doorframe's flaking white primer. "This was once a grand house, no? Somebody great built this house, and those people are dead now." He put his hand on the doorframe and patted it as he stepped inside and spun around with his head tilted back. "Yes, it was once quite grand."

I peered out the door, fearing Alix would return and be scared away. When I turned, Henry was seating himself on a chair inside the doorway, as if this was all the intrusion he wanted to make. He pulled a half-smoked cigar from his shirt pocket and held up the fishing line again.

"This," he said, dropping the line on the floor, "is no good. The fish back there are too big." He nodded to see if I agreed, which I obliged him by doing. He smiled broadly, then struck a match and lit the cigar stub, letting the ashes fall by his muddy boots as he proceeded to smoke it down to the yellow plastic stem.

"I want to be great, to do something great," he said, jabbing his thumb into his ribs. "To say that Henry was here."

When I sensed he wasn't going to leave, I fetched my bottle of vodka from the kitchen, rinsed out my glass, and offered it to him. He ignored it and talked of his plans to catch a bigger fish than he had the week before. He'd been studying that backwater, the places where other fisherman would never think to go. There were types of fish in them, he whispered, leaning in close, that no man had ever seen, places so secluded that a man could feel as if he had been privileged by God to see. I nodded to seem agreeable, and he mistook this to believe we understood one another on a fundamental level. A few times he stood and grabbed my hand and shook it hard, before sitting back down.

Soon Henry went quiet, his shoulders and even his eyes beginning to slouch. An exhausted appearance washed over him, as if he were a traveler who'd come a long way to deliver his message. I looked at his face, the tar embedded in the creases, the black eyes that seemed to retreat farther back as the minutes passed, as if he was visiting that backwater in his mind. He stared at the floor with his legs crossed and his arms folded across his chest and for a moment I feared he had fallen asleep. I looked through the open doorway, down at the creek, the mouth of it revealing the lights of Staten Island across the bay, where barges moved like slugs across shattered glass.

I awakened to the crack of thunder. I looked up with a start and saw a flash of lightning across the bay and the silhouette of the city. Henry was gone. A smeared cigar butt lay on the floor beside where he had sat. The ball of fishing line beside it.

I finished the vodka alone while rain pelted the open doorway. For a moment I wondered if Henry had taken anything while I slept, but concluded that there was nothing I would've taken myself if given the chance. This is my life, I thought, as midnight came

and went with no sign of Alix, or even some understanding of what she had taken or why I wanted it back, and I kicked the cigar butt out the door and locked it shut.

~ ~ ~

I rode my bike to work early the next morning and found Henry asleep in the warehouse beside the boiler. His fishing tackle and an assortment of fast food wrappers lay scattered by his blanket. I woke him and he stood quickly and began pacing, dust swirling under the light bulb that hung above his head. He crumpled the blanket and took a towel from a shopping bag and wiped his face. Then he ran a comb through his tangled hair, scanning the warehouse as if to assure himself it was still empty.

"They kicked me out," he said without looking at me, instead addressing the boiler. "They said someone needed the place. I said, I pay my rent and I keep to myself. And then he says it's the landlord's family. There is to be no discussion." He wagged his head. "Where will I go, I say, and he says, to the hotel. The fucking hotel is twenty-nine dollars a night!"

He tossed the comb in the bag along with the blanket. "You won't tell?" he asked, and when I said it was no concern of mine, he shook my hand vigorously as he had the night before. As he tucked in his shirt I scanned the rows of crushed soda cans, a coffee can filled to the rim with cigar butts. A penny saver and a Russian to English dictionary, and a picture of what I took to be his family, taped beside the simmering boiler.

"Sitting Bull comes today," Henry said, taking a swig from a bottle of Listerine. Sitting Bull was the head inspector for the state wide operation, who stopped by once a week to find something to needle us about. He was Sioux and from the Dakotas and he never missed an opportunity to mention it.

Henry spat the mouthwash into an open drain. "He says he needs to see my work papers to officially hire me." He wiped his lips. "I don't have them. I bought a round trip ticket here and never went back."

Although it was only a quarter to eight, Henry flipped a switch and the pump on the floor began to shake. A frayed belt turned a wheel. The boiler rumbled and something in its deep inner workings, of which I knew as little as I did my own beating heart, began to groan. Suddenly it was too loud to talk.

After checking gauges and adjusting levers, Henry took a bucket, placed it under a spigot and stepped on a pedal. Steaming black tar filled the bucket. He hammered on the lid and lifted the bucket onto the conveyor. I grabbed the moving bucket and dropped it in the baby crib, the tall, enclosed pallets that held them.

Sitting Bull showed up before lunch. Even working in a noisy corner of the warehouse, we could hear his grumbling truck, a new three quarter-ton pickup with chrome side exhaust stacks and a big shiny boat hitch on the back. And if you didn't hear it, you could see the others along the line, raising an open palm to each man nearest him, and mouthing, "How."

That day I could see it parked outside the warehouse doors, blocking the forklifts from the docks. His window was cracked to let out his cigarette smoke while his air conditioning fogged up the windshield. He was wearing a crisp white polo shirt, his grey hair trimmed short over his ears. His fat, tan face was expressionless as he scratched at a clipboard and talked on his CB radio.

We stood near the boiler all that time, sweat slicked, filling the buckets with tar, pushing them down the conveyor. The buckets would bind and I'd prod them with a broomstick, reaching over my head to wrench them free.

Henry came and helped me unload the freed buckets. His bare arms got smeared with pitch when a lid loosened. He swore and waved his burning arms in the air before we noticed Sitting Bull standing in the doorway. He yelled at a worker for leaning on his blocked forklift, then whistled sharply and signaled for Henry. He slipped off his gloves and nodded at me to take over the machine. I watched him walk slowly across the warehouse, head down, his work pants loose and bunched around his boots.

Sitting Bull turned in the open doorway and spoke to Henry. As Henry nodded and began fishing in his pocket, the CB squelched loudly and Sitting Bull turned and picked it up through the open window of the still idling truck. A minute later he swore, climbed in the truck and tore out of the parking lot with two smoke clouds raging from his exhaust stacks.

"I hate," Henry said when he returned, "being treated like I am a fucking machine." He stopped and looked at me, his black eyes retreating farther and deeper than they had the night before. I nodded, but this time he didn't shake my hand. Finally I asked what he had in his pocket and he pulled out a folded up copy of *MAD Magazine* and threw it aside. He then leaned against the conveyor, resting his head in the crook of his arm a moment before he picked up the hammer and slammed another bucket closed.

~ ~ ~

When Alix never returned after that night, I wondered if she'd ever really been there. If it was all some dream and I'd awakened to find I was truly and irrevocably alone. I envisioned her floating among us in her seemingly untarnished and unaffected state, and realized that her sudden appearance in my life was strange, if not suspect. I wondered if perhaps she was a pawn in my family's attempt to check in on me. Or, if this was a ruse to show me up as her equal, and I felt both admiration and jealousy that she was outplaying me, or had otherwise succeeded in fooling me, and had long since delivered to my family the truth of my condition and whereabouts.

She turned up on my doorstep a few days later. Her hair was cut in a severe fashion, which cast her stone grey eyes into deep relief. In her absence she'd grown striking, beautiful even, and she walked into my apartment with her shoulders held back, hair bristling, strutting as she went to the cabinet and pulled out a bottle of scotch, and before

telling me that she wasn't sure, but she thought she was in love with someone, someone terrible, she poured and tossed back the drink and wiped her lips with a finger.

It's those I came to love most who were lost to me at the outset, unable to see or care who I truly was. Alix set her glass down and leaned against the counter, head bowed, her bare legs stretched out behind her. I should've asked her to leave, or at least where she'd been, who she was in love with, though I was certain it wasn't me, as I had displayed no indifference, had done nothing to hurt or cast her away, as was always the case in those who professed any kind of feeling for me.

No, I thought, looking at her. I don't want to hear a lie or to tell my own. And yet it seemed at that moment there wasn't anywhere else she'd rather be, and I felt that was enough. After she refilled her glass and drank again she held up her finger and walked across the room and out the door while I stood watching it sway in the breeze.

She came in carrying a rope basket of mussels that she proclaimed she'd picked up from a place she knows, and then, her thin arms straining, took a knife and sliced the bag open, dumping the mussels in the sink where she proceeded to scrub them in her bare feet, taking sips from her scotch as she did.

A long, circular talk ensued, where nothing was said and little was revealed, notable only in that I had deluded myself in thinking wrongly of Alix, and that my suspicions lay only in her patent aloofness, of which she was unaware as she smoked and watched the wisps rise to the ceiling, continuing a tale which had no moral or purpose, and did little to fill my image of her, and from which I concluded this was all of her, or at least all she was willing to give.

I awakened that night and saw Alix standing in my bedroom doorway with her arms outstretched. I lifted my head and before I could speak she lifted off her shirt and came and stood beside me. The curtains sailed inward. I could feel the bay tossing and rolling outside the open window, mocking me.

"Shh," she said, but I hadn't said anything; in fact, I was aware at that moment that I may never have actually spoken to her. She pulled one drawstring to my pajamas and the other fell away and then she yanked them down and undressed herself.

She moved atop me with her eyes closed. It was as if she was saying something, inviting me in, and soon I felt myself beating against that deep place where I wished to remain, from where I could see beyond to something no man had touched or ever given name. A place without which we were lost, together, sweating and whimpering, there in that room in that house on that ocean.

~ ~ ~

The following night Henry came to my door holding his fishing rod. He smiled and began stripping line from the reel and running it through his fingers to relax the curl. I leaned against the doorway and tossed back the rest of my drink. Alix had slipped

off that morning at first light and at that moment they had both become reminders that I should go far away, where the banalities of its people and places would be obscured. While Alix had sought a life a train ride from the city, Henry had crossed the ocean, and they had both come to stand on the rotted steps of a crumbling house as if it was a palace and I was its Lord.

"You like it?" Henry stripped off another ten feet of line and nodded towards the water.

I looked over his shoulder and saw, lashed to the lowest wooden post of the stairway, a brand new Boston Whaler. Clamped on its transom was a giant outboard motor, and as I watched, the boat's wide hull thumped against the posts with the beat of the waves.

"Where did you get that?" I asked, studying the boat's polished white exterior, the orange cushioned chairs. The chrome captain's wheel tucked under the canvas Bimini canopy.

"Don't ask." He reeled the straightened line back onto the spool.

I looked across the creek at the adjacent banks, and then beyond the town and the bay. The water tossed and churned, and several miles to the east, the lights of the city glowed beneath a darkening sky.

"So." Henry pulled a cigar from his breast pocket and began working its wrapper. "You want to go for a ride?"

~ ~ ~

As Henry steered the boat his eyes went black and dreamy. He flicked on the running lights and the boat glowed as it slipped through the dark water. The engine purred while we cruised upcreek, turning bends, crossing under rickety wooden walkways, then under large cement bridges, where evening traffic droned. When it seemed too shallow to go on, we tilted the engine to keep the propeller clear of the creek bottom, and pushed our way through a narrow channel, brushing the swales of grass from our faces as we broke through into a broad marsh.

Henry cut the engine and killed the lights as we drifted inward silently. A school of fish cut across the flat, brackish water, something larger giving chase. He looked around and took a deep breath and handed me my rod. He whispered that he'd been wanting to fish this spot for a long time, that he'd seen it from the highway and had since been scoping out the right boat.

He quickly rigged and baited his rod, cast out his line and sat back to light his cigar. I looked over at the console above the rows of gauges and saw that the locked compartment there had been pried open.

"I am just keeping it for the night," Henry said, kicking his feet up on the console. "No one will miss it."

I heard the traffic in the distance, mingled with the noise of water lapping against the hull. The marsh was perfectly black, our peripheral view obscured by the cattails and bulrushes that grew along the shore. Above, the sky was an overturned bowl, the scattered stars dimming as clouds passed.

I cast off my line and looked over at Henry, leaned back in the plush captain's chair, a fishing hat laid over his eyes, his rod resting against the side of the boat.

A few minutes later I watched his rod bend and then go still. Soon it bent again, jiggling this time, before once again going still. Henry didn't stir. I sat back myself, wishing I'd brought something to drink, when suddenly the rod banged against the hull. Henry jerked awake and grabbed the rod and lifted it to his chest as the reel began to sing and the line lifted from the water and began to spool out towards the creek.

Henry lifted the rod tip, his teeth gnashed around the cigar, and with a pumping motion, repeatedly reeled in line and lifted the rod tip as the fish continued its run.

"This is it," he said, grinning at me, "this is the one." He calmly relit his cigar and stood there with it clamped between his teeth, burning down to the plastic filter as the fight drew to a close and the fish began circling the boat. I grabbed a gaff and a flashlight and panned it across the water.

The fish appeared a moment later, a sliver of light, as it made one last dash for the tidal creek. Henry again drew it in and as I stood poised with the light and gaff, the fish—nearly three feet long and close to forty pounds—flopped on its side, gills flared open, and as I reached to snag it I heard a rushing sound and a dark shape filled my eyes, bursting and then thrashing in the water, knocking the gaff from my hand and taking the fish in its jaws before it and the fish disappeared beneath the surface with Henry and I standing there, dripping wet.

Henry reeled in his line and attached to the hook was a large fish head, two bright eyes gazing skyward, grinning, as if in death it had been given the chance to see that which it had not seen in life. Blood dripped down the side of the boat. Henry retrieved the hook from its mouth, which was filled with what looked to be human teeth.

"What was it?" I asked, looking at the water where the dark shape had submerged.

"A sheepshead," he said, looking at the human looking mouth in his hand a moment before he tossed it in the water and then tilted his head back and let out a yell.

~ ~ ~

The phone was ringing when I opened my apartment door. We stamped our wet boots on the mat and peeled off our coats as it continued to ring.

"I think I did it this time," a groggy voice said when I answered. It took me a moment to recognize this voice, this person who kept drifting in and out of my life like a dream. She told me she was at a hospital in the city, the Catholic one. Her voice sounded distant and hollow. As she talked, I kept lifting the phone from my ear and looking at

it, imagining the miles of cable, her human voice traveling along them as an electrical signal.

"Come see me," Alix said. "I'm feeling not so well."

"I'll be there," I said, dragging my shirt sleeve across my face. Then the line went dead.

Henry looked at me as I held the receiver and explained.

"You have to go to her," he said. "She's all alone."

"No," I said, shaking my head. "You don't understand."

"What do I not understand?"

"I don't know her." My hand was trembling, still picturing the giant shark that had risen and disappeared in the water, and then Alix the night before, moving in that same earthen light and shadow.

"Then why did she call you?"

I set the receiver in the cradle and looked at him a long time, standing there under the light. I sat on the arm of the sofa, our reflections in the blank television, displaying a scene that a year before I wouldn't have thought to contrive.

"Then we must go." Henry turned and went out the door and down the stairs. He was still ignoring my protests as we stood on the dock. He jumped in the boat and started the engine and revved it so loud there was no sense in talking. I threw my hands in the air, untethered the boat and jumped in as Henry put it in gear and ran it at full throttle until we reached the end of the creek and entered the frothing bay.

I looked at him, his hair blasting in the wind, his eyes watering. I glanced back at the house, glowing faintly beside the creek, fading in the mist until it was a dim point of light. I turned and the salt spray licked at my cheeks, the engine cavitating as the boat pounded the growing swells. After we hit one so hard that Henry's rod bounced clear of the boat and I was thrown to the floor, I crawled to the bow while Henry held fast to the wheel, his eyes wide open.

We looked at each other, daring the other to yell that we should turn around. Henry crouched behind the wheel and nudged the throttle forward. On the horizon were the silhouettes of shipping vessels, and farther off, a lone light waved across the water. I turned and saw the mouth of the Hudson, the scows, barges and tugboats that were about to surround us. We gazed up at their looming shapes as we crossed their churning wakes, Staten Island receding behind us, Brooklyn appearing through the driving rain. Looking up, it felt for a moment as if the world had inverted and we were falling like pellets from the sky into a black pit whose depths we would soon come to know.

Battery Park was dark except for a few flickering streetlamps. As we drew closer, looking for a place to land, the engine popped up when it hit the rocks. The tide was high and yet the boat bottom began banging against them too. Henry gunned the engine and we scraped inward, and soon we were climbing the mossy, barnacled concrete walls with the boat's ropes in our hands. We led it along the shore and tied it to a streetlamp that

stood on the grass lined banks.

It was raining steadily and the park was empty as we wandered through it, looking to see if anyone had noticed our landing. After a short cab ride, we were standing outside the hospital. Henry sat on a bench near the entrance as I went in, shivering and wet. I listened to the carts moving down the corridor. The antiseptic scent of all the starched uniforms whisking by. I walked to the front desk where the nurse informed me that visiting hours were over for the night.

I leaned against the counter as the clock ticked on the wall. Although this was years ago, it struck me that this was the most modern the world had ever been. I shook my head and cursed. Perhaps I had envisioned myself elsewhere, where I wouldn't have to argue if life was fair, if any of it mattered. Or perhaps I was simply disturbed that I hadn't foreseen this moment any more than I had the flecked linoleum tiles on which I stood, the nurse's habit, her thick black glasses as she eyed me up and down.

I cursed again. The nurse set down her pen and asked if I was there to see the young woman who'd just come in. When I nodded, she picked up the phone and whispered into it, her hand cupped over the receiver.

"Someone will be right down." She set the phone down softly and offered a smile. I felt sorry for her then, that she never could've understood who I was and all it had taken for me to be standing there. I turned and looked into the waiting room, where a few people sat gathered, holding one another's hands. On a television hanging above them the eleven o'clock news played. I watched as it reported that the electronics salesman, Crazy Eddie, had been arrested for drugs, fraud and laundering.

"I knew he really was crazy," someone said. When I turned, a Chaplain was standing by the nurse's station, and after the nurse pointed me out he came and stood before me. Pale and featureless, silver rimmed glasses and thinning grey hair. I felt something in me drop and shatter, something heavy I had been holding up and had not realized I'd been holding at all. He suddenly gripped my hand and told me that Alix had died not an hour before; she had ingested something and had been left outside, unconscious, with nothing but a note of her condition. There had been no time to save her.

It was impossible, of course, as I had just spoken to her. People stared at me from the waiting room, hands clasped to their hearts. They could never have guessed, neither could Crazy Eddie's ruddy and corpulent face frozen on the screen above me, of what had led us to this. That we had once been decent and good, had come seeking something broader and deeper, carrying some belief that there was more to life, that there had to be meaning, but had come to understand that there was none, but instead there was always someone who professed they had found it. As the Chaplain stroked my hand and whispered that He was right in front of me, and had been in front of Alix had she wanted to see Him, I gripped his hand and was washed over in a complete calm, not because we had been saved, but because we had finally given up.

Henry was still sitting on a bench outside the hospital when I came out. I sat down beside him with my hands tucked deep in my coat pockets. He nodded at me and looked back up at the building across the street, the way it rose up into a point in the night sky. We sat there a while, the drizzle falling from a great height beneath the orange light, until it was in the roots of our hair and dripping down our backs.

"Is she okay?"

"She's fine," I said. "Just fine."

Henry nodded slowly, his eyes still aimed on the building, as if aware that I was lying. "At least you tried." He looked at me, then back up at the sky. "At least you came here and you tried."

We didn't speak as we walked towards the park. We hustled despite being tired, as we were expected at work in only a few hours. I felt stunned, dead in my own way, and the images of that night still play in my head, and are never as flat and clear as I'd like them to be. We hurried through the park, moving from light to shadow and back again, unafraid of the darkness and the strange elements that lingered there at night.

When we got to the end of the park, we stopped and looked down at the bare rocks in the place where the boat had been parked. The tide had gone out rapidly and the lamp the boat had been tied to was uprooted and bent, the rope snapped. We watched its remnants laying limp on the rocks, being lifted and dropped by the shifting water.

We didn't speak, but stood there open mouthed, gazing north and south along the dark and quiet river. Then Henry looked over at me. He pressed his bad hand to his lips and bent over, his hands on his knees. His body shuddered and twitched and a moment later he let out a rolling laugh that echoed through the park.

"The boat." He looked up at me, wiping away his tears between gasps. "It was Sitting Bull's."

~ ~ ~

I didn't know it that night, but within a week Henry would be gone. One day, without explanation, he just wasn't there. No one at work seemed to mind his sudden absence, and although it seemed strange even to me, I didn't either. In a way, I suppose I was glad. He reminded me of Alix, of all the bad in me, and all the good in him that I would never be. But I'd smile when I'd see Sitting Bull parked out there in his big white truck, blocking the loading dock, fogging up his windows. Or the morning the new guy asked who it was in the picture that was taped to the wall beside the boiler.

"It's no one," I said, slipping the picture in my back pocket, and pointing him towards the rack of buckets that were waiting to be filled.

The last time I saw Henry, the work trucks were backed up at the loading docks. We were loading the palettes of tar on them, the fluid that mended the state roads. The potholes were never marked, they were never counted. Just filled without record, without

afterthought. It's still strange to drive and know that all of that patching tar had passed through our hands. That the work we did at that time was always under me.

Henry was working steadily that day until he stopped and sat down on one of the baby cribs. Trucks started honking, men started yelling. He was lighting a cigar with his tar covered hands when the tip of his finger caught fire. A white plume of light. He didn't swat it out, he sat there and pointed his flaming finger at them, closed his eyes and smiled.

The steps leading from the creek to the house where I lived didn't wash away. I suppose this disappointed me fundamentally, and coupled with the fact that it hadn't taken me with it, I began looking for somewhere new. But before I did, I looked in the bedroom some nights coming home, thinking about Alix, wondering if I could've saved her. I sat in the kitchen drinking too much, waiting for someone to knock on the door, but no one ever did.

I thought of going to find Henry, to see what had happened to him. He had lived nearby in an apartment with a view that overlooked an alley before he had been kicked out. But things were changing for me, and as I moved on I suppose I forgot about Henry, as I'm sure, wherever he was, he had forgotten about me.

I only came to know the neighborhood he had lived in many years later. A realization came over me when I first saw it, that I was walking through a place that I had theretofore only imagined. And remembering Henry, I began to glow with an inexplicable warmth, as if a shadowed inner part of me had suddenly filled with light. The neighborhood looked as I had always pictured it, its old buildings and narrow streets, its restaurants serving food that was twice displaced. Cuban-Portuguese. Chinese-Japanese. Greek-Sicilian. *Comida*, a small man called at me from his restaurant doorway, and he led me inside a bustling restaurant and had his uniformed men ladle me soup and pour wine and serve me fresh bread and a meal that may have been the best I ever tasted.

As I was finishing up the last of it, concerned now only with where I was expected next, and what this delay had cost me, a man entered the restaurant and began looking around. Slump shouldered, grey haired, clean khaki pants bagged around his sneakers. He wore a white sweatshirt with a cartoon horse on it, and was carrying two heavy plastic shopping bags. I had a feeling that he was about to start talking to me, or ask for money, and I looked away. He walked through the front parlor as if looking for something, money perhaps, or something he had lost. No one else, not the bartender or the waitstaff seemed to notice him, even as he passed right before them. The man looked up from the floor and our eyes met briefly and then he turned and went out the door. As I signed for the check, I watched him tentatively cross the street and round a corner.

After I left the restaurant I began to follow after him. People watched as I hurried across the busy street, trailing him by a block. I don't know what my intentions were if I was to catch up with him, but I can only say that I felt compelled to better see and understand this man. That the sight of him, and my initial reaction to avoid him, had filled me

with both a sadness and guilt that I hadn't felt since I was young and those feelings were new to me.

Soon the man was just ahead of me, making small but quick steps along the sidewalk, and as I hurried after him I watched him turn a corner. When I rounded it myself a moment later, I saw the street was empty of people and cars, just a row of scaffolding and construction trucks parked outside a building being rehabbed.

A squirrel chattered at me from a tree. I looked up at it and then turned back from where I'd come. I then proceeded down the quiet street, the din of traffic fading behind me. I glanced in a nearby doorway and saw my reflection, flustered and sweating, in its cracked glass. Inside I saw the bank of brass mailboxes, the long tiled hallway, and in its far reaches, two large shopping bags and the old man I had seen in the restaurant, standing in a seam of light, where he had paused to rest his hands and catch his breath and a glimpse of the man who had been chasing after him.

Wai ‘ōpū nui.

Thirst

Ashley Davidson

The man bought the rifle to scare off the ragtag herds of javelina that occasionally wander through Monica and Dustin's subdivision. The javelina fan out around a swimming pool and lower their snouts to drink, concentric rings expanding across the chlorinated blue surface. A few weeks ago, this man, a neighbor of Monica and Dustin's one cul-de-sac over, to whom they'd never actually spoken, shot his wife. The wife, like Stacy's friend Monica herself, was pregnant, although not visibly so; they only found that part out later. The woman might not have known it yet herself.

There are still only a few dozen residents in the subdivision, designed to house two thousand. Stacy imagines these lone neighbors stumbling out into the streets after the shooting, squinting, dazed, like survivors of some freakish supernatural disaster—a microburst, a blast of irradiating white light.

Last year, Stacy drove to Monica and Dustin's housewarming in this same unfinished subdivision, way out in the boonies, past Buckeye even, 200-and-somethingth street. The house was a foreclosure, a palatial stucco two-story with a clay tile roof and a soaring pillared entryway. Inside, the grey marble was slick and cool; even hushed voices skipped across it like rocks. Stacy remembers their old furniture looked shabby, dwarfed by the cathedral ceilings—something so gaudy and depressing about all that space. And yet. She'd spent most of the visit trying to shake the feeling that she'd lost something—a credit card, an earring, some mislaid item that, by its absence, threw her off balance. Behind the house was a paved street lined with empty lots. There was a sprinkler system, a green lawn, a pool shaped like a kidney bean, the kind of neighborhood that, seen from the air, appears orderly, comforting in its sameness.

She'd trailed her fingers along the white walls of the hallway as Monica gave the house tour and imagined herself living here instead. She imagined the pad of Dustin's bare feet, the huff of his breath in the half-dark.

"What do you think, Stace?" Monica asked. The other guests had already gone back downstairs. It was just the two of them, looking out the window of the master bath at the distant highway, worn-down trenches of arroyos crisscrossing empty scrubland.

"Big," Stacy said.

"Huge." Monica smiled. Stacy could see she was a little anxious. She needed someone to tell her: everything will be okay.

"It's nice," Stacy said. "Really nice." In the mirror doors of the bathroom closet

she'd caught sight of a hundred selves turning to face a hundred Monicas.

"Thanks," Monica said, relieved. "It's a lot of house."

Today, a full year later, the subdivision remains unfinished. The builder went under a few months before Monica and Dustin bought their house. *Went under* is exactly how Monica had phrased it, as though Stacy were to picture the man sinking, one hand reaching for the fading light, here where the air is so dry swimming pools must be refilled every third day, where Stacy has only to tighten her fist to split the parched skin of her knuckles, lick her lips and wait ten minutes to taste blood.

She coasts along the wide, vacant streets of the subdivision, blacktop barely used. She's wearing the clothes she taught in, the armpits of her red polo shirt and the inner waistband of her chinos sweat-soaked. New teachers complain that the uniform makes them look like Target employees, but Stacy is used to it. There are thirty-plus kids in a class and the air-conditioning in the portables can't handle that many bodies, even small ones, all of them producing heat. April and already in the hundreds. Heat radiates up from the asphalt. In the afternoons, she wades shin-deep through it to get to her car.

Stacy is thirty, but part of her is still waiting for her real life to start and of course that real life would begin with a fresh change of clothes. She's seen Dustin only a few times since the housewarming, when he came to carnival or to the enchilada fundraiser at the school where she and Monica teach. This distance has helped some.

It's brown out here, nothing but teddy bear cholla and sagebrush, an hour from downtown Phoenix. Stacy reads the street names aloud: Palm Oasis, Blue Sky Way, Sunshine Beach, as if to suggest the distant whir is not the highway at all, but the soothing, drowsy ocean. Beside her in the empty passenger seat is a pink gift bag containing a crocheted blanket and two ice cream cone baby rattles. The pinch-pots the first-graders made shift collectively, rattling against each other in a shallow cardboard box in the backseat, waiting to be fired in the kiln at the high school. Stacy leans over the steering wheel to read the address numbers, unnecessary; only one house on the block is occupied.

His work truck is parked on the street, *Dusty's Lock and Key* stenciled on the side panels, a half dozen other cars. Stacy notices the load of bleached gravel he's spread over the front yard to save on water. Monica stopped working last month, earlier than planned. She's petite, her wrists tiny, and even at twenty-four weeks the pregnancy had appeared enormous. She waddled, sighing when settling into chairs, her bangs ruffling in the current of air blown up from her bottom lip. She's stayed home since her leave of absence started. It seems creepy to Stacy, to spend all day alone out here, one street away from where the man shot his wife and was led from the house, grim and penitent, old before his time.

Stacy hears women's voices over the church echo of the doorbell, but it's Dustin who opens the door in a faded red ball cap and paint-splattered Levi's. He has grown a thick dark beard out of season, as though to appear more fatherly. Stacy smiles to cover the little stab of tenderness she feels for him scratching his beard now, self-conscious of it.

"Hey, Stace," he says, as if she still lives next door, though she hasn't seen him in almost four months. "Weren't sure you were gonna make it."

Dustin lived in the apartment beside Stacy's for almost three years before he and Monica bought this house. Stacy used to meet him on the stairs; they were outdoor stairs, inlaid with smooth pebbles. If Dustin ascended them quickly, the sound of his work boots striking the concrete slabs would ring out, reverberating against the side of their building. Once, he helped Stacy carry up a dining room table, setting each chair down carefully to avoid scuffing her linoleum and then brushing off the backs, as if dusting the shoulders of a little boy to make him look respectable. At one point, Stacy had even locked herself out of her car. It seemed so obvious a gesture and yet, after retrieving her keys, he pocketed her twenty dollars easily, made no show of refusal. If he stood on the landing to have a cigarette, Stacy invented reasons to go out. He is soft spoken, but back then his voice lingered like smoke in the air. He quit when he moved in with Monica—these were the sort of mundane details Monica relayed to Stacy in the lounge or standing around on recess duty: small, awful weights she fastened to Stacy's wrists and ankles, cinching the knots.

Before all this, before Monica and Dustin ever knew each other, Stacy had known them both separately. Stacy had watched through her peephole as Dustin led other women up the stairs, women who twirled, dipped back over his arm, ending a long and complicated dance.

Today, Monica is in the den at the back of the house, where the sliding glass door would look out on the pool, if the curtains weren't drawn against the heat. There are new sofas, large and white, and Monica's mother, aunts, cousins, old friends of hers from high school—all women closer to Monica than Stacy is, even after eight years in the adjacent portable. Monica's thick auburn hair is swept back in a black exercise headband. Her face is plump. The slits in the sleeves of her beaded turquoise blouse expose pale, freckled arms. The blouse stretches tightly over her large belly, her skin moist when Stacy bends to hug her, as if she has been teaching in the portables all day too.

Stacy helps Dustin arrange trays of bacon-wrapped dates. He asks about school, humming under his breath as she answers. He's polite, friendly, but Stacy senses his attention is elsewhere, straining to catch Monica's voice in the next room.

The day Stacy introduced them in the parking lot of her apartment complex, she'd just loaned Monica a sky-blue peasant dress. It billowed in the rippling heat. They were on their way out, headed for the movies, where it would be cool, Dustin just coming home. The way he looked at Monica, Stacy wished she'd been wearing the dress instead, wished the crocheted neckline had revealed honeycombs of her own skin. It was Monica who teased Stacy about him that day, until they got to the theatre, a huge multiplex, bigger than a Wal-mart.

It took him a few days. When Stacy finally opened the door, she'd felt buoyed by the warm currents of air flooding in to equalize the air-conditioned chill. She'd been wearing slippers and always returned to the fact of them, ratty pink terry-cloth, as if they

were partially to blame. Dustin looked nervous, standing there.

In the den, Stacy hears Monica retelling the story of the man who shot his pregnant wife as she emerged from the master bath upstairs, in a house identical to this one. Stacy imagines curtains of steam rising behind her, towel turbaned around her hair, her knitted brow, the split second of confusion. Maybe they had debts. Maybe she'd been carrying on with a married man from another cul-de-sac—meeting him at night in one of the abandoned houses, the air inside it stale, only slightly cooler than outside, their breathing amplified by its bareness, the wife's low moans echoing through the cavernous rooms.

Dustin goes out to grill on the patio. Stacy brings him the metal platter; a wedding gift, it catches bright coins of sunlight. He's been drilling holes around the pool to install a wrought iron fence. They've drained it—it costs too much to maintain—but the baby could still fall in. Stacy descends the steps into the empty concrete basin, walking down the slope to the deep end, arms extended, balancing one foot in front of the other as if very high off the ground instead of underneath it.

Dustin tells her about the flash flood a few weeks ago. How the banks of the arroyos turned green with stickyweed and bullheads, until the moisture evaporated and the dirt split and curled. People forget how much is alive out here. Before he drained the pool, he'd skimmed off scorpions, millipedes, drowned kangaroo rats. A lone, mangy coyote once waded in to drink. Stacy imagines the coyote trailing off across the vacant lots: glassy-eyed, haggard, the last of its pack.

Dustin lifts black-striped chicken breasts and turkey burgers off the grill with tongs and the platter buckles, Stacy adjusting the placement of her hands. Less than a foot separates them. There's the hiss of grease, the smoky heat rising off the grill only slightly hotter than the air. She looks straight into the grizzle of beard, the place on his throat where it smoothes out into skin. If he lifted his eyes, he would see what has been there from the beginning, from the very first day they passed each other on the stairs outside the apartment complex.

"You can take those in," he says. "Thanks, Stace."

Pink paper plates announce *baby*, with matching cups and napkins. Stacy holds her burger with both hands, wipes her fingers, raises lemonade to her chapped lips, each movement a blaring, self-congratulatory reminder: *baby! baby! baby!*

They've closed off some of the extra rooms to save on cooling bills. They like living out here. Quiet, private. Stacy wonders how they can afford it on Dustin's income. They've chosen Ruby as the name.

Stacy thinks about the house where the man shot his wife. It stands empty now, like the others, but eventually, once the hardened splatters have been scraped off the walls, shattered mirrors replaced, grout scrubbed down with bleach, it will appear normal but for the steam of its invisible past.

Dustin stands to gather plates, the sort of routine thoughtfulness Monica no longer notices, no longer even considers worthy of mention. The veins on the backs of his hands

are swollen from working outside in the heat. From where she's sitting, sinking into a white chenille blanket thrown over the sofa, Stacy sees him press the plates down inside the kitchen trash, tie up the bag and haul it out.

Monica unwraps diaper bags, teething rings, a pair of string underwear small as a slingshot. The women cackle. Stacy watches Monica's face through the joke gifts: a bottle of Advil the size of a mason jar, earplugs. If the cattiness of the gifts affects her, there's no outward sign of it. The skin at the corners of Monica's eyes pinches, something Stacy has not noticed before—maybe it's the baby weight. Monica shakes the ice cream cone maracas and whips her head to one side, a flash of auburn hair. This is what Dustin likes: Monica's flair, the red blotches that bloom on her neck and chest when she's upset. She's the type of woman who would surge forward to meet a deer rifle: *Go ahead. Here I am*. She'd pull open her robe.

Stacy traces her fingertip along the wall, laughter echoing through the bottom story of the house. The stairs are carpeted, absorbing the clomp of her ergonomic clogs. The stairwell is crowded with wedding photos: Monica's head thrown back in riotous laughter. In the background, Stacy stares out from a table of bridesmaids, her eyes squinty and deep-set, holding a fancy stick of crystallized rock candy for sweetening iced tea. The candy stirrers had caught the light like objects of geological value and Stacy had studied hers through the inevitable locksmithing metaphors: the heart a safe, a vault, blah, blah; it required patience, finesse, a stethoscopic ear. Dustin toasted her for introducing them and Monica sitting at the banquet table beside him went momentarily out of focus, pins-and-needles prickling up Stacy's spine. The guests all turned to acknowledge her then, as if she'd held the door for them, retrieved a fallen coin.

It's warmer upstairs. Monica and Dustin's bedroom door is cracked. Stacy reaches out a full arm's length and pushes it the rest of the way open, as if this is the thing she has spent three years working up the courage to do. The bed is loaded with ruffled pillows, like a fake bedroom on display in a JC Penney's. Stacy walks into the master bath, runs the faucet, traces a crack in the cheap generic bar of soap beside the sink, steps up to regard her repeated reflection. She lifts her shirt, examines the mosquito bites across her lower back. She imagines the wife of the man one cul-de-sac over examining herself this way, checking for softness in her stomach or the backs of her thighs, until, satisfied, Stacy lets her shirt drop down again. The upstairs hallway is dim, lines of light leaking out from under the doors, carpet plush and white. There's a softness up here Stacy had forgotten, insulating it from the voices downstairs, which rattle in the air ducts.

The coolness of the first door handle is surprising. It's a small room, white, empty. The second door opens into a wallpaper of pastel-colored balloons. There's a crib, a farm-animal mobile, a small yellow changing table.

Stacy had rummaged through her purse in the entryway of her apartment, flustered, until she found a pen. *Monica* she scribbled on the back of a crinkled receipt. Dustin had stood there a minute, as if he wanted to say something besides *thanks*, to

explain: some things, we can't explain how our bodies know them. *I have to go*, she said, grabbing her purse.

She went downstairs and got in her car. Her hands were shaking. She would get supplies for the third-grade peacock project. She felt better, making the list in her head: paper plates, glitter, blue and green feathers, but once she got to the store she stood at the head of an aisle, gripping the cart handle.

Excuse me, a man asked. She looked down at her school clothes, realizing only then that she had forgotten to change. Unspeaking, she'd led the man to the toothpaste aisle, walking in front of him, scanning the shelves until she located the brand he wanted. *Thank you*, he said. *I never would have found it myself.*

The night of the cakewalk, the first time Monica brought Dustin to the school, they folded up cafeteria tables and marked the floor with masking tape. The gym filled with cakewalk music, with the bumbling vibration of the popcorn cart and the squeak of sneaker rubber streaking across waxed floors. Stacy tore tickets off a wheel, watched Monica touch Dustin's wrist lightly, slide her fingers up his forearm to the elbow. Children thrust forward dollar bills, Stacy struggling to make out their voices, the tear of the perforated tickets suddenly very loud.

Dustin held up a football cake stitched with black icing and mimed lobbing it. Monica crossed her wrists in front of her, clutching the invisible pigskin to her chest. Dustin smiled, as if she'd caught a real cake.

"You don't mind, do you Stace?" Monica had whispered, as if she were simply borrowing her chapstick, something small and trivial that could be easily replaced.

Of course, Stacy couldn't admit she'd seen them already, hushed and clumsy on the landing.

Every morning, Stacy passes Monica's portable on the way to her own. At first, hunched over her purse, fumbling for her keys, she'd glance up and see the two of them leaning against the sun-faded siding. She'd have to look up a second time to make them vanish. It happens less now, since the long-term sub started. Sometimes it's only Dustin standing there, smoking the cigarettes he gave up.

"Stace?" Dustin asks.

She turns from the window, confused, vision still imprinted with the brightness of the scene she's been staring absently down on: white gravel, cookie-cutter houses, desert. His face softens, but she doesn't wipe her eyes or duck her head to dab them with her sleeve.

"I'm not finished," he says finally, running his palm along a wallpaper seam. "I still have to do the trim."

Light filters through the angled slats of the blinds, illuminating dust mites stirring in the air between them.

"Which house was it?" she asks. "The guy who shot his wife?"

"That one," he says, coming closer. The house's hedge is completely desiccated: a

rattletrap of oily leaves gone papery brown. “Over there.”

He smells of barbecue smoke. His forearm grazes her elbow—he doesn’t even seem to register it, but the touch makes her draw herself upright.

“It still doesn’t seem real,” he says, scanning the room.

“Having a kid?” she asks.

He nods and the hairs at the back of her neck prickle with sudden awareness: of the warmth of his body in the stuffy room, of a distant throaty ticking in the shafts of the closed-off air vents, of the friction, his palm running back and forth along the sanded railing of the crib.

“It isn’t yet,” she says.

“It is though, Stace.” His voice is gentle, but there is also a firmness, a finality. “It is.”

She needs a task: hold this popsicle stick in place the time it takes to squeeze a line of glue. Show me where the toothpaste is. She wants to ask Dustin what the man was thinking. If he’d felt trapped or if he’d simply imagined his life differently. No doubt, that morning, examining her fleshy abdomen in the mirror, the wife had also imagined things otherwise, the way we sometimes will.

Whale Story

Rajiv Mohabir

I. Matsya

> And having sat thusly, I will guide you across the oceans.
> —Vishnu in *Krishna* by Ramanand Sagar

It's not my fault demons
steal Vedas from your mouth
as you sleep. If you forget
your prayers how will you float?

Breathing air I come
to point out the moon. Don't pack
grains for this voyage only.
Pack folksongs. If you capsize

your lungs will seize up,
will catch fire of salt and sputter.
All about you the ghost arms
of drowned men try

to submerge you, beg you to cool
their tongues dry
and white with hunger.
Their fired iron and steel hooks,

will scald your skin
like undying sun.
Tie your vessel to my horn
and offer garlands

to the sea, your own name
a mantra to the god
of exile, the ruler of life.
One day your children

will crack coconuts,
grind chutney from the tropic's
plankton bloom, and beckon
demons to their gold.

II. Cetus

Andromeda,
It's wise to hallucinate
as you await the beast
that will devour you.
The cetacean's a storm
whose eye withstands
the pressure of diving
nose first into the abyss.
Because of pride
the innocent are chained
to rocks and sacrificed.
Even if you survive
thus betrayed by your mother
to the sea-god, how
could you possibly return
home? Your patria
will strip away your caste.
Or perhaps a savior
with skin like a ghost
will smite the whale
into mere phantasm.
You are obsessed with
reentering the womb
once it spits you out;
there's no return from
exile so why not destroy
every beauty you find?

III. Bake-kujira

Imagine, a wraith—beautiful
and terrible—
rises from the brine.

It's the skeleton of a baleen
whale whalers shoot iron hooks

into. A phantom in calcium,
their spears pass through its queer apparition

which is defleshed, picked to the ghost.

O god of bones,

is it the micro-plastic, the hunt,
or radiation that causes
you to rise up from the grave,

to unsettle rivers and tide, harrowing
and intent on prophecy?

Fish and birds, warped and
misshapen
attend you.

Plastic gouges their guts;
they rot as albatrosses on Midway
and dry conjoined

as grey whales on a Baja beach.

Every living intestine fills with
radioactive nuclides.

O Kujira, forgive me

for lancing your lung with my silence:

an auto-annihilation
from which
none can be revived.

IV. Leviathan

> Can you fill its hide with harpoons
> or its head with fishing spears?
> —Bible: Job 41:7

O God of Abraham, Isaac, of Jacob,
I lance this monster
through the nose, lasso its tongue
with rope, and carve its flesh
into the shape of a Bible.

May your will be done.

I've seen the sea transform
from coral to crimson, gallons
and gallons of gore frothing
in the thrash of fluke and harpoon;
the final sputter of hellfire.
You crush the mighty heads
with just one blink.

Your name be praised
as the walls of Jericho
tumble into dust.

O God of eternal resource,
as I am your servant, give to me
loyal slaves, give to your devoted
always, a dark body to spear,
and land thirsty for conquering.

V. Niho Lei Palaoa

> ʻO luna, ʻo lalo, ʻo uka, ʻo kai, ʻo ka palaoa pae—no ke aliʻi ia.
> *Above, below, the upland, the lowland, the whale that washes ashore—all belong to the chief.*
>
> Hanau ka Palaoa noho i kai.
> *Born is the Odontoceti living in the sea.*
> —Kumulipo

Who controls the bone
carved into a tongue
and strung about your neck
with braids of human hair
is true aliʻi—a ruler who controlled
the corpses of beached whales.
They posses the tooth-ivory,
this kino lau, this carved palaoa,
one bodily form of sea-god Kanaloa,
giving strength to their speech,
tidal force to their decree.

Yet how can power remain
when today, during RIMPAC
in the bay, you hear the sonar pulse
drive melon-headed whales to scrape
their tonnage against the fringe
reef, bleeding from their ears,
to wither on the sands
of the "most beautiful beach
the world over." Since

the kapu has been broken,
the illegal overthrow of American
war-lust, lava rocks carted
to the continent and all the whales
fished almost to extinction,
navy, army, and methamphetamine
tongues speak the loudest

and control all the beaches
with dependency on a coin
embossed with presidents
from sea to shining Waikīkī.

VI. Dhan-Nun (Yunus, sallallahu wasallam)

> Then the fish swallowed him, while he was blameworthy.
> —Al-Qur'an 37: 142

Darkness thrummed within,
rahimhuallah, may Allah be merciful,

a djin in the heart of the whale.
I begged the seamen, *Heft this body;*

hurl me into the sea. My prayer
a chord of light. But first I must atone;

stomach acid must scald
my skin. I must come face

to face with night, swallowed whole.
I must write the poem

where I admit running away
with the neighbor boy, packing

a bottle of gin and condoms.
I must admit my failures as a son:

I left my father alone,
without an heir; I never used

the condoms. I break my name
in two, *-maha -bir*, holding

onto *bir*, the part that means *semen*.

The Secret State of Everything

Jéanpaul Ferro

We came by moonlight to Cuba,
washed up on her shores with the giant catfish,
drunk and fragrant like rinds,

wedged between each other and the sands,
your long hair, wet, adorned in the color of delicate lemons,
your kiss a topaz held against the morning light,

pinned against each other like we are cuffed together,
our every move sticky and blistering in the heat,
two prisoners, caught on this island where one cannot change,

swim, you think;

go on and on forever, I think;

we scream, but no one hears our pleas,

you squeeze my hand, and we swallow everything together,
merging, wrangling back against the waves (to hide where
nothing can be seen).

To Wet Your Scales

Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio

i remember your shedding
skin, ways
your scales fell to the floor.
With one hand, i pull you,
tighten my flame to
your silhouette. i want to
inhale these pieces
before they fall, before the new
body is covered, dazzling.
        Shedding yesterdays like water.
i must be prepared to shift.
hope & hang
my fire to dry your
flakes, iridescent,
shaking.
        Fall to your feet.
The closer i come, the more you dance.
How do i touch you &
not evaporate?
How am i inside without
taking?

Who, moi

Julia Wieting

> "Orlando naturally loved solitary places, vast views, and to feel himself for ever and ever and ever alone."
> —V. Woolf, *Orlando*

I'll change my sex at will for you.
I'll semi-colon my tale into body
and era according to your tastes.

I'll kiss her, and him, and land on your plate for dinner.
I'll wait for the right month
to catch who you are, this moon.

I'll wait for the time you are in residence.
I'll await your mana's making me
edible.

When that night comes I'll wait, and die
expecting the right mouth.
I'll wait, and spawn.

I'll wait, and enter this gate because the gate is here.
I'll wait, because waiting is swimming,

and because fish don't drown in water like women do.

1. (a) *Tó hajíleehé*, an origin of water, a beginning of place, submerge under the carving cliff sides and receding salt deposits. Ochre bound etchings of silt solidifying bone into existence; calcifying giants among epithelium giants cast shadows along the barren sifting landscape. Dominance is the leaden course. Turning into men.

1. (b) *Kughą'bíkiné*, dawdling glaciers hover in currents, building houses in the north; another origin of place migrates downward into cavernous canyons billions of years later. Silt shale deposits outline geological generation of lifecycles, inurement marking of impressing collapse; posing angels.

Shi

1. (c) *Túduubits'ą́ídaa*, this origin has evidence of stolen ice particulates obfuscate evaporating ghosts, whirling toward vociferous blues. Insurmountable tears pool beneath sacred crater rims like diaphanous film remembering edges. Solidifying water mirrors each among endless skies of twinkling ghosts.

1. (d) *Ts'áł*, is everlasting origin begin and ends with placenta. Water way cuts through rock, cuts through birth canal, over time like universal expansion. Swirling evolution of dust gas nest inside waiting lung; expel breath, dispel gasp; compelling tethering cries during forgotten moment of death, quiet.

2 (a) Standing alone before a mirror; age seven. A tan towel clasps to scalp, lop strand of mock hair, naked with tucking genitals between thighs, head tilting slightly upwards, arms gestural towards ceiling reaching with cringing fingers, peeking occasionally at the natural pose and to see if anyone was coming.

2 (b) It is past evening time, ten years old, still afraid of the showering water. Fridge droplets hammer constricting skin cells. Gaping mouth forces no utterance inside the slight drowning squeak wrought by cascading wash. Castigate gush diagnoses an *immunological rejection to the non-self, tissue*.

Shi

2 (c) Thirteen years old there were already names; *faggot, queer, sissy, girlie, gay, homo, cock-sucker, fudge-packer, tinker-bell, nelly, freak, stick licker, butt muncher, feather chaser, perve, butt pirate, fruit cake, pansy, he-she, ass vandal, fairy, back door bandit, brownie scout, puff,* beaten up and often times dead.

2 (d) Sitting alone on a hillside cross-legged, below thick Ponderosa pine tree line, at the peak of summer, six-teen, hand gently pressing upon a secret signal crotch. Familiar church parishioner pulls up to public park bathroom. Eyes connect, remaining heart beat trappings escalating into miniscule prayers.

3 (a) backward slump, limp on a rotten spruce log, behind the blue house, Carrizo. Suffusive pink liquescent swill like kerosene, black seethe label agitating against clear on clear. Somewhere inside inebriation misplaces opulence towards the woman in white paste clay. Like a flicker, her face captures light, hazy eye light.

3 (b) which part of a tree best resembles a body part intended for amputation? Every weekend over the course of summer; oak, cedar and juniper wood is cut, gathered and stacked. At summer's end a top a stack, a faggot preens a blade, limb separates, delicate cambium spray smattering red beads unto dry dusting earth.

Shi

3 (c) A slick melanin sheet lacquers stainless steel screen; sometimes ensnaring particle board; unescapable cubical procuring no light, glinting light; unprotecting; anonymous slippery coition. Secrets protrude through indistinguishable [G] holes expelling lascivious groans, impetuous abate.

3 (d) ixxxxxxy loss
bilateral symmetry

mirroring halves

adjoining axis

apposing default

birth separation

4 (a)

‘isdzáą *haastí*

time

-im

-memorial

ndéʔisdzán *nádleehí*

4 (b)

daaneest’ągu,

early autumn

guusts’iidi,

number seven

1971

embryonic

whirling spider

Shi

4 (c)

[F M J]

ripening first season

number sixteen

2001

‘it’ede’ *‘ishkįye’*

inseparable

dziike

4 (d)

? <->

≠ X

Diné Bizaad (Navajo Language):

Tó hajíleehé: place where water comes from (well or spring), name of Diné (Navajo) tribal location in New Mexico, where my father was from

nádleehí: name for man who acts like a woman or continually transforming (LGBTQI term)

Ndé Bizaa (Mescalero Apache Language):

Shi: me or mine

Kughą'bíkiné: house made of ice, place of origin or emergence in Mescalero Apache culture

Túduubits'ąlídaa: near a large body of water that is endless, place of origin or emergence in Mescalero Apache culture

Ts'ál: Apache cradle to carry infants

'isdzáą: woman

haastí: man

*ndé**ʔ**'isdzán*: name for man who acts like a woman (LGBTQI term)

daaneest'ągu: month of August, time of year when crops ripen

guusts'iidi: number seven

'it'ede': young girl

'ishkįye': young boy

dziike: sitting together forever

Hungry

Serena Ngaio Simmons

I have been standing here
for at least an hour now
trying to find my home.

It used to be somewhere
rooted in all this blue
there were miles of it
bands of green laid out on the surf
tied down by polyps
fire
rock
people
our tupuna
packed in earth and cloth
bubbled up
then down
to rest in the deep
anchors drowning alongside them.

Well,
at least this is what my grandmother tells me
as we sail by
safe in steel casing and polished wood
made to withstand change
boating across the conquered.
“This is where we come from,” she tells me,
pointing at planks of sea green and blue.

This doesn’t look like the maps she showed me
dotted with atolls, motutere,
waka cutting through the channels.

“Kia tupato, kei pore koe!”
she shouts.
I forget how far I’m leaning over the rail,
the only barrier keeping me from diving into this salt
and fishing up the ruins.

I had no idea
things could get this bad.

All we have is language
the bits we scavenged before
the earth stopped listening.

It has been many years
since this part of the brine
has felt life above the surface,
save the rare ship
or bird, flying by
swimming close to a crest.
All are ready
maw open
cameras out
swoop down
flash on
fish caught in beak
bird snapped in mid
hunt cameras in bags
people in cabins
prey in gullet
bellies full,
while grandmother and I
stand on deck
stomachs empty
hungry for home.

Waypoints

Tui Scanlan

I am often asked: “Where are you from?”
The question is much simpler than the answer.

I come from a land in the Far Away Sky
Ra‘iātea.
A place so sacred its location had many names
so that it may never be revealed.
Yet our journey began in Aotearoa,
the Land of the Long Cloud of White.
Or to be more polite—
New Zealand.
We followed that second star on the right straight on till dawn,
Neverneverland on the horizon
where pirates and mer-creatures abound,
naming the new islands we found after home
so that we might map our journey
with the comfort of a hearth
thousands of miles away.

Hoe nā wa‘a,
pull the boat forward,
release the sails and let the wails of our loved ones
propel us to the safety of a shore
that never before had been seen.
I love you, they scream.
Return safely, my sons.
Be at peace with the world for she is your Mother.
You have no skin, only scales.
You have no hands, only fins.
So if the wind capsizes our hopes,
your soul will swim back to our embrace.
Your face will forever
grace the sky to guide
wayward travelers
onward to familiar shores
for the first time.

And while we zig-zagged across
the largest bucket of water
this puny planet has ever seen,
the Europeans burned books in the dark ages.

Our darkness has a name:
Teauriuri, from the darkness to the light,
emerging with perfect sight,
surging as if in flight,
a seamless sky that does not exist
in amber waves of grain.

But shame, SHAME.
Thor Heyerdahl writes Kon Tiki,
which basically states:
"Pacific Darkies are too stupid to navigate
the largest ocean in the smallest boats
without maps or tools—
fools they drifted
from South America and luckily found land."

So we built a boat to disprove his claims
and display our ways upon the waves.
Hōkūleʻa, the star that brought us to where we are.
Star of Gladness.
Sad they don't understand it, the tourists call it "Arcturus."
We bellowed mournful chants as our ancestors once did,
sending our best and brightest on that ill-fated trip, and when it flipped
miles away from shore,
the horror in the eyes of his fellows
welled up inside.
Eddie Aikau, big wave rider and lifeguard extraordinaire,
who, I swear, said "Don't worry, I can do it. I can get to land.
I'll swim those 12 miles for a century of regression,
12 miles of oppression,
12 miles of political cartoons that painted our Queen as a monkey."
He jumped on his board and swam
and was never seen again.
And what ensued was the largest air-sea search in Hawaiʻi's history.

So, to answer your question:
I come from a place where we know why Eddie would go.
I come from a place most people wish they could go.
I come from Paradise.
From a geological, evolutionary phenomenon.
From nearly 150 distinct ecosystems,
from the ring of fire's hotspot,
from a land that loves me from the soles
to the soul and you can never take away
the feeling of my feet on my land
or my hands in my water.
I don't claim to be omniscient,
so if my answer is insufficient,
then tell me:

where are you from?

The main reason why Korean men move to Hawai‘i (and move back)

Joseph Han

Korean men move to Hawai‘i to golf and live
on the plains when not taxiing, surveying
the grass and sand they own
through membership as the water
claims what they lose.

They drink with com(patriots), checks covered
by age where youth demands a fight to pay
for soju bottles, enough spirits to fill their pale
guts with the Pacific, separating birth/place.

They tan on the courses,
becoming darker, fuller,
so they can buoy back
home after dinner.

~

my father will join them, youngest in the taxi troupe:

and pay for their meals
go to the range for form,
buy my sister small irons
eat fast food while working
start un-tucking his polo shirts
spill shots below the table
work every day besides Tuesday
sleep until the afternoon
take us to the range

respect in a grab for the check;
knowing what it means to soar;
so she will one day be pro;
no time for real meals;
his stomach beginning to fold;
when no one watches;
which is golf day;
returning early mornings;
where I’ll putt instead of fly.

~

Most of them will remain in their town cars,
double up in golf carts as each remain gassed.

~

But my father will give up the plains, find re(course)
over the water claiming distance from home
repair/par his way back to Korea:

He will never have to leave
change in the glove box.

He'll leave his clubs with me,
a wedge in the family.

Covered in Red Dirt

Liz Prato

Kimo and I stretched out long in my bed. I ran my finger over his arm wrapped around my waist. I traced the edges of the blotches on his skin, milky white patches blossoming against brown. "It's what Michael Jackson said he had," Kimo said when Kayla asked him what was up with his skin. I'd hushed her, *That's rude*. But Kimo, he didn't mind. "It's just the way I am." People call him Hapa Kimo. Hapa is what locals call folks who are half Caucasian and half something else. Half haole, half Japanese. Half haole, half Samoan. Kimo's mom was haole, his dad Filipino. "Guess my skin wanted to keep Mom close by," he said.

Kimo came by every Tuesday. It was the day he delivered bottled water to the Lāwa'i Valley. I once asked him if he had a woman for every day of the week, for every part of Kaua'i. He laughed. "You're crazy. You think they knockin' down doors to get to Kimo?" I wasn't sure what that said about me, or him. He also taught surf lessons and did handyman work. That's how it is here: you have to work three jobs to get by. I only worked one, giving massages at a hotel spa, because John was paying enough child support for me and Kayla.

"Almost Kayla time," Kimo said. I slid out from under his arm. We were always sure to make the bed back up by the time Kayla was home from school. Most days, my daughter came home covered in the island's red dirt. It was on her ankles or her elbows, sometimes on her knees. When it got into her shorts and shirts, there was no cleaning it out. Kayla used to wear white, when we lived on the mainland. She had white dresses and frilly white tops, little white Capri pants and even white sandals. But since we moved to Kaua'i last year there was no point. The island made its mark on everyone and everything.

Kimo and I sat on the porch, not saying much, just listening to the way the trade winds swished the palms, when Kayla came walking up the road in her shorts and t-shirt and flip-flops. *Slippers, Mom*, she always reminded me. *That's what they call them here*.

"Howzit?" she said, plopping her backpack on the porch.

"Hey, little wahine," Kimo said. "You ready to hit some waves?"

"I need a snack," she said and headed inside.

"Little grind!" he called after her. "No want your stomach too full."

I waited until Kayla was in the kitchen, away from us. "I'd like it if you didn't talk slang with her," I said.

"That's how people talk round here, Dorrie," Kimo said, just looking out at the breeze, making me believe it was possible to see a breeze. "You been here long enough to know."

Nine months. At first it didn't take me long to slip into the island ways, the slow talk and the slow walking, slang that seemed easier than saying the real words. But after John left us, my attitude went back the other way.

"How about when she needs to get into college?" I asked. Or how about if we're not forever stuck on this island? Some day we might just get back to the mainland, and kids would tease her.

"She's twelve," Kimo said. "Plenty of time till college."

Kayla came back with a fruit roll-up in one hand, her surfboard tucked under the other arm. "Let's rip," she said. "You coming, Mom?"

"You bet." There was no work that afternoon, no tourists wanting me to rub their muscles with coconut-scented oil. The three of us squeezed in the front seat of Kimo's rusted pick-up and drove down the curving road to Po'ipū.

~ ~ ~

When John and I moved to Kaua'i we bought a small house in Kalāheo, in a valley away from Po'ipū's tourists and desert landscape. Kalāheo is carved out of jungle, blanketed by bamboo and monkey trees and philodendrons with leaves like giant flat fingers. On Po'ipū's south side, it's just dry red dirt and cactus. It's barren like the surface of Mars, except where a mainland developer came in and planted palm trees and thick blade grass. Orchids, plumeria, yellow hibiscus. If you went the other direction from our house, you'd be in Waimea Canyon, deep walls carved away by the river's erosion. If you want something different on Kaua'i, you don't have to go far. John just went North, to Leilani's house. It's rainier there, but greener, too.

Kimo and Kayla took to their boards, paddling out to waves. I sat on the beach with the tourists lazing in the sun. They bring that fake coconut smell with them, painting them slick and brown. When I was fifteen, sixteen, I'd sit in my backyard coated in baby oil, trying for a Valley Girl tan. I thought the burn would wear off into luscious brown. It never really happened that way, but I kept on burning my flesh anyway.

Kimo paddled ahead of Kayla, sometimes looking back for her. Little waves rolled towards them, and Kimo and Kayla slipped over the tops. Like riding a bucking bronco, but gentle. Sometimes a bigger wave came, but too close to the shore, so they grasped the front of their boards and dove under. "Always better to go under or over a wave than through it," Kimo would say.

John had never wanted Kayla to surf. "It's too dangerous for a young girl," he said. Kayla had been trying to wear him down since before we moved, since we were on the plane. She kept talking about a girl from Kaua'i who lost her arm in a shark attack.

"She started surfing again only one month after the shark bit her arm off," Kayla said. "And she's a professional now." The argument did little to sway John and who could blame him? But for every surfer that gets mauled in a shark attack there's hundreds of thousands who never do. John would never see it that way. But after he left us for Leilani, I figured how he saw things wasn't the only way.

Kayla and Kimo were so far out that I couldn't hear them, they couldn't see me. Not that they were looking for me. I wondered why Kimo never had any kids of his own. Then again, I didn't know that he didn't. I didn't even know if Kimo had ever been married. Hell, I didn't know what he was doing with me, some uptight, middle-aged haole.

Kimo waved a windmill through the air at Kayla. *Take this one*. She paddled to catch the lip of the wave. Then she was up on her feet. Sometimes I imagined her on that board when I did Warrior Two in yoga. I'd imagine the salty spray around my face, a roar so loud I couldn't hear. No mirrored walls in front of me, no click-click-click of the overhead fan, no rubber mat sticking me to the ground.

Her first few seconds upright were a fight between Kayla and the wave: who would ride who. She gave a good knee bend, and won that battle. The wave pulled her along, like she was tethered to the other end.

Then, in the span of one breath, whatever tension had been keeping Kayla upright was severed, and the water tunnel crashed down. I shielded my hands over my eyes, afternoon sun grimacing back at me. Kimo paddled toward where Kayla had gone down. Her yellow board popped up, and then her head. The ocean spit her right back out. Kimo held out his hand and pulled her on her board. The two paddled back out again. They went to fight another battle against the sea.

~ ~ ~

John had Kayla every other weekend, more if he wanted. There was no official custody agreement. That could have never happened on the mainland. John would have had one of the partners at his firm draw up reams of paper. Everything would have been official, from the separation to the division of assets to the final divorce. But after we moved to the islands, John lost that drive. Killer instinct, he used to call it.

Every Friday John drove clockwise around the island to pick Kayla up from my house. On Sundays, I drove counter-clockwise to retrieve her. His way was worse, getting choked in Friday rush hour in Līhu'e. Nothing like L.A., of course. This traffic was just one long lane going one way, one long lane going another. When I drove up on Sunday, the worst of the traffic wasn't in Līhu'e, but up North. Tourists heading for Hanalei beaches and the Nā Pali Coast. Pulling their cars aside to snap pictures of rainbows.

Leilani's house was inland, surrounded by mango trees. "We eat a lot of mangos when I'm there," Kayla told me. "Like, all the time. It drives me crazy." I knew she acted annoyed just for me. Leilani's three mangy dogs barked and followed my car up the long

driveway to her house. Wagging tails, ears forward. No teeth bared.

"Are you early?" John was on the porch, wearing a shirt bursting with orange plumeria.

I looked at my watch. "Not really."

"Kay, your mom's here!" John yelled into the house. "Get your stuff together."

"Yeah, coming!" my daughter yelled back.

John stood against the porch railing, looking out at the mangos like I wasn't on the top step, my arms folded across my chest. "You want some tea?" he said. "Or juice? Hey, Leilani!" he called behind him. "What kind of juice do we have?"

"Why you yelling?" Leilani stepped through the front door wearing peach colored scrubs. I couldn't tell if she was coming from the hospital or going. "Hi, Dorrie."

She wasn't pretty like the word Leilani makes you think, long and thin, on an exotic postcard. But she wasn't some big Samoan either, a formidable force of womanliness. She was an average woman. Except she was more.

"Bring some juice out," John said. "We can sit. Talk story." It – *talk story* – sounded stupid coming out of John's mouth. It's what everyone said around here, Kimo all the time, Kayla and even me, but from John it sounded like trying to force a round peg into a square hole.

"I'm not thirsty," I said.

"Maybe some cookies, then?" John said.

"John, come inside," Leilani said. He followed her in.

All the windows in Leilani's wood house were open to capture whatever breeze made it that far inland. It also pushed out John and Leilani's voices.

"What are you doing, trying to get us to all sit and grind?" she asked.

"There's no reason we can't be friendly," John said

"She doesn't want to be your friend," Leilani said. "You left her for another woman."

"She'll get over that," John said. "She'll move on."

He didn't know about me and Kimo. I didn't want him to think I'd moved on.

"John, just let her be," Leilani said. "Show her respect."

It made me want to say, "Yeah, I'll have some mango juice," to sit on Leilani's porch and eat coco-mac cookies just to prove her wrong, because it pissed me off that she was right. But Kayla skipped through the front door, carrying her backpack and duffle bag. "Okay Mom," she said. "Let's go."

There was hardly any traffic on our side as we drove clockwise again. I'd gotten hungry, standing on that porch, so we stopped at a roadside stand in Anahola for burgers and shakes. We ate at a round picnic table with tourists. Two wild chickens and a rooster wandered around our perimeter, waiting for us to drop a piece of meat. The island was overrun with feral roosters, crowing day and night. We watched the birds scratch and scrape, waiting for their prey.

~ ~ ~

Next Tuesday, when we were still lying in bed, Kimo said, "Let's you and me get some dinner on Saturday. While Kayla's with her dad."

"Why?" I asked. Kimo and I had never been outside of the house together, not unless we were at the beach with Kayla, getting shave ice, eating Puka Dogs.

Kimo pulled himself on top of me and kissed my lips. "If you're this pretty in the daylight, you must be a goddess at night."

There wasn't much more to say, really.

~ ~ ~

We ate at a Chinese barbeque joint in Līhu'e, but didn't eat barbeque. There were too many places to get island barbeque, so we shared shrimp with choi sum and sizzling scallops with black bean sauce. Fried coconut ice cream for dessert. The place was full of brown-skinned locals, a few haole, like me, and some tourists brave enough to go off the beaten path. I kept thinking that most of those locals were technically hapa, but none of them looked hapa like Kimo. His brown and white skin, the way he didn't care much about it, made him seem royal. Maybe Kimo was right, maybe there was something about seeing each other in nightlight that made us divine.

We went back to Kimo's place, a house he shared with two other guys. One was tending bar, the other waiting tables. The living room furniture was worn wicker, dusty walls covered by tapestries of whales and sea turtles. The air smelled like old apple cider vinegar.

"It's how locals live," Kimo said, even though I'd said nothing. I got the feeling that he could read my thoughts. That maybe he had some sort of island mojo.

His bedroom was small, but immaculate. No clothes on the floor, no clutter on his nightstand. The bed made with crisp-looking sheets. His mattress sat on a bed frame of carved koa wood.

"It was my tutu's," he said, as I ran my hand over the reddish-brown wood. "She gave it to my dad, and my dad gave it to me."

My grandmother gave me a brooch, once. It was gold-plated, shaped like a snowflake, mindlessly picked out of her jewelry box. *Here*, she'd said, *you can have this*. I lost it in the backseat of some guy's car years ago.

Kimo's bed was bigger than a back seat. We stretched out and up, laid flat and round. We bathed in the scent of plumeria and sex. We were royalty.

~ ~ ~

Next Tuesday I worked at the spa. Another massage therapist called in sick and I

had to cover her shift. I don't know if anyone really got sick—more likely someone was heading to big waves on the North Shore. "Cough, cough," they'd spew into the phone. "I have a sore throat." It meant I wouldn't see Kimo, but he was going to drop by the house and pick up Kayla for surfing anyway.

I gave massages to three couples that day, folks who just got married or wanted to pretend like they just did. Olina and I worked together, standing side by side in a thatched hale. Her hands glided over one client, mine over the other. We worked separate, but moved together. The rain beat outside.

Olina and I were standing outside the hale, waiting for the couple to put on their long terry robes. Rain smacked the tops of broad leaf plants, then slid into the garden. There was water from the waterfalls, water from the sky. When it rained like this, it was easy to believe the island would just return to the ocean.

"So, I hear you were out with Hapa Kimo the other night," Olina said.

"Where did you hear that?"

She waved a hand. "Oh, you know how people talk. Nothin' better to do."

"We had scallops," I said.

"Just scallops, yeah?" she poked me in the ribs. If Olina knew that Kimo and I had Chinese BBQ in Līhu'e, then could the news travel to John? Sure, it was an island of fifty-thousand people, but only fifty miles of road between us. Maybe there was some math, some physics, some law that made information travel faster. Then John would think it was okay, dragging me and Kayla all the way across the ocean, only to leave us amid giant leaves for mango trees.

"Hey, Dorrie?" It was the receptionist who stood behind the spa's front desk looking impossibly pretty. "Phone call for you. Says it's an emergency. About your daughter."

All the smells and sounds of the island shut down. I could have been on the surface of Mars, ice cold and airless.

~ ~ ~

Kayla was at Mahelona Memorial Hospital in Kapa'a. She got hit by a big wave, and then another, and she couldn't get to her board. The waves kept coming, and one finally threw her into the rocks. Ancient lava, black and jagged, tearing into my baby girl's skull. She was bleeding in the brain, needed surgery to stop it. I signed the papers, called John. Waited for him to show.

I sat next to Kimo in the waiting room. His hair was still wet. "Why is she here?" I asked.

He put his hand on top of mine, but I refused to give him a hand. Just a fist, so his hand was more like a piece of paper in rock, paper, scissors. "I know. It's hard to understand."

"No," I said, pulling my fist away from him. "Why the fuck is she *here*? On this

part of the island? Why were you surfing up North?"

"She wanted to surf where Bethany surfed," he said.

"You mean where Bethany got her arm bitten off by a shark?"

"That's not what happened," Kimo said gently.

"I know what happened." I stood. "You took my daughter someplace dangerous. You let her do something that could kill her."

"Dorrie. . . ." Kimo reached up, pulled my hand. "She's going to be fine. She'll be fine."

Kimo didn't know if Kayla would be fine. I didn't know it, John didn't know it, and Leilani didn't know it either. Even if Kayla was fine, John would be pissed. Pissed enough to take Kayla away from me.

Leilani walked around the corner, just wearing shorts and a T-shirt, like it was any old day. "John's on his way," she said. "Had his phone turned off. Just got the message."

"Have you checked on Kayla yet?" I asked. "How is she?"

"The surgery's coming along," Leilani said. "Right now she's okay." Then Leilani looked at Kimo. "You had that looked at yet?"

"No time," Kimo said and touched his head. I didn't see them before, the scrapes and scratches on his forehead and his arm. Red bleeding into the borders of his brown and the white.

"You get those pulling her out?" Leilani asked, and Kimo nodded. She said something in Tagalog, and he said something back that I couldn't understand. She stood at Kimo's side, peeked closely at his skull.

"You pulled her out?" I asked.

"How you think she got out?" Kimo asked.

He put her in there, he pulled her out. But it didn't feel like a zero sum game. Especially since I knew John could turn back to his killer instinct ways. If he took Kayla away, I'd have no reason to stay. I'd go back to the mainland, where plants were small and turned brown and dry.

The elevator bell dinged down the hall. I waited for a doctor or a nurse to deliver the news. I waited for a priest to take my hands. I waited for John to be harried and irate. I waited for John to punch out Kimo. I waited for John to take Kayla away. I waited to be expelled from this uncertain paradise. I waited for my daughter, dressed in bright white.

The madness of crowds

James Norcliffe

The only shells on the beach are high priced shells on the stall tables. High priced shells sheltered by canvas. The beach itself cannot be seen. Bodies. You maneuver between them and make your way to the water. Bodies. You make your way between them. Legs. Arms. Heads covered in towels. There is no delineation between the sandline and the waterline because of the bodies. Bodies massed at the unseen border. Two worlds merged into one. As you move into the water the bodies grow shorter, lose legs, lose thighs, waists, midriffs. As you move further out the bodies become disembodied. Lose chests, breasts, shoulders. Now just heads neckdeep in water. Heads and beach balls. Bodyless beachballs bobbing among the bodied heads. Now you must tiptoe and bounce to keep your head above the water, now visible beyond the heads, beyond the beachballs. Somewhere beyond these there is water moving, heaving water. Somewhere beyond is the sea. Somewhere beyond the sea are continents, bodies.

Mr. Chompers

Colin Fleming

After my wife left me, without a word of warning, not the vaguest hint that anything like that could happen, I found myself reading the labels on the backs of a lot of things I'd never considered before—Advil bottles, ketchup tubes, beer cans, salad dressing canisters—like I was looking for some grave information I had previously missed which would tip me off to something especially deleterious that I should have been on the lookout for, as I should have been on the lookout for fissures in my own marriage.

We lived in Swampscott, which is north of Boston. I liked it because you were close to the city, but you were also getting out into the woods, and I could take four giant strides—or so it seemed—out of our front door, bounding over a pumpkin or two, if it was autumn—for it was one of those kinds of New England towns—and be at the beach.

True, that beach was "grotty," as my sister, Claire, would have put it when we were kids, and it wasn't uncommon to find a syringe next to a piece of driftwood. But that's also because Claire was accustomed to Falmouth, on the Cape, which is where my dad grew up, with my mother in nearby Mashpee, and where we spent many childhood summers after my parents had "migrated to the West," as my dad put it, which meant Quincy.

My wife, Mollie, had lived in Quincy once too, with the man she married long before I came along. We'd go out to Castle Island, in nearby South Boston, when we first started dating, and watch drug deals go down as we sat on the pier by a Revolutionary War fort that had inspired Poe to write "The Cask of the Amontillado," having our cones of mint ice cream with jimmies.

She'd tell me how she'd go to the beach alone and stare at the two enormous tanks on the harbor that everyone in the area knows, even if no one knows what they're for. But they're massive, probably 100 feet high, and some artist painted them in DayGlo colors way back when, and she'd say that her first marriage had felt like swimming to the bottom of one of those tanks, only to find that there was no way out, just like there'd been no way out at the top.

She didn't have that problem with our marriage, and her going was so sudden—she left in the middle of the day, taking all of her possessions with her, while I was in the woods of Gloucester, snapping photos—that one friend and family member after another told me it couldn't be permanent, we'd end up going to counseling, I needed to work less,

yell less, be an altogether calmer, nicer person, and thirty years out, this could all be a good thing.

I did yell, that's true. Mollie was supporting me in my attempts to develop my career as a freelance photographer, and work was as scarce as mint condition beaches in Swampscott. We had gotten to this point where I'd have to ask her a question, any question, five times over, just to get an answer—"Want to get a coffee, want to get a coffee, want to get a coffee," etc.

I hadn't yelled before that, but when I'd never get an answer back, to anything, I'd up the volume, and wonder if my wife was gaslighting me, because I saw how capably she responded to everyone else, and then the volume of my voice would increase, the assignments would not, my wife left, and I was a dessicated, bad joke of a man who spent his days in a broken-hearted stupor, crying my eyes bloodshot, worrying about money, drinking, and reading the backs of Advil bottles, ketchup tubes, beer cans, and salad dressing canisters.

When another night of tucking away the Budweisers and the sight of a few cast away phials—which I'm thinking never held, say, aspirin—caused me one day to throw up in a tidal pool, to the obvious dissatisfaction of a hermit crab, I knew that something had to give, and that something was me in that house in Swampscott, writing letter after letter to my wife at her work address, hoping they'd *do something*. So I called my dad way out in the West, and told him I needed help.

For my father, there is nothing in this life that cannot be cured by going to the Cape, living in a shack or in a rented room that dozens of fishermen before you had drank and spit up in, and toiling at whatever it is you toil, which for me was photography. I think I phoned him because I was so sure of what he'd say, and I hadn't much in the way of surety since Mollie left.

"What do you think about *The Larboard*, Bryn," my dad asked, only he didn't say my name the way everyone else did, but rather as "Brine," a habit my father had whenever I was going through a tough time, like he wanted to make me more elemental, more like the sea itself. I played along.

"*The Larboard*? Really?"

"I'll call your uncle tonight. But they're loving that Santa Fe life, so I'm sure the house is empty. I don't know how a Cape Codder up and moves to the desert, but that's your Uncle Parm. Weird."

Uncle Parm was my dad's brother Parmenter, named for some Italian navigator. His house—which you'd call a shack, save that it had indoor plumbing—was right on Buzzards Bay in West Falmouth. As a man of the sea—Uncle Parm was a chummer on innumerable tuna boats that went out to the Gorges Bank—who was also left-handed and who did double-duty as a boat's cook and larder stocker, it was perhaps inevitable that he would have named his house like one names a ship, while paying homage to the hand he favored and half of his official duties. I knew my father was trying to keep things light,

but I could hear my mother whispering in the background, the way one whispers over a sick patient, and my father whispering back, and not doing a great job of keeping his hand over the receiver.

"Think about it, Bryn."

I shook the latest bottle of Advil in front of me on the lobster trap table that Mollie had made and which was now crowned with a mighty pyramid of empty beer cans. There wasn't a sound, and I looked inside to make sure there were no pills stuck to the side. I told my dad anything would be better.

"Do you want a ride?"

"It's all right. I'll take the train, and the bus. I assume the key is still in the gullet of that plastic dogfish in the garden?"

"It is. And Bryn?"

"Yeah?"

"If you see any dried urchins in the drawers, you know what to do."

"Right. Leave them there."

Uncle Parm was a collector of maritime animals with exoskeletons, which he tucked away in the various orifices of his occasional home. I, simply, was an admirer, at the time, of things with exoskeletons. They seemed to be good at keeping life, pain, what have you, out, as I wished I were. Jealous of an urchin. Not where you want to be.

~ ~ ~

I spent those first few days out on the Cape puttering around the beach, drinking beer cut with iced tea—a concoction that in my boredom and depression I dubbed a Tear (imagining an ad campaign where some brawny guy takes a stack of construction paper, rips it in two in a manly display of muscle, and declares, "Now that's a Tear, and so's this," as he starts chugging away)—and encountering Uncle Parm's dried out treasures—a spider crab in the bathroom medicine chest, a sealed quahog on the soap tray in the shower—back at *The Larboard*.

The beach got me down, because Mollie and I had hung out on it over the course of a couple of summers, so I retreated more and more into my temporary bedroom, reading old copies of *The Boston Globe* that Uncle Parm had stacked up in the fireplace, as if they were meant for kindling.

I came across one of those summertime puff pieces that goes along the lines of "Ten Things to do on the Cheap" if you're bored, but I didn't see myself driving to Story Land in New Hampshire, and there was no way I was going looking for arrowheads out on the Mohawk Trail. The piece signed off with this sarcastic comment that if all else failed you could hop a Cape Regional Transit Authority bus and explore Massachusetts' prime vacation spots one bus depot at a time, so I thought, *right, fuck it, that's for me then, the most loser-friendly thing for a loser to do*, and I was off.

By midday, I was sitting about three-quarters of the way back, which was as far as you could get from the bus's emergency windows. I figured that if we were on a bridge and went over the side and down into the sea or some river, I'd have less of a chance of getting out, even if I made a legitimate effort, and it's not like God could count anything against me and banish me to hell, like I was a suicide.

In Hyannis, a fisherman in waders stood on top of his docked boat at a marina we had stopped in front of, waiting for the light to change. He used a hose to spray what looked like crab parts out of the scuppers. It occurred to me that that's maybe what life was, mostly, the search for the next necessary scupper or spigot, something to get you out of what, rightly or wrongly, you've come to believe you never should have gotten in-to. But my reveries were soon intruded upon by a fellow passenger who had decided it was time to start yelling.

"He ain't nothin' without his chompers!"

I looked up and caught the bus driver's eye in the rearview mirror, as the voice sounded again, and then once more.

"Look, guy . . . do we need to do this every day?" the bus driver began. "I don't want to have to kick you off again."

There was a man—a short man—a dozen or so rows in front of me, with an enormous pile of hair atop his head that reminded me of the inkberry plants that grew in the easement across from Uncle Parm's yard, a kind of conflicted mode of shrubbery caught somewhere between wanting to be a pine tree or an elevated clump of brambly moss.

The man was quiet after that, and for the rest of the trip. But each day, there he was, and he'd declaim what I gathered was his signature line, and then be shushed and threatened with deportation from our little world.

His body had an odd shape, with giant arms, not especially long legs, and feet that would have been the envy of any duck. Every day he had on a cheap silkscreen t-shirt—which were common enough on the Cape—but they were all movie-related. Odd. A celebration of one horror film after another: *Bride of Frankenstein*, *The Brain that Wouldn't Die*, *They Saved Hitler's Brain*, *The Brain from Planet Arous*—he had a whole brain series—*Reptilicus*, *Carnival of Souls*, *Orff: The Rabid Hound of Satan*.

The shirt for *The Demon Caves* had these shapes on it that must have been a cheapjack film company's idea of vagina monsters, which became all the more terrifying when you realized they were on tiny roller skate wheels. When I was five or six I was out with my dad on the main drag in Hyannis, and we saw this shirt on the rack that was a picture of the Cape doing its thing, jutting out into the ocean and all of that, with the caption, "Cape Cod—Fisting the Atlantic since 1656." My dad wouldn't tell me what that meant—if he even knew—and while I wondered, in subsequent years, how the Cape, if it was fisting anything in 1656, was otherwise engaged in 1655, I nodded, as I had come to do each day, to the man a dozen rows in front of me as he got up, took a look behind him, and scrambled out the door at the front, patting the bus driver, lightly, on the shoulder as

he passed. At which point the bus driver—it was always the same guy—would shake his head, laugh, and wave to the man as we pulled away, and he stood on the curb waving back.

"You know who that is, right?"

"No, who is it?"

"Man. You're not from around here, are you?

I didn't feel like I was from anywhere, anymore, which made it easier to do what the man the driver took for a local celebrity did and get off at a different stop every day. If there were interesting places in walking distance of the bus depot, great, I figured. Might as well see some stuff while you're around and able to.

I built an epic sand castle on Craigville Beach with this Russian kid named Sergei who said "no vodka, no vodka," when I offered him a drink from my water bottle; in Orleans I made my way to what I thought was a saltwater pond, only to dangle my feet in and have a snapping turtle make a bid for my toes; in Truro, I saw a massive guy with a t-shirt that said Give Me a Jab rubbing a woman's ass as they made their way for the far side of a jetty where some kids were on their knees fishing for crabs in the cracks with bits of mussel tied to strips of eelgrass; in Wellfleet I watched a man about my age walk up and down the shore, looking as bleak as I figured I did, tossing a piece of sea glass in the air for the entire three hours I was there as it pissed down rain, the fingers on his free hand making downward stabbing motions, like he was playing air piano.

But mostly what I did, despite my honorable intentions, was hit up one bar after another. And whether it was at Sez the Flounder in Truro, The Rat Line way out in Provincetown, Hawser's in Harwich, The Quarter Berth in Eastham, or Time and Tide in West Dennis, I came across, eventually, my ersatz bus companion, who would surely be my bus companion again the next day.

You'd think nearly vomiting every time I rode the bus after those nights of drinking, with the driver eyeing me suspiciously in his rear view mirror, would have made me clock on to the fact that I was in a lower place than I'd ever been before. But it wasn't that that did the trick.

It was when I'd start to feel happy for a few seconds. I'd be walking through some pasture, with cows on each side of me, or scrambling up the back of some dune to see what was on the other side, and for two, three, four seconds, I'd be happy. And that was messed up like nothing in my life had ever been. Because the reason I felt happy was because I'd convinced myself, for a few seconds, anyway, that I was in a nightmare, and how awesome it was going to be when I woke up, and there was my life again, ready for me to regard it, to treat it—and that person in it—as I ought to have before. And when you realize that you think you're happy because you've convinced yourself that you must be in a nightmare, good luck with the next bit of your life.

A former youth hockey coach of mine, who had once played in the AHL, had a bar in Chatham called Scuttles, and I thought I'd make that my base, so to speak. Kenny

Buckstan was the guy's name, which meant you basically had your pick of calling him by any one of three names.

We ran into him one summer when I was a teenager, after my own hockey career was over, on the main drag in Hyannis. He was enormous, and I wouldn't have recognized him, were it not for my dad. Big Hawaiian shirt, sandals, baggy shorts. And he smelled like he'd just come from testing an entire pharmacy's worth of sun-tan lotion.

He didn't recognize me the first few nights I sat in his bar, drinking iced coffee and root beers, trying to force myself off of the beer, but on my fourth or fifth time there, when it was really slow—meaning, the few people who were there were fishermen focused on getting drunk as efficiently as possible—I stuck my hand out and said, "You're not Kenny Buckstan, are you?"

He kept drying the glass he had in his hands, and smiled at me.

"I think you know I am, Bryn. Your father phoned. Said to keep an eye out. Rough summer?"

"Yeah. You know. Rough summer."

"It'll get better. I've been through it three times myself."

"Will it?"

"Yep. I'll bet my royal Cape Cod arse on it, as they say in the Chathamite's English." One of the drunken fishermen behind me half scoffed, half laughed. "Something will happen."

"Something will happen" was Buck's (that's what the kids usually called him) go-to line as a coach, and there was something, I admit, reassuring in seeing how he had stayed true to his line all of these years, like maybe the bus guy did with his "He ain't nothing without his chompers" line, whatever that meant. With Buck, we could be getting our asses handed to us in the third period of some game 5-0, and it was always "something will happen," which would morph into, "Keep working here boys, keep working, let's make something happen."

What happened eventually that summer is that my bus compatriot shambled in to Scuttles.

The first time, he was wrapped in a bright orange jacket—never mind that it was in the seventies—that some of the lobstermen wore, with one of those eight-panelled hats on his head that looked like it'd been pulled out from under a dumpster, and rubbed a thick, greasy sheen with a handful of congealed clams.

"He ain't nothing without his chompers!" he declared upon sitting down, to Buck's delight.

"Relax. He's safe. Just a little weird."

"I know."

For the first time, he turned his attention to me. Normally, I just watched him on the bus, from behind, or watched him drink in the same bars we happened to be in, as he told stories, out of my hearing, to people I didn't know.

"How come you never ride up front with me?"

"What?"

"You're always at the back of the bus. Wouldn't you want to be near an emergency window? Stuff happens. All those bridges the bus goes over, water below. Or are you confident you'll make it out anyway?"

"Look, Mister…"

"Chompers," Buck offered.

"How's that?"

"Well, that's kind of what we call him."

"Okay. I'll go along. Why do they call you Mr. Chompers?"

"Ever seen Rudolph? The Christmas program?"

"Everyone's seen Rudolph."

"Well, there's that snow monster, and when Yukon Cornelius, the prospector guy, pulls all the snow monster's teeth out, he's all emasculated, see? And what does Yukon Cornelius say to the poor bastard as he reaches up to feel that his teeth aren't there?"

"'He ain't nothing without his chompers.'"

"Bingo. Notice how he doesn't say teeth. Everyone has teeth. Chompers, that's something else. Like an attitude, your fucking essence, your drive. And you ain't nothing without your chompers."

"Well, the Snow Monster guy gets that job decorating the Christmas tree at the end of the program."

"Of course he does. He's got his chompers back by then."

~ ~ ~

Mr. Chompers was actually from out West, Buck told me. Not Quincy out West, but real out West.

I'd come in in the morning, before anyone got to the bar, and Buck and I would hang out, drinking this noxious coffee he made that had sand in on account of the clam shell Buck put into the pot, claiming it gave his proprietary brew a nice early morning zing.

He'd usually have some weird bit of trivia for our conversations, as though he was trying to keep my mind sharp. That's a great way to feel, like people have this need to give you advice, or find clever ways to help you along because they don't think you can help yourself.

"What do you know about horror hosts?"

"Horror hosts?"

"Horror hosts."

"Nothing. Why?"

"Chompers used to be one. In California."

Turns out I was familiar with horror hosts. I just didn't know what the people who came on TV dressed up as some ghoul or vampire to introduce a showing of *Dracula* or *Frankenstein* were called. Or that they had civic duties. Presiding over assorted Hallow-een events, or leading the first annual charge into the local corn maze.

"And he was Mr. Chompers the horror host?"

"He was. But he was Bruce Pence the diver."

"Stop it."

"I'm serious. But don't go asking him about it."

You could tell that he wasn't joking. It's weird when something jocular becomes deadly serious in the space of a few seconds, especially when the sun hasn't come up yet and your coffee has flakes of shell mantle in it.

I was living in fear of Mollie's lawyers and what they would do next. Whether they were going to try and take back all of the photography equipment she'd bought me, simply because she had paid for it, and I had trusted her that the money would be there, on my end, eventually, and I could put my life in her hands in the meanwhile.

I wasn't used to not being able to understand things. I'm not saying I was some genius, because I obviously wasn't. But I had no ability for reconciling this current version of the woman who was about to be my ex-wife with the version I had known. And if I wasn't even close to really knowing that, was there anything I really understood? So everything doubled as an unknown, and the unknown is almost always terrifying. Buck terrified me even. The dried up sea urchins I kept finding in one secret hiding place after another terrified me. Parts of me terrified me.

But Chompers, for some reason, did not. Even after Buck let me in on his past. Or maybe—and this was worrisome—part of that alleged past appealed to me.

"Why'd he leave California to come here and ride buses?"

"People think he killed his wife."

"Jesus."

"He didn't. Or no one proved it, anyway. They would do shows, diving to crazy depths, retrieving, I don't know, things that people chucked into the water, showing how long they could stay under. And the last time she didn't come up."

"Bad stuff happens in dangerous jobs."

A fisherman who had come in to get drunk at seven in the morning grunted.

"True. But as he told me, she had cheated on him. And she was always a lot more cautious with the act than he was. He'd almost died a bunch of times going for some abalone diver record. There aren't any abalones in the Atlantic, are there?"

"No. So he kept her under then?"

"That's what people thought. And he lost his TV gig."

I felt like I'd lost a TV gig, too, after a fashion, because TV gigs were rare and hard to come by, and no one could convince me that women like Mollie weren't as well, and maybe if I followed Chompers' example—after all, he seemed in reasonable spirits,

and at peace with the world around him—there'd be some way out for me.

Chompers had this vagrant aspect to him—you had the feeling he crashed on a different couch every night and was never in the same town for too long—so I asked him to stay with me at *The Larboard*, but he preferred to sleep on the beach nearby instead. So we were neighbors, of a sort, for a few weeks there.

He'd go clamming whenever dusk and low tide happened to coincide, and I'd take photographs of the piles he left of dug up mud that looked like cairns, the Cape Cod variety, with the sun sliding down the far end of the sky.

Chompers and I had some long conversations on that beach. I consider myself a caring person, and sensitive—more sensitive than I wanted to be—but Chompers, although he was prickly on the surface, had this whole mystic vibe to him, like he understood anything you ever could have been through. The idea of him holding a woman under water was a tough one to get my head around, and when I finally just asked him straight out if what Buck had told me had any merit to it, he told me it depended on who I asked.

"I'm asking you."

"There's a lot of murk down in the water, and not a lot of difference between trying to entangle someone, and tangle them further. If you know what I mean."

I felt like he was talking about me, maybe, or trying to get at something, which pissed me off, because I was so protective of what I had been through, what I was going through. But no matter. Wanting to hide all of that away only end led to me blurting stuff out that I didn't articulate to myself, in my own thoughts, because the feelings were so obvious to me that I never had a need to apply language to them.

I took a breath. "Every day feels like a re-drowning, a re-dying. Just when I think I might get some of the water out of my lungs, more than ever before washes in. I never really believed it meant anything when a person said they were going to kill themselves, it was some cheap ploy, a rhetorical device, a power move to win one of those late night drunken arguments you have with someone, or your self. But I was wrong. I really don't want to live anymore."

I looked off in the distance towards some gulls who were hunting for crabs in the eelgrass. That seemed like a good gig, being a gull. They always flipped the crabs over before they pierced them with their beaks. There was usually a delay between getting the crab on its back and finally delivering the mortal blow, as if gulls were prone to deliberation in this matter.

Chompers stared at me like the gulls stared at those crabs, before he said anything again, his voice lower than I'd ever heard it before. "You have a lot of teeth at the moment. All teeth. Besides: you don't want to miss my big comeback. I'm back, baby. First broadcast is tomorrow."

"First broadcast of what?"

"On WJIB."

WJIB was the local radio station that broadcast everything from Cape Cod League baseball games to "Hotter than hot fishing tips with Ron Patroon, the 'Striper Sniper," to old Led Zeppelin bootlegs at three in the morning when the FCC was probably asleep.

"Are you going to be giving fishing tips?"

"No. I'm going to be in character, spinning classic radio horror and mystery programs, doing my Bela Lugosi imitation, playing monster movie soundtracks, that kind of thing."

"Okay."

"You'll listen?"

"I guess. Good luck, I mean."

WJIB was the kind of radio station that when you listened to it you assumed you were the only person on the Cape who could possibly be tuning in. So when this crazy fat man—he'd tell you he had just ordered three pizzas and you could hear him eating them for the entire broadcast—from Sandwich greeted you at two in the morning and said, "this is *Team Talk with Terry*, and I am going to tell you what the Red Sox can do to win the next eight Pennants," it felt like you were having a one-on-one session with the lunatic who lived in the back corridor of your mind.

But Chompers was an out-in-the-open hit. Despite coming on at midnight on Tuesdays. In a few weeks, you couldn't go anywhere without hearing someone—man, woman, child—shout, "He ain't nothing without his chompers!" There were a lot of really bad Bela Lugosi imitations going around as well.

The radio gig led to a TV gig with WBEE, and Buck and I would sit at Scuttles drinking sand-befouled coffee as Chompers, wearing a red-lined cape and sporting plastic fangs, introduced *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, *Plan 9 From Other Space*, or some other horror relic.

It didn't stop there: he threw out the first pitch at like a dozen Chatham Anglers games, judged horror short story contests, christened boats with suitably macabre names (*Cod's Revenge*), and signed autographs at a lot of pizzerias.

Summer had become fall by then, and that meant the divorce would soon be final, given how long that particular process takes. All of those months of silence. Not a word despite all of the letters I sent. Adulterers got a word, people who diddled the babysitter got a word, heroin addicts who ran naked up and down the streets got a word. Husband #1 got a word.

Mr. Chompers' career, meanwhile, was flourishing. For the final telecast of the season, he was going all out: there was this allegedly bottomless saltwater pond that was linked up to the sea by a river at Bream's Cove. Apparently, a lot of kids used to drown there back in the 1950s—but never any time else—and their bodies were never found.

As the movie—*Revenge of the Atomic Gill-man*—involved a radioactive clam or something similarly ludicrous, Chompers had this giant lead abalone made, which he spray painted bright orange. There were fliers for this event/stunt everywhere, on the

front door of every clam shack, ice cream stand, sub shop, under the wipers of cars, at the check-in booths of the mini-golf places, at all of the movie theaters, ball fields, you name it.

The radioactive abalone in question was going to be heaved into the water by Sandwich High's All State shot putter, and then Chompers, cape, fangs, and all, was going to brave the bottomless depths, save all of the Cape from atomic disaster, and then introduce the movie that would be playing four days later, after all of the footage had been edited.

I was there, at his instigation, working a little handheld camera for "back-up footage," whatever that meant.

The shot putter was all set, the tiny film crew all set up. There must have been 300 people in attendance, altogether. Personally, I'd have been pretty nervous, so I was surprised when Chompers came over and motioned for me to bend down to him, like he wanted to say something in my ear.

"Are you ready?"

"Yeah. I just push the little button and…"

"No. I mean the murk. Don't fear the murk. Not if you got your chompers."

"Those are twenty cent toy fangs in your mouth."

"Them's chompers, baby. Can't put a price on having your chompers."

A voice—Buck's—boomed over a PA system: "Come on everybody, let's welcome him together, because…"

That one voice became several hundred.

"He ain't nothin' without his chompers!"

I filmed that orange lead abalone splashing into the water, and Mr. Chompers waving to the crowd, and diving in after his quarry, ditching his cape as he broke the surface. And I filmed and I filmed and I filmed. And nothing happened. It was kind of like writing Mollie, actually.

An hour later, that pond had twelve police SCUBA divers in it. The next day it was dragged. Turns out it wasn't bottomless after all. But nothing was found all the same.

Suffice it to say, that last episode didn't air on WBEE. Something had gone wrong with the main camera anyway, so the only footage that existed was what I shot. It was silent. I watched it with Buck, at Scuttles, after I had sent a copy to Mollie, knowing, on account of a warning letter I had received from her lawyers, what one more parcel from me would mean.

WBEE aired the tape—as an homage, I guess—a bunch of nights in a row, at midnight. Someone recorded it off the air and it became a kind of local horror film in its own right, with kids arguing whether it was real footage of something that really happened or just a hoax.

"Did you get something back from her lawyers?" Buck asked me a few days after Chompers was last seen on Cape Cod.

"Yeah."

"And you threw it away?"

"I knew what it was. It actually says 'restraining order' on the outside of the envelope. But I only would have kept trying without one."

"Are you going to throw up now?"

"Yeah. I am."

It's a good man who both passes the bucket to you, and takes it back when you're done with it.

Years after Buck had died, and my parents, and Uncle Parm—although *The Larboard* still stands—I was living on a different Cape—Cape Ann—on Massachusetts' North Shore, in a town called Rockport. That is, when I was not traveling on assignment for some magazine—I specialized in ocean-related photography—which usually meant getting up at some ungodly hour of the morning, kissing my wife, Seraphim, on the forehead, and taking the train into Boston to get myself to Logan. She was an unsurpassed insomniac, and she'd sit at the computer for hours going through the various YouTube channels she subscribed to. Sometimes she'd wake me up to show me something, never mind that I had to be leaving in three hours.

"Bryn, look at this guy. He has his own little catchphrase."

He was rounder, bald, but it was him.

"Oh yeah, that guy. I think I've seen some of his programs before. Does he have one where he talks about a hero saving a town by diving to the bottom of a lake or something and then swimming out to sea in this river?"

"That was on the other night. Look at you. Closet horror host fan."

"Yep. I'm not nothing without my chompers."

"What?"

"Well, that's his catch phrase, right, if I'm remembering correctly?"

"No, it's 'spare my fangs, baby!'"

"Ah. Well. Variety is good, I guess."

Poured some extra sand into the coffee pot that morning. Bite and all.

First Element

Henry W. Leung

Water lancing our pores
before birth. A last resort: “fire”
added to our names
like a third body,
fold raised in the map.

A sister bursts from the egg
four years and four days (*death*, and *death*,
the old crows cry)
before me. Slivers of shell
ingrown, a stitched skin.

In my manual of death I learn
the round language.

Two paradigms:
spit and fear.

In a mirror an egg-faced creature
smoothed to anonymity
unflaps scrolls of coarse cloth
which do not give.

That is our mother.
This nest, her garland of spit.

Long ago she thought:
How easy to be close,
eating for two.

That was the water’s deception.
And it was good, no, necessary.

Bull

C.R. Resetarits

This time last year the Bull's third electroshock was misapplied. What had til then been remedy—brute wind to low-land fog—dropped a cloud, a thick woolly net to mood and mind. Court still gathered at Cedar Street

but the Bull moved mired: nooscopic hoofs through salt marsh muck. Slowly but slowly, he found his way, a thread of longing left by ocean breeze.

Number four was better tracked and brought again that good clean gray to our pie-eyed christ, our suffering beast of brackishness.

If

Moana Nepia

If you have grown up within sound, smell
and sight of the sea,
living, breathing
a part of this place
then you may know . . .

kina needling
pools to jump
and slip

parengo, stars, fish swimming
sky-soaking waves,
froth bursts
sand blasts
shaded dreams and shins

surf carves harmonies on bedrock curves

stones beckon
which to throw away
as flotsams and jetsams
clump wearily to bed
in sheets of clouded mist

weeping

Brackish

Will Cordeiro

Bowers Beach, DE

backwash of wish & drift
at slack tide
kelp snarls along the crash
pad dappled at the wrack line
foam-plush tremor-lashed ebb sift
in the breakers' slap with smashed shell marl

a tidepool's purl's kissed
down into the seabed
as one starfish
holds fast to a rock ledge
& memory
flashes as if settled
on its resolve to perish
yet
floods redolent with the sand-quick
rubble
of its glut doubles up pitched back
& fashions
an undercurrent
sweeping all asunder with its undulations
so that some impressions
can persist
in a beach-wrecked wave-wed
junk-heaped
& dripping
inwrought glitter
which parles the shoreline's litter
where the river spills its guts—

O confluence! the wake of every broken tongue
which leaps at each wet lip that laps & chokes & thunders

—our arms drag the bright wet scoop-net
& clutch
a saunter's bevy
of tidewater muckets
sea-scum & mud nuggets
battered spines &
bladderwrack a whelk egg case
riddled glyphs warped bottle-glass an oyster thief
augers moult jackknives
sea-gluten
& an unidentified half-cracked off dog-eared castoff
mucked in
with jellied venter
chaff & slime
with everything that's been dismembered

the mouth that reeks with briny slag
slews out
in flags of reeds recast debris

the viscid paste that makes our core—

the horseshoe crabs astraddle
stagger up the raked sludge of ragged estuaries
carrying addled ooze & germ within their books
of gills
while fiddlercrabs each nibble
dead fish which stare with open eyes
at clouds & sun & scree

Ua ka‘a niniau i ka wili wai.

Artist Statement

Joy Enomoto

The muliwai is a complex space that is vital to the survival of the ʻāina and its people. The brackish space that is often turbulent, murky, and misunderstood is also a nursery for new growth and the base of an entire ecosystem. Therefore, there is no one way to approach it visually.

"ʻŪpā paʻakai" (2013) is a previously untitled work that I produced along with a series of other screen prints addressing the issue of bleached coral. However, when I recently read Lyz Soto's new poem, "Flumes of the Muliwai" the title and the image of "ʻŪpā paʻakai" seemed to fit better as a response to the line, "These waves / will catch us between salt jaws" (see page of this issue 48). This 20 x 30 screen print not only refers to the rising sea levels that will soon consume the ʻāina if we do not change our current path, but also continues my ongoing collaboration with Lyz Soto's work, which is itself a convergence.

"The Path Is Not Always Clear" (2014) is a mixed-media work that is driven by material and process. This square, 10 ½ x 10 ½ inch work includes a vintage photograph, thread, dirt from Kahakuloa, Maui, and salt on paper, which is all posted on a wood panel. The dirt worked into the paper was a gift from Haley Kailiehu. She gathered the dirt from the sea cliffs where fresh water meets the sea in Kahakuloa, Maui. Since my own ancestors are also from Maui, this dirt holds much significance as a material to work with. The photograph of a small bay from the 1920s is not readily identifiable but holds a certain mystery and beauty which takes on another layer when salt and thread are moved into the image. Thread is always a symbol of our unbreaking ties to our genealogy. The brackishness of the work speaks to the rich brackishness of the muliwai. Part I is an image of the piece right after I produced it. Part II is how the work transformed because of the high humidity of a recent tropical storm.

"Pūkai" is a mixed-media work. This square, 10 ½ x 10 ½ inch work includes bleached coral, bleached linen book-binding thread, and acrylic on a wood panel. "Pūkai," which means "salty tears," holds a lone piece of bleached coral that washed up along the shores of Mālaekahana, a muliwai of Kahuku that is being devastated by development interests. The sea cries when facing unrelenting environmental trauma. Coral literally bleaches itself in order to protect itself, which in turn kills the reef and threatens all surrounding sea life. One coral stand carries much weight. And we are tied to its fate.

See page 177 for "ʻŪpā paʻakai," page 178 for "The Path Is Not Always Clear," and page 179 for "Pūkai."

This Is Where Your People Are From

Lianne Charlie

In spring 2014, I was invited to participate in the second official lā mālama ʻāina workday with the Hui Mālama i ke Ala ʻŪlili (HuiMAU) at the Mālama ʻĀina Koholālele māla (garden) site that hugs the coast of the Hāmākua district on the Big Island. I joined members of the Hui to help clear the land of invasive species and extend the garden of maiʻa (banana), kī (tī leaf), kō (sugar cane), and ʻulu (breadfruit) that they planted back in November 2013. As a short-term resident of Hawaiʻi (I am an international PhD student at UH Mānoa), I was eager to join in and contribute to the ʻāina restoration and reclamation projects that are happening across the archipelago. The work happening at Koholālele is of particular importance to me because of my connection to and newfound friendship with Noʻeau Peralto and Haley Kailiehu, members of the HuiMAU and direct descendants of those who have lived on, cared for, and loved the ʻāina in Hāmākua since the beginning of time.

I am writing this in Whitehorse, Yukon, in Northern Canada (the territory located east of Alaska). I was born here, but grew up on the West Coast of Canada. I am in the Yukon for the summer before returning to Hawaiʻi for another year of university. I am a descendant of those who once lived in small family camps on the shores of the Yukon River, in and around the Big and Little Salmon Rivers in the mid-southern part of the territory. Like the ancestors of those in HuiMAU, mine too have connections to our homelands that go back to the beginning of time. Today, we call ourselves the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, and most of our people live in Carmacks, a small town of 500 residents that is about a two-hour drive north of Whitehorse, the capital of the Yukon. It may seem odd to you that I am making links between the Yukon and Koholālele, but there are reasons for this that I think are important. This past weekend, I was thinking a lot about that May workday at Koholālele as I traveled for the first time to the village of my grandfather, Big Salmon Charlie.

My grandfather once lived in Big Salmon village, which is located right where the Big Salmon River runs into the Yukon River. It is about a two-hour motorboat ride up the Yukon River from Carmacks. It is hard to describe how isolated Big Salmon village is. The phrase "in the middle of nowhere" works in the sense that it really is in the middle of nowhere. It is surrounded by hundreds of kilometers of bush, mountains, and tributaries in every direction, which adds to its isolation. It is also really rundown. The village is referred to as "ancient" and "abandoned" by the many websites that advertise guided canoe trips down the Yukon River. But at the same time, descriptors like "in the middle of nowhere," "abandoned," and "ancient" fail to capture the fact that Big Salmon village is actually in the middle of everywhere for the Tagé Cho Hudän (Big River People).

From the early 1890s, Big Salmon village was a main stop for the steamboats that traveled the Yukon River, bringing miners and supplies to and from Dawson City for the Klondike Gold Rush. Today, it is a well-known camping spot for the hundreds of tourists who paddle down the Yukon River each summer. The four dilapidated log cabins at Big Salmon that were once homes and a trading post give the impression that the village is abandoned. But this is far from the truth. It was home for many of my ancestors well before the steamboats came and for my grandfather who worked those steamboats. Today, even though many of the descendants of the Big Salmon villagers live in Carmacks, Whitehorse, and elsewhere, Big Salmon village and the vast lands that surround it have a firm place in our hearts and minds as home.

I spent the weekend at Big Salmon village with my boyfriend, Michael, and my cousin's husband, Justin, who is an avid hunter and familiar with navigating the river and the land. When we got to the village site and out of the boat, Justin said to me, "This is where your people are from." That's a powerful statement and one that, I've learned, comes with a lot of responsibility. After settling in, we walked around the old village for a bit. Along with the four old cabins, there are a couple picnic tables, wooden outhouses, and a new cabin and gathering-site built by the First Nation. Everything is connected by a web of well-worn paths. Two of the cabins have caved-in roofs. The other two are in good enough shape to have a look inside. They are basic, one-room log cabins with a door and a couple windows. The first one we went in had an old wooden shelf and on it was upwards of 150 empty bottles of liquor brought and left by the many visitors. Some were signed with names and greetings in English, German, or Japanese. Most were covered in a thick layer of dust. They were stacked five deep on every shelf, arranged thoughtfully and with intention. I can remember a time in my life when I would have thought that such a display looked cool, even picturesque—the lighting was really nice, the bottles were of various colors, shapes, and sizes, and the dust aged them, adding a layer of mystique. But times have changed and now empty liquor bottles bring up entirely different feelings.

I have felt these feelings before. At Koholālele back in May, we unearthed an old lawn chair and a huge collection of garbage buried a few feet below the surface of the ground and hidden under eight-foot-high cane grass. The garbage had been there for a while; you could tell: the cans were warped and rusted and all the organic material had broken down. By the time we found it, the garbage was mostly a mass of plastic, metal, and glass mixed into the earth. It took hours to clear it out. We would go back and forth between removing clusters of cane grass roots using sickles or picks, and digging out garbage with our hands.

I learned that day that removing trash left by others from places that you love requires deep respect for those places and dedication to the process of restoring them. I

learned this from watching Aunty Millie Bailado, the kupuna in HuiMAU and the matriarch of the family. She worked the land with ease and energy that was matched by no other, even those more than half her age. While I was resting my sore muscles from swinging a pickaxe at cane grass roots (using a technique that expended way more energy than needed—as I was told repeatedly by the far more experienced uncles with us), Aunty Millie was out there under the hot sun, head down, sickles in both hands, gently easing all the unwanted matter out of the ʻāina with tenderness, like a mother cleaning a scrape on a small child's knee. Watching her work was beautiful and empowering.

Memories of Aunty Millie and her family working at Koholālele came to me as I sat by the river after looking around Big Salmon village and seeing liquor bottles displayed in my ancestor's home. Thinking of her and her family reminded me that caring for places that you love involves hard work and doing things that are sometimes uncomfortable or demanding (like laboring under the hot sun for hours). My experience at Koholālele also taught me that restoration and reclamation of our homelands requires dealing with the removal of all things unwanted. These things have been brought and left by others that do not care about us, our lands, or our ancestors in the ways that we do. At Big Salmon village, the empty liquor bottles, to me, were a physical manifestation of disrespect for my people and our land by newcomers, visitors, tourists, and the like. They have no place in our homes. So, the day we left the village, we took the bottles with us. We made two trips from the cabin to the boat with a tarp full of more than one hundred pounds of bottles. We left the village, just as we did Koholālele, in the way we wished to find it upon our return: clean, cared for, and loved.

Mahalo to Noʻeau and Haley for inviting me to Koholālele and putting me to work. Mahalo to Aunty Millie and her family for being so warm and welcoming—and for showing me how to use a pickaxe properly. Máhsin Cho to Justin for bringing me and Michael out to Big Salmon.

Máhsin Cho to all of the families who are dedicated to the restoration and reclamation of their homelands.

See page 181 for Lianne Charlie's visual art piece titled "Collage."

Artist Statement

Haley Kailiehu

The first four digital drawings belong to one series titled "Hoʻoulu ʻĀina, Hoʻoulu Lāhui." Hoʻoulu ʻāina literally means to cultivate the ʻāina and hoʻoulu lāhui means to grow or cultivate our nation. Little keiki are embedded within various Native Hawaiian staple plants, like the maiʻa (banana), ʻulu (breadfruit), and kalo (taro) that have nourished and sustained our Native Hawaiian community since time immemorial. By cultivating and nurturing our plants that sustain our keiki, we are thereby cultivating and nurturing the next generation which will essentially be the carriers of our culture, traditions, history, knowledge, and moʻolelo for future generations to learn from and pass on.

The next set of four paintings also belong to one series titled "ʻUkukoʻakoʻa" inspired by the Kumulipo or genealogy chant. I drew upon this one particular line in the Kumulipo, "Hanau ka ʻUkukoʻakoʻa, hanau kana, he ʻAkoʻakoʻa, puka," which according to Beckwith translates to, "Born is the coral polyp, born is the coral, come forth."* The coral polyp was born out of the pō, out of the darkness, which then gave birth to the entire coral reef. The coral reef is essentially the foundation upon which the rest of the ocean was created and all the creatures that live within it. This series represents my reflection on genealogy and how we all connect back to this period of time.

The very last two images are from the mural we painted for Mākua Valley. This semester I worked as the lead artist, in collaboration with Ileana Ruellas of Native Hawaiian Student Services and Greg Kashigi of Nā Pua Noʻeau, to initiate a community event that would bring together members of the the community of Waiʻanae to paint a large mural about the cultural and historical significance of Mākua valley. About 250 people from the community of Waiʻanae and around Oʻahu showed up, and together we spent about seven hours on a Saturday painting the mural. As we painted together, we also learned more about Mākua, the moʻolelo of Hiʻiakaikapoliopele, the importance of maintaining a healthy ecosystem, and the negative impacts that the military has had on

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*Kumulipo as translated by Martha Beckwith 15. Hanau ka ʻUkukoʻakoʻa, hanau kana, he ʻAkoʻakoʻa, puka Kumulipo was the husband, Poʻele the wife. To them was born Pouliuli. This was the beginning of the earth. The coral was the first stone in the foundation of the earth mentioned in the chant. It was the insect that made the coral and all things in the sea. This was the beginning of the period called the first interval of time. During this time grew the coral, the shellfish. It was still dark. The water was made to be a nest that gave birth and bore all things in the womb of the deep.

this ʻāina over the past 30 years. Members of Mālama Mākua ʻOhana also joined us that day and shared with the community about their efforts to protect the ʻāina of Mākua. The mural is now housed in the Waiʻanae High School Library, where it will continue to help educate current and future generations of students in Waiʻanae about these important histories. (Medium: Behr House Paint on Plywood. Size: 8 feet x 16 ft.)

See page 182 for "Hoʻoulu ʻĀina," page 186 for "ʻUkukoʻakoʻa," and page 188 for "Mural for Mākua Valley."

Nā Wai ʻEhā

Haley Kailiehu

Waikapū, Wailuku, Waiehu, and Waiheʻe are the four great rivers on the island of Maui more commonly known as Nā Wai ʻEhā. At one point in our history all four rivers flowed from ma uka to ma kai providing life for all living things that depended on it for health and survival. In most accounts that I have read and heard from our kūpuna, Nā Wai ʻEhā fed extensive loʻi kalo systems, supported whole ecosystems from mountain to sea, and ensured the continuance and survival of Kānaka ʻŌiwi for many centuries.

In more recent decades however the riverbeds of Nā Wai ʻEhā have gone dry. Greedy businessmen uninterested in maintaining the health and well-being of whole ecosystems are diverting Nā Wai ʻEhā away from the natural flow of these rivers to bottomless suck tanks, also know as hotels, golf courses, and unaffordable housing developments. Large irrigation channels, remnants of the sugarcane plantation era, much like the business owners of Wailuku Water Company themselves, are now the culprits that devastate, deteriorate, and destroy the homes of fresh water fish, such as our ʻoʻopu, and shellfish, like the hīhīwai, and the shrimp, known as ʻōpae. Nearly 100% of Wailuku is being diverted everyday, leaving little to nothing in the ecosystems that the waters originate from.

Diversion of these waters is detrimental to the natural environment because the water never remains in the system and never returns once it is gone. Tourists who visit Maui and stay in the multiple hotels that line the beaches of Kīhei and Lāhainā, some of the most arid parts of the island, find themselves swimming in pools full of water from Nā Wai ʻEhā. Tourists who stay on our island home for two to five days during their short-term visits find themselves bathing in showers lining the beaches of Kīhei and Lāihainā from the waters of our Nā Wai ʻEhā. People who have the privilege to spend time at golf courses find themselves standing on green grass in the middle of the desert lands of Wailea, teeing of into more green grass lands, because vast amounts of Nā Wai ʻEhā have been pumped into the soil to maintain that artificial greenery for their short afternoon endeavor. Unlike the bountiful flow of water that was maintained for centuries, even after the islands were populated by Kānaka ʻŌiwi, the waters of our Nā Wai ʻEhā run dry to the detriment of everything that once depended on it for life.

This is the reality my generation grew up in. I noticed the nonexistence of water in Nā Wai ʻEhā. I saw entire riverbeds being lined with cement while the remaining rocks were shoved into a mountainous pile near Sack N Save in Wailuku. I remember quite vividly how it became normal for my friends and I to go swimming in the rivers above the grates where the water still flowed and filled ponds. You could actually walk right up to the diversion grate built across the Wailuku riverbed and watch as the whole river emp-

tied into it. I remember an eerie, gut-wrenching feeling overcoming me each time. By the time I was 16 years old, I decided I would no longer go back there.

Just recently I returned to the Wailuku River. What brought me back was a special moment for many of us because for the first time in nearly 140 years, water was to be restored to the Wailuku River. On October 13, 2014, my mom and I drove to Kepaniwai Park. Like many other people on that day, we were there to watch the waters of the Wailuku being released back into the stream. We stood among a crowd of people, some familiar friends, some young college students, some long-time advocates, and some just there because they found themselves drawn to the cause. My initial thought was one of admiration for Hui o Nā Wai ʻEhā and their immense, tireless dedication to fight for the restoration of the waters of Nā Wai ʻEhā. It was a special moment and we were all about to witness and experience it together.

When the Wailuku Water Company's water management operator, Clayton Suzuki, opened the valve and the water emptied out into a small stream running parallel to our feet, my mom looked back at me and I saw tears running from her eyes. I saw tears running from the eyes of many people as they had longed to see those waters that we barely ever see. My mom and I stayed for a while before heading home. By 6:00 p.m. that night it was made clear to me by my friend and long time Nā Wai ʻEhā advocate, Hokuao Pellegrino, that Wailuku Water Company did not release the 10 million gallons per day (mgd) that had been previously agreed upon, but instead only released 5.47 mgd back into the stream. According to Hui o Nā Wai ʻEhā, Wailuku Water Company did not comply with the terms of their stream flow agreement and continued to divert 100% of the stream flow at the Spreckles Ditch Diversion in Happy Valley.

What transpired after Wailuku Water Company's public disregard for the law was really eye opening for me as I watched more than 600 people from all parts of Maui congregate on one day along the banks and bridges of Nā Wai ʻEhā to express their aloha for Nā Wai ʻEhā and their disapproval with Waluku Water Company's actions. For the first time in all my life, I saw people of all ages, from little babies being held by their mothers and fathers to older kūpuna, all standing in unity on this one day confronting this one issue together. My mother and father made some of the largest "Restore Stream Flow" signs I have ever seen and joined the many people at the Happy Valley Bridge. Because I could not be there physically, I decided to do what I often do as an artist to process what is happening in the world around me. I picked up a pen and quickly started to draw Nā Wai ʻEhā, inspired by the people back home who were there standing at the front lines.

This collective action of aloha ʻāina inspired my drawing of Nā Wai ʻEhā. This image is what I envision of how Nā Wai ʻEhā flowed and how they will flow again one day. We have longed to see our waters restored for over a century. And I truly believe that one day they will be restored, because our community of Kānaka ʻŌiwi are incredibly

conscious and intelligent, and will no longer allow these injustices to go on. This piece is dedicated to all the members of Hui o Nā Wai ʻEhā. For more information on Nā Wai ʻEhā please go to www.restorestreamflow.org

See page 190 for Haley Kailiehu's drawings titled "Nā Wai ʻEhā." The cover of this issue was produced with the final drawing in this series.

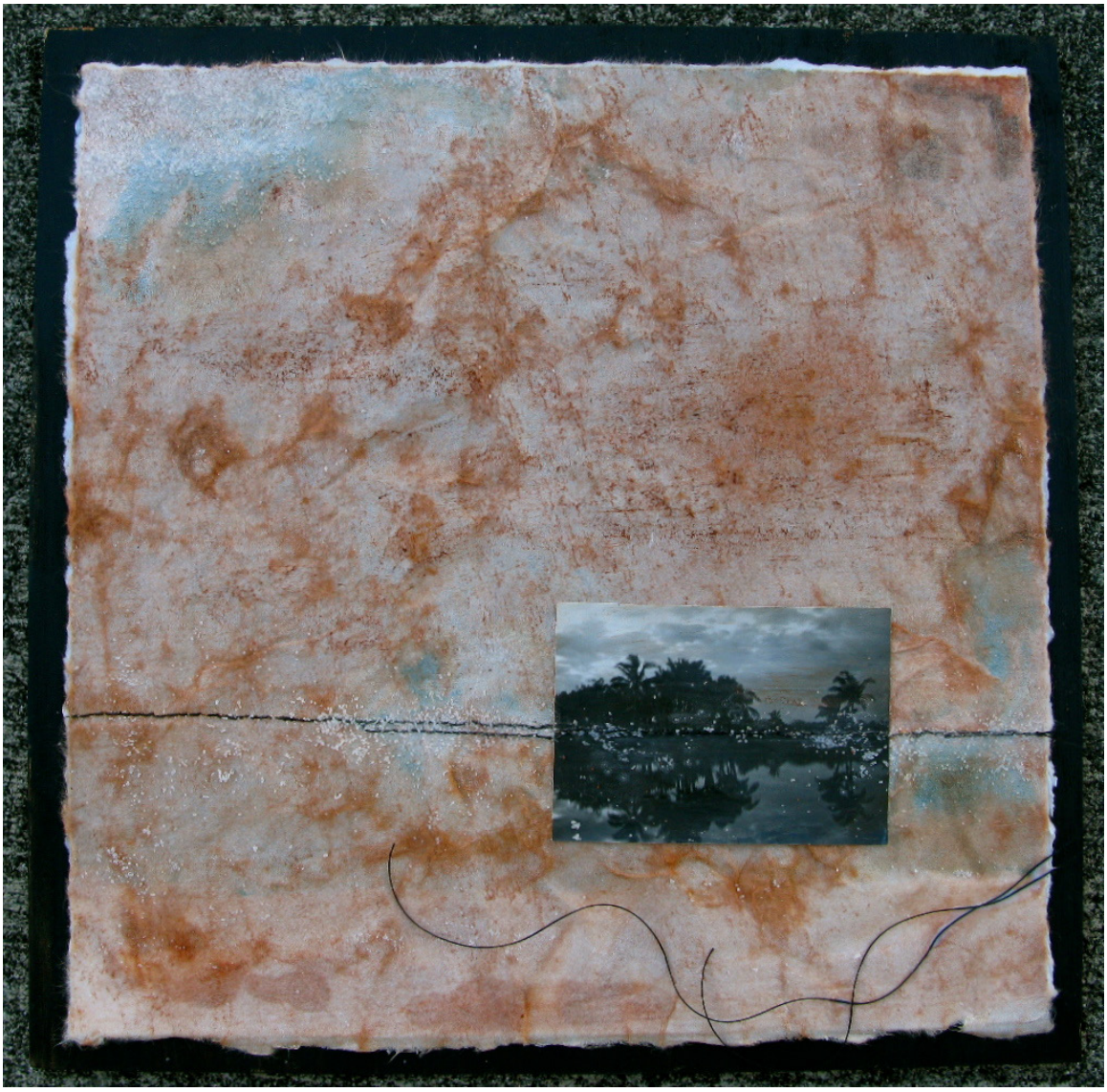
Kahe ka wai ʻula, kuakea ka moana.

ʻŪpā paʻakai
Joy Enomoto

See page 167 for the artist's statement regarding this work.

The Path Is Not Always Clear

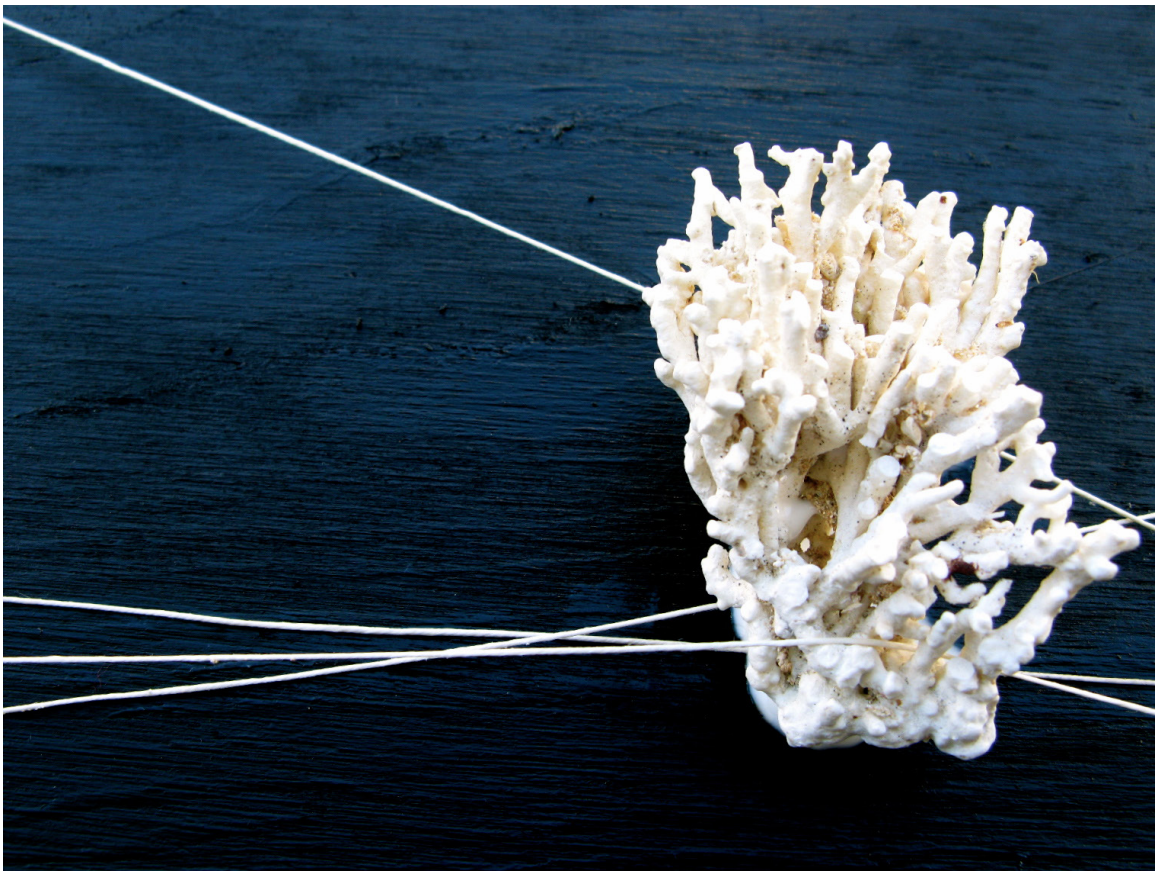
Joy Enomoto



Note: After a strong rain, this living artwork transformed substantially in color. With enough time to dry out again, it returned to its original color.

See page 167 for the artist's statement regarding this work.

Pūkai
Joy Enomoto



See page 167 for the artist's statement regarding this work.

Ocean Stains

No‘ukahau‘oli Revilla

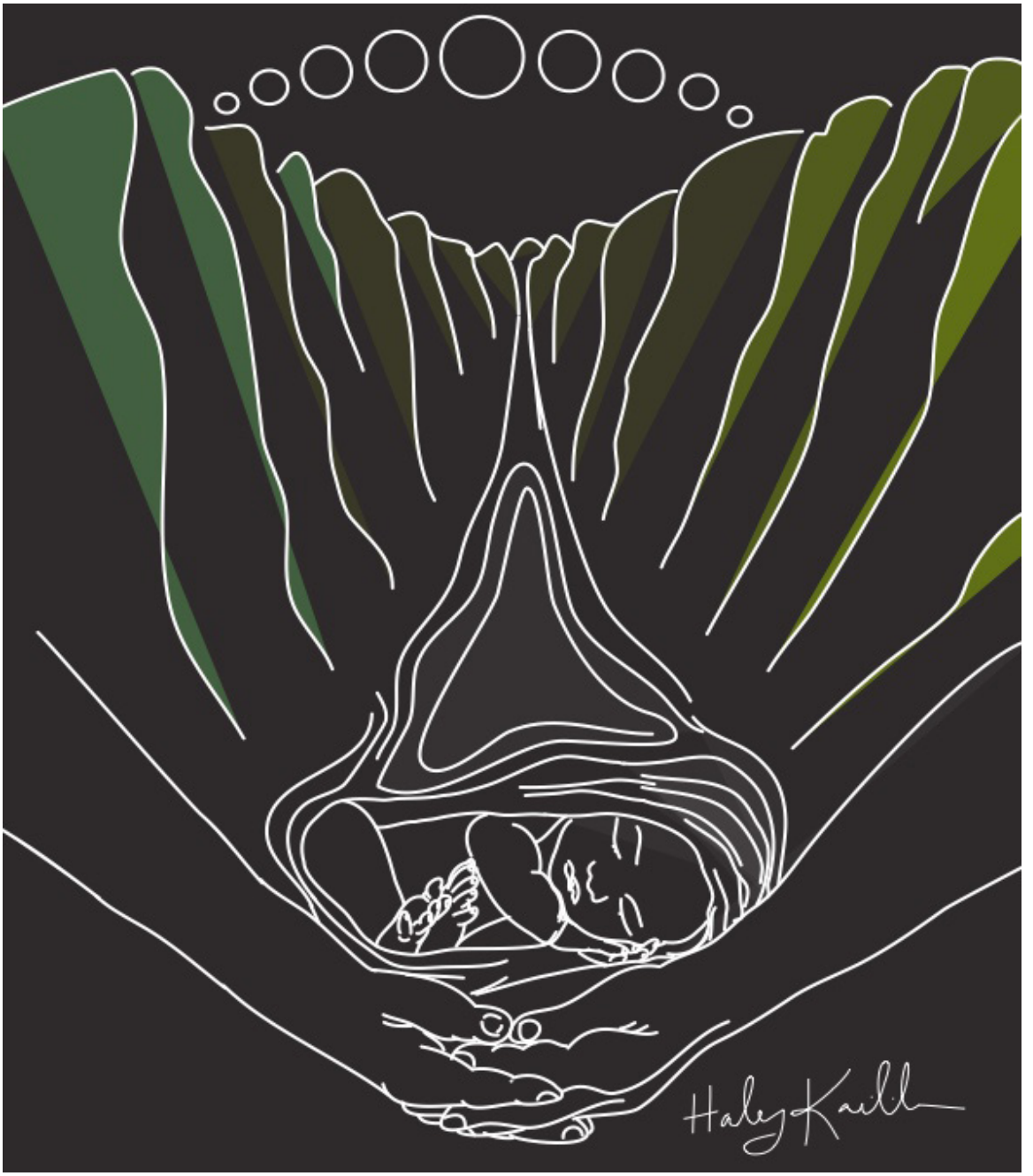
Acrylic, coffee grinds, newspaper, copper wire, glass, and marble.

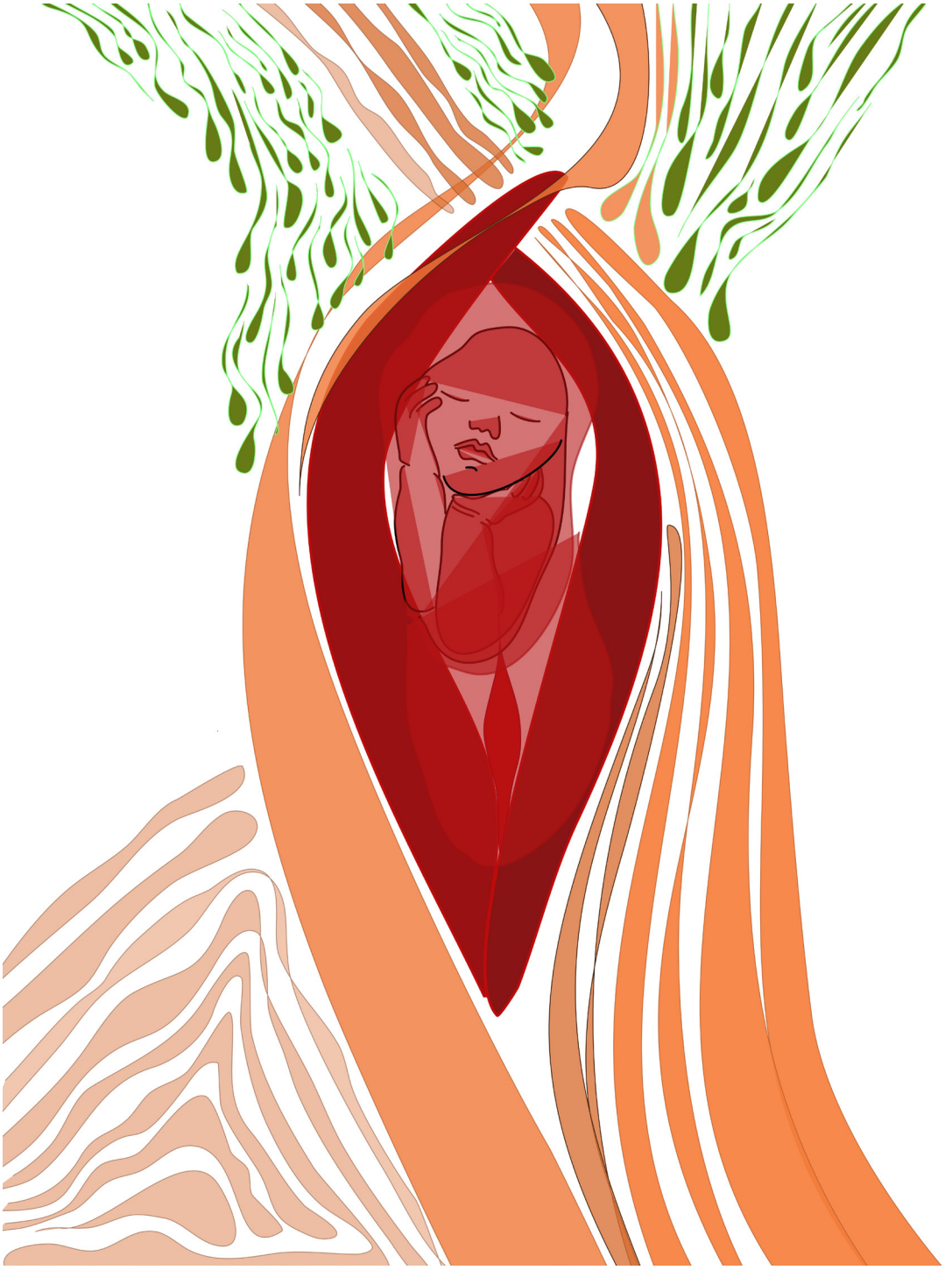
Collage
Lianne Charlie

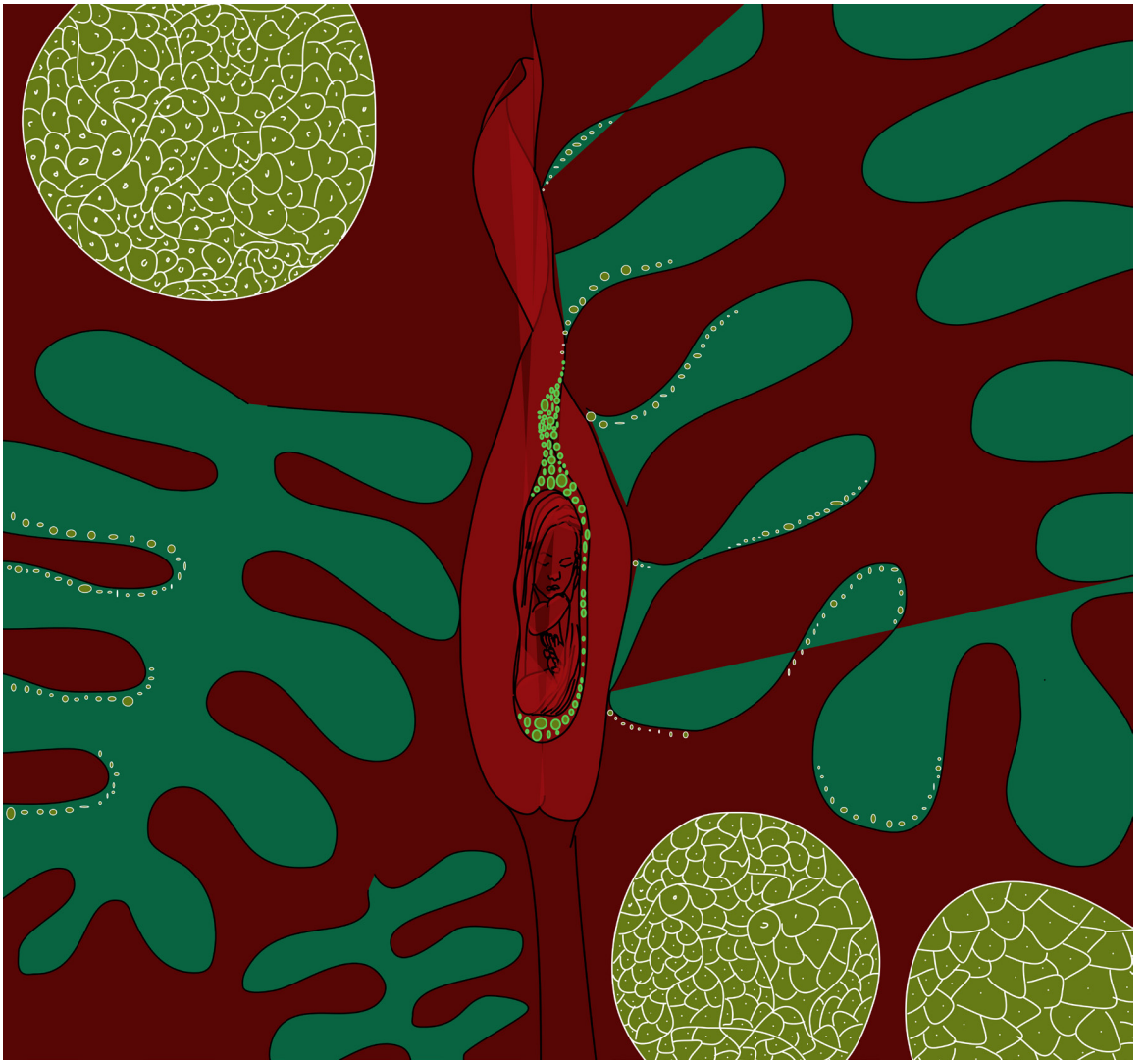
See page 168 for the artist's statement regarding this work.

Hoʻoulu ʻĀina

Haley Kailiehu


Haley Kaili





See page 171 for the artist's statement regarding these works.

ʻUkukoʻakoʻa
Haley Kailiehu

See page 171 for the artist's statement regarding these works.

Mural for Mākua Valley

Haley Kailiehu

See page 171 for the artist's statement regarding this work.

Nā Wai ʻEhā

Haley Kailiehu


NO
WAI
EHU

See page 173 for the artist's statement regarding these works.

ERRATUM

The following poem was misprinted in HR 78. We are reprinting it here accurately with the author's permission and our deepest apologies.

A Talent for Destruction

Charlie Bondhus

I

This is what it comes down to: the flowers
dead,
even the hardy geraniums,
the unflappable monkshood.

Don't tell me it was winter that did this
and not my native frost, my touch
as cold as salt.

II

When I was a kid I was always first
to suggest we dissect
the frog we'd caught in the backyard,
always distracted from the beauty
of the forest by an anthill I wanted to grind
beneath my sneaker's heel. My favorite
fairytale was the one where the witch
gets stuffed in a spiked barrel
of boiling oil and venomous serpents,
then pushed downhill.

III

Three klicks west of Kandalik
we hit an ambush. Nothing serious;
kids with frayed moustaches

and secondhand assault rifles. Mendoza got
spun around; Patel caught a stray
one in his IBA; a bullet hit
the dirt at my feet.

The only decisions were tactical ones.

War is easy.
You get up.
You stay alive.
You go to bed.

IV

I visit you after three months of separation.
This is when I notice the flowers
dry and flat, faces pressed to the ground
like the Afghan woman when she heard that her son,
had caught a piece of shrapnel in his liver.

I know you
so I know that you expect reconciliation,
unconditional forgiveness burbling behind
your chatterbox syllables as you pour the coffee
and futz with the table settings.

How do I tell you I still love you
but feel most at home
among the dead?

A jet passes over the house
and we are silent.

V

Don't think that
I'm going back for the U.S.A.
I love America, but nobody's died for it
since 1945. These days we're dying
for the benefits; we're dying for the adventure;

we're dying for the chance
to make someone else die;
we're dying because we're no longer moved
by movies and video games; we're dying because our parents
said work, school, or the military; we're dying
because we don't know who we are so,
like the prophets of the Old Testament,
we go to the desert to hear a voice;
we're dying to prove that we can die better
than anyone else; we're dying to be told
that we are good; most of all, we're dying
because we're not sure
what else to do with ourselves.

VI.

I command my own fire team,
three men under me.
We barely know each other
but we've all been here before,
and tell variations on the same story,
the military's version of the collective unconscious
knitting us in shared language.

Shortly after our first firefight, Delancey, the assist,
gets his tattoo gun through the mail and marks us all
with ویرګوانړی, the Pashto word
for "destroyer."

When it's my turn, the needle enters
too deep. The blood comes
quick, sharp, and easy.
It gives color to a pain
that is sweeter than thorns.

Contributors

Crisosto Apache is Mescalero Apache from New Mexico. He is an alumnus from the IAIA (1992), where he holds an AFA degree in creative writing and where he is currently pursuing his MFA. He earned his BA in English from the Metropolitan State University of Denver. His work is published in '90, '91 and '92 anthologies from IAIA, which he coedited; *MSUD/MetroSphere*, *Future Earth Magazine*, *Black Renaissance Noire*, *Yellow Medicine Review*, *Tribal College Journal*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Toe Good Poetry*, and *Fulcrum Poetry #8*. Crisosto also appeared on *MTV's Free Your Mind* (1992) ad campaign for poetry. His published book reviews are for the Native American anthology *Visit Tee-Pee Town* (Coffee House Press 1999), which was published in *Poetry Project* issue 175.

Jill Birdsall has completed two collections of linked stories. Her work has been published in more than 25 journals, including *Iowa Review*, *Crazyhorse*, *Story Quarterly*, and *Seventeen Magazine*. Since 2013 her stories have been selected for awards by Charles D'ambrosio and Rick Moody. Jill earned an MFA in fiction from Columbia University. To read more, visit www.jillbirdsall.com.

Ahimsa Timoteo Bodhrán was born in the Bronx to a multigenerational mixed-blood familia (Kanien´kehaka, Onondowaga, Irish, Puerto Rican, and German/Moroccan Jewish). He is the author of *Antes y después del Bronx: Lenapehoking* (New American Press) and *South Bronx Breathing Lessons* (Palabrera Press), and editor of the Fall 2010 international queer Indigenous issue of *Yellow Medicine Review: A Journal of Indigenous Literature, Art, and Thought*—the first global queer Indigenous collection, with over ninety contributors from around the world. A Wildacres, Soul Mountain, Paden, Escape to Create, Caldera, Sitka, Prairie Center, Vermont Studio, Blue Mountain, Wurlitzer, Yaddo, and James Merrill House artist-in-residence, and Fine Arts Work Center, Lambda Literary, Macondo, and RAWI scholarship recipient, his work appears in 180 publications in 21 nations. He is completing *Yerbabuena/Mala yerba, All My Roots Need Rain: mixed-blood poetry & prose* and *Heart of the Nation: Indigenous Womanisms, Queer People of Color, and Native Sovereignties*.

Charlie Bondhus's second poetry book, *All the Heat We Could Carry*, won Main Street Rag's Annual Poetry Book Award for 2013 and the Publishing Triangle's 2014 Thom Gunn Award in Gay Poetry. His work appears or is set to appear in numerous periodicals, including *Poetry*, *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, *The Wisconsin Review*, *CounterPunch*, and *Cold Mountain Review*. He is the poetry editor at *The Good Men Project* (goodmenproject.com).

Lianne Charlie is part of the Wolf clan of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, who are Northern Tutchone (Athabaskan)–speaking people in the Yukon (Northern Canada). Lianne was raised by her mother, a second generation Canadian of Danish and Icelandic ancestry. Although born in the Yukon, she has spent most of her life in Victoria, BC, which is located on Lekwungen, Esquimalt, and WSÀNEC traditional territories on the West Coast of Canada. She is a second-year PhD student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Indigenous politics program (political science department).

Will Cordeiro recently received his MFA and PhD from Cornell University. His work appears in *burnt district*, *Copper Nickel*, *Cortland Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *CutBank* online, *Drunken Boat*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Harpur Palate*, *Phoebe*, and elsewhere. He is grateful for residencies from ART 342, Blue Mountain Center, Ora Lerman Trust, and Petrified Forest National Park. He lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, where he is a faculty member in the Honors Program at Northern Arizona University.

Ashley Davidson's stories have appeared or are forthcoming in *Five Chapters*, *Meridian*, *Nashville Review*, *Sou'wester*, *Quarterly West*, and other journals. She holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and lives in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Heather Dobbins's poems and poetry reviews have appeared in *Beloit Poetry Review*, *CutBank*, *The Southern Poetry Anthology* (Tennessee), *The Rumpus*, and *TriQuarterly Review*, among others. After ten years of earning degrees in California and Vermont, she returned to her hometown of Memphis. Her debut, *In the Low Houses*, was published in 2014 by Kelsay Press. For more information, visit heatherdobbins.com.

Owen Duffy's recent fiction has appeared in *Passages North*, *New South*, *Storyglossia*, *New Delta Review*, *PANK*, and *Bluestem Magazine*. He holds an MFA from Rutgers-Newark, and his novel, *The Artichoke Queen*, is forthcoming from Livingston Press in 2015. He lives with his wife, Liz, and their daughter, Ella, in Charleston, South Carolina, where he mentors local writers.

Cathie Koa Dunsford is a queer Māori/African/Hawaiian artist/activist. She is author of a poetry book, *Survivors/Überlebende; Getting Published: The Inside Story*; and a novel series: *Cowrie*, *The Journey Home/Te Haerenga Kainga*, *Manawa Toa/Heart Warrior*, *Song of the Selkies*, *Ao Toa/Earth Warriors*, *Return of the Selkies*, *Pele's Tsunami*, and *Kaitiakitanga Pasifika*. She is (co)editor of *New Women's Fiction*; *The Exploding Frangipani: Lesbian Writing from Australia and New Zealand*; *Subversive Acts: New Writing by New Zealand Women*; *Me and Marilyn Monroe: New Writing by New Zealand Women*; and *Car Maintenance, Explosives and Love: And Other Contemporary Lesbian Writings*. Her work appears in *Bamboo Ridge*; *Dreadlocks*; *Ora Nui*; *Yellow Medicine Review*; *Te*

Ao Mārama: Contemporary Māori Writing, Volume V; *Get on the Waka: Best Recent Māori Fiction*; and *Nga Uri a Papatuanuku/The Descendants of the Earth Mother/Die Nachkommen der Erdmutter: Poems and Short Stories by Maori Women Writers/Gedichte und Kurzgeschichten von Maori Schriftstellerinnen*. http://www.dunsfordpublishing.com

Joy Enomoto thinks about climate change every day—king tides in the Pacific, floods in India, fishing villages being swallowed by sand in Ghana, tsunamis in Japan, bleaching coral, and on and on. These are not what-ifs. They're happening now. The resilient space of the muliwai is where her genealogies converge with the ever-changing sea, and it is in this brackish place that we must imagine a path for survival.

Jéanpaul Ferro is a novelist, short fiction author, and poet from Scituate, Rhode Island. A nine-time Pushcart Prize nominee, he has appeared on National Public Radio and in *Contemporary American Voices*, *Tulane Review*, *Tampa Review*, *Columbia Review*, *Emerson Review*, *Connecticut Review*, *Cleveland Review*, *Cortland Review*, *Portland Monthly*, *Arts & Understanding Magazine*, and *Saltsburg Review*. He is the author of *All The Good Promises* (Plowman Press, 1994); *Becoming X* (BlazeVox Books, 2008); *You Know Too Much About Flying Saucers* (Thumbscrew Press, 2009); *Hemispheres* (Maverick Duck Press, 2009); *Essendo Morti–Being Dead* (Goldfish Press, 2009), nominated for the 2010 Griffin Prize in Poetry; and *Jazz* (Honest Publishing, 2011), nominated for both the 2012 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Prize and the 2012 Griffin Prize in Poetry. He is represented by the Jennifer Lyons Literary Agency. For more information, go to www.jeanpaulferro.com

Colin Fleming's fiction appears in the *VQR*, *Boulevard*, *Post Road*, *Black Clock*, and *The Hopkins Review*, and he also writes for *Rolling Stone*, *The Atlantic*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Sports Illustrated*. He's a regular contributor to Newstalk's *Tom Dunne Show* and NPR's *Weekend Edition*. His next book, *The Anglerfish Comedy Troupe: Stories from the Abyss*, comes out from Dzanc in August 2015.

Atar Hadari was born in Israel, raised in England, and won a scholarship to study poetry and playwrighting with Derek Walcott at Boston University. His "Songs from Bialik: Selected Poems of H. N. Bialik" (Syracuse University Press) was a finalist for the American Literary Translators' Association Award and his poems have won the Daniel Varoujan award from New England Poetry Club, the Petra Kenney award, a Paumanok poetry award, and a New Poet feature from *Poetry Review*. His debut poetry collection, *Rembrandt's Bible*, was recently published by Indigo Dreams and his *Lives of the Dead: Poems of Hanoch Levin* is forthcoming from Arc Publications.

Joseph Han is a graduate student in English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He is also the current director of Mixing Innovative Arts, a monthly reading series in Honolulu.

His work has appeared in *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Hawai'i Pacific Review*, *Eclectica Magazine*, and elsewhere.

ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui is a Kanaka Maoli nationalist, scholar, aloha 'āina advocate, poet, and visual artist. She is Associate Professor of English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where she specializes in Oceanic (Pacific) literatures, place-based writing, and Indigenous literacy. ho'omanawanui is the author of *Voices of Fire: Reweaving the Literary Lei of Pele and Hi'iaka* (University of Minnesota Press); and a founding and Chief Editor of *'Ōiwi: A Native Hawaiian Journal* and Kuleana 'Ōiwi Press. Internationally published, her creative and critical writing appears in numerous journals and anthologies, including *Hūlili*; *Anglistica*; *Chain*; *boundary 2*; *Pacific Studies*; *Educational Perspectives*; *American Indian Quarterly*; *The Contemporary Pacific*; *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*; *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English* and its sequel *Mauri Ola: Contemporary Polynesian Poetry in English*; *Shout Out: Women of Color Respond to Violence*; *Other Tongues: Mixed-Race Women Speak Out*; and *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature*.

Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner is a poet and a teacher currently working at the College of the Marshall Islands.

Born and raised in Kukuipuka, in the ahupua'a of Kahakuloa, Ka'anapali, Maui, **Haley Kailiehu** is kama'āina to the steep cliffs and rugged coastline of Makamaka'ole valley. Descendant of generations of 'Ōiwi artists, Haley's art is shaped by the genealogy and 'āina of which she was born. In 2009, Haley graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa with a BA in Art, with a focus in drawing and painting. In 2012, Haley acquired an MEdT (Masters in Education and Teaching) from the Ho'okulāiwi Center for Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Education. Currently, Haley is pursuing a PhD in education with a focus in curriculum studies. Her research is focused on community- and 'āina-based art as a means of reclaiming 'Ōiwi spaces and places.

Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada enjoys living in Pālolo in a house of talented people, including an amazing woman he loves and a slovenly old dog he loves significantly less. He has the most fierce, most loving, and most dedicated friends who always push him to do uncomfortable things, and his family and faculty have put up with his obsessive school-going for the last two decades.

Diane Lefer's books include the short story collection, *California Transit* (awarded the Mary McCarthy Prize and published by Sarabande Books), and the novels, *The Fiery Alphabet* (a Small Press Pick) and *Confessions of a Carnivore* (Fomite Press). Her nonfiction about Northern Ireland appeared in *New Madrid* (winter 2014) and *Numéro Cinq*:

http://numerocinqmagazine.com/2014/02/10/provocations-essay-diane-lefer/ She is an associate artist with ImaginAction, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting social justice and community through the arts.

Henry W. Leung was born in the Pearl River Delta, then raised in Honolulu's Pālolo Valley and later the San Francisco Bay Area. He is the author of a chapbook, *Paradise Hunger* (Swan Scythe, 2012), and the recipient of Kundiman, Soros, and Fulbright fellowships. He is currently in Hong Kong researching its languages and literatures, parsing poems from pronouns.

Aurora Levins Morales is a bisexual writer, visual artist, historian, and activist. Her ancestors include people of the Borikén and Quisqueya Taíno, West and North Africans, Iberians of Cantabria and Andalucía, and Ukrainian Ashkenazi Jews. Born and raised in Maricao, Puerto Rico, she is co-author, with her mother, Rosario Morales, of *Getting Home Alive* and *Cosecha and Other Stories*; and author of *Medicine Stories: History, Culture and the Politics of Integrity*; *Remedios: Stories of Earth and Iron from the History of Puertorriqueñas*; and *Kindling: Writings On the Body*. Her work appears in numerous anthologies and is translated into seven languages. She has been a commissioned writer and performer for Sins Invalid, a disabled artists' performance project centering artists of color and queer artists. A member of Jewish Voice for Peace's Artists and Cultural Workers Council, she blogs at http://www.auroralevinsmorales.com. She is finishing a novel and new edition of *Medicine Stories*.

D. Keali'i MacKenzie is a queer Kanaka 'Ōiwi writer and librarian at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Hamilton Library. He received his MLISc degree from UH, where he is completing his M.A. at the Center for Pacific Islands Studies. His article, "Rules of the Game: Resources and Researching Pacific Islands Sport," recently appeared in *The Contemporary Pacific*. He is the author of five poetry chapbooks, *Kaonohiokalā: The Eyeball of The Sun*; *Komohanaokalā: Entering In of The Sun*; *Rust and Faded Columns*; *Kahikinaokalā: The Rising of The Sun*; and *Broken Spires*; and a forthcoming full-length collection, *Legacies* (Kuleana 'Ōiwi Press). His writing appears in *'Ōiwi; Yellow Medicine Review*; *Hawai'i Review*; *Hawai'i Pacific Review*; *Storyboard*; *Assaracus*; *Wilde*; *Mauri Ola: Contemporary Polynesian Poetry in English*; and *Flicker and Spark: A Contemporary Queer Anthology of Spoken Word and Poetry*. He is Poet Facilitator for Pacific Tongues, which conducts youth writing workshops and poetry slams.

Lisa Suhair Majaj is a Palestinian-American feminist writer and editor living in Cyprus. She is the author of two poetry chapbooks, *These Words* and *What She Said*, as well as the full-length collection, *Geographies of Light*, winner of the Del Sol Press Poetry Prize. She is co-editor of three academic anthologies: *Etel Adnan: Critical Essays on the Arab-American*

Writer and Artist; *Intersections: Gender, Nation, and Community in Arab Women's Novels*; and *Going Global: The Transnational Reception of Third World Women Writers*. An award-winning and internationally-published poet and autobiographical/critical essayist, her work appears in *Banipal*; *Al Jadid*; *Mizna*; *Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists*; *Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women*; *The Poetry of Arab Women: A Contemporary Anthology*; *Scheherazade's Legacy: Arab and Arab-American Women on Writing*; *Inclined to Speak: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Poetry*; and *Arab and Arab American Feminisms: Gender, Violence, and Belonging*.

Abby Mason is 10 years old and goes to Selyn House School, Christchurch, New Zealand. She does creative writing at school, and has just joined the school for young writers, Christchurch. She loves reading and writing and wants to be a writer when she grows up.

Rajiv Mohabir's first full-length collection of poems, *The Taxidermist's Cut*, winner of the 2014 Intro Prize in Poetry, is forthcoming from Four Way Books. A VONA, Kundiman, and American Institute of Indian Studies language fellow, Rajiv has published some of his poetry and translations in journals such as *The Prairie Schooner*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Anti-*, *Great River Review*, *PANK*, and *Aufgabe*. Having completed his MFA in poetry and translation from Queens College, CUNY, he is currently pursuing a PhD from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Moana Nepia had an international career as a dancer and choreographer before retraining as a visual artist in London. His creative practice now includes painting, video installation, and performance. His recent writing is included in *Ora Nui: Journal of Contemporary Maori Writing*, edited by Anton Blank in 2012; *Of Other Thoughts: Non-Traditional Ways to the Doctorate, a Handbook for Candidates and Supervisors*, edited by Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul and Michael Peters in 2013; and *Puna Wai Kōrero: An Anthology of Māori Poetry in English*, edited by Reina Whaitiri and Robert Sullivan for Auckland University Press in 2014. He received a PhD for his practice-led thesis entitled *Te Kore: Exploring the Māori Concept of Void*, from AUT University in 2013. He is currently an assistant professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Center for Pacific Islands Studies, where he is helping to develop new courses with a focus on arts and performance in the Pacific. He is also the arts editor for *The Contemporary Pacific*.

Loa Niumeitolu is a Tongan American writer/community organizer. Her work appears in *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English; Homelands: Women's Journeys across Race, Place, and Time*; and *Yellow Medicine Review: A Journal of Indigenous Literature, Art, and Thought*; and was featured on BBC Radio Scotland. She is one of the writers for, and narrator of, the documentary, *Kau Faito'o: Traditional*

Healers of Tonga. As an educator/organizer, she has worked with(in) Mataliki: Tongan Writers Group; Salt Lake City Public Library; Decker Lake Youth Center; Great Salt Lake Book Festival; Human Rights and Democracy Movement, Tonga; Clark University International Development, Community, and Environment Women of Color Collective; Ex-Prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement; Asian Prisoner Support Committee; Alternatives to Violence Project; Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla; California State Prison, Solano; One Love Oceania; Community Health for Asian Americans; and Oyate Tupu'anga, a queer Native American/Pacific Islander support group.

James Norcliffe is a NZ poet, editor, and writer of novels for young people (mainly fantasy), including the award-winning *The Loblolly Boy*. He has published eight collections of poetry, most recently *Villon in Millerton* in 2007, and *Packing My Bag for Mars* and *Shadow Play*, both in 2012. In 2010 he took part in the XX International Poetry Festival in Medellin, Colombia, and in 2011 the Trois Rivieres International Poetry Festival in Quebec. This year sees *Essential New Zealand Poems: Facing the Empty Page*, a major new anthology of NZ poetry coedited with Siobhan Harvey and Harry Ricketts.

Liesl Nunns graduated from the University of Oxford in 2011 with a doctorate in classical languages and literature. She has since returned to her home and favorite place in the world, Wellington, New Zealand, where she writes, coedits a literary e-journal called *Headland*, and works in arts administration. She has work published or forthcoming in *Southerly*, *Hippocampus Magazine*, and *Waypoints Magazine*.

Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio is a Kanaka Maoli wahine poet / activist / scholar born and raised in Pālolo Valley (O'ahu) to parents Jonathan and Mary Osorio. Jamaica is a three-time national poetry champion, poetry mentor, and a published author. She is a proud graduate of Kamehameha, Stanford (BA), and New York University (MA), and has recently moved home to study Kanaka Maoli literature in the English Department at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Craig Santos Perez is a native Chamoru from the Pacific Island of Guåhan (Guam). He is the cofounder of Ala Press, costar of the poetry album *Undercurrent* (2011), and author of three collections of poetry: *from unincorporated territory [hacha]* (2008), *from unincorporated territory [saina]* (2010), and *from unincorporated territory [guma']* (2014). He is an associate professor and the director of the creative writing program in the English department at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Liz Prato's short story collection, *Baby's on Fire*, is forthcoming from Press 53 in May 2015. Her short stories and essays have appeared in *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Iron Horse*

Literary Review, *The Rumpus*, *Carve*, and *ZYZZWA*, among others. She is the editor of *The Night, and the Rain, and the River* (Forest Avenue Press) and teaches throughout Portland. She dreams of Kaua‘i every. Single. Day.

C. R. Resetarits's poetry has recently appeared in *New Writing*, *Kindred*, *Kestrel*, *dirtcake*, *Weber—The Contemporary West* and the anthologies *Lines Underwater and Drawn to Marvel: Poems from the Comic Books*. Her poetry collection, *Brood*, will appear this winter from Mongrel Empire Press.

No‘ukahau‘oli Revilla is a Kanaka Maoli poet and educator from the island of Maui. She is one of the founding members of Nolu ‘Ehu: A Queer Nesian Creative Collective, which is based in Honolulu.

Tui Scanlan, aka Tui Z, your friendly neighborhood Samoan, was born and raised on the island of O‘ahu. He is a jack of all trades and a master of none. He believes our cultural roots in storytelling can be used to engage current issues and lead us into a brighter tomorrow.

Serena Ngaio Simmons is a writer of Māori and Pakeha descent born and raised on O‘ahu. Serena has competed in the Brave New Voices international spoken word competition for youth in 2011 and 2012. Her poems have been published in *Hawai‘i Review* 79: Call & Response, and *blackmail press* 36: Baninnur: A Basket of Food. Serena is an undergraduate in the English department at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Family, books, and daydreaming about her wā kāinga keep her going throughout the semesters.

Lyz Soto is a poet of Hakka, Ilocano, Tagalog, English, German, Scottish, Irish, Cherokee, French, and Spanish descent born and raised in the islands of Hawai‘i. She is co-founder of Pacific Tongues and a long time mentor and coach with its award-winning youth poetry program, Youth Speaks Hawai‘i. She is working towards a PhD in English at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where she also teaches English composition, poetry, and performance. She has also had the privilege of working on collaborative projects with Joy Enomoto and Jaimie Gusman. Her chapbook, *Eulogies*, was published in 2010 by TinFish Press.

Julia Wieting publishes The Cast Off Press, which will be shortly releasing *O Hina*, a lunar epic by Blaine Tolentino. She is poetry editor for *Paradise Review*, and has also edited *Hawai‘i Review*, *Vice-Versa*, and *Kalamakua*. Her poetry appears in *Spiral Orb*, *Jack London Is Dead*, *Hawai‘i Review*, *Paradise Review*, *JAAM*, *Deep South*, and is forthcoming in *Bone Bouquet*.

Waimea Wiliams's debut novel *Aloha, Mozart* (Luminis Books), received the 2013 Po‘okela Award for fiction published outside Hawai‘i. Her nonfiction books include a

memoir about Kaua‘i in the territorial days, and the culture guide *Aloha for the Heart & Soul* (Island Heritage). She was featured at the 2013 Maui Celebrates Reading and at the California Squaw Valley Conference. Her short stories appear in *The Chariton Review*, *Cirque*, and *Crab Orchard Review*. She lives in Kane‘ohe.

Rain Wright is the author of “A Way with Water,” winner of the 2014 University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Biography Prize. She writes creative nonfiction, poetry, and fiction. Rain is from Hawai‘i island. Her work is heavily influenced by place, rhythm in language, and ideas of identity.

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page 12

Water given by Kāne and Kanaloa, spring water, water to drink, water for power, water for life, may there be life.

—Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, provided under definition for "water"

page 64

Water in a ti-leaf cup.

When one goes to the upland and needs a cup to dip water from the stream or spring, he folds a tī leaf to form a dipper.

—Mary Kawena Pukui, *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau* #2903

page 92

The fish groped for in the streams.

The ʻoʻopu, often caught by groping under rocks and hollow places in a stream.

—Mary Kawena Pukui, *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau* #1329

page 96

The fish that turns over the stones.

The wī, a shellfish found in mountain streams. They can be discovered only by turning over the stones to which they cling.

—Mary Kawena Pukui, *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau* #1341

page 112

Big stomach water.

A humorous term applied to the water of a brackish pool. A stranger, unaccustomed to brackish water, often drank too much of it in attempting to quench his thirst.

—Mary Kawena Pukui, *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau* #2915

page 166

Swirled about by the eddying waters.

Dizzy from being madly in love. Also, intoxicated.

—Mary Kawena Pukui, *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau* #2797

page 176

When the brown waters run, the sea is white with foam.

Signs of a storm.

—Mary Kawena Pukui, *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau* #1306