Call & Response

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Call & Response

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Cover Art: The primary art for this cover is Joy Enomoto's "The Mitosis of Papahānaumoku No. 1," also featured inside this issue (see 158). *Hawai‘i Review*'s design editor, Donovan Kūhiō Colleps, created the block cover overlay and added the type for this cover.

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Call & Response

What inspires us?
What motivates

authors, artists,
lookers, listeners,
readers, receivers

to create?
to shape-shift
& work together?

Is it possible to curate collaboration?

When our team came together for the first time over summer 2013, we decided to create an issue that celebrated collaborations. What you hold in your hands is our attempt to reveal moments of reciprocity between and among artists. Those

connecting
yet often shrouded

moments of Call & Response, which we have approached as

a creative process,
an intimate form of communication,
an imaginative space

where

instincts are reinforced
or
"guts reverse"*

where

to share
means
to make possible—

*Dawn Mahi to Aiko Yamashiro: "your poem makes me think i have a memory that i don't. as if i could wish a memory about the past into being because some parts of our story might be similar."***

the possibilities of art & memory
emerging
between
the structured and improvised,
the explanatory and secretive,
the tender and obscene,
the formal and experimental.

This issue is dedicated to the pulsing promise of inspiration. As you carry these works in your hands, we hope you are as moved to listen and create as much as we were.

** (Lyz Soto 46)*
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Garden 1

In February 2013, as a keynote speaker at the University of Hawai'i's Words in the World Symposium, Albert Wendt read from his literary work, From Mānoa to a Ponsonby Garden. *His garden poems inspired Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, another keynote speaker at the symposium, to write his own garden poem, entitled "Mũgũnda ũrĩa ũngĩ" in Gĩkũyũ (in English translation as "The Other Garden"), which Ngũgĩ shared on the final day of the symposium.*

Written as a true Call & Response, these two poems put into conversation Kenya, California, Native America, Hawai'i, Samoa, Fiji, and Aotearoa.

The poems also illustrate how poets engage in what Ngũgĩ has described as good-natured competition with one another.

The reponse to this poem is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's "Mũgũnda ũrĩa ũngĩ," pg 10.

This summer Sunday moves in slow motion
We sit on our back lānai under the beach umbrella
we brought back from Hawai'i sipping tea and flowing with the day

Tahu mows the back lawn with our museum-piece hand mower
Its metallic clacky-tee-clack keeps our cat Mānoa crouched fearfully
near the worm farm Reina placed in the far corner of the yard

All around us on the wooden railing and deck is Reina's rainbow garden
of pot plants: fuschias snapdragons capsicums poppies sage and thyme
rosemary and coriander carrots tomatoes
basil daisies pansies orchids and cacti rock melon
mesclun and lettuce which we're already eating

The markets continue to tumble so so far away from
this slow-motion Auckland day
this lazy light and growing

Garden 2

Reina got up early and did some baking
Now the rapturous smell of banana cake fills our house
and weaves out and around the pot plants she's just finished watering

Soon she'll get the cake from the oven and we'll sit on the lānai
under the beach umbrella and eat it and drink the coffee I'll make
with the Kona beans our Hawaiian friends brought last week

For the first time the tomatoes are bearing fruit—tiny silver-green balls
on which the clouds are reflected as they drag their shadows across the city
The light is a healing balm on my skin as I stand at the lānai railing and watch

Mānoa hunting the daring flies cicadas and other insects
in the tangled trees and shrubbery that border our back yard
She'll hunt all day only resting to check if we're still there

I marvel at her sleek determination faith and purpose
and remember it's the first Sunday of the new year

Mũgũnda ũrĩa ũngĩ

In the original Gĩkũyũ

This poem responds to Albert Wendt's "Garden 1" and "Garden 2," pg 8.

1

Rĩrĩa njĩrĩga iceera Honolulu Hawai'i
Tũcigĩrĩrainĩ twa Pele twa irĩma, mbura na mũtuthũko
Iriainĩ rĩa bathibĩki rĩruru bururu
Nĩ ndaiguire mũrebeti Albert Wendt
Akĩrebeta cia mũgũnda wao
Aotearoa nokuo New Zealand
Ũrĩa ũrĩmagwo nĩ mũtumia wake Reina
Akaria ũrĩa Reina agariũranagia tĩĩri
Ainamĩrĩire hakuhĩ maitho kũhutia tĩĩri
Akĩinamũka agakaya wũi mahĩndĩ maya
No ningĩ arora mahũa magĩcanũka
Akoiga gũtirĩ kĩega kiumaga hega
Ikihĩra mwana rĩ ruo na thithino
No mwana akemũka nĩ kũingĩria mwĩrĩ thĩ ĩno
Nyina na ithe makamenya e muoyo
Magakemũra ngemi cia gĩkeno

2

Ndaacemanirie na mũrebeti Wendt mwakainĩ wa 1984
Ndorete gĩcigĩrĩra kĩa Aotearoa
Kĩrĩa kĩabatithirio New Zealand nĩ
Pakeha arĩa maatunyire Maori tĩĩri na rĩtwa
Makĩrenga king'i wao kĩongo thutha wa Waitangi
Ndathiyaga kuo gũtheca regeca ya
Ũrĩa tũngĩeheria mũgogo wa mũkoronia kĩongoinĩ
Tũtige kũgambaga ta kĩnanda
Kĩrĩa tene gĩetagwo HMV/His Master's Voice
Rũhuho rũnene rũkĩgiria ndege yũmbe Aucklanda

Ĩkĩhũndũkĩra rĩerainĩ ĩkĩũmba Fiji
Ndaakorire mũrebeti Wendt anjetereire kĩharoinĩ
Ehumbĩte GĩSamoa
Cati igũrũ wa cuka njohero
Kũrekereria rĩera rĩceere mwĩrĩ
Niĩ kĩgooti na burana na thikabu ngingo
Kũgirĩrĩria rĩera rĩceere mwĩrĩ
Amu ndoimĩte Kwangeretha
Kũrĩa mbarabu yuraga thĩ ta mbura

Ruta igoti nĩ wakinya bũrũri wa riũa

Mũrebeti Wendt agĩtiirũria mũrango
Ngĩikĩra tũcigĩrĩrainĩ twa Bathibĩki

3

Tene arebeti Gĩkũyĩinĩ
Maatũnganaga kĩhaaro kĩrĩndĩinĩ
O mũrebeti gĩcandĩ guoko
Kabũthũ kagemie na ngũgũtũ iraheeherera mageganiа
Kabũthũ gathecange ndemwa cia kĩririkania
Kabũthũ kaiyũru iroto ciao
Makahiũria gĩcandĩ gũtwarana na ciugo
Magathogana na ciugo
Magaikania mĩhwa na ciugo
Maakamemania na ciugo
Makanyuguta ciugo rũhuhoinĩ
Makarũndana na ciugo
Ciugo cia hũũhi
Ciugo cia kĩnyũrũri
Ciugo cia kĩhooto
Mũrebeti acoraga mbica na ciugo
Mũrebeti enjagĩra ma na ciugo
Mũrebeti arebetaga ciugo ikaina rwĩmbo
Mũrebeti arebetaga ciugo ikagĩa mathagu

4

Nĩ ndoya uthi waku Albert mũgani ng'ano cia magegania
Nĩ ndamũkĩra uthi waku Albert mũcori mbica cia buraciĩ
Nĩ ndaarũmia uthi waku Albert mwari wara na karamu

Nĩ ndaigua rũrĩa wainĩra Reina
Nĩ ndaigua ũrĩa wamũthuthĩra na korathi ya ciugo thuuranĩre
Nginya ndaigua ithoga rĩanyungunya ngoro ndoya uthi
Kĩigue macokio ma mũturi ũngĩ wa ciugo

Haaro ya arebeti nĩ ya ciugo ti ya njũgũma
Mĩmemano ya arebeti nĩ mĩmera ya ũrata
Arebeti matiũĩ gũteyana mooĩ gũtĩyana
Kĩnyũrũrũri kĩa arebeti kĩnyũrũrũkagia mawega
Mbaratha ya arebeti ti mbaara nĩ marutia ma mbara nginyo
Kwaranĩria kwerirwo nĩ kwendana

Albert Wendt mũcori mbica na buraciĩ
Albert Wendt mũcori mbica na ciugo
Albert Wendt mwarimũ njorua na kĩrĩra
Nĩ ndetĩkĩra ithoga rĩaku nĩ ndoya uthi

O naaniĩ nĩ ngũrebeta cia mũgũnda ũngĩ
Mũgũnda ũrĩa ũrĩmagwo nĩ Njeeri wakwa
Mũgũnda ũcio wĩ Abaini Karĩbonia Mũhuro

5

Tuokire Karĩbonia rũgongo rwa macungwa mwaka wa 2002
Tumĩte itũũra rĩa macungwa Niujacĩ mwaka o ũcio
Tũkiugĩra ũhoro mĩaka ikũmi ya rũgendo gatagatĩinĩ ka Niwaka na Manihatani
Tũgathama nyũmba ya rumu inyanya bara ya Berkeley Orange
Gũthamĩra nyũmba ya rumu inya njĩra ya Fuertes Irvine

Kaĩ nĩ kĩo kwerirwo Amerika nĩ thĩ igĩrĩ na ya gatatũ ya kagũrani ĩ!

Irathĩro nĩ ira, therunji na matahĩko ma ngoma cia rũhuho
Ithũĩro nĩ riũa na matahĩko ma ngoma cia mwaki na ithingithia
Irathĩro nĩ makinya ma ngeretha hithitũrĩinĩ
Ithũĩro makinya ma Thibanya hithitũrĩinĩ
Makinya ma Rũraya magakinyĩrĩria ma Amerindiani
Kĩĩruru kĩa Rũraya gĩkahumbĩra mariũa ma eene bũrũri
Mũgeni agatuĩka mwene; mwene agatuuo mũgeni
Mũũki aathanage e nyũmba thĩinĩ ta arĩ we mwene
Mwene eroragĩre gwake e nja ta arĩ we mũũki
Ngeretha makĩbatithia Irathĩro bũrũri mwerũ wa Ngeretha
Thibanya makĩbatithia Ithũĩro Karĩbonia
Aya nĩ mbarĩ ya arĩa maahootire eene Amerika ya Mũhuro
Aya nĩ mbarĩ ya arĩa maaharaganirie ũthitarabu wa Maya Aztec na Inka
Amerika matiaragia cia Algonkia, Huroni, Iroquoi, Mississauga,
Maaragia cia Niuyoko, Niujacĩ, niu gĩkĩ, niu kĩĩrĩa, mbomu cia niukiria
Matiaragia cia Mohawka, Oneida, Seneca, Onondaga,
Maaragia cia arĩa maamatunyire bũrũri
Matiaragia cia andũ airũ maathikirwo kaburi ya mũingĩ atĩ nĩ ngombo
Mĩthiita ya cuma Manhattan ĩgokĩria mbĩrĩrainĩ cia andũ airũ
Watarii a kuuma kũ na kũ makamĩĩrorera makoiga
Kaĩ ĩno nĩ mĩraihu ĩ! Ma, Nginya yatonya matuinĩ
O na ithũĩro rwĩmbo no rũu
Ene Karĩbonia matũũraga kũrĩa maikirio rithabu
Meroragĩra ageni magĩtangatanga bũrũri wao
Makiugaga gũtirĩ kuoneka ũngĩ ta ũyũ
Atĩ nĩ ngai wa nyakerũ wamagaĩire na thani ya ngũrũndi cia gũtunyana.

O na ndoka gũthomithia Abaini Karĩbonia
Na ngaikara nyũmba mĩrĩmainĩ ya Yunibathĩtĩ
Ĩrĩa ĩng'etheire ihiga rĩa nguru na Bathibĩki ya maaĩ maruru bururu
Nĩ njũũĩ gũkũ ndĩ mũgeni

Mũgeni nĩ rũũĩ rũratherera
Mũgeni nĩ gatu karahĩtũka

Nĩ ndutaga mambura ma ngatho

Nĩ njitaga ndibei tĩĩriinĩ eene kuo manyamũkĩre
Na kwĩririkania kũrĩa ndoimire

Gwitũ nĩ Kenya
Bũrũri wa irĩma na mĩkuru na werũ
Bũrũri wa ituamba na mĩtitũ na njũũĩ
Ndarutũrũrirwo kuo nĩ ũteti mũbuthu
Ti kwĩyendera kana kwenda gũtaha kwene

6

Twakinyire Abaini mweri wa kenda 2002
Thiong'o kahĩĩ ka mĩaka mũgwanja
Na Mũmbi kairĩtu ka mĩaka ĩnana
Maakoretwo moima Mang'u Kenya
Kũrĩa twamatũmĩte mwaka ũmwe makindĩre Gĩgĩkũyũ kĩao
Makagana ũrĩa marahaicaga mĩtĩ gũtua matunda
Ũrĩa marakaragia ndimũ macungwa maembe mbera na ndarathini
Na gũteng'eria mbũri kĩanda karũũĩinĩ
Na kũngania ciũra ciũngũyũ na ndararĩki
Na rũciinĩ gũũkĩrio toro nĩ nyoni ikĩina
Ikamoimagaria nginya Thukuru ya St Francis
Nyoni na ihuruta ikainũkania na o
Ngui Simba ĩkamathagaana thome yoyote mũting'oe
Makamĩĩra yambe ĩhoorerie mũting'oe matue maembe

Makĩambĩrĩria gũcayĩra macio maratigire Mang'u
Wũi meeru marinde mũgũndainĩ Mang'u
Wũi maembe meeru mĩtĩinĩ Man'gu
Wũi cama wa njungwa cia tata Wabera

Njeeri akĩmatwara thubandũnyũ ya Arubati[1]

Oneei ũrĩa matunda mabangĩtwo wega tũthandũkũinĩ
Oneei ũrĩa matunda marahenia ta rũũrũ nĩ rũ
Maya mothe moimĩte Abirika Asia na Amerika ya mũhuro

[1] Albertson

Makagetherwo Amerika ya mwena wa igũrũ
Amerika ya Igũrũ ĩgethaga kũrĩa ĩtahandĩte

Ciana ciakwa rũma rĩrĩ rĩa Guatamela
Kana rĩrĩ rĩa Ecuador
Kana rĩrĩ rĩa Costa Rica

Mũmbi na Thiong'o makĩmarũma na thuti
Mũmbi na Thiong'o makĩmatuĩra thĩ makũnjĩte ũthiũ
Mũcamo wa maya ndũracama ta wa ma Mang'u
Maya matiracama ta marĩa tũrarĩyaga gwa tata Wabera Mang'u

Njeeri akĩmeera ciana ciakwa
Nĩ ngũmũthondekera Mang'u yanyu haha nyunjurĩ

Nĩkĩo Njeeri oigire mbu ona
Nyunjurĩ wa nyũmba nĩ
Mahiga na mahiga na mahiga
Gũtirĩ kanyamũ karongoya kana kũmbũka

Mang'u ĩngĩ ĩkuuma kũ gũũkũ?

Njeeri agĩta Wabera Mang'u na thimũ kũmwĩra
Atĩ aroimagara nduka akagũre tĩĩri
Wabera akiuga mbu thimũinĩ
Kaĩ wamaitũ worĩire mahigainĩ merũ?
Na arĩ korwo tĩĩri nĩ ũtũmagwo na thimũ
Ngũtũmĩra ũyũ mũtune wa Mang'u o rĩu?

7

Njeeri aatemire ihiga icembe rĩkiunĩka
Akĩgeria tarimbo ĩkĩgonyoka
Akĩrĩringa na thururu ĩkĩrũga na igũrũ

Akĩgĩĩra aruti-a-wĩra a Meehiko kũmũteithia

Magĩũka magwete ithegethi cia thitima
Ngũbia cia Somburero kĩongo kwĩyũa riũa
Magĩthegetha makĩmethũranga mahiga
Makĩharagania mahiga mũgũndainĩ
Nake Njeeri agĩita tĩĩri ũrĩa aagũrĩte *homedepot*

Njeeri agĩakithia karũũĩ ka hinya wa thitima
Maaĩ makagera rungu magatuthũkĩra rũgongo
Magaikũrũka na kĩanda hanini
Magacoka igũrũ magereire rungu
Mũthiũrũrũko wa karũũĩ ka maheeni
Tuonage mwago wa karũũĩ karatherera gategũtigithĩria
Tũiguage kanegene ga karũũĩ gagĩcũna mũtaro mwena na mwena

Thiongo na Mũmbi makĩĩhumba nguo cia gũthambĩra
Makĩgeria gũthambĩra karũũinĩ
Makĩng'ũrĩka tondũ gatiarĩ kaaramu kana kũrikĩra
Rĩĩrĩ rĩngĩ magĩtiga gũthambĩra magĩĩthamba
Magĩcoka magĩteng'erania mũgũndainĩ
Kũminjanĩria maaĩ na mũberethi

Thiongo akĩrega kũheneka
One gatirĩ na thaara ũrainaina rũũinĩ
One gatirĩ ciũngũyũ irongũya maaĩinĩ
One gatirĩ na ciũra irarũgarũga rũteereinĩ
Na gũtirĩ mbũri cia gũtwara rũũĩ ikanyue maaĩ

Njeeri akĩongererithia gathaku nyunjurĩ kagite na hama
Akĩiga metha na itĩ
Andũ maikarage ho kwĩyũa riũa
Na kwĩrorera karũũĩ gagĩtherera
Na kwĩyonera muoyo ũgĩkunũka

8

Ria rĩa ngirini nĩ rĩo rĩambire gũkunũka

Nyanya itũngũrũ ndania rũthimĩrĩ igacoka
Marigũ ndimũ njungwa mbera maembe
Makorobea abũ mainabũ mamũgumo ndarathini
Mũhari wa kabici karĩburawa kiukamba na karati
Marenge terere mĩrĩyo ya ngwacĩ na Zukini
Njeeri akĩgarũra mahiga magĩtuĩka mũgũnda kĩrorerwa

9

Hiihi thigiriri na igunyũ ciokire na tĩĩri
No thutha hanini tũkĩona tũmbe ta ngi
Kana tũrĩa tũtambaga ta mbũmbũĩ
Njũkĩ na ihuruta nacio
Nyoni nĩ ta cio ciambire kũgenera mũgũnda
Ikanyua maaĩ karũũĩinĩ
Igatheca matunda na mbembe njĩthĩ
Njeeri akĩhandithia mĩtĩ-ya-nyoni
Ĩrĩa ĩrutaga tũhũa tũtune mathangũinĩ ma ngirini

Arĩa angĩ nĩ mbũkũ ngaara ngui na nyau
Andũ magĩceeria ngui magerega barainĩ ya Fuertes
Magucĩtie ngui na mũkanda ngingo kana magucĩtio nĩcio
Ndanona nyingĩ mĩthemba mĩingĩ
Dalmatian cia maroro twana na ng'ima
Chihuahua tũtegete matũ ta mbwe
Bulldog na PitBull iria cigana njaũ
Shih Tzu tũnini kũigana tũnyau
Ciothe ihĩtũkagĩrio hau ikĩrekagia mĩbibi o harĩa cienda
Na kuoya kagũrũ gũthuguma itugĩinĩ cai thitima
Kana o harĩa hothe ciakurĩrwo

Ene ngui mathiyaga makuuĩte tũciko twa kũhakũra mai
Na tũkũnia twa kũhakũrĩra mai
No maakinya mũgũndainĩ wa Njeeri
O na Ngui ikamba gũtithia nĩ mahũa gũcanũka

Gwitũ Limuru Kenya tene
Twaigaga ngui cia kũhĩta
Cia kũriĩra mũciĩ
Cia kũrĩithia mbũri na ng'mbe
No ningĩ nĩ ndirikanaga ngui cia borithi
Igĩteng'eria arũĩri wĩyathi ikamatambũrĩra nguo
Kana rĩngĩ kũmatembũra nyama mwĩrĩ
Thetera nyakerũ ithekage nĩ mwago ũyũ
O na gũkũ Amerika nĩ maarĩithagia ngui
Arĩa maateta atĩ ũhinyanĩrĩria wa gĩkonde ũthire

Ngui cia gũkũ Aibani mĩrĩmainĩ ya Yunibathĩtĩ
Nĩ cia gwĩkenia na cia ciana gũthaka nacio
O na cianeneha atĩa ngui no gũkũga o hanini
Itirũũgagĩra mũndũ nĩ gĩkonde gĩake

Rĩmwe kĩhwainĩ
Ndaakorire Njeeri agwete thimbũ banga na toci
Nĩ kĩĩ indo cia mbaara?
Ngwandĩkagĩra haha kahamainĩ
Ndoimĩrĩrwo nĩ kĩnyau kĩa mũtitũ
Kĩrĩa kĩ mbutu njirũ ta macicio ma riũa
Kĩanyua maaĩ na gĩethiĩra
Njiguwaga nĩ gĩtharĩkagĩra andũ
Kwĩgita ti guoya

Tene ũyũ warĩ bũrũri wa nyamũ mĩthemba
Mbogo[2] ciatũũhaga gũkũ
Ũmũthĩ no wonire mĩicũhio ya cio
Mĩrũthi ya irĩmainĩ[3] nayo rĩmwe nĩ yonekaga
Nyaama[4] ya mũtingoye nĩ yo gĩthitũ kĩa Yunibathĩtĩ

Ageni arĩa aingĩ nĩ ehĩtũkĩri
Arimũ na atungatĩri a Yunibathĩtĩ kana ageni ao
Makamba kũrũgama bara kwĩrora mũcanũko wa mahũa
Marũthi matuune meerũ mangoikoni

[2] Bison
[3] Mountain lions
[4] Ant-eater

Makĩina ndaci rũhuhoinĩ rwa kuuma bathibĩki
Njũkĩ ihũngakage kĩro mahũainĩ
O hamwe na ciĩhuruta
Ngui igakũgĩra ciĩhuruta kana nyoni

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Ageni maanagenera mũgũnda ũyũ nĩ aingĩ
Na moimĩte mabũrũri maingĩ
Njĩrĩmani Ngeretha Thibaria[5] na Itaria
Korea Caina India Mehiko na Vietnam
Nigeria Ghana Mali Uganda South Africa
Tata Wabera oka kuma Kenya ona mĩrĩyo ĩgĩtamba akĩmaka
Kaĩ gũtirĩ ũrirũ ũtonwo-ĩ
Tuuge mahiga marĩa nĩ maatuĩkre mũgũnda wa Edeni?
Akĩenja ndũma akĩmĩhĩhia akĩmĩrĩa

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Hawai'i mamĩtaga rĩtwa rĩngĩ
Ũguo nĩ guo Haunani atwĩrire okĩte iceera mũgũnda
Haunani nyarari ya Hawai'i nĩ mũrũĩri wĩyathi
Agĩikarĩra gaturua gĩthakuinĩ kwĩrorera karũũĩ gagĩtherera
Tũkĩamba kwaria cia rĩrĩa rĩmwe aatũnyitire ũgeni
Niĩ na Njeeri tũceerete nyũmba ya Ahawaii Yunibathĩtĩ ya Hawai'i
Ĩrĩa meetaga gĩikaro kĩa Kamakakūokalani

Hĩ! Macio nĩ Mambura matakariganĩra

Twathaaganirwo thome nĩ aini ndaci na ahuhi mĩtũũrirũ
Makĩinaga nyĩmbo maatungĩire Ngũgĩ
Angĩ magwete *Decolonising the Mind*
Makiuagaga ĩyo nĩ mbuku yao

Nĩ rĩo o rĩmwe . . .
Waririkana Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa?

[5] Sweden

Ndaiguire inegene rĩathira
Maitho mothe marorete hamwe
Maitho mothe kwĩrorera kĩrorerwa
Kĩa Lilikalā agĩkinya ikinya rĩa Hula
Andũ irĩma mĩtĩ o na mahuti rũũĩinĩ makĩgegeara
Makĩambĩrĩria kwera mwena na mwena ta me irootoinĩ
Matahĩtwo ngoro nĩ makinya ma Lilikalā agĩkinya Hula
Mwĩrĩ wake rũcuĩrĩ nginya rwara rwa kũgũrũ nĩ mwĩnyogoro
Mooko magũrũ na njohero nĩ ta ici itarĩ na mahĩndĩ
Mwĩnyogoro wake wanyorokete ta ũnyoroku guo mwene
Mwĩrĩ wa Lilikalā weraga ta maaĩ maratherera nywee rũriiĩinĩ rwa mwĩhoko

To cia Lilikalā ciiki twaririkanire kĩhwainĩ kĩu
Nĩ twaririe cia kũriũkia thiomi citũ
Haunani agĩtũganĩra cia rũthiomi rwao kũũragwo na kũriũkio

Maagarũrire wathani wa Kwini Lili‘uokalani mwakainĩ wa 1893
Magĩtua Lolani mũciĩ wa mũthamaki njeera ya Lolani
Makĩhinga rũthiomi ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i mwakainĩ wa 1896
Haunani na mwarĩ wa nyina Mililani Task na angĩ makĩanjia mateta
‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i rũkĩhingũrwo mwakainĩ wa 1978 mĩnyororo yothe ĩkĩohoka 1986
Nĩ ũndũ wa Pūnana Leo[6] rũthiomi rwitũ nĩ rũrariũka . . .

No rĩrĩa oonire ndũma karũũĩinĩ ka Njeeri mwenainĩ
Haunani akĩingĩrwo nĩ ngoma cia gĩkeno
Warutire kũ ici?
Kaĩ mũhandaga ici?
Gwitũ tũciĩtaga taro na rĩngĩ talo

Ng’ano nyingĩ iria atũganĩire
Ndirikanaga rũũrũ rwa Taro

Wākea Nyenematu na Papahānaumoku Nyenethĩ meendana
Nĩ maciarire Ho‘ohokukalani Nyenemweri-na-njata
Nake Wākea na Ho‘ohokukalani magĩciara Hāloanaka Wacekerũbebe
No Hāloanaka oimire e mũhunu; magĩthika kĩhuno nyunjurĩ wa nyũmba

[6] Mathukuru marĩa mathomithanagia na Kĩhawiiani. Kĩhwaiini kĩarĩ kĩhinge gũthomithania nakĩo 1896-1986. Rĩu rũthiomi nĩ rwariũkirio nĩ ũteti na kĩyo na kwĩrutĩra kwa ene ruo.

Mbegũ ya muoyo yathikwo tĩĩriiĩ ĩgĩkunũka ĩ Taro
Ĩrĩa yatuĩkire irio cia mũrũ wa nyina Hāloa
Na cia ciana cia Hāloa Kanaka Maoli

Kuma rũganoinĩ rũu niĩ ngĩtua atĩ
Taro yaciarirwo nĩ Matu Thĩ na Njata
Na nĩ mũmera ũtheragia rĩera tũhiihagia
Taro nĩ mbegũ ya hinya na muoyo ĩrĩa meetaga Mana
Taro nĩ irio cia andũ a Hawai‘i
Taro nĩ irio cia andũ a Kenya
Taro nĩ ndũma . . .

Haunani nĩ aatũganĩire ingĩ ikoniĩ icigĩrĩra cia Pele
Hawai‘i kĩrĩa kĩnene nĩ kĩo Pele athereragĩria kĩguũ kĩa mwaki
Maui gĩĩtanĩtio na ũrĩa tene watahire riũa
O’Hau nĩ kĩo kĩene Honolulu na Waikīkī
Kaua‘i gĩcigĩrĩra kĩmũgathĩ ngingoinĩ ya Hawai‘iloa
Moloka‘i gĩikaro kĩa Atheru a ndini ya Roma
Na ingĩ nyingĩ iria Pele aakunũkithirie maaĩinĩ Ũcenia.

No kĩrĩa aatindĩrĩire na ngoro nditũ
Nĩ cia ũrĩa eene Hawai‘i maatunyirwo bũrũri wao
Ũgĩtuwo ũmwe wa mabũrũri ma Amerika
Hawai‘i ĩgĩtuuo gĩikaro kĩa indo cia mbaara na gĩkuũ
Hawai‘i ĩgĩtuuo gĩkenero kĩa Watarii

Haunani akoiga nĩ maatunyirwo ũthaka wa kwao
Kwanĩrĩra kwao nĩ ciugo cia wendo hatarĩ wendo

Hawai‘i nĩ gĩcigĩrĩra gĩthaka gĩtarĩ andũ
O‘ahu nĩ kĩega gĩa kũgurũtũkĩra maainĩ na iceera kĩongo kĩa Dayamodi
Kaua‘i nĩ kĩega gĩa gũtwarĩra tũtarũ na tũmeeri twa tama
Maui nĩ kĩega gĩa gũtubĩra kĩĩhindie na iceera Paki ya Haleakalā

Watarii nĩ ta o eene Waikīkī; ngoma ciao ihurutanaga kuo

Maitho mao monaga o irĩma mĩkuru na maaĩ ndururumo
Maitho mao monaga o mũthanga wa iria na mbata maaĩinĩ
Maitho moonaga o nyoni ikĩũmbũka na gũthaka rĩerainĩ
Maitho mao moonaga maaĩ mũthanga na riũa mationaga eene kuo

Maromerio nĩ Pele Ngai wa Nduthũkomwaki!

Mĩario ya irĩma cia Hawai'i na Ngai wao Pele
Ĩkanjokia Kĩrĩnyaga o na kĩo maciaro ma nduthũkomwaki
Ngai Murungu aikaraga Kĩrĩ Nyaga igũrũ
Ehumbĩte taama wa nyaga theri
Pele na Ngai nĩ matarainie hihi Mahatha
Maakororire me ndainĩ ya Thĩ
Magĩthingithia thĩ ĩgĩkunũka mũgathĩ wa irĩma cia mwaki
Irĩma mĩrongo ĩĩrĩ na igĩrĩ Kenya kuma Logipi nginya Longonot

Ciugo cia Haunani igatũririkania cia ũngĩ
Mũtigairĩ Wangarĩ Maathai aarĩ mũrũĩri muoyo
Okĩĩte iceera mũgũndainĩ thutha wa regeca Yunibathĩtĩ
Regeca yake yakoniĩ rũthiomi rwa macigĩrĩria
Wangarĩ aaikarĩire gaturua o kau Haunani wa Hawai'i aikarĩire
Agĩtũganĩra ũrĩa aahandithirie makiri ma mĩtĩ Kenya
We na atumia angĩ aingĩ maroretie ũthiũ mwena wa Kĩrĩnyaga
Wangarĩ agĩceera Farm School kũrĩa Thiongo aathomaga
Akĩarĩria ciana kũmeera tũrĩ amwe na mĩtĩ na macigĩrĩria
Bjorn na Patrick makĩhũrwo mbica na Wangarĩ mũgũndainĩ
Bjorn akĩigĩrĩira Wangarĩ guoko kĩande gwĩtia kĩrathimo
Nake mũihwa Patrick agĩtahĩra Wangarĩ irio na gĩciko

Wangarĩ oigaga macigĩrĩria nĩ irio
Wangarĩ ahunjagia macigĩrĩria nĩ muoyo

Haunani-Kay Trask Mwarĩ wa Hawai'i
Wangarĩ Maathai Mwarĩ wa Kĩrĩnyaga
Macũthĩrĩirie mũgũnda wa Njeeri
Eerĩ makaaria cia macigĩrĩria

Ũmwe cia Pele wa Irĩma cia Hawai‘i
Ũrĩa ũngĩ cia Ngai wa irĩma cia Nyandarwa na Kĩrĩnyaga

Hĩndĩ ĩyo tũtioĩ atĩ Kenya na Hawai‘i
Yerĩ nĩ yaciarĩte mũthamaki wa mwĩhoko
Tiga tũtiũĩ egũtiga hithitũrĩ ĩhaana atĩa
No ningĩ gũkorwo ndĩ muoyo ngeyonera na maya
Njiarwa cia arĩa maatahirwo ngombo
Arĩa hinya wao wakire Amerika ĩno
Kwĩyonera cũcũ na cũkũrũ magĩtũũha njaĩ-inĩ ya nyũmba ya Wathani
Irĩa yaakirwo nĩ hinya wa amaguka na amacũcũ ao tene
Gũkandeehera gĩkeno na kũndirikania atĩ
Mĩtheko ĩrathekwo rĩu yumanĩte mĩcayo ya mĩcarica
Mĩĩrĩinĩ ya Mamirioni . . .

No nĩ ndirikanaga Njeeri na Mũmbi
O haha nyunjurĩ mũgũndainĩ ũyũ
Magĩthondeka imenyithia cia kambĩini ya Obama
Kana Mũmbi acokete kuma Washington
Atũganagĩre magegania:
Baba Maitũ Ma ndĩrarĩ kuo Washington
Michelle na Obama magĩkunũrwo . . .

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Mwarimũ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak nĩ ũrĩa ũngĩ waceerire mũgũnda
Agĩikarĩra gaturwa ka Haunani wa Hawai‘i aikarĩire

Gayatiri nĩ acemanĩtie na Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa Hawai‘i
Lilikalā mwenyenchi na Gayatiri e mũikarĩri gaturwa ka mwenyenchi
Mwarĩ wa Hawai‘i na mwarĩ wa India hamwe mamburainĩ ma Kalākaua
Kũrĩa andũ a Hawai‘i kĩhumo mahoyagĩra Tūtū Pele
Lilikalā akĩonia Gayatri gũkinya ikinya rĩa Hula na kũina Mele Oli
Gayatri akĩonia Lilikalā kwamũkĩra ndogo theru na gwĩthamba nayo ũthiũ na moko
Tūtū Pele na Kali ngai a ngoro ĩmwe magakinyanĩria ngeithi maaĩinĩ ma Bathibĩki

Rĩrĩa Gayatri erĩga mũgũnda ũyũ
Riũa rĩarĩ rĩaru thikũ ya kenda mweri wa gatatũ mwaka wa 2013
Marĩ na mwarĩ wa nyina Maitrain ehumbĩte Sari
Hũhi ciao cionanagia wendani wa arĩ a nyina ũmwe
Ng'ano cia Gyatri ikĩndirikania mwaka ũngĩ aaceerete
Kofi Anyidoho mũrebeti kuma Ghana aarĩ ho
Heneri Chakava mũrutithia mabuku kuma Kenya aarĩ ho
Kassahuni Checole mũrutithia mabuku kuma Eritrea aarĩ ho
Magĩikara gĩthakuinĩ ũtukũ wothe kwaria maingĩ
Mathekania ma Gayatri magatũma mũndũ eng'aũrĩre
Magĩitĩrĩria thĩ maithori ma mĩtheko ngoma inyue gĩkeno

Ooragia ciũria mũũrĩrie wa Thokirito
Agatua gĩthaku thukuru o ta Thokirito
Thokirito hihi aarĩ mũgani ng'ano ta Gayatri?
Thokirito hihi aarĩ mathekania ta Gayatri?
Ĩ Derrida? Baũrũ de Mania? Heidega? Karo Maki?
Nĩ moĩ Kĩhĩndĩ Kĩbengali Kĩjabani Gĩcaina thiomi itarĩ ciao
Ũrĩa Gayatri oĩ Kĩngeretha Kĩbaranja Kĩnjĩrĩmani Gĩitariani itarĩ ciake?
Gayatiri ooĩ ciake na ciao

Gayatri nĩ mũrembeke thũmbĩ ya ũthamaki na muonere
Gayatri nĩ mũhe njata ya kũmũrĩka njĩra
Korwo mũgũnda ũyũ wĩ nĩmĩ nyingĩ ũrĩa wĩ marangi
Waruta ũira wa ũrĩa waneiguĩra na kwĩyonera
Gayatri aceerete mũgũndainĩ ũyũ

Ndaacemanirie nake rita rĩakwa rĩa mbere Amerika 1966
Hĩndĩ mbaara ya Vietnam yacacĩte
Mũingĩ wa Amerika ũkaregana na thuti ya ũthũkũmũkĩĩrĩu

Gayatri aaciarĩirwo Karukata agĩthomera India kwao
Gayatri agĩcoka akĩringa iria kũrĩkĩria gĩthomo Amerika
O ta ũrĩa niĩ ndaciarĩirwo Rĩmuru na gũthomera Kenya na Uganda
Ngacoka gũthiĩ Kwangeretha kũrĩkĩria gĩthomo kuo

Twacemanirie kwa Paul Engle ũrĩa wambĩrĩirie
Iowa International Writing Program
Ngĩhũrwo mbica ndĩ mbarathi igũrũ
Gayatri na Hualing Nieh Engle meroreire
Amwe magatheka mona ũthiũ wakwa
Gaka nĩ gacaũ ningĩ nĩ kahoorerie
Mbarathi nĩ nyamũ thaka mũno, ti itherũ
Gayatri na Hualing matiathekereire guoya wakwa ũthiũ

Mbarathi Kenya ya mũkoronia ciarĩ cia mathako ma thetera
Nĩ maateng'eragia arũĩri wĩyathi na mbarathi na kũmakanyanga

Nĩ ndaheirwo nyama cia mbarathi bũrũriinĩ wa Khazakistan
Ndiacimeririe; ngĩamba kugĩra nyama ũhoro gwa thikũ karũndo

Mbarathi iririkanagia mũndũ hake

Gayatri nĩ Kwini wa ciugo na meeciria
Aceeraga thĩ yothe kũhurunja mbegũ cia meeciria
Gayatri nĩ mũrĩmi na mũrĩmĩri meeciria
Aceeraga thĩ yothe gũitĩrĩria mbegũ cia meeciria maaĩ
Gayatri nĩ mũramati meeciria
Ahũraga meeciria maita na meeciria magaciara mabuku ma meeciria

Mwarimũ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak nĩ okire iceera mũgũnda rĩngĩ
Agĩikarĩra gaturwa karĩa Mũtiga irĩ Wangarĩ wa Kenya aikarĩire

Nĩ rĩo Gayatri aatumũkire mũbango wa kũhanda mĩtĩ mabũrũri maingĩ thĩinĩ wa thĩ
Gayatri endaga makorwo me mambura ma kũririkana mũtiga irĩ Wangarĩ wa Maathai
Mambura moime Korumbia Niuyoko nginya India na Bangladeshi

Wendoinĩ wa muoyo Gayatri akanyitithania ng'ongo cia thĩ

Macigĩrĩria nĩ nyũngũ ya muoyo
Ũgima wa macigĩrĩria nĩ ũgima wa muoyo
Kĩrĩa kĩombire tĩĩri nokĩo kĩombire maaĩ rĩera na riũa

O hamwe na mĩtĩ nyoni nyamũ na tũnyamũ

Wendo nĩ ũmwe muoyo nĩ ũmwe

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O na ciana nĩ iceeraga mũgũndainĩ wa Njeeri
Aingĩ nĩ arata a Thiongo na Mũmbi
Makahũrĩrwo mbica mũgũndainĩ na magicitũma na gathimũ

O na tũcũcũ twakwa nĩ tũceeraga na ndurumeni ya Skype
Nyambura wa Wanjikũ na Saami e Biniranda[7]
Nyambura wa Mũkoma na Maureen e Konetikati
Nyambura wa Ndũcũ na Nyambura e NiuYoko
Na Wabera wa Ndũng'ũ na Wanjikũ e Niujacĩ
Nĩ mageragia kũhutia matunda marona macuhĩte mĩtĩinĩ
Rĩngĩ makarĩra atĩ matuĩrwo matunda

Rĩmwe Njeeri nĩ atũmĩire Ndũcũ na Mũkoma makorobea
Mothe makĩbuthĩra njĩra . . .
Maya meendaga mũndũ ekinyie mũgũnda etuĩre

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Njeeri agethaga na akagethera arĩa tũrigainie
Anjirie na mbotha kũhe Mũcaina ũrĩa tũrigainie
Rĩngĩ makorobea kwa mũnjĩrĩmani tũrigainie
Mũthenya ũngĩ ngĩmuona na thaani ĩiyũire ndarathini
Aroretio mũkĩra wa bara kwa Mũitariani na Mũmehiko
Hĩndĩ ĩngĩ nĩ Maembe kwa arĩa moimĩte India na Vietnam
O na kuma Korea na Ukraine no marĩĩrĩire mũgũnda wa Njeeri

Kaĩ gũtirĩ ũndũ ũtangĩgarũka ĩ!

Tũgĩũka haha o na arĩa maarigainie matiaranagĩria
Mũndũ ndangĩtonya kwa ũrĩa marigainie kũhoya cumbĩ

[7] Finland

Mũndũ ndangĩkaĩra ũrĩa marigainie kwĩ na ũgwati
Kũrigania gũkaaga kĩene; manyũmba kũhuutania no eene cio ca

Gwitũ Kenya ya ndĩ mwana nyũmba itiahutanĩtie
No eene nĩ maageithanagia na guoko makorania
Waigua atĩa? Watindia atĩa? Ũkũraaria wega?

Gũkũ matũũrainĩ ma taũni arĩa marigainie nĩ ageni
Gwitũ icagiinĩ o na mũgeni nĩ ta ũrĩa marigainie

Matũũra ma taũni nĩ ũtũũro wa kũhutatanĩra
Matũũra ma gĩcagi nĩ ũtũũro wa gũtũũrania

Ũtaana wa Njeeri ũkĩhingũra njĩra
Arĩa tũrigainie makĩanjia gũteganĩra maciaro ma hao
Gũkũraania maciaro nĩ kwambĩrĩirie gũtuĩka mũtugo

Mũgũnda wa Njeeri nĩ ũrĩmagĩra ũrũmwe wa itũũra o mũthenya

15

Albert Wendt Mũrebeti
Mũgũnda wa Njeeri nĩ rũgano
Rwĩganaga mũthenya o mũthenya

The Other Garden

English translation of "Mũgũnda ũrĩa ũngĩ"

1

The other day in Honolulu Hawai'i
Pele's Islands of hills rain and volcano
In the blue Pacific waters
I heard poet Albert Wendt
Voice verses in praise of their garden
In Aotearoa also named New Zealand
That Reina his partner looks after
How she turns the soil over
Back bent so low her eyes almost touch the earth
When she rises oh my back she winces
But on seeing the flowers bloom
She says every good thing is born of effort
Labor for a woman is pain and beads of sweat
But when the baby enters the world crying
Mother and father know she is alive and well
They ululate in joy

2

I first met Albert Wendt the poet in 1984
I was on my way to Aotearoa
Renamed New Zealand by the Pakeha
Who robbed the Maori their earth and name
And beheaded their King after Waitangi
I was going to give a talk on
How to remove colonial logs from the mind
How to end the years of playing the gramophone
Long ago labeled His Master's Voice
Big winds denied us landing rights in Auckland

The iron bird turned back in the air and landed in Fiji
I found Wendt the poet waiting for me at the airport
Dressed Samoan from top to bottom
A loose shirt on a cloth tied at the waist
Allowing air to move freely to cool the body
I in a coat and sweater and a scarf
Preventing air from moving freely
For I came from English lands
Where ice falls from the air like rain

Take off your coat you've reached the lands of the sun

Wendt the poet opened the gate
I entered the sea of islands.

3

Long ago Gĩkũyũ poets
Met in the open field before an audience
Each poet's hand a gĩcandĩ gourd
Beaded with sea shells that whisper mystery
Dotted with hieroglyphics that carry memory
The gourd carries their dreams
They shook the gourd in rhythm with words
They quarreled in words
They feigned in words
They flung words to the wind
They wrestled with words
Words that mocked
Words that reeked sarcasm
Words that reeked reason
A poet paints pictures with words
A poet seeks truth in words
A poet makes words sing
A poet gives words wings to fly

4

I have accepted your call Albert Wendt teller of tales
I have accepted your call Albert Wendt the painter with brush
I have accepted your call Albert Wendt poet of many skills

I listened to the song you sang for Reina
I heard the caresses in chorus of words chosen with care
I heard your call
Hear now response from a fellow wordsmith

Poets quarrel with words not swords
Poets test each other in testament of friendship
Poets are here to stay not to lead astray
Poets mockery is awesome poetry
Poets palaver is a parliament of words made flesh

Albert Wendt who paints images with brush
Albert Wendt who paints images with words
Albert Wendt who teaches wisdom of words
I accept the unspoken challenge from master of words

I will tell the tale of another garden
The garden that my partner Njeeri looks after
The garden is in Irvine California

5

We came to the California County of Oranges in 2002
We left the New Jersey country of oranges the same year
We severed ten years lived between Penn Newark and Penn Manhattan
We occupied an eight room house on Berkeley Avenue Orange
Now we live in a four room house on Fuertes Street Irvine

Well may it be said that America is two worlds and a third possibly

In the East snow ice and biting rains
Where daemons vomit storms and hurricanes
In the West sun and earthquakes
Where daemons spit out fiery flames
In the East English marks on history
In the West Spanish marks on history
Marks of Europe cover up the marks of Amerindia on history
Shadows of Europe shut out suns of the soil
The foreigner becomes the owner; the owner foreigner
The arrivant rules the house the resident built
The resident looks on from the outside at the house he built
The English named the East New England
The Spanish named the West California
They came from clans that conquered the owners of America
They came from clans that laid to waste what the Maya, Aztec, and Inka had built
In America they tell not the tales of Algonquin, Huron, Iroquois, Mississauga
They tell tales of New York, New Jersey, New this and that, Nuclear arms
They tell not tales of the Mohawk Oneida Seneca Onondaga,
They tell tales of those who snatched land from them
They tell not tales of the black people buried in mass graves
The Manhattan steel phallics are erected on the graveyard of slaves
Tourists from the world look at them and marvel
How tall and big and masculine! Look they penetrate heaven even
In the West, they sing the same song of conquest
Natives live in reservations
Immigrants strut about their lands
Oh what a beautiful country they say
A white God gave it to us in golden plunder

Even though I teach at Irvine California
Even though I live in a house on University Hills
Facing a turtle shaped rock and the blue waters of the Pacific
I know I am a guest here

A guest is a passing river
A guest is a passing cloud

I pour libations on the ground in gratitude
I pour ceremonial wine and ask our hosts to accept us
I remind myself where I came from

Yes I come from Kenya
The land of numerous hills valleys and prairies
The land of luscious bush and dense forests
The land of rivers that murmur and roar
I did not choose to leave home
I was not driven by lust for other people's land
Evil politics drove me into exile

6

We arrived in Irvine in October 2002
Thiongo eight and Mũmbi nine had just come back from Mang'u
After a year deepening their Gĩkũyũ language in Kenya
They told tales of climbing up trees to pluck fruits
They ate lemons loquats mangoes oranges and plums
They led goats down the valley to the river
They collected frogs and grasshoppers
Birds woke them up at dawn
Birds walked with them to St Francis school
Birds and butterflies walked them back home
Simba at the gate wagged his tail in welcome
Simba give us a minute to pluck more mangoes

They missed what they left behind at Mang'u
Oh for the ripe bananas of Mang'u, they sang
Oh for the mangoes that dripped juices from Mang'u trees
Oh for the juicy oranges at Auntie Wabera's

Njeeri took them to the Albertsons

Look at the fruits beautifully arranged in bins
Look at all the fruits shining fresh

These come from Africa Asia South America
Harvested into the supermarkets of North America
Oh North America harvests where it never planted

My children bite this from Guatamela
Or this one from Ecuador
Or this one from Costa Rica

Mũmbi and Thiongo bit the fruits in glee
Mũmbi and Thiongo spat them out and wanted to flee
These don't taste like the ones we plucked at Mang'u
These don't ooze freshness like the ones at Auntie Wabera's

My children Njeeri told them
I will recreate your Mang'u in my backyard

That's why Njeeri screamed when
The backyard turned out to be
Just a rock and a rock and a rock
Not an insect or worm in sight

How shall I create a new Mang'u on this rock?

Njeeri called Auntie Wabera in Kenya with the news
I am going to shop for soil at the home depot
Auntie Wabera screamed into the phone
Oh my sis did you end up in a white desert?
If only good soil can be sent over the phone
I would send you any amount of the red earth of Mang'u

7

Njeeri struck a rock the hoe broke
She tried a crowbar it got twisted
She tried pickaxe it sprung up

She got help from Mexican workers
They came electric drills in hand
Sombreros on heads shields against the sun
They drilled through the rocks
They spread the pieces over the land
They made a bed of broken stones
Over it Njeeri spread the soil from home depot

Njeeri had them make a motor driven stream
Water underground then up and down the hill
Then underground and up and down the hill
Same water in a circle of watery illusion
A marvelous stream never mind its source
Making noises as it licked this and that side

Mũmbi and Thiongo put on swimming suits
They tried to swim in the stream
The stream was not deep enough
The stream was not wide enough
They bathed instead of swimming
Then they ran about in the garden
Splashing water on each other from a hose

Thiongo broke the illusion
There are no reeds in the water
There are no tadpoles in the water
There are no frogs on the banks
There are no goats to bring down to water

Njeeri added a patio in the back
She put a table and chairs under the patio
We sat there to enjoy the stream
And watch life emerge

8

Green weeds sprouted first
Then tomatoes onions cilantro rosemary
Then bananas lemons loquats oranges mangoes
Avocados apples pineapples pears and plums followed
Then lines of cabbages cauliflower cucumbers carrots
Pumpkins spinach sweet potato vines and zucchini
Njeeri turned a stony ground into a greenery of life

9

Ants and worms may have come with the soil
But soon we saw insects flies and spiders
Bees and butterflies certainly
Birds were really the first visitors
They drank water from the stream
They pecked the fruits and corn
Njeeri planted hummingbird trees
Red flowers flamed on green

Cats dogs rats and rabbits are the other lot
Owners taking dogs for walks pass Fuertes
They pull the dogs on leash but dogs also pull them
I have seen different shapes colors and sizes
Dalmatian babies and biggies black dots on white skins
Chihuahua with ears primed
Bulldogs and Pitbulls the size of a cow calf
Shih Tzu small like cats
The dogs stop wherever needs overtake them
They raise one leg to piss by lampposts

Their handlers carry spoons for scooping dogshit
They carry bags into which they put the shit
But when they get to the front yard of Njeeri's garden
Even the dogs stop to stare at the flowers in bloom

In Limuru Kenya of my youth
We kept dogs for hunting
For guarding homes
For herding
Police dogs attacked freedom fighters and tore their clothes
They tore their flesh too
White settlers enjoyed the bloodsport and laughed
Here in America they used to set attack dogs
On those that fought for racial and human rights
In South Africa too

Dogs of University Hills Irvine
Are family companions to adults and children
Big and small they only bark in play
They never attack on account of color

One evening I found Njeeri clutching a club, machete, and a torch
Why up in arms, I asked
I was writing under the patio
I saw a tomcat emerge
The one with eyes like sunglasses
It drank water and then slunk away
They are dangerous aren't they?
I have heard they attack humans
Caution is not a sign of cowardice

Bisons once roamed this land
Now only sculpted images remain
Mountain lions occasionally visit
Ant eater is the mascot of the university

Many of the visitors are passersby
University teachers and staff and their guests
They stop in the street to admire the flowers in bloom
Red, white, yellow roses dancing in the Pacific breeze
Bees drink juices from the roses
Butterflies too

10

Visitors in Njeeri's garden are many
They hail from lands near and far
Germany Britain Sweden Denmark Italy
Korea China India Mexico Vietnam
Nigeria Ghana Mali Uganda and South Africa
Auntie Wabera came from Kenya and screamed again
Wonders of wonders
The stones you once talked about became this garden of Eden?
She harvested some ndũma and cooked it

11

In Hawai'i they call it another name
Haunani told us this when she visited the garden
Haunani the beauty from Hawai'i is a freedom fighter
She sat on a stool in the patio and watched the stream flow
We talked of that time when she hosted Njeeri and me
Her guests at the new Kamakakūokalani center, University of Hawai'i

Holy memory! A rite to remember!

Hawaiian dancers and flute players received us at the gate
They sang songs they had made for Ngũgĩ
They held *Decolonising the Mind* in hand
They called it their book

Then suddenly . . .
Remember Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa?

All noise ceased
All eyes turned the same way in the same direction
All eyes looked met at one appearance
It was Lilikalā dancing the Hula
Humans hills and leaves by the river were still

Then they started swaying side to side as in a dream
Captives of Lilikalā's side to side motion
Her body from hair to toe was all motion
So smooth the motion so gentle the waves
Her hands and waist seemed without bones

Lilikalā in motion was the silent stream gently down the plains of hope

It was not of Lilikalā only that we talked in the twilight
We talked of bringing our languages back to life
Haunani told us the story of language loss and recovery

They overthrew Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1893
They turned ‘Iolani palace into ‘Iolani prison
They banned ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in 1896
Haunani and Mililani Trask and others fought back
‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i was unbanned in 1978; final shackles fell off in 1986
Thanks to Pūnana Leo our language is coming back . . .

It was then that she saw ndũma leaves by the stream
Her face lit up with joy
Where did you get these?
Do you also grow this?
In Hawai‘i we name it taro also kalo

Of her many stories that night
I remember the story of Taro

Wākea Skyfather and Papahānaumoku Earth Mother out of Love
They created Ho‘ohokukalani heavenly maker of beautiful Stars
Wākea and Ho‘ohokukalani bore Hāloanaka the trembling long stalk
Hāloanaka was stillborn a seed; they buried the seed by their house
Out of the buried seed of life Taro was born
Kalo became food for Hāloa and Hāloa's children Kānaka Maoli
Taro is born of heaven earth and stars
Taro purifies the air we breathe

Taro has Mana power of life
Taro is food for the Natives of Hawai‘i
Ndũma is food for the Natives of Kenya
Taro is ndũma . . .

Haunani told us other tales of Pele’s islands
Hawai‘i where Pele’s fiery tongue still flows as red river
Maui named after the one who once snared the sun
O‘ahu home to Honolulu and Waikīkī
Kaua‘i the place around the neck of Hawai‘iloa
Moloka‘i home to Catholic saints
And many more that Pele created out of the ocean

But what drew words from a heavy heart
Was the tale of alien conquest
The forcible marriage to the United States
The union turned Hawai‘i into a base for war and death
The union turned Hawai‘i into a tourist paradise

She lamented the stolen beauty
Their praises are loveless words of love

Hawai‘i the Big Island of uncrowded splendor
O‘ahu surfing hiking Diamond Head and Pearl Harbor
Kaua‘i ziplining kayaking and sailing soft ventures
Maui snorkeling sailing hiking Haleakalā national park

Tourists own Waikīkī; they haunt the islands

They see beaches hills valleys and water falls
They see sands on seashore ducks on waters
They see birds in aerial maneuvers over the waters
They see sands and sun not native daughters and sons

May Pele the deity of volcano swallow them!

Talk of her beloved islands and Pele the Deity
Took me home to volcanic Mount Kenya
Ngai dwells on Mount Kenya dressed in spotless ostrich feathers
Maybe Pele and Ngai are twins
They coughed from under the belly of the Earth
And out came a necklace of hills and Mountains
In Kenya twenty two in all from Logipi to Longonot

Haunani's words brought back
Memories of another woman fighter
Wangarĩ Maathai was a relentless warrior for life
She visited the garden after a talk at Irvine
She talked about the language of environment
Wangarĩ visited Thiongo at Farm school
She spoke to the children about trees our relatives
Bjorn and Patrick from Sweden had a picture with her
Bjorn put a protective hand around her and sought blessings
Cousin Patrick dished food for Wangarĩ and sought blessings

Wangarĩ says the environment is our food
Wangarĩ preaches that the environment is life

She sat on the same stool Haunani sat on
She told tales of planting a thousand trees
She and many other women did so facing Mount Kenya

Haunani-Kay Trask daughter of Hawai'i
Wangarĩ Maathai daughter of Mount Kenya
Facing Njeeri's garden talking about the environment
One talked of Pele of the Hawaiian hills
The other of Ngai of Nyandarwa and Mount Kenya

We then did not know
That Kenya and Hawai'i
Had already given birth to a prince of hope
Except we do not know what history he will write

But to be alive to see the descendants
Of those whose Mana built America and Europe
Occupy the white house they built
See black grandmother and children play on the lawns of power
Brings bliss to my heart but helps me not to forget
That every sound of laughter echoes sounds of a thousand whips
On the body of millions . . .

I recall Njeeri and Mũmbi
Seated in this backyard facing Njeeri's garden
Making posters for Obama
Or Mũmbi returning from Washington
Now regaling us with stories:
Baba! Mama! I was there in Washington
When they crowned Michelle and Obama . . .

12

Mwarimũ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is the other visitor
She sat on the same stool that Haunani of Hawai'i had sat

Gayatri met Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa in Hawaii[8]
Lilikalā the citizen and Gayatri Spivak citizens chair
The native of Hawai'i and the native of India at Kalākaua festival
Where only Hawaiians go to worship Tūtū Pele
Lilikalā taught Gayatri to sway in Hula and holy Mele Oli
Gayatri taught Lilikalā to scoop holy smoke to face and head
Tūtū Pele and Kali kindred spirits in exchange across the Pacific

Gayatri's recent visit to the garden
Was a sunny ninth of March 2013
She brought Maitrain her sari-clad sister with her
Their banter told of a sisterly bond
Her stories reminded me of her other visit an earlier year
Kofi Anyidoho the poet from Ghana was there
Henry Chakava the publisher from Kenya was there

[8] In 2001 Gyatri was holder of the Spring Citizens chair.

Kassahun Checole the publisher from Eritrea was there
They sat in the porch half the night in talk
Gayatri's tales made them crack up
They poured libation to the gods with tears of laughter

She asked questions the way of Socrates
She turned the patio into a school the way of Socrates
Did Socrates tell tales the way Gayatri did?
Did Socrates make people laugh the way Gayatri did?
What of Derrida? Paul de Mann? Heidegger? Karl Marx?
Had they mastered Hindi Bengali Japanese Chinese their other
The way Gayatri has mastered English French German Italian her other?

Gayatri wears the crown of wisdom
Gayatri wears the star of the way
Had this garden tongues the way it has colors
It would bear witness to what it hears and sees
Every time Gayatri visits this garden

I met her on my first time in America 1966
A time when the Vietnam war was in the air
A time when American people rejected neoimperial reaches
Gayatri was born in Calcutta educated in India
She crossed the waters to America to add to what she already knew
I was born in Limuru and educated in Kenya and Uganda
I crossed the waters to England to add to what I already knew

We met at the Paul Engle who founded
Iowa International Writing Program
They took my picture on horseback
Gayatri and Hualing Nieh Engle and others looking on
Some seemed amused at what they saw
It's only a pony it's broken
Horses are beautiful, aren't they?
Gayatri and Hualing did not laugh at the terror on my face

Horses in colonial Kenya were for white settlers only
They raced each other on horses
They used horses to scatter and trample on freedom seekers

In Kazakhstan they once gave me horsemeat
I could not swallow it and for days gave up meat

Horses evoke different memories, don't they?

Gayatri is queen of words and thought
She travels the world planting seeds of thought
She travels the world watering seeds of thought
She travels the world cultivating fields of thought
She multiplies thought by thought to yield tomes of thoughtful wisdom
Gayatri is entrepreneur of thought

On Mwarimũ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's other visit
She sat on the same stool that Wangarĩ of Kenya sat

Gayatri planned to plant trees in different parts of the globe
Gayatri wanted the rites in memory of Wangarĩ Maathai
Gayatri would spread the rites from Columbia New York to India and Bangladesh

Out of love of life Gayatri links continents

The environment is the womb of life
The health of the earth is the health of the human
Whatever created earth also created water air and sun
And trees birds worms creatures big and small

One life one love

13

Even the young visit Njeeri's garden
Most are Mũmbi's and Thiongo's friends
They take pics of each other in the garden and text to facebook

My grandchildren visit the garden thru skype eyes
Nyambura daughter of Wanjikũ and Saami in Finland
Nyambura daughter of Mũkoma and Maureen in Connecticut
Nyambura daughter of Ndũcũ and Nyambura in New York
Young Wabera daughter of Ndũng'ũ and Wanjikũ in New Jersey
They try to touch the fruits they see hanging from the trees
They cry demanding we pick the fruits they see

Once Njeeri sent avocados to Ndũcũ and Mũkoma
All rotted on the way . . .
One has to visit the garden to pick them fresh

14

Njeeri shares whatever she harvests with neighbors
She started with a plateful of loquats to our Chinese neighbors
She sent avocados to our German neighbors
Another day I saw her carrying a plateful of plums
She crossed the street to our Italian and Mexican neighbors
Another time it was mangoes to our Indian and Vietnamese neighbors
Those from Korea and Ukraine too have shared something from Njeeri's garden

Behold even suburbia can change its ways

When we first arrived neighbor hardly spoke to neighbor
Neighbor did not knock at the door of neighbor to ask for salt
Neighbor did not cry to neighbor for help in an hour of need
Property touched property but humans did not touch human

In the Kenya of my youth homesteads hardly touched
But homeowners always touched and asked
Is it well with you neighbor? Did you sleep well neighbor?

In suburbia a neighbor is a stranger
In the village a stranger is a neighbor

Suburbia is a neighborhood of strangers
The village is a neighborhood of relations

In our street Njeeri's generous hand opened the way
Neighbors began to share fruits from their garden
In our street sharing harvests is becoming a way of life

Njeeri's garden brings a little togetherness every day

15

Albert Wendt the Poet
This garden tells a new tale every day
It is itself a tale in the making

Lyz Soto

Pacific Coordinates

The response to this poem is Joy Enomoto's "Map Me Isolated," pg 156.

continental transformation.
mutation on my left

Every
floating
translated by
Mapped me isolated
marks . . .
rib.
points
these speckled
Meta
Places
morphosis
calculated integers
of my right
fearless trajectory
bronchial
foolish direction
tree.

tropic

lodged.
equatorial
in my trachea
find almost homes
circular, or loops.
do not
breathe
in a knot.
do not
tied.
gasp

exhale hemispheres
Digest in counter clockwise twist.
sail southern
I eat different. where my guts reverse.

beheaded by trap of trade routes

Heterodissociative

The response to this poem is Joy Enomoto's "The Mitosis of Papahānaumoku No. 1," pg 158.

So move back
to okay You was born here,
in land where I belongs
to no primary number
broken down to
roots cubed reaching
for a fourth dimension time
like the fourth time maybe
lucky live here. where belongs
an otherwise vernacular rests
without bumps or pits
without allergic reactions.
fixated on
Medicine works wonders.
maybe erases, but
grab a gut with bent knees, see
passing doesn't go both
ways, and why go
dissociative when picking
and
happens so simple.

Searching
in outer

to spacial and

heterochromatic,

binary fusion, yet

mitosis begets desire

Discrete
mutates to a four
letter
word.

Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio

What They Cannot See: He Mele Nō Hōpoe

The response to this poem is ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui’s “Hi‘iaka and Hōpoe,” pg 160.

I saw you dancing in the distance
pulling my glance with the diction of your stance
gliding over the land like water
over itself

With a name that speaks too much of your magic
Nānāhuki,
too heavy for the diphthong of my tongue
instead, let me call you Hōpoe
I have seen you gathering parts of yourself in the form of yellow lehua there
I have been with you from the beginning
only waiting for the pahu to sound for our ha‘a to begin

You created of this stranger in me
a lover
let me cover your body in the sacred skin of ka nāhele
plant you a fortress of rumbling lehua trees
each blossom a promise to return. my love
to move within your kino again
for your hā to find home in my mele

Can you see those strange men
watching from beyond the page
see the way they have drawn us naked and grown
how they miss your skin feathered with yellow lehua
writing us into stillness into silence
how it seems through them
we have been forgotten

I wonder how it is they cannot see
I wonder
what has made them so blind

Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner

Lessons from Hawai‘i

The response to “Lessons from Hawai‘i” and “Tell Them” is ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui’s “E Micronesia,” pg 58.

Lesson Number 1:

FUCKIN MICRONESIANS!
that’s my seventh grade friend
cussin at the boys across the street
rockin swap meet blue t-shirt
baggy jeans
spittin a steady beetlenut stream

You know, you’re actually kinda smart
for a Micronesian
And that’s my classmate
who I tutor through the civil war
through the first immigrants
through history that always
seems to repeat itself

Lesson Number 2:

Micronesian
MICRO(nesian)
as in small. tiny crumbs of islands scattered
across the pacific ocean.
different countries/nations/cultures no one
has heard about / cares about too small
to notice. small like how
I feel
when lady at the salon
tracing white across my nail
stops and says
you know you don’t look
Micronesian.
You’re prettier!

Lesson Number 3:

Prettier as in not
ugly like those
other Micronesian girls
walking by the street smiling
rows of gold teeth like they got
no shame with hair greased and braided
cascading down dirt roads of brown skin, down
shimmering dresses called guams
and neon colored chuukese skirts
and I can hear
the disgust
in my cousin's voice
Look at those girls! They wear their guams
to school and to the store like they're
at home don't they
know?
This isn't their country this is America see that's
why everyone here hates
us Micronesians

Lesson Number 4:

I'll tell you why everyone here hates Micronesians
It's cuz we're neon colored skirts screaming DIFFERENT!
Different like that ESL kid
whose name you can't pronounce
whose accent you can't miss
Different like walmart/7-eleven/mickey D's parking lot kick its and fights
those long hours
those blue collar nights
Different like parties
with hundreds of swarming aunties, uncles, cousins
sticky breadfruit drenched in creamy coconut
coolers of our favorite fish

wheeled from the airport
barbequed on a spit
my uncle waving me over
Dede a itok! Kejro mona!
Dede come! Let's eat!

Lesson Number 5:

Headline:
NO ALOHA FOR MICRONESIANS
Headline:
MICRONESIANS RUN UP HEFTY HEALTH CARE TAB
Headline:
MICRONESIANS FILL HOMELESS SHELTERS
Quote:
We shoulda jus nuked their islands when we had the chance!
Quote:
You know, they're better off living homeless in Hawai'i
than they are living in their own islands
Joke:
Eh, eh—why did
the Micronesian man marry
a monkey?
Because all Micronesian women are monkeys!

What?

Can't you take a joke?

Lesson Number 6:

It's actually
NOT Micronesian
It's Marshallese/Chuukese/Yapese/Pohnpeian
Palauan/Kosraean/Chamorru/Nauruan/Kiribati/
but when Hawai'i insists
on lumping us all together

When they belittle us and tell us we're small
when they tell us our people are small
when they give you a blank face
when they give you a closed door
when so many in Hawai'i hate
Micronesians, when so many hate
us

Lesson Number 7:

That's how I learned
That's how I learned
That's how I learned
to hate

me.

Tell Them

I prepared the package
for my friends in the states

the dangling earrings
woven into half-moons black pearls glinting
like an eye in a storm of tight spirals

the baskets
sturdy
also woven
brown cowry shells shiny
intricate mandalas shaped
by calloused fingers

Inside the basket
I write this message:

Wear these earrings
to parties to your classes and meetings
to the grocery store, the corner store
and while riding the bus

Store jewelry, incense, copper coins
and curling letters like this one
in this basket

and when others ask you
where you got this
you tell them

they’re from the Marshall Islands

show them where it is on a map
tell them we are a proud people
toasted dark brown as the carved ribs
of a tree stump
tell them we are descendants
of the finest navigators in the world
tell them our islands were dropped
from a basket
carried by a giant
tell them we are the hollow hulls
of canoes as fast as the wind
slicing through the pacific sea
we are wood shavings
and drying pandanus leaves
and sticky bwiros at kemems
tell them we are sweet harmonies
of grandmothers mothers aunties and sisters
songs late into night
tell them we are whispered prayers
the breath of God
a crown of fushia flowers encircling
aunty mary's white sea foam hair
tell them we are styrofoam cups of koolaid red
waiting patiently for the ilomij
we are papaya golden sunsets bleeding
into a glittering open sea
we are skies uncluttered
majestic in their sweeping landscape
we are the ocean
terrifying and regal in its power
tell them we are dusty rubber slippers
swiped
from concrete doorsteps
we are the ripped seams
and the broken door handles of taxis
we are sweaty hands shaking another sweaty hand in heat

tell them
we are days
and nights hotter
than anything you can imagine
tell them we are little girls with braids
cartwheeling beneath the rain
we are shards of broken beer bottles
burrowed beneath fine white sand
we are children flinging
like rubber bands
across a road clogged with chugging cars
tell them
we only have one road

and after all this

tell them about the water

how we have seen it rising
flooding across our cemeteries
gushing over our sea walls
and crashing against our homes

tell them what it's like
to see the entire ocean__level___with the land

tell them
we are afraid

tell them we don't know
of the politics
or the science
but tell them we see
what is in our own backyard

tell them that some of us
are old fishermen who believe that God
made us a promise

tell them some of us
are a little bit more skeptical of God

but most importantly
tell them
we don't want to leave
we've never wanted to leave

and that we
are nothing
without our islands.

E Micronesia

“E Micronesia” is a response to Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner’s poetry (see pg 50), in particular the pieces she read in 2012 at Native Voices. Listing to Kathy’s amazing poetry that evening, I realized that there really hasn’t been any noticeable Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) art that responds in any way to the tensions surrounding Micronesian immigration to Hawai‘i, although there is entrenched anger, racism, and resentment, reinforcing the normalization of hate crimes and acts of violence against the diverse Micronesian communities in Hawai‘i.

I don’t want you here
your gold-riddled teeth
and foreign betel-stained tongue
bright quilted skirts
sashaying down the sidewalk
across the sand
your sun-darkened children
skin glistening with salt water
look like mine
their musical laughter
echoing across blue Pakipika waters
calling to reef and surf beyond
sounds like mine
playing i ke kai side by side
they look the same
yes, we are distant cousins
so why shouldn’t we be friends?
why can’t we invite you in to eat,
talk story, laugh together?
Because your presence
is a painful reminder
of U.S. colonial dispossession
of you from your homeland
polluted, destroyed
to mine
pushing us further away
from our ‘āina
the questions my children ask
of why your children live on the beach
in a tent on a sidewalk
an old rusted car

why we just visit, why we call them away
too painful
too complex
too embarrassing
for me to answer
so instead
I just quietly hate you
defenseless against my anger
because it is easier to blame the victim
than the empire

قمري الجميل

In the original Arabic

The response to this poem is ku‘ualoha ho‘omanawanui’s “The Beautiful Mahealani Moon,” pg 161.

قمري الجميل
جالس في عالمي المظلم
أحدق حولي مثل اعمى
ألظلام هنالك ولا شيء اكثر

وفجأة، تهب رياح عذبة من حولي
مثل ما ارادت ان تقول
أنظر إلى السماء
رفعت رأسي
كان نورك قد أنار ظلامي القاتم
كنت أنتي تبتسمي إلي
النجوم في السماء تنتمي اليك
في سواد مجرد انتي ضوئي المشع

My Beautiful Mahealani Moon

English translation of "قمري الجميل"

Sitting alone in my dark world
staring aimlessly like the blind
Only darkness and nothing more
Then—
a sudden, fresh wind blows
caressing my face
like it wanted to say—
Hey, look up at the sky.
I raise my head to your beautiful light
your radiating light brightened my darkness
you are there smiling down on me
lighting my heart.
The stars in the sky belong to thee;
In the darkness of the world,
you are my radiant light

April A.H. Drexel

. . . lying in wait . . .

This poem responds to the complex and layered issues addressed in Kapulani Landgraf's visual art piece titled: "Ka Maunu Pololoi" pg 162.

treacherous
platforms
veiled
in
crony capitalism
. . . lying in wait . . .
alluring stench
of
exploitation
smeared
across
trigger plate troughs
. . . lying in wait . . .
contracted
guillotine hammers
shackled
with
sleek corporate henchmen
rods
. . . lying in wait . . .
. . . lying in wait . . .
. . . lying in wait . . .
TO
BRAND & DISFIGURE
COMMODIFY & PROSTITUTE
APPROPRIATE & CORRUPT
visual/cultural
expressions
ancestral ways
of
knowing
intellectual property rights
of
KĀNAKA ʻŌIWI

On March 15, 1899, I heard cannon firing. I was working in the fields, and then came to the house. Toward the next morning my mother, three younger brothers, and sister started through the swamp for Apia, because they were afraid of the bombardment and the natives. About noon of that day my brother Henry sent my father and I out a note, telling us to leave the place at once as the ships were going to bombard our place. When the note came my father and I were hiding under the river bank to keep out of the way of the shells. I had trouble to get my father to go, but finally that same morning we came to town. A Chinese neighbour was going to town with a wagon and I got him to take my father in. I rode on horseback myself.

On March 15, 1899, the natives, under Mataafa, had orders to leave Mulinuu. On the same day Mataafa and a lot of his people came through my place and told me they had to leave as the Americans would shoot. At 10 o'clock that day the bombardment started and shells were thrown over my place until 4:30; one shell struck my veranda as I sat there. Others struck the kitchen. I had no notice of the bombardment other than what the natives told me.

The next day after the bombardment I went to see the American officer in charge of the land forces, Lansdale by name, and told him that my parents and brothers and sisters were out at our place, which was in the midst of the bombardment, and he gave me permission to go out and bring them to town. On that morning my mother and youngest sister had come into town, with nothing but the clothes they wore. I then sent my brother Olaf out to bring my father and my brother Peter into town. The notice or pass from Lansdale said they must come in immediately. My father and brother then came into town, my brother on horseback and my father in a wagon with a Chinaman. They brought nothing with them except what they had on. They had to be in town by 12 o'clock noon and had no time to bring any property in.

Doug Poole

FIAOTI—FIAOLA/ Desire death—Desire Life

In this collaboration, artist Penny Howard and poet Doug Poole create works that explore cultural identity. This particular project responds to Maori and Samoan diaspora, specifically as they relate to war in the Pacific during the 1800s. The larger collaboration is entitled War of 1899. *Together Douglas and Penny explore the testimonies that Doug's great-great grandmother, great grandfather, great aunts, and great uncles gave as evidence to the U.S. representative P.C. Knox when they were claiming damages for the loss of crops and damage to land and house caused by the illegal bombardment of Apia in 1899.*

See pg 164 for Penny Howard's "So'ogafai's Song."

Lost Possessions

We left as soon as the bombardment started. We fled to Sogi, Apia. We stayed there until the war was over. Only the clothes we wore. We had to flee through the mangroves and swim through the bay to get to Sogi, my mother and the three boys and I. We were afraid to stay home any longer, as the natives were all around us.

Tables and chairs; don't remember how many. One big mirror, about two big clocks, and a lot of other things; but I have forgotten. Two sewing machines, one hand and one treadle; three bedsteads, boxes with clothes in, chests of drawers, washstands; some fine mats, but only two were taken, and two shaggy mats.

The windows and doors were all gone. The Samoan house was burned down. The kitchen was entirely destroyed, as was the fowl house. All the furniture was gone; we could find nothing. All our clothing, jewellery, and cooking utensils were gone. They used up all the coconuts. Some breadfruit trees were destroyed. There were also some provisions which were taken away.

The doors and windows of the houses were all smashed and there was nothing in the house. The pigs, fowls, and horses were all gone. Some of the furniture was lying around the yard, but all broken. All my clothes were gone. We had three sewing machines and they were gone. We found only broken chairs and boxes.

So‘ogafai’s Song II

On my land at Tulaele. A dwelling house of about six rooms, a copra house, kitchen, and a Samoan house. We had just finished it before the war broke out.

We left as soon as the bombardment started—went to Sogi, Apia, and stayed there until the war was over.

It was all lying about broken and destroyed, and so was the crockery. I don’t remember how many; that’s all. Tables and chairs; don’t remember how many. One big mirror, about two big clocks, and a lot of other things; but I have forgotten.

Just the empty house; the copra house was broken—some of the posts were cut off and the floor smashed. The Samoan house was burned. All the livestock was gone. Yes; pigs and fowls—don’t remember how many; three or four cows, some horses.

No; I don’t remember anything more.

The House

We had a seven-room house, one parlour and five bedrooms and a storeroom, besides a big Samoan house, a kitchen about 12 by 16 feet, partly boarded with a thatched roof, a copra house of wood about 16 by 30.

Seven or eight chairs, I think, three or four bedsteads, all iron but one, which was wooden; two chests of drawers; a fancy chiffonier; lamps; cooking utensils; crockery; boxes; three sewing machines, one hand and two treadle; knives and forks for a big family.

About 90 acres. I think about one-half of the place was covered with full-bearing coconut trees. At the time we made out our claim just after the war we put down what the property was worth, then some of it was old and some new. Part of it had been built within six months and the balance was a little over a year. We had fixed over our old house at this time, just using what of the old lumber was good.

All the windows were broken. It was very dirty. It wasn't quite empty. There was a little broken furniture lying around. Most of the furniture was either gone or broken. I don't remember to have seen any good furniture around. Some of the veranda posts were cut by knives.

After the war the land was in bad shape for want of weeding and care. A lot of copra was lost by reason of the fact that the nuts weren't gathered at the right time, and some, perhaps, were stolen.

Christina Low

Steps

Having K.L. Quilantang, Jr. (Ken) respond to my short story was an interesting exploration for me, having never collaborated on anything more than exquisite corpses. Since my story came first, Ken asked me to include and feature certain aspects of it, increasing the significance so that my piece could more closely link to his.

Questions that we both considered are: How effectively do crayfish signify relationships? How do the juxtaposition of light and dark: the correlations, as well as the divergences, work and play together?

The response to this story is K.L. Quilantang, Jr.'s "Cracked Shells," pg 71.

Our house is so close we don't need to drive to the falls but we do anyway, packing the car with bucket and rods, our tabbies and rain jackets. Descending the road that takes us to the stream, I protect my knees by landing on the balls of my feet. Iako puts his hand at my back when the asphalt stops and the hard, slippery earth begins.

"Watch your step," he says to everyone.

"Daddy, remember the last time for Father's Day and we caught so many?"

"Daddy, the tourists left cans on the side of the road."

"Daddy, how many will we catch today?"

There are two of them, two of us, and more questions. I wait my turn. "I want to see another thrush."

He answers, "The Shama Thrush is actually from Indo-China. It's invasive, but there's something about it that makes it belong here. Maybe it's because it sounds like a nightingale, even though there aren't any indigenous nightingales here. I dunno," he pauses. "They sound nice—I agree."

I am silent, listening for the song that will lilt and trill, resonating with something deep and fragile inside me. Instead I hear the whoosh of the stream over dull boulders, spilling into itself as it moves past the trees' arthritic knuckles, sweeping twigs and leaves from its banks.

Before I met Iako, I was married to someone else. So was he, but we could have been married to the same person for all the nights we spent untouched, convinced that we were undesirable. We both thought the mere strength of our love could transform our exes into what we needed. But that's the thing about love, it's sometimes confused with control.

At the stream, a great tree has fallen across the water. Its roots are a heart burst open and frozen so that all the fragments are caught midair. The mass is taller than any of us, and we close in to study the dark lines where moss and thick trails of ants shade the decaying underbelly.

"How long do you think it will take?" Alika asks.

"Ah, maybe a while," Iako answers. "The stream will probably wash it down before it's all gone. Then it will break into bits."

Ena has stopped looking and walked to the edge below a Kukui tree, fish pole in hand. The rush of water running is different, cleaner, there.

"Daddy, I need bait!" she repeats until he obeys, crouching next to her. The boy squats next to him, studying exactly how it's done, asking to do it next time. Iako slices squid on a white styrofoam tray, disposable gloves keeping the rotten stench of fish off his skin. He ties the end of her line, and it's hard to tell his fingers from the fleshy stuff.

"Don't let 'em get you," he says with a laugh, handing over the pole. "Those pincers can snip a finger."

He takes the grayish gloves off when he's done, stuffs them with the fingered end close to the bait.

Ena's bait swings close to her calf as she navigates the rocks, peering down; her intense gaze studies the eddies and swirls and not her next step. Alika chooses the other side, crossing the path of jutting rocks with precision. That shore is smoother, less shaded, less slippery. Suddenly, he jumps in with both feet and beams back a smile.

The rocks clink behind me, and Iako stands and smiles back. He hands a pole to me, then starts to walk the path the boy took.

"Crayfish live in streams like this because they like to be close to running water. Close, but not too close." He glances back to make sure I'm following. "See that open water? You're not going to find any there. Look for protected places where water is still moving."

My foot slips, plunges in. I leave it for a second. The cool is wonderful, refreshing; it sucks the wetsuit material of my tabbies towards my skin.

"Look for the red," he continues. "But they're pretty smart, so you have to watch them. They'll definitely be watching you."

Ena dips her line gently, and the bait disappears for a moment. She waits like I've seen her wait when she was hiding behind a door trying to scare her brother. She reaches her head out slightly while keeping the pole still, retracts, then repeats about once every ten seconds. Suddenly, she yanks up with her entire body and smiles huge. A bright miniature lobster clings to the end of her line, motionless with shock.

It begins twitching as it hangs.

"Daddy, Daddy," she dangles the line over the rocks, shaking it as she hops.

There is no hook, but the cray has refused to let go.

"Convinced," Iako says as he deftly moves toward her "that someone will steal its food." He's there beside her so fast, gingerly placing the creature in the bucket. "Good job," he says, patting her head.

Alika is there, too, studying the small thing. "Last time we caught a bigger one," he says. "I'm gonna catch a bigger one this time, too." He goes back to his place and beyond, trolling for something that will beat his sister.

Everything is brown and gray but mostly green, and the sun filters through the vast canopy, shimmers and sparkles atop everything wet. I close my eyes when I hear the thrush. Her song is like drinking cool water. She's perched close, I can tell, and I look for her.

"Daddy, Daddy," comes again. The girl has caught another and I lose the thrush, though I look back and catch the blur of white tail feathers through the trees.

This is the first time I have crayfished, the first time I have waded in a stream since I was a girl. And it feels like I have been away from myself, like I'm returning to a familiar place where I almost belong. I'm bigger now, more awkward, less free. But I know Hapu ferns grow close to the banks, their spiraled brown fur blooms big and green and spidery. I know impatiens, bright pink and purple and orange, have bulbs that pop between my fingers and seeds that fly as the pod springs inside-out. I know them as I know myself, and for almost as long.

I shift my weight, clunking the rocks beneath me, and I lose my balance for a moment. Then, quickly, a blur of red, and my hands dip toward the water. "I caught one!" The water is so clear; I can see everything. A plume of mud curls, swirling, and a small patch of firecracker red flashes: the tip of a tail. The intricate body yanks the bait with its disproportionately large claws, scratching the ground with its feet and kicking up more cloud. It tugs in the direction of a rocky crevice. The bait is almost half its size, and I'm amazed at the sheer strength of the small creature, wonder how it will handle all that food alone. "What do I do? What do I do?"

"Just make sure it doesn't let go," Iako says, calm. When I bring my line up, he and the bucket are at my feet. The cray is off my line with one fluid movement. "Nice," he adds, standing to kiss my lips.

Alika brings the biggest one yet, his nine-year-old hand only slightly smaller. "Last time, it was bigger." He sighs. The bucket holds almost a dozen crays in a few inches of water. I wonder about recipes, imagine them simple: salt-and-peppered, then grilled with chili pepper water. I watch the smaller ones climb atop the bigger ones, trying to scale their way out, their claws clicking and sliding against the smooth sides. When Alika dangles his over the bucket, a few grab on, weighting his down. Finally, his slips and splashes onto the pile. And I think about how hard it is to be in that position, facing the consequences of not having let go in time.

"I want my wife back," my ex said when I'd ask him about which pieces of furniture he wanted. But I had made up my mind and had held on for too long already. There was no going inside the bucket.

It's only been about thirty minutes, and no one is tired yet. No one has fought. We are still close to the broken tree, about a hundred meters upstream when the sky darkens. No one really notices, though, because we're all intent on ferreting out the best hiding places, and we talk about what crayfish like, how they sleep, what they usually eat when there's no squid being fed to them. We wonder about cray mommies and daddies, and why we never find families together, unless this entire stream is just one big extended family, and maybe we're walking through their house with our tabbies on.

When the rain comes, it seems from out of nowhere. Huge drops pelt through the leaves, past the branches, and splatter up from the stream so that we get wet from both directions. I run toward the toppled tree, taking refuge beneath a thicker-branched spot. I wave Alika and Ena to come, and they do, cowering on either side of me, clutching to my damp shirt.

"Don't forget the bucket!" I say to Iako, who turns back and grabs the wire handle, then up-ends its contents back into the water. Muddy brown is interspersed with flashes of bright red that seem to gash through the falling water like a bucketful of entrails.

"Catch and release," he says to my stunned expression.

"Plus, the family stays together," says Ena.

"And the small ones get big," adds Alika.

I nod, even though it occurs to me that this was all an exercise in futility, a way to pass the time. And although it's certainly memorable, I wonder about how we've displaced these crays and whether they will get back home. But the stream is soft and the small bodies disperse, skittering and darting under new cliffs. The swirling mud sinks and settles like sand after a wave. Soon, there isn't a sign we were even here, except for the weight of our

tabbies on the stones. It's as if our afternoon hasn't made the crays smarter, more wary of floating squid on string. Iako has given them another day, and for that, I admire and love him a little bit more.

We wait for the rain to subside before we make our way back, past the felled tree. "See," Iako points, "pieces have already broken off from the downpour." We join him on the other side of the tree and watch the debris wash downstream.

Alika touches the core of the root, touches other-colored parts, too. "It's soft here," he says, pointing to the middle. "How is everything going to wash away when the outer parts are harder?"

"The water will get to the middle eventually," I explain. "Water is very strong, and it can break through anything."

"Dad?" he says with a slightly furrowed brow.

"Like she said, son."

"Oh," he says in a small voice, melting the furrow with downcast eyes.

We walk back to the car drenched and find our raincoats still balled up on the back seat. The sun appears and makes the asphalt steam clean. When the thrush flies above us we see her feathers shimmer black sapphire and brilliant white. She sings to us perched on a young strawberry guava tree that marks the end of the forest and the beginning of the road. The lilt is familiar and sweet, we agree, like ice cream or a half-rainy day.

K.L. Quilantang, Jr.

Cracked Shells

I'd been fishing for crayfish before. I remember their claws pinching the webbing between my kid-fingers. When Christina and I decided to use crayfish as a theme I had some painful experience with the delicacy/invasive species/bait/rubbish fish/little bastad (what one says out loud as they hang from your skin). I was intrigued with the way Christina used crayfish fishing as a metaphor for a romantic relationship and decided to concoct my own story with a similar setting. I was instantly drawn into talking about carapaces as symbols of power and abuse and what happens when carapaces are shattered by those we trust to care for us.

This story responds to Christina Low's "Steps," pg 67.

"Bad luck you know," I say. Fingers trace the outline of broken shards, pausing around sharp corners. "Bad luck, seven years."

"I know," she says. "Ask me if I give a damn." She starts sweeping the cracked silver with an open palm. "Ask. Come on."

I say nothing, watching slivers puncture her skin. I want to wince, to feel whatever she cannot now. She looks at her hand, crimson smears across the plastic tablecloth. She smiles.

"The Romans."

"What," I ask. "What about da fuckin Romans?"

"They believed that mirrors take your soul." She picks pieces of the mirror from her palm. "Cracking a mirror cracked the soul of the person being reflected." She flicks the pieces at the sink.

Clink.

I take a napkin and corral the broken glass into the trash can. If Ma saw her like this she'd kill herself.

Clink.

She flicks another piece.

***

A long time ago, a girl looked into a plastic white bucket. Spindly legs scraped against the sides. The old man with her grumbled to himself. A boy skipped rocks across the murky water, trying to hit the old tire sticking out of the creek.

"Don't do dat," the old man said. "Scare op da pish. No good. Stupid."

"Sorry, grampa," said the boy. He looked at his sister and shrugged.

They had been at it for a while, and the boy remembered how hot the summer sun was here. Not like back home in Wai'anae, where even though it was hot he could always walk to the beach.

"Eh, Boy, come," said the old man. "Bring de backet."

The muddy water sloshed around and the crawdads slid to one side of the bucket. The girl looked at her brother and ran toward him.

"Here," she said. She held the wire handle.

The old man sat on a haggard couch left on the shore. "For illegals, dat one," he said one time. Foam exposed springs and a rotting wooden frame.

The bucket swung back and forth between the two children.

***

After cleaning up the mirror I do a double take at the floor to check for stray shards. I see her in the bathroom, looking at herself. Crimson smeared on the edge of the sink.

***

The old man sat on the edge of the couch. Strings from frayed ends of fabric dipped into wet mud. The old man grumbled something to himself and scooted toward one end.

He felt the wire slipping out of his sweaty palms. The boy and his sister dropped the bucket near the old man's foot. Brown water splashed up the sides. Carapaces scraped against plastic.

"Paking stupid boy," said the old man under his breath. "Don't drop de backet."

***

I'm supposed to keep an eye out for her. At twenty-five, she still needs a damn nanny. I bite my lip, shake my head a little to clear my thoughts. I hear a noise, a car engine running smoothly on the street fronting my apartment. Headlights flash into windows. I turn my head.

A woman's voice, "Bye, baby, call me tomorrow." She lives next door.

Fuck. It ain't her. I hear high heels walking slowly up concrete steps. Metal jewelry scratches against metal railings.

Shink. Shink. Shink.

I'm supposed to watch out for my sister. Twenty-five and needs a fuckin' nanny. I look for my denim jacket and put it on because that's what brothers are supposed to do.

Keys jingle.

A door closes in the unit next to ours.

I leave the garage, the tires of my beat up Corolla squeaking. In my rear view, the lights in the next door unit come on.

***

The old man commanded the children to pick up rocks. “Too big,” he said when the girl heaved a rock over her head. She dropped it into the edge of the muck. Flecks of grime against the skin of her legs.

The old man caught himself looking. He mumbled to himself, then turning to the girl, “You are dirty now, no good.”

“I can wipe if off, grampa,” the girl said. Fat kid-fingers with chipping Barbie–pink nail polish smeared mud off legs. The old man caught himself looking again.

The boy saw two men walking their way. He noticed they looked toward the ground with each step.

“Hi,” said one. The boy thought, *Dey stay walking long time. Get pukas in their shoes. Can see da guy’s toes.*

***

I drive past Chinatown. The smell of overripe fruit wakes me up. I park the car on Merchant, between a shiny Benz and some SUV. I turn away when I see a cop on his laptop staring back from the driver’s seat.

I want to ask him if he’s seen her. I put my hands in my pocket and make my way toward the gameroom. I want to ask for help, but instead I ball my hands up into fists in my pockets.

I can feel the cop’s eyes stalking me, waiting for me to fuck up.

***

The men looked at the old man and the two kids. The old man looked into the crayfish bucket.

“¿Habla usted español?” asked the taller man. He put two fingers up to his lips. “¿Cigarillo?”

The old man reached into his back pocket. He waved his empty hand like some king on the news.

The boy held his sister’s hand tight.

“No worry, I going take care you,” he said in her ear. Flies around the rim of the plastic bucket.

“¿Español?”

Again the old man waved his hand. “Pilipino.”

The men trudged to the other side of the pond, laid out their tattered coats, and sat.

"Grampa," asked the boy. "Who's dat?"

"People," the old man said. "Tired people."

"Why dey tired?" asked the girl. "Haccome?"

***

First thing I notice about the gameroom is the people sit in rows, hunched over bright flickering screens. Coins get plugged into the slot. Change rains out of metal boxes in loud clink-clink-clinks.

I walk slow amongst the rows. Anything familiar, a shirt, a smell, something. Please. She's twenty-five and needs her brother.

I feel eyes.

"Eh." I feel a tap on my shoulder. "She no stay."

I cross my hands across my puffed-up chest. He was with her last time she was strung out. One of the hunched-over players looks at me. The screen light enhancing deep wrinkles.

"Where she went?"

"I dunno," he says. "She never come by since . . . da las time."

I look away from him, knowing how things turned out. Two months in OCCC for assault and battery. I got hospitalized; he got time. Last thing I remember was his tattoo, a knife running down his forearm, the tip drawing blood.

His arm, scarred and solid, holds my shoulder, "Sorry 'bout da las time." I notice a knurled hand shaking palm open. "I sorry how stuffs went down."

I take his hand and tell him in the space between us, "No worry brah, everybody was fuck-up dat time."

"If was my sista, same, same I would do."

I look at him in the eye; a flash of my fist shattering his right orbit shakes me up. End flash.

The doors of the gameroom feel oily on the way out.

My hands shake when I walk to the Corolla. I keep looking over my shoulder and notice the cop is gone.

My mouth is dry.

***

The old man took one of the big rocks and looked into the bucket. Silhouettes of claws and antennae behind the whiteness of a bucket. Sounds of carapaces scraping reminded the boy of his grampa's false teeth clinking

when he dropped them into the cup in the bathroom. He looked at the boy.

"Come here," he said. He opened the boy's palm. The boy noticed how the dried mud caked and cracked around the lines in his hand. The old man grabbed a big crayfish and the three watched it wriggle, claws rising up trying to catch the loose skin on the old man's liver-spotted hand. He placed the crayfish in the boy's hand. It made its way to the flesh of his palm.

"Eww," said the boy. A muddy trail across his wrist.

"Paking bakla," said the old man. "Be a man. Your parents make you girl. No good."

The crayfish landed on small rocks with a dull thud then scooted toward the safety of the pond. The old man rose up from the creaking couch.

A foot dropped, dropped, dropped, onto the creature.

Green and grey and red, the girl thought to herself.

The boy stood there, unsure of movement. The old man picked up the shattered mass of shell and guts.

"Open your hand."

The boy shook his head.

"Open."

The old man grabbed the boy's wrist and smashed the crayfish into his skin. The children screamed.

The men sitting on the other side looked their way then looked away.

"You are girl," he said to the boy. The old man turned to the girl. "You, you good girl." He wiped his hand on his faded jeans then ran his fingers through her brown hair, smiling as he did.

***

I park the Corolla in the structure and ask myself why I always park street level where all the traffic is.

I wonder to myself, *why at three in the morning do people have to buy shit from Wal-Mart*. I make my way to the freezer. I grab the nearest bottle, watching bubbles from my Coke fizz up the sides.

The way home I drive past places I've heard she goes, Ke'eaumoku, Kapi'olani. Something tells me she ain't there.

I see a black-and-white blouse with stripes, her favorite shirt.

I slow down and roll down my window.

"What da fuck you looking at," yells a man's voice.

The girl with the black-and-white shirt holds her hands up. "Yeah, get da fuck outta here!"

I look to my left and my Corolla tries to do a burn-out.

***

The old man handed the boy a big rock. He pointed to the bucket.

"Smash."

Mud and tears and crayfish and guts all over the boy's face. The old man held the girl's hand.

"You are good pro notting," the old man said, pointing to the boy's forehead. He took the rock and looked at the boy. "I show you." He dropped the rock into the bucket; each time shells and claws dripping from the bottom. The old man picked up the rock again, the veins on his hands in the muck of muddy guts reminded the boy of worms that came up after a hard rain. He let the rock fall into the bucket again. The old man coughed and hacked in a low bass tone then spat. A string of drool in the afternoon light wiped on a dirty sleeve. The girl held her hand to her mouth. The old man yanked her arm away from her face and held it. "We go home already." The old man smiled at the girl, still holding her hand.

The men across the pond got up and shook out their jackets. They came back to the torn couch.

"Excuse me," said the tall man.

"Huh," said the old man. He held onto the girl's shoulders.

"Where you go?"

"I go to Chula Vista pare," said the old man. The boy rinsed his hands in the muddy water.

"Ride," asked the tall man.

"You sit in de back," he pointed to the silver GMC truck, "with him." He looked at the boy and sneered at him. "Where you come from?"

"Tijuana," said the tall man. He looked at the shorter one, who looked irritated.

"I drop you by de freeway. After de exit."

"Okay."

***

The door is open in my apartment. Fuck. I know she's home. Everything is on. The TV is playing 4 AM infomercials. The fluorescent kitchen light makes the white cabinets look green.

The bathroom. Again.

The water in the sink runs. Plastic bags with words written in Magic Markers lay broken. 2.99 goldfish. Orange and silver scales. And fins. A Wal-Mart bag and it makes sense. The only place she could get fish right now. She makes tight fists, the remnants of mashed-up bits of goldfish bits, blood and guts are everywhere. In long black hair, rubbed into skin, into the floor, in fibers of the rug. Between her fingers. They leak through the sides of

her hand, slipping down her elbows. A glass pipe cracked and smoldering on one end is in the trash. A tiny Ziploc bag the size of a thumbnail is open on one end and leaks white pebbles onto the tile floor.

"Green, and grey, and red, and silver, and white," she whispers.

"Fuck," I say. "Come on, gotta clean you up."

"My mirror is cracked," she says. "Can't."

I hold her until I think her soul stops shaking.

***

A long time ago the bed of the truck was bumpy and the two men pulled their jackets around them. The boy sniffled, looking at the cab of the truck and saw how close his sister sat to their grandfather. The boy had always sat between them before. The truck stopped and the two men got out.

They smiled at the boy as they leapt over the side.

The boy shivered in the cold wind of a San Diego night, looked at the cracked rearview mirror, and cried.

Kelsey Amos

heavens

These two poems should be read alongside Will Caron's digital painting. My friendship with Will has consisted, as all relationships do, of a series of interactions—messages, signals, actions, words—exchanged and responded to with the best of intentions. It wasn't until Hawai'i Review *put out its Call & Response call for submissions that we attempted to formalize this continuing exchange. "heavens" was written organically about an experience that he and I shared. "in a new light" is a conscious response to Will's painting, which is itself an attempt on his part to both interact with my poem and respond to our shared experience.*

See pg 166 for Will Caron's "Couch Beneath the Heavens."

tripping on the brown couch all afternoon
sweaty and uncertain
we step outside—

two figures
struck dumb & blind
by the clouds rushing around
in the sky above Kaimukī
bright white and
gregarious

in a new light

This poem responds to Will Caron's digital painting, "Couch Beneath the Heavens," pg 166.

I enjoy having
the last word
but is form
louder?

you reshaped me—
I am longer
in your eyes,
leaner.
I am a girl

I liked myself, then
as you saw me,
I loved the mountains,
I loved the sky,

but that girl looks like a girl
I might make small talk with
out of politeness.
That couch is sold & gone,

your face
is involved
in something.

Alice G. Otto

Flight 23 from Cincinnati

One day this spring, I was sitting in my office staring at the walls when a poem came to me. "Out of nowhere," I thought. Then I realized I had not been staring at the wall but at a mounted print of one of Brandon's baby shots. The poem was a subconscious response. This prompted Brandon and me to collaborate (when a writer and photographer marry, it seems silly not to). After he read "Flight 23 from Cincinnati," Brandon showed me the picture that now accompanies it. The pairing felt right to me because of the way he translated the poem's atmosphere; when I look at the photo, there's a feeling of being suspended, isolated. Flying and drowning at the same time.

See pg 167 for Brandon Otto's "Flight 23 from Cincinnati."

The art of Over-the-Rhine goes pinprick,
graffiti growing in spattered vines
from the chalk outline of a teenage girl.

Soon, it's a soybean field.

School buses nose out of a garage,
they are toys, then cigarettes escaping the pack.

275 circles the city, a target
or a haloed angel.

I lay beneath
a thin blanket, breathing thinner air.

Leilani Tamu

How to Make a Colonial Cake

I

Take one wily whaler
{harpoons and fish hooks
burly men, rough and rugged
seasoned sailors
in love with the sea}

Add three bloody beachcombers
{shipwrecked and lost
afraid and alone
adopted eaten assimilated}

Mix in five tricky traders
{crooked and cut-throat
sex on a stick "native" wives in tow
going troppo
in the fecund heat}

Stir in seven meddling missions
{chaste and two-faced
bibles loaded
ready to attack
Tagaloa's heartland}

Janet Lilo and Leilani Tamu's collaborative relationship began when they contributed to a popular NZ magazine Metro *in 2012. Leilani wrote editorial content concerning social issues affecting New Zealanders and Janet responded with visual text. Injecting a Pacific perspective into* Metro*'s readership base was implicit in both practitioners' approach. Following the* Metro *experiment, Leilani and Janet wanted to continue the collaborative dialogue, but in a space where they could maintain autonomy over the "editorial eye" in the development process.* Hawai'i Review*'s Call & Response provided a natural space for this dialogue to unfold: this time as a reflection on the impact of colonisation in the Pacific. With Leilani physically based in Hawai'i and Janet physically based in Aotearoa, the development process was shaped by an unspoken yet shared knowledge of colonialism—an intimate yet simultaneously removed knowledge of the impact of the process on their lives. Accordingly, Leilani sent the poem "How to Make a Colonial Cake" to Janet who in response created "A Colonial Cake."* *See pg 163 for Janet Lilo's "Colonial Cake."*

II

Bake for 200 years @ 38°C
{cut across
beaches and cultural
boundaries protocols languages gene pools
as though the world was an oyster
a giant vagina
that only they could eat}

III

Sprinkle with hundreds and thousands: indigenous variety
{sang fought laughed cried
eventually
died}

IV

Ice with care: vanilla will displace chocolate
{as they succumbed to
enticement
excitement
addiction
affliction

horror

of the west}

Dawn Mahi & Aiko Yamashiro

Poetrymail

This friendly exchange explores the ways in which we write around and through the loneliness of writing, reaching for someone who can hear us, who might write back.

Mon, Feb 11, 2013 at 8:49 PM

hey, would you be interested to start a small poetry exchange? :-) i've been procrastinating on writing this huge report trying to find something to send you as part of this idea. it's been great.

what's our color?
bright orange, burnt hot heat
deep cold blue, solid and spatial
startling, enveloping red, like the blood in my chest?

maybe it's not so much a color, but
a serene sort of floating,

a home kind of feeling
that spreads around my buttered toast heart

as soon as you open your marmalade mouth.

love,
dawn

Tue, Feb 12, 2013 at 9:23 AM

poetry exchange! offered over a dining room table, with a bowl of soup. dawn, i hope you're okay with me being in love with you :) it happens often these days—being in love with people—and i'm so blessed. i will be thinking about the deliciousness of buttered-toast heart and marmalade mouth all day today.

where did the moon go? is she visiting
someone clandestinely? is she picking
pineapples at dusk? is she tanned and
full of dried fish? is she sitting
in the tub with the door unlocked?
is she exploring the pleasure of a
kiss, in the dark, without moonlight?
she will not judge the deep holes
of our mouths, how we turn the
light on before entering the bedroom.

xo
aiko

Fri, Feb 15, 2013 at 1:21 AM

the poem that you sent is so beautiful and unexpected. i think of a slanted, satisfied aunty with a nice brimmed hat walking sideways in the moonlight!

dork freewrite:

i like being in love
even if it's just in the mento sort of way
like
your heart is pretty and so i
heart it.
[heart, heart.]

ps—the word pineapple is so satisfying to say. picking pineapples in the moonlight . . . mmmm! sounds nicer than it would actually be, i imagine.

Tue, Feb 19, 2013 at 12:06 AM

the poem you sent is sly and open at the same time. like two smooth, symmetrical doors. or square brackets. heart!

> **believing the liliko‘i was inside**
>
> the wind calling
> lost
> in the night and rain,
> tumbling your round, yellow,
> little-girl self:
> the one you carry deep inside
> like summer—
> singing something.
> not ashamed of hiding,
> sliding, seeding, clinging
> tightly to something sticky
> and tart.

Wed, Feb 20, 2013 at 7:34 PM

hi aiko!

i am glad that you didn’t go to the reading, not because it was what it was, but because spiritual sustenance is so important! hopefully it was a great night all around.

liliko‘i inside: so beautiful! makes me imagine a cute, sweet girl before the sour of adolescence and the guilt of the world sets in. (ah, i’m a dork.) it reads like one of those really good poems you spy in a poetry journal on really nice paper. perfect words put together perfectly!

something about how awesome you are makes me want to share! thanks and sorry! i don’t really share what i write with many people mostly because i use it as a self-processing tool. however some people can hold that in such a supportive way. thanks for sharing with me!

your book launch conversation makes me think of the perhaps tangential concept of privilege. also your "smooth symmetrical doors" remind me of the "perfectly complicated coaxial cables" in this sort of cheesy rambling freewrite that happened soon after i came back from central america and was staying at my friend's house in seattle. i had just got a non-stop craigslist ride from a sort of broken man in an old gold car all the way from SF to my friend's doorstep, and a few days later wrote this.

we think that if we

buy biodegradable laundry detergent

turn off the lights when we're not in the room

and eat organic

talk to the neighbors, perhaps

it will be enough
(or enough at least assuage to our hyper aware consciousness es)

ohhhhhhh

it's not enough

things aren't changing
fast enough to stem the tide

the little things we do
the little ways we participate and consume
smaller and more correct

are still too much
too much.

what good is awareness when cupboards and stomachs are still bare?

i understand the end is coming but
why do most have to face it with
hunger and illness
distended bellies,
old gmo beans
buggy rice

bad knees
no health insurance
a boat that ships out and
leaves us on the shore of little hope
and missing paychecks?
[imminent promises i can so carefully ignore; i ignore at midnight and wave gently while he hobbles away down the street, bird with broken wings nobly headed toward his beat up auction station wagon with the cracked air conditioning vent, no plates and chipped gold paint. where will he get the money for the doctor, the xray, the money to walk again on soft jelly knees, to realize his dream of an intentional community in belize, the money for his perfectly respectable gray haircuts, a daily bagel, soft fruit and endless cups of coffee in disposable containers?
fly away,
fly away.]
self-judgment: i want more compassion, enough to burn myself out, melt down into nothing, to light your fire with this used candle wax and disappear in thin, velvety smoke. enough to feel what you're feeling, to let it go and pick it up again like smooth, cool stones. enough to really understand what is going on, to connect and disconnect fluidly like perfectly complicated coaxial cables. blow out the speakers. to love unconditionally, like trees loving land and air, because that is all there is; to not need for myself.
i am overwhelmed by the neatly colorful hedges of this neighborhood.
i am trapped by craftsman style homes and sidewalks.
landscaped yards, comfortable couches,
families living row by row with infinite water and pianos and appliances and good night stories
and conditional love.
i also participate,

and consume, which i know, and have known, and will continue to know
please remind me

it's that right now i only want someone to read me a nightstory in low light
to gently wrap warm blankets around my human-ness and love me unconditionally:
let's escape.

the terror of complacency scares me.

i feel a sense of desperation inspired by
the smell of home in the pine-paneled basement
the washing machine, its dryer,
a well placed box of
politically correct laundry powder and a
slight feeling of helplessness,
like a stupid weak fist thrust to an empty sky.

there's no grit, no proof in this sham
of what it's like beyond these manicured streets, beyond these imposed borders.

i want to make glorious music, to shout and scream, to yell and sing, to lay facedown in the lush grass in
the backyard for a long time and give in.

i have no idea what to do with myself.
i love having no commitments, no goals
except to remember and act with intention and intensity.

all this but not knowing how to go about it, not knowing where the next move is, is an exhilarating waste of
privilege.

dammit i miss the enforced simplicity of where i once was,
i hold no imperialist romantic visions
but recognize

the lack of pretension in a life of poverty,
it's not beautiful but it's
basic and necessary and
at least
there's no fooling yourself

here i find i am a fool and i lie and i hate seeing that
over and over

and over again.

Sun, Feb 24, 2013 at 10:42 PM

dear dawn,

i really love your poem-journal-dawn-thinking/feeling-through words, "with intention and intensity" (really really love that—want to . . . will . . . recite it to myself). that you're talking to yourself on the inside and outside and maybe to someone else too, looking over—"please remind me." i especially admire the fullness and tangledness of your thought, and the bravery i think it takes to follow something like this all the way . . . to watch the bird until he disappears into the horizon. in my own writing i know my weakness is to stop too soon, and you're inspiring me to keep going.

this is really beautiful and not dorky and cheesy at all! it makes me feel achy and furious. and the fire of self-judgment in a world that really sucks at being just.

the part about melting into nothing and loving like trees was extremely meaningful to me. i felt like you were giving me the language for things i keep deep inside out of the light.

and maybe being able to tell this to someone makes you not a fool, or a liar, i hope, or at least not alone.

in thinking about sweet potatoes, here is something i was writing about a year ago, as part of a poetry-food project. this is loosely about my Okinawan grandma, the one who started the okazuya in Kaneohe (called "Megumi's," which is not her name and I wonder why she named it that. Means approx. "blessing," and this makes it more mysterious and nice in my wondering about it). She always had sweet potato around to feed me bites of. I am thinking about how i learn about her secondhand (through my dad), thirdhand (through me going

through cooking rituals, chasing down the path she has already traveled, looking for signs . . .).

the photo is of my brother, daniel, remember him? :) i feel like this photo of him and his sweet potato spilling out of the pot goes with this poem-in-process.

thanks for such a lovely day,

love,
aiko

Kazuko Nakamine, sweet potato feet

Her feet are not sweet potatoes
is not planted firmly in the ground a woman
who is swollen from standing?

Her blood is not sugar
is not sweet potatoes feeding her seven grandchildren
who she cannot say “no” to?

Her memory is not famine
is not a ration standing in line for her younger sister
who is humiliated?

Her disease is not satiated
is not devouring her future tense
who can visit her?

Her documents are not edible
is not seaweed in great quantities
what makes girls beautiful?

Mon, Feb 25, 2013 at 11:40 PM

dear aiko,

thank you sooooo much for the lovely treat of breakfast with you on a sunny sunday. thank you for accommodating the fact that i can't make decisions very well. that comes from a childhood of trying to avoid being judged by others. i suppose i haven't healed from that yet because i still can't decide anything. but there's corned beef in the world, and scrambled eggs, so in the end everything will be ok.

i so, so so love this picture of your brother with his big grin and all the sweet potatoes spilling over. with all my heart! the roundness of his posture and circular arms reminds me of the japanese figure with no arms or legs whose story is "fall down 7 times, get up 8."

you are really heartfully adept at putting words together to create things that are really important and beautiful. this is so cool. it's not only when you're writing something that is supposed to be poetic, but even when you write things like telling me what you thought about what i wrote.

when i read what other people write, i don't always know how to put what i feel into good words that make sense and convey the honor, reverence, and similitude i feel when reading. but i know when i feel something!

your poem makes me think i have a memory that i don't. as if i could wish a memory about the past into being because some parts of our story might be similar. i have an okinawan grandma who lived in kane'ohe. but she died right before my first birthday.

> "Her disease is not satiated
> is not devouring her future tense
> who can visit her?"

what lines. and the way the syntax doesn't make sense but it does. it shows so much about your relationship. and i like how the poem is not completely explicit, that in the lines are hidden your secret story line that is not for me to reveal completely, but is there for you for later, when you return to it. maybe it's not like that but i see it. and i write that way a lot. i thought about your emails all day but had to wait till after work to be able to write this mediocre email in response.

here is a poem about my grandfather, but also about trying to figure out where i was, and also about being in love with someone who doesn't love you back. i hope it's not obscene to send it so soon after reading this poem beautiful about your grandma.

i am a delicate flower.
my heart is broken.
the sheer pleated cliffs
of my childhood
loom ominously
on the windward side
of my dreams,
breaking my heart.

now real, i drive through their
verdant bamboo-laden
sharp knuckles
of ancient ali‘i forests
that come to me in
my sleep,
that have in the past,
chased
me all the way to
my mainland home.

in the time that it once
took me to traverse
nearly half a country
i can be as isolated as
i feel, deep in the heart
of the mighty
pacific
on a concrete
and mystic green
rock that
brings my
defeated youth
back to my

heart in full force.

and it was a delicate youth,
it was a heart broken.

i see the paper thin eyelids of my
grandfather, the stiff eyelashes
like obstinate bristles
blinking in a white hospital bed,
searching for light.

his belly heaves like an odd whale
over thin legs that have
recently been cut open
at the left hip, filled
with mud and sewn up again.
this crushes me.
it pulps my heart.

the sufficient ease with which
i booked my plane ticket and
caught a deep purple and
friendly hawaiian-themed
plane ride contrasts the
simplicity of my former life.

my debt grows as i jet off to
familial obligations deep in
the bosom of the undulating sea.

quiero llorar cuando pienso en ti.
en tu traición, in the way my

heart feels stabbed and soothed
and filled by your eyes.*

but i am only a delicate flower.
i am only a broken heart.
these things
do not matter now.
and i move on, alone,
at home.

(**i want to cry when i think of you. / of your betrayal*, in the way my / heart feels stabbed and soothed / and filled by your eyes.)

and finally, here's the link to the sweet potato article. unfortunately, i can't find the link to the migration story. was there something else was supposed to send?

http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2013/01/22/169980441/how-the-sweet-potato-crossed-the-pacific-before-columbus

i hope you're having a good start to your week.

love,
dawn

Wed, Feb 27, 2013 at 8:57 PM

oh, Dawn, what beautiful presents from you in my email always!

your constellation of heart-Ko'olau-loneliness-home is really powerful for me. i think it's perfectly appropriate to weave together stories about a grandfather, heartache, and a young woman wandering/wondering.

the cliffs and knuckles in your poem are so beautiful and so brutal near the delicate-ness of a heart's petals. Ow ow ow. That immensity or sublimity (according to my aesthetics class) of those mountains is so real and true. i was driving once, obsessing over these mountains, and couldn't stop thinking: "this green, a pouring ruin, a

pouring ruin." That stillness and catapulting.

And then the paper-thin eyelids and the bristles! Oi!! The heart's petals, crushed; the eyelids, translucent petals. That moment is so tender and unnerving. Like the way something intimate like touch or family is so mediated in hospitals—in their protocols, in their spatial arrangements.

the tense of your poem is difficult too. like answering what does it take to break a heart? like ending and starting in the same place, but achieving breaking in the process.

this poem also makes me ready to go on the rampage for you/with you. :) if you ever need a roll-dawg for that, let me know.

love,

aiko

ps. i will never be impatient with your indecisiveness as long as it means i get to travel your thought-trails with you!

Sun, Mar 3, 2013 at 11:03 PM

Wow, Aiko,

"The pouring ruin." In the circle at the Park I'm often tempted to say that I'm from the Ko'olaus because they own me. But I don't.

I like excess. Gestures. And I always try to write after the fact, the allusion to my friend in the poem I just sent was that for me. To me it's a way to manage my emotions in the face of something too hot to handle. In sort of skipping around the full story an allusion is created that only I can understand, and it becomes a marker, makes it safe instead of coming truly clean. But I'm sure that's far afield from what you were thinking.

Your imagery is so vivid in the vignettes of your lines, I know I'll be dreaming of shaken limbs, mango bones, and scraping teeth. Something sweet after. You capture moments and emotions perfectly, in so few words. Being wrapped in won ton pi makes me think of Momotaro somehow, the little peach boy. His story ended happily ever after . . . but that story isn't for everyone. "When I don't believe in genealogy . . . " Something we can't escape, something I think about all the time, something that in my case is obscured by circumstance, rejected, borrowed, hānai.

The intensity of the emotions and metaphor contrasted by being gently wrapped in that won ton pi, the breathlessness of loneliness, all cracks my heart. I'm right there. Thank you for sharing, roll-dawg. I feel likewise for you. Fierce. Never having heard that before, it's awesome. Invincible-making cool-ass word.

Tue, Mar 5, 2013 at 10:51 AM

Dear Dawn roll-dawg,

I am deeply grateful and honored to be part of this amazing poetry-exchange, and to brush-hands-with, share-looks-with your "gestures . . . allusions . . . markers . . . " I like what you're saying about how these words we write can sweep their arms and delineate a circumference of safety. Can stand in for something that's not a word on a page. I hope it's true.

your poetry is raw and delicate at the same time (have you read much Elizabeth Bishop? I loved her for a great while . . . her expert lady-ness coupled with the ability to wrestle).

how your poem tackles "decency" and "obscenity" has lodged these words in my insides in ways they didn't exist before. wonderful how we build these internal vocabularies for each other. i feel like these words are floating on a still still body of water, and i need to circle around them carefully, give them a wide berth.

the nested-dollness construction of this haunts me—

> am i afraid of decency?
> . . .
> i figure inside there must be a decent person
> i know she's hiding
> but i can't seem to find her
>
> amidst the obscenity.

That's a very true way of formulating that strange pull toward someone—the knowing that you can be everything that (he, always a he . . .) needs and (he) will fulfill none of that for you. that your poet soul can see and acknowledge and cradle his particular loneliness or strangeness, and love it in a way the world doesn't. aren't we taught that good women and girls give everything? it's a very scary and dangerous kind of power . . . to become someone's vessel. or repository. i feel the torn-ness of the poem but i am also secretly, for my own sake even, glad that it ends in a car and radio echo. that the decency was hidden too well to be given away.

Tue, Mar 5, 2013 at 11:02 PM

this is our non-public roll-dawg blog. cool.

we try to do so many things to make bitter things seem palatable and to make unhealthy things healthy. sometimes it's just a veneer. and it's so hard to make your own taste, especially if the taste we've learned is bitter, if it lingers long.

and your dad. so much to love. the ways he putters and fills up spaces with words because he seems nervous of silence. filling up the world with so many words because in the world there are certain words we can't say. and your writings about your reactions to him are so, so beautiful and evocative. the little details of writing, notes, the crying shiitakes, the powdered milk conquered country. just enough detail to provide an idea of the landscape but not so much that you know exactly where you are. it's not overdrawn, but the moment is fully communicated, we climb inside with you, we click shut the tupperware with anxious worry. when you go in that place inside, what does the altar look like in there?

-the horizon: jeferson at nine-

the immensity of

alone.
the feeling of being by yourself in the
dark night
trapped in a starlit patio that
smells like
pig shit
cocks crow in the distance
and the tinny repetition of the discoteque
on the corner
shouts
mariachi music into the night
in an off-tune A
proving even more in your young solitude that
in other places, people are
enjoying themselves.

standing in the middle of the thick night air
on hard packed earth covered with fallen flowers and dead leaves

there's nothing to sink into.

there aren't any more hugs,
no special attentions.
just creepy and learned desires,
like nintendo and eating trash food.
filling up the belly, filling up the mind.
constant yelling.
trouble on the horizon.

authority not much older than you
setting limits, breaking rules
laying blame

and you have this greasy shitty laugh
that i hate
a phony sound gurgles from your throat,
a shrill tea kettle boiled dry;
trying to feel better about the world as you
threaten the other children as you
mimic the discipline you've been taught as you
raise your hand in warning to her face as you
try to gain some sort of power but still you

walk alone, laughing alone.

and i'm sad because i
remember when you were younger when we
used to play together and you
had this really big smile and it

wasn't fake it was happy and full of joy
though toothless from
drinking too much coffee, sugared.

then, you still cried when it hurt.
in big gulps and sobs
swallow the sky
you weren't afraid to show your fear.

but you learned better.

now you are sullen and you
don't look me in the eyes.
i know i can't change the situation but i
try to reach out and i
don't really know how because

you aren't really interested anymore.

and i'm leaving soon.
i won't see you again for a lot longer and
by the next time i come
you'll be a teenager and

lord knows what comes next.

i don't believe youth is wasted on the young.
at least
why blame them for wasting when
we have wasted them first.

love.

Thurs, Mar 14, 2013 at 12:40 am

Dear Dawn!

. . . and then you ask me these Questions like: what does the altar look like in there? holy moly. when i think about this unfamiliar question, i begin to wonder if i mourn things for people that they don't for themselves. and if that's appropriate for me to live in someone's (imagined?) grief like that. when i was little (like 10 or so), i would cry myself to sleep sometimes just feeling really sad about my parents . . . like thinking about how if this had happened or if this hadn't happened, then their lives would have been so much better. what a weird exercise in empathy or in drama or something. i dunno.

Your Poem.

"this greasy shitty laugh" is such a stabbing phrase. it makes me so sad. this feeling is so true even though i've never (dared) said it. how can a laugh be something shitty? the mangle of that makes me so sad.

how can we be trapped in a starlit patio? i know we can be. i know we are. but the irony of that immensity . . . that stars are meant to guide us. i mean i guess that's what makes this story and watching children adapt in terrible ways to terrible things . . . that's what makes it all so outrageous, right? these stupid missteps that don't make any sense. the wasting.

Have you read *Rolling the R's*? I wonder what you think about that book if you have. I am finishing up teaching it in my lit class, and I just had the students write poems in response to the book. They shared them today and they were AMAZING. I mean some of them were about stupid and terrible things. But they all ran at those things with such verve and resilience. That's what I get out of *Rolling the R's*. Really shitty things happening to children who deserve something else. And they take it all. And they bounce back in strange and marvelous and not-whole, but still strong, ways. like a miracle.

the words you said to me about family are hard words.
love. of course. like sorrow or defeat. or betrayal. rejection. i probably reinforce. i don't know.
i am not brave enough to say all these words so close together, so i will just hold them for now.

alright, let me end here for now. the poem i'm sending you tonight is part of a series of very silly and serious love poems.

love,
aiko

Morris and Edna

1. “Edna sweet feet!” he called to her from across the room, his own long toes wiggling in recognition. And then he stretched his back into an unbroken brown mountain range, and she found a place under the ridge of his arm that felt right.

2. There was a forest of mechanical, silver trees. It was quiet except when the wind came. Their trunks and branches were joined in many places and clicked and whirred when the wind bent them. Morris stood up in the middle of this story. “I always feel like an old robot when I stand up like that,” Morris said. “Maybe we could live there,” she replied.

3. Morris!
and Edna!
Together!
Forever!

They sang this to each other, one voice red, one voice blue. Morris didn’t like to sing in public, but this was his favorite song.

Tue, Mar 26, 2013 at 10:05 PM

hi aiko,

i am also stuck in not writing island land. i tried to write something about my house but it didn’t go very far. and i had several others ideas at nights after having already turned out my lamp and never got up to see them through. poor things!

i was studying lots of different healing modalities before. one of the healing things we tried was to imagine what the altar inside us looks like. we had to describe it to ourselves. in some cases the altar was damaged, and we had to rebuild it. it was a beautiful practice. not sure what i got to in the end but i know when i started it was a pretty desolate place. and crying about your parents. [. . .] sometimes as kids i think we carry things for our parents that they can’t carry for themselves, and they rely on us for that. i don’t know that it’s bad but it just is. but then when we grow up we have to untangle ourselves from what we’re carrying that isn’t ours. and that can be really tiring.

otay: a poem. i have to admit that i've been cheating. i haven't included to you something that i wrote recently. i haven't written anything that i would really consider gangbusters lately, or maybe i have but when i write these days it's on little scraps of paper or in random notebooks that seem to play hide and seek. but for some reason, i don't know why i've had it in my mind in the last week that i would send you this poem about perceived betrayal:

just name it.

just name it.

fuck you and your dishonesty

your deep divisions

just name it

don't be afraid to say it

to define what it is
the nature of the conflict

not just a letter

or a pile of tiny lines

her name
her name
her name.

love,
dawn

Sun, Apr 7, 2013 at 11:53 PM

dear dawn,

that is a sharp-stone poem you sent me. this is so true. her name. yes! i feel like i probably needed to say this to someone at some point but didn't have the nerve for it. fuck people, sometimes! and their shitty laughs. especially when i try extra hard to be honest and open and willing even when it's treacherous and messy, and the fuckers won't even give me the courtesy of engaging with that gift. ha!

and thank gods there are other glorious people who are willing to hold your hand all the way through and listen. and talk. and not retreat.

i wrote this in my night journal on 3/13/13:

> Fuck you! I try to say in a non-mangled way
> bc my students asked me what "resilience"
> means, but most of all because they are
> brave and beautiful every chance they get
> and laugh at big things and
> carefully unfold themselves and sing with
> their eyes closed and misuse words on
> purpose and make me talk too much
> when I'm afraid the silence will cover
> how exciting we all are
> and in text msg and instagram and
> other coercive/non- idiom, they,
> and Edgar Ramirez, give me
> the courage and verve to say
> Fuck you!

this is beautiful and important what you said . . .

and it helps me name the tangle. and that makes me feel clearer and cleaner. thank you, dawn! really. i can't speak for your mom at all, but i know that if you were my daughter, i'd just be so proud of your grace and loveliness. i would marvel at how you help create homes and worlds for others. my mom tells me pretty often that we three kids of hers are her proudest, happiest accomplishments. that is a wonderful thing to hear regularly. it

also makes me feel a little sad for her. but aiyah, so judgmental, me. maybe if i'm ever a parent, or older, i will understand . . .

one of the most wonderful moments of the night was when my friend tagi read her poem, in her bright red lipstick, about how the old gods live somewhere in our marrow. settle to the bottom like kava sediment. "you who live in the sweet juice of our bones . . . perhaps it is we who lie dormant . . . "

love,
aiko

Mon, Apr 15, 2013 at 9:13 PM

Hiyah Aiko,

Aiya, your poems and email always break my heart and put it back together again. As a better person, or at least with some more understanding in life.

The truth is here that I read your last email immediately when it came and it inspired me to freewrite a poem that is below. It happened immediately but I wasn't able to write the rest until now.

Your students . . . yes, fuckers! Always a potential to keep us down. Not your lovely students, but the fuckers that get us all riled up. I think they're a distraction from us sharing our gifts. We get discouraged and then our gifts don't shine as bright. Or we fight. Everything comes out mangled when trying to deal with that.

What your mom tells you is so beautiful. I am glad that she feels free enough to say that. Glad for you too. For my mom I wonder if she isn't a little afraid to go somewhere like that. Not for her but in fear of me: I used to be sassy to her before because I was so mangled myself. I did a lot of healing. Hence I learned about the altars and other stuff like that. And she was sweet and did her best but she's been wronged by life a lot [. . .]. It took me a long time to realize that my parents in all their homebodiness and idiosyncracies and hobbies and tv watching and clutter and bolt/craft collections and strange codependencies and complaining are really cool, generous people. And even though I know that and things are so much better some things still aren't safe to share.

Hope to see you soon and enjoy tasty chocolate!

Love,
Dawn

Wed, May 15, 2013 at 10:56 AM

Dear Dawn,

Holy moly, it's summer! What can happen in the strange summertime? What is summertime's consistency and speed? Is it rushing or drifting? Is it bright yellow and dusky blue? Does it burn quick like a fire and go out?

Some of the things I am looking forward to include: bon dancing, picking lychee and mango at your house, movie nights, beach days, and I have an urge to try and make a different pie each week to get better overall at pies.

Our relationships with our parents. I went home last weekend and got sad about this (I feel habitually, ritually sad about this). My dad is so sharp and unyielding on the outside and so I interact with him with sharpness too. But I wonder if that hurts him sometimes. I think it did last weekend, and I didn't know how to be not sharp; I felt like I was regretting every word I was saying but had no power to stop them ahead of time. But this is not every time and I think that words don't work all the time with my dad anyway. His yard is really overgrown (the grass is all taller than I am) and Bryan agreed to come with me a few days later to try to cut it down for him. A few years ago, our yard was so overtaken by bamboo that the light couldn't come through. My friend and I cut it all down in a really amateur way, but that transformation outside changed my dad a little on the inside . . . i'm hoping that might happen again. How to speak directly to those bright soft centers of people, without getting stuck in the mangledness covering over that—this is something I struggle with. That I have to strive to have the patience and sensitivity for.

Maybe I also took awhile to respond because your poem was a difficult one. I do this mental exercise with myself every now and then: I would imagine being alone forever and check in with myself to see if I felt okay with that. I would always feel that the answer is yes, and that made me feel good. That I could find or make my own happiness always, no matter who was or wasn't there. I don't know if this is really a strengthening exercise or not. Maybe it's a delusional one. But why does "alone" in the romantically unattached sense have to mean alone? I feel like fairytale heteronormative society mangles the word "alone." But what do I know.

love,
Aiko

Thu, May 23, 2013 at 10:29 PM

solo digo otra vez
[i only say again]
there's just not time for your white anger
any longer
your forlorn entitlement
the waste of your guilt
that keeps you up at night
wide-eyed and anxious
that keeps us up all night
complaining and bitching
i mean
what is it that you want?

would you prefer
to have grown up oppressed
like your brown brethren
would that street cred have made you
more desirable
than your conventional haole beauty
that you can't
seem to embrace yet
love using as a tool?

fly away, fly away—
you constantly tear us down
i'm so over it it's difficult to
have compassion but then
i see that twitch in your eye
that says
you're about to lose it
that

your whole world is about to come
crashing down
and even though
you drive me crazy
i wish the best
for you
somewhere deep down inside
where your child self
needs love, love, love.

Love,
Dawn

ps. tired sugar freewrite:

what if loneliness is forever? everyone feels sorry for you but they don't know why. and they like you but you don't know why. well, you do. don't feign humility it's just that there are some things that you know. without even knowing or being told there are some things that seem they will always be a part of you. and you'd like to believe in transformation. you talk about it all the time: one of your favorite words is manifest. but for what? to what end? what do we manifest for others that we cannot for ourselves? and why would we do this? the howling mountain, the craggy tree, twisted with age and wind. standing on the edge of that place you feel like maybe you've always been here. things change slowly and sometimes fast. there are contradictions, like difficult miracles. there are too many things to do and say. and we keep ourselves busy, so busy. so no one will notice—(the only thing that can change is inside. and there's nothing to fix).

Tue, Jul 16, 2013 at 10:19 PM

oh what an email deferred!

dear Dawn,

I have been meaning to send you this poem for awhile now. And since it's the opposite of drying up in the sun, maybe I'll start here.

It came so insistently as I was sitting on the bed in Palolo, completely overcome by the rain and the mountain outside. Thinking: why do I think I have to go thousands of miles away to be inspired to write when everything is so intense here . . .

[btw there were so many intensities on the trip, like LILACS YELLING so sweetly. like the sun up for hours too late. like vast, flat prairie. like giant pohaku sitting forever, seeing everything. like dancing close with people you love, some of them you don't even really know. like a stranger taking your hand and asking you to brush her hair for her.]

the rain arrived.
but i wasn't there
to greet it.
now the valley is waiting,
bright green
skin drenched and soft,
tentative birds feeling the stillness.

how will i remember this forever?
the ti leaf hands trilling
the hair of pine trees, rough,
your dark, folded center.
i want to kiss you with the clarity that comes after rain.

forever is the wrong word—
the clouds fall to cover your nakedness
just as you move your shoulder to the sunlight,
unafraid.

maybe forever is the promise
and the waiting,
with faith,
for the next rain.

and then the silver-white rhythm of her came
covering everything.

you think and write and talk about inheritances in beautiful and true ways. how loneliness can be something we inherit, something we learn slowly as children. i went to a family obon party the other night. so many souls tangled and stretched thin . . . at family parties. and too many baked goods. the crazy writers can see it, of course. you can see it and you can read it. back in the day, what role in the village did that person have? the one who could . . . or at least tried to . . . see everybody.

my friend told me at a coffee shop that someone told her that the compassion and guilt travel through the same synapse. so you can only technically feel one of those things at a time. who knows if that's true. your poem! tells me that you have to time travel to reach compassion. that you have to see more than one world at once. versions of someone that aren't there (yet).

but everyone else goes about their regular business. it makes me ache to see my cousins who i grew up with, growing up, so different. with such different and terrible problems. i thought we were all the same, when we were 7, when we were 10. not true! and that makes me so mad.

love, love, love.

your poem is beautiful because it requires imagination. it requires anger, but also a connection to your own sore and tender places.

i've been thinking recently about how strange to us our internal worlds are. i mean you can't even see into your own body! what goes on in there? how does it all work? western science's mapping of that terrain is just one version of course :) i started taking an okinawan singing class! our sensei told us that our voice comes from below our piko, from the same muscle you use to lift something heavy. amazing. i'm trying to practice that connection.

so maybe our insides can change all the time.

[and i couldn't feel sorry for you even if i tried. :) your light is too bright and strong, your dark ocean too deep and wise.]

love,
aiko

Wed, Jul 17, 2013 at 12:25 PM

I put this on Facebook but thought of you, and the picture goes with it:

In the modern age, influenced by psychoanalysts and neuroscience we tend to forget the ancient hegemony of dreams.

The quote and foto I found at the pitti palace where my grandparents on my haole side were married here in florence many moons ago.

Thanks for the beautiful poem, I will write back very soon. Also thanks for the kind words. Can't wait to hug you!

Love,
Dawn

Jaimie Gusman & Lyz Soto

Astronaut

In this collaboration, we each selected an album of music from which we wanted to draw inspiration. Jaimie chose Grey Oceans *by CocoRosie and I chose* Who Killed Amanda Palmer *by Amanda Palmer. Jaimie would write a poem inspired by a song from* Grey Oceans *and then I would write a poem responding to her poem. Similarly, I wrote a poem prompted by a song from* Who Killed Amanda Palmer *and then Jaimie wrote another poem responding to my poem. In this way, the Call & Response was multilayered. Both "Astronaut" and "Runs in the Family" were inspired by songs written and performed by Amanda Palmer. We tried to capture the rhythm, mood, tone, and content of the songs. We also tried to match these qualities between our poems, thus blurring the line of actual authorship.*

With the drip of bones I motion over
Who painted over my post-card home? [I brought a man here once. I brought a stack of bronze lumber to keep us warm through the winter. Fathers are always on the run.]
Platinum brushstrokes,
linoleum floors, and my fenced in pets
I loved—yes—I set fire
I took a catwalk and came back to rocket disaster.
Cure what I've been delicately cursed—Dear Father,

I waited
between the dew tipped earth
and the cosmic soil
kiss my skin away
I prayed
kiss my brain
like seawash
devour planetary belt
tell me I'm no different
ripped down to dogbone
to shark tooth
to rabbit eye
to chimney curls
explode a brick wall
or fall.

Fault lines seem so world-center.
My seams so ocean-open.
I blamed Father. Ate his monster.
Wished to sew my lips forever.

Blue green-ed this world from
space outer than out in a dark matter
vacuumed between bonfires she video captured as
he sat scryed in cups, then chocolate sauced
a mirror reflection she watched
with night time washes a blurred
background to fore front fractures what
fits in these spaces? she asked smoke
in a column rising to transcribing when
we first figured dynamite as solution
to cardiac cracks:
Paint destiny as abstract as
fate fit in a picture box shipped
c/o
Andromeda neighbors
in the Cretaceous time zone:
Still sitting shit shooting
around camp fires with hominid cousins, we became
astronauts alone then in night myths:
Find frontal lobes connect this
nine pin plug downloaded check

verify check yes
this wisdom yes
stripped:
these wires stripped
blue green red
copper
twist:
we are
conflict.
We. Are. Conflict.
between him and she
build to big
they and them define
love and hate as the same thing:
vague:
like muck
like cake to pieces we
eat us and
them they feast
taste on the
lips we still
kiss with the
lick of the
drip of the
bones
we split.

Runs in the Family

Turn Time Machine on past passed
optic wires coiled to cortex. Pretended forgetten of inserted
this universing bus to face to face. Twisted pairs interlaced to
inputting raw. Data from data unplug she must
disconnect to flesh to hard drive press these organ systems
to select
search
chance in saline rich goop
to not mineral to not liquid to not gas to mutable
from bacterium to animalian to chordata to amphibian to mammalian to
hominid to sweating to speaking to Darwin to discovering
it runs in the family.

Find this time machine now stuck on past re-
winded wound rewound rewind her bodies mutable
with philosopher gravel gripped in fists shift
to drift wood then water manacles: molecule
chains re-arranging to sand
grains slipping through
merman hands to change cells to cracked shackles
to flight to crystallized ice refracting
light across a memorized northern sky. She R E M remembers
in Cro-Magnon dreams of life.

———————————

Time machine hello hello traveling
dirt-city, shrunken trees, I arrive unknown
where is was I am I to go
ruffle dress up pretty legs out
heart-shaped stone scratching
voice—hear me through the chromium
streams—break down patter, skinned knees,
ripped flipper, cariogenic cementum, blip in the system:

(check eyes, fingers;)
(check torso, cheeks;)
(check copper dishes, dishtowel tresses;)
(check electric wings and glycemic index)

empty row of row to soul.

Embryogenesis—came out like a lake.
All the water inside me has turned to glue.
This story is lost strains, brunette begins,
fuse-blown brain, wrap cells in paper like dead fish don't drink
from your own fins.

I'm make-up of modular crime.
Slow fall to turpentine, drain-bound.
Spit up, delete again
thinly, I think, like straws or sticks
cryptogenic spine, memories align.

Daren Kamali & Grace T.E. Taylor

Kai Kasi

He

in a bulbless room

brightened by the full moon

races collide on a whiteboard

She was born

in him and him in her

he kai - her afa

she kasi - his loma

half inside - half out

inside out

race in her

spoke to race in him

them against racism

Kai Kasi

As NZ/Pacific poets who share their life together, Daren Kamali and Grace T.E. Taylor created "Kai Kasi," a collaboration inspired by the terms "Afakasi" and "Kailoma." From these two words/two worlds, "Kai Kasi" was born—meaning half-caste in both Fijian and Samoan languages. In this piece, the poets express what it means to be both island and city-born islanders living in diaspora in Aotearoa/NZ. This poem is only a snippet of the full-length theatre piece "Kai Kasi," which was shown at the Navigating Pasifika Festival in Sydney, Australia. Grace and Daren are enthusiastic about developing this piece further. Indeed,"Kai Kasi" is a combined effort of two poets with big alohas. Vinaka vaka levu.

bridged in her womb

massaged back in place

by the words of the poet

by the poem on the page

She

half of something

half of nothing

half taken

half given

inside out

they pull her apart

expose afa

never full enough to be tasi

don’t get afa twisted

massage the poetry

David James Poissant & Tessa Mellas

A Bridge. A Rusted Boat. A Dog. A Boy.
a story in correspondence

The story is epistolary, a story in correspondence between two characters, the letters written back and forth in an experiment between two writers. The writers are David James Poissant and Tessa Mellas. David is the author of John's letters to Mandy, and Tessa is the author of Mandy's letters to John.

Mandy—

You're probably wondering where I've been, so I'll tell you. After Ogdensburg, I went to Arkansas, where I know a girl. That didn't work out the way I planned, and I wound up in Dallas for a week. Maybe it was longer. Time in Texas stretches, kind of like taffy, you know? Probably that sounds stupid to you, big jail chief. Probably you're thinking: *Cut the poetry crap, Johnny.* I don't know. I just need to get these words down. I'm putting them down on paper because some things you can't say on the phone.

Anyway, I wound up at this motel in Albuquerque. I only ever planned to pass on through, but seeing the city at night from the Interstate, it was like this green, electric bowl lighting up the dark. I felt called to it. Like, when we were kids, the river? How you said it called to you? This was like that. It beckoned me, and I went.

I got lucky. Their maintenance guy was sick, and they gave me his job for a week, paid me with food and a room. I didn't have to do much but rake gravel and plunge a few toilets. And these swallows or finches had built little mud-type, bungalow things in the overhead corners of the porch out front of my motel door. I thought they were wasp or mud dauber nests and came *this* close to knocking them down with a broom handle until a bird zoomed out of one, and then it was little birds in and out all morning. I just stood there and watched them, Mandy. These little, fucking brown and white deals with black stripes. Maybe they were wrens. I don't know. I don't know my birds. But then the week was up and the maintenance guy was back.

I wanted to stay there. I could have stayed there forever, I think. But staying there turned out to be too much, and I didn't have the cash.

I'm back in Tucson now. I know you didn't want me here. What did you call Tucson? *The bird around my neck*? But when I look out the window of the guest house I'm renting and see the *palo verde* trees with their green, sun-sucking bark, see the mountains in the distance, and everything all ripe with cactus flowers, I have to believe that Tucson will take care of me.

It's been a month since the night I left your house, and I just wanted you to know that I am well. I am here and I am alive and I am well.

And I am sorry.

I know you meant to help. I know it the way people say they know things in their bones. I know it way down deep, is what I mean. And the things I said, I never meant them.

I want to explain. I want to try to explain:

I never thought you'd be home. That's the first thing. I thought you'd be out, and I thought the key would still work. I thought the money would still be in the same place in the can in the bottom drawer. I never meant to borrow much, and I always meant to pay you back.

But what I want you to know is that when you pushed that wad of twenties in my hand, you shamed me, sister. That money, the way you gave it to me, wasn't that crueler than the borrowing? Wasn't that crueler than what I'd meant to do to you?

Probably you think it's selfish, my saying that. Probably you think I'm mean or that I take you for granted.

But I'm not and I don't, and I appreciate the money. I do. But I ask you: What's a gift you're made to feel bad taking?

Love—
your John

Johnny,

That letter of yours was one hell of a literary act. What, you're a poet now as well as a thief? You called me on it. You knew what I'd say, so now I'm saying it. I'm writing you a fucking letter. Is that what you want?

Shit, I don't care what you want, really. I'm only writing because every time I talk to Ma, she says, "Be good to your brother. You don't know what it's like to live in his head." I don't give a shit what kamikaze rockets shoot through the part of your brain that makes reasonable decisions. But Ma has this crazy idea that you and I were close as kids. She keeps saying, "Mandy, you've only got one brother. Patch things up." Which is the reason I'm writing. I'm writing so I don't have to lie.

Honestly—I mean we're being honest here, right? Cause, Christ, this is a paper and ink type of letter, and isn't honesty the point when you break out an actual pen?—Honestly, I don't remember a time when you and I were close, John. I don't remember kicking it up with you at the ice rink or grabbing snow cones down at the docks—though God knows you were there. Aren't those the kind of small-town American snapshots that would signal brotherly love?

What I remember is watching things happen through windows. I remember you and Dad stomping off into the woods like men. And then you'd both come back smelling like wet dogs, and I'd still smell like peonies or whatever crap they put in shampoo. You and Dad would sit on one side of the table at dinner, and Ma and I would be on the other. And that's why we're not close. I'll say it straight, Johnny. Just so you know. I'm angry because you picked sides. I didn't want to be on a team. The womanly side of the clan. You chose Dad and made my sex this festered thing whose wrist I wanted to slit. Sure, we all lived in the same happy house and went on those same bullshit tour book vacations. But you made everything a fucking boys' club, where the girls were idiotic boobs. Now you don't like what I've become. You say I'm an androgynous bitch. A bitch with twenty dollar bills to spare but no brother who would ever pick up the phone and call.

That's what happens when you draw lines, Johnny. People end up on opposite sides without a boat or a bridge.

Now you're on the side that sees blurry lights and thinks a motel is calling your name. I'm on the side that sees a river that's dark and cold and deep. I wasn't drawn to the river because I thought it would save me. I was

drawn to the river because it's so damn cold that when you jump in, its grip on your skin hollows you out. That, and the current is strong.

Johnny, you think there is wonder in the world. You think you can find it by hitting the road. But the road is just a road. It leads to other roads with nothing at the end but Podunk towns and Podunk kids who rip off liquor stores and misplace bullets in each other's heads. Those kids end up in my jail, Johnny, and they're shits. They're little Podunk shits. And you're gonna find the same people way out there because that kind of birth is in your blood.

I'm not saying these things to piss you off. I'm not trying to be an "androgynous bitch," whatever that is. I'm saying these things because they're real, and you need more real in your world.

Your cactuses and mountains sound rosy when you paint them with poetic words. But those things won't put money in your fist. I guess you've already got someone who's good for that. Remember, Tucson will always be the place where you buried a dog and spent a summer trying to wash the smell of smoke out of your clothes.

I'm glad to know where you are. Ma will be too.

One last thing. I need you to know that Scott, the new deputy superintendent, is staying at my place weekdays. The commute's too long for him to do daily. It's just a business thing, a nice gesture, since I've got the extra rooms. Just wanted you to know. He's around, so maybe next time knock.

I want you to be safe and well. But I can't give you that money and make it seem like a gift. It was shame I was handing out. Maybe the only thing we share in this world.

For now,
Amanda Rose

Mandy—

It's taken me five gin and tonics to write this.

That's not meant to impress you. Nothing in the last letter was meant to impress you, though, by your tone, you'd think I'd shoved the Sistine Chapel in your face.

Things are good, and I don't drink every night. Out here, it's like I don't have to. There's a balance out here, a weight of weather and rock and moon that gets me through the day without a drink.

I'm drinking now, but, like I said, I don't have to.

Tucson's good for drying out. The air sucks up the liquor. Tears too. I can't remember the last time I cried. Do you know what that's like? Do you have any idea what it feels like to cry and cry and cry and, one day, not have to cry?

I got a job. It's part-time, but it's enough to get by on, for now. I'll tell you where, but I don't want you getting mad at me. I'm back at the shelter. Tina's not there anymore, and the staff is topnotch. They're a no-kill, now, which is all I ever wanted, you know? Now, walking the rows, rinsing pens and squeegeeing the floors, it's hope I see in those dogs' eyes. Hope, not the end. All of them will get homes. They'll get homes or else they'll live out

their days here with me, for as long as I can stay.

The couple I rent the guesthouse from is nice. I wish you could meet them. Their names are Rob and Liz. Liz is sweet. Last night, home from work, I found a plate of cookies at my door. There were a dozen of them, big, symmetrical, and plastic-wrapped. I pulled back the cellophane, and they were still warm. I ate them all wishing I had a tall glass of milk.

Ma called milk "Moo Juice" when we were kids. Do you remember that?

You told me once we all make choices. You said, "Whatever you do, that shit's on you." And what I want to say is: Yes, that's one way to see the world. Another way is: Sometimes there isn't a kind choice you can make. A third way says there's always a way out.

But what I believe, what keeps me up nights, is the truth that no matter what you do, one way or another, you're going to wind up with a German Shepherd at your feet. No matter how well you live or think you live, one day you're going to find yourself with another hole that needs digging.

The difference between us, Mandy, is that, when your turn comes, I'll be there with the shovel. And, when your arms get shaky, I'll pickaxe the bedrock for you. I swear I will.

Because here's another secret: I've seen the way you watch the river, and what writhes in me, it lies in wait for you. And I'm waiting. I'm waiting for it to bloom. And, when it does, I have to believe you'll see what it's like living in my head.

A person can believe a thing until it's like she remembers it, and I think that's what you've done with me and Dad. I never meant to pick teams, Mandy. Dad picked me. I was a boy, and what can a boy do but love and go along?

You think I liked it? Me? Johnny Boy? You think I like the blast of a shotgun? How a doe's ears try to twitch the buckshot out?

You were right about one thing though. I said I wrote to say I'm sorry, and then I tried to shame you. That was wrong.

But you're wrong about the world. The world is full of wonder, Mandy Rose.

This morning, I watched a lizard do pushups on my window ledge, his throat flap going in and out. And then, from out of nowhere, another lizard joined him, and he was no longer alone.

What will it take for you to love me, Mandy? How many pushups do I need to do for you?

Love—
John

Johnny, Johnny,

I swore I wasn't going to send a second letter no matter what you wrote back. Of course, I knew you'd respond. How couldn't you, after the things I said? Hell, I was pissed. Anger tunnels into my bones. It leaks like dye, and I can feel it spread. I know my insides are all gray and brown, like those slides we show inmates of smokers'

lungs. You think I don't feel that suffocated grayness scraping into all my soft, gushy pink parts, petrifying my organs into dead weight that drags at the back of my neck? I don't know what circuitry in your brain keeps telling you, *Hey, boy, that Tucson place sure has its perks*. But I know why you drink. It's why I hit up the city pool and do laps. Same thing. Put your head under and kick the shit out of your feet. All that slapping the water feels so, so good. It numbs the skin.

I'm glad Pets without Parents has a no-kill policy now. With a name like that, I never understood the mass euthanasia you described. But I worry about you back in that place. The media turned it into a damned Soup-for-the-Soul story, but there's something rotten underneath, and I beg you to get away from there before the rot caves everything in. You're attracted to trouble. You want to save things. But what about saving yourself?

Speaking of saving, as I write this, Mitchy's asleep at my feet. You softened me up when you mentioned him in your letter. I guess we both have a soft spot for pups. Right now, his paw is over my toes. He's been clingy today. He's holding my foot to keep me in this chair. We had some bad business at the facility yesterday, and I had to stay late. A Hispanic guy with a shaved down toothbrush ripped into a black guy's neck. The whole yard erupted. The guard in the tower had to fire a warning shot into No Man's Land. He put it in exactly the right place. The men dropped—thank God—and we rounded them up. Had to let Kenny take a few days off. I told him, "We retrieved the bullet from the ground. You did it exactly right." I could feel his legs shaking through the linoleum under my desk. It wasn't the warning shot that was hard. It was the thing he knew he'd have to do if the warning shot didn't work.

I know you don't like me calling them Hispanics and Blacks. I'm sorry, Johnny, but, here, that's how they see themselves. The color of their skin. That's how they pick sides.

So. Where have we misunderstood each other now? The pushups and dear old dad. You *did* pick Dad, Johnny. You don't remember, but from the time you could walk, you'd find him and crawl on him and cling to him. You copied everything he did. DNA is not the reason you walk like him and laugh like him and write in the same scrunched print as him. Christ, you probably even kiss like him, though how would we know? You studied him, Johnny. Maybe it's because they gave you the exact same name and you misunderstood what that meant. Maybe you didn't misunderstand.

Maybe you got it exactly right. You studied him and you studied Ma. And it shaped everything you did.

I'm sorry I started in on all this now. It was better when you didn't know why I've hated you so long. You're a sweet boy, Johnny, but you're too much like him, and that wouldn't be a crime in itself if it weren't for the fact you chose it. Though how could you remember that? Of course, you couldn't. You chose it, and you keep choosing it, and now it's who you are. And maybe the reason I hate you so much is you never got to decide who you wanted to be.

Now, Mitchy's got his paw over his eyes. He still makes small crying sounds in his sleep. Big dog like that, making those sounds. It breaks my heart. He pulls his paws over his face, and I wonder what he sees in his dreams that needs covering up. What lives this dog must have lived before we found him under that bridge.

I'm glad you've got work again. The animals will help keep you in line, but don't let those poodles convince

you that even one drink is okay. You sure you don't want to come home? We've got shelters here.

Put lots of toys in the crates with those dogs. I read somewhere it helps them get adopted, makes them seem playful. Even if they're just lying there asleep.

I'll be out of town a few days with Ma. We're heading to Burlington so her cardiologist can do some checks. Don't worry. It's just an annual thing to make sure the stint is still in place and all that. Just wanted you to know in case you get Ma's machine.

I'm sorry. I can't write *Love*. Maybe in time.
How about like a telegram? Stop.
Till the postal service treks south and north again. Stop.
Amanda Rose. Stop.

Mandy, Mandy—

You say you hate me. But people you hate, you don't care enough about to write them back.

Call it what you want, sister. I call it *love*.

Write soon with news about Ma. I miss Dad. I'm not ready to say goodbye again so soon.

Send me the good word that her heart is strong, or at least word that the stent's in place. It's been a rough year for me. I don't think I could take more bad news right now.

So, Scott. Interesting. And we're sure this is just an arrangement? Everyone keeping his or her belt buckles fastened? (Don't think I don't know about you, Amanda Rose. High school, our bedrooms shared the same thin wall.)

I have my own sights set on someone here in Tucson. Still testing the waters. There's some question as to her availability. She watches me one way, but the ring on her finger says something else. We're navigating a boundary, making our way around it. We'll crash through it, or else we won't. But my money's on *we will*.

Probably that's more than you were hoping to hear. I'm no saint, sister. But you know that.

You've made the fact you know that abundantly clear.

Signing *love* whether you do or not—
John

Johnny,

Ma's doctor in Burlington says everything's fine. He still can't believe Ma lasted so long with a hole in her heart. He says the surgery she had as a kid couldn't hold, and it's lucky she didn't have damage from the TIA. She's staying on aspirin for the clots. But everything's good. You know Ma.

She holds up.

Mitchy got out again while we were in Vermont. Scott didn't know about the loose screen in the bathroom,

how Mitchy knocks it through with those big mitten paws. Mitchy went right to the docks.

Shelby's kid brought Mitchy back. You remember Shelby? She swam breaststroke in the IM with me senior year. She married Kyle Jenkins. I know you remember him with your big ears listening through the wall. It's funny you bringing that up. Back then, my God, I couldn't get enough of those boys. You know how you hear about a boy's libido's being stark raving mad in adolescence?

Well, back then, that was me. I don't know when that stopped, but it's gone. Maybe Scott wants something to happen between us. He's divorced, but he goes home to see his kids. I don't know. I stopped being able to read signs like that ages ago. Maybe you're right. Maybe I am androgynous now (I looked it up). All I know is I like my peace and quiet. And Mitchy's paw on my toes is all the affection I need.

Right now, Mitchy's watching me, and his eyes are saying, "Hey, remember that brother of yours? Remember the night you found me under the bridge and how we all rode in the rusted boat? I laid between you two, and we floated toward Canada, just letting the current take us, until some kids on shore shot rockets off. And I, doggy that I am, got scared and tried to burrow into the boy. Yeah, that boy. He used to make me feel so safe. Where did he go?"

I keep telling Mitchy you're in Tucson. But he doesn't understand. He's like, "I thought he was done with Tucson. Wasn't he here? I'll go look for him by the bridge. That rusted boat."

But remember that night, Johnny? The boat. The rockets. The current.

It's weird. That's the only time I remember you with me on that boat. Usually, I floated the darkness alone. Had I been alone, Mitchy'd be my dog. Instead, he's yours. Mitchy went nuts when those rockets went off. He was frantic trying to climb inside your chest. He hid under your flannel.

But that wasn't enough. He wanted to be in you, in the cave of your ribs. Is that what it's like with you and women?

A married woman. Oh, Johnny. Don't.

Dad was that way. Until the end. Until the cancer drugs deadened him instead of the cancer.

Sometimes I wonder whether chemicals got inside me too somewhere along the line. Not the kind they injected into Dad. Other chemicals. They're all over the place, right? I don't know how to explain it otherwise. I don't miss it. That hunger for people. But, Mitchy? He misses you.

Mandy

Mandible—

I guess it's past time I told you what happened in Tucson. What I told you was bad, but what really happened, what's true, is worse. Because, what happened, it's sort of my fault.

Part of me doesn't want to tell you. Part of me doesn't want to wreck this shaky life raft we've lashed together with our words. But another part of me, the part that worries we're building something just to sink it, wants this over with, the confession in the sand, a line I pray you'll step over or that you'll maybe let me pull you across.

If you can love me after this, I'll know it's real. So, here it is:

I started the fire.

It was only ever supposed to be a little one. We'd been drinking all night, Tina and me, and Tina had one of those ideas that come only once you've been drinking all night. I don't mean to blame her. I won't try to wash my hands of this.

The plan was to burn up just a little of the back. We had the extinguishers at the ready. We had the windows open for the smoke, the hallway shut and locked. Tina had even thought to soak a towel and plug the crack under the door.

The fire was never meant to spread. The smoke was never meant to reach the kennels.

We had to do it. Anyway, that's what we told ourselves. See, there's this machine. It's regulation. It dries dogs after baths. A shelter's got to have one and it has to work, but ours broke and we couldn't afford another. But, more than that, we couldn't afford to get caught without it and get shut down. Insurance wouldn't cover a replacement outside of fire or flood, and the city denied our request for surplus funds, and, I know this sounds stupid, but when you're drunk and 4AM brainstorming ways to save your shelter—to save your *dogs*—things can go a little sideways. When you're an hour from sunup and you've been up all night, bad ideas can make a tricky kind of sense.

Try to see it from our angle: We were already putting down practically a dog a day. The thought of getting shut down, the thought of the city gassing all eighty of our babies—it was more than I could bear.

I thought I could make it look like an electrical fire. I really thought I could. Insurance would cover a new dryer, maybe a makeover for the back room.

You think you know what happened next, but what you heard, what was in the papers, that isn't the way it went down.

We got seventy-five of the dogs out before the firefighters got there. They put the fire out, but they wouldn't let us go back in. Those last five—it wasn't the fire that got them, it was the smoke. I couldn't tell you which is worse. Imagining those dogs, what their last minutes must have been like, it makes me want to stick my head in our river and exhale and fight my body to keep my head under to the point of passing out. But, before I do that, I have to try another way. This—coming back, working here, loving these dogs, and looking them in the eye—this is my sacrament.

I'm sorry I started the fire, and I'm sorry I lied about it. I'm sorry I told you there was just one dog to bury when there were five. I want to be honest with you, Mandy. I want to be honest from now on. And while I'm not proud of what I've done, while I'll maybe never forgive myself for the ten femurs turning in the desert sand, there are days I walk the rows, days I marvel at the new facility or wave to all our volunteers, there are days I go back and watch the footage of the weeks that followed the fire—the outcry, the public sentiment, the money that funneled in, and how those seventy-five dogs, now famous, all found homes—there are days I use the dryer, and days I look at the modest but very real balance surplus in our bank account, and days I pet a dog I know will never feel a needle in its side, will never spend its last minutes with a muzzle on its face, and, on those days, I can't say we did an evil thing. And, if we did, if what I did was evil, then this new place, forged in fire, proves that, some days, evil blossoms into good.

You have your men, Mandy, and I have my dogs. We're not so different, you and me. We give homes to the unwanted. We love the unloved.

As I write this, there's another plate of Liz's cookies waiting for me. I heard the plate touch the cement block outside my front door an hour ago. The whole time I've been writing you, I've been thinking of them. And now I'm going to go and eat them all. With milk, a quart of 2% I bought in case there were more cookies and which the date stamp says is good another day.

Here's my last confession: I write because I can't afford a phone.

That's not an ask. I don't want your money. I don't want your help.

Give Mitchy my love, but tell him I can't come home, not yet. Maybe not ever.

Love—
John

Mandy—

I know you're mad, but it's been two weeks.

I want to know what you're thinking. I want to be sure your silence doesn't mean you're contemplating the thing I think you're contemplating.

Your brother—
John

Johnny,

I'm overnighting you this letter because things will happen fast now. I want you to hear it from me before there's a knock at your door. Please read this all the way through. I promise things will work out.

I fished out your earlier letters. In one you wrote, "Sometimes there isn't a kind choice you can make." And I wonder if you wanted me to do this. Or is this some demented test of my love?

Damn it, Johnny. You knew Scott was staying here. He gets home first. He takes in the mail. He knew letters were coming here from you. Sure, he didn't know what they contained, but it was enough. Your confession put my job on the line. "Bullshit," you'll say. "No one had to know." But Johnny, these things come out. Just like they came out of you, they could so easily come out of someone else. Did you expect me to wait for it with both our futures on the line?

These weeks of silence, since your last letter, I've been busy as hell. Making phone calls.

Consulting experts. Worrying. And here's the bottom line. The insurance company still has an investigator in Tucson sniffing around. Companies like that don't drop that kind of cash without making sure that everything checks out. Everything wasn't checking out. And with all that press.

More likely than not, the story was going to pop again. I say this not to explain why I chose to report you instead of letting it go. I say this to explain why it wouldn't have mattered either way.

I can't say everything I want to say because everything I write here is evidence. I was advised to make a report to my Commissioner. I'm a Peace Officer, Johnny. I'm required to report any knowledge of a crime. The penalty for not doing so is more than just my job. You know I have to follow the rules. Be angry with me. Hate me. But you were the one who confessed.

Here's what will happen now. There will be an arrest. You named yourself and Tina in the letter. Be ready. Have your inhaler and your allergy meds. You can't keep those, but they'll make sure you get what you need. You might be in a cell overnight. In this package, I'm including a card with the name of a lawyer, David Hayes. He specializes in arson. I've hired him and forwarded him money for bail in case I don't get there in time. Soon as you get this letter, call him. The four rolls of quarters are for phone calls. You should get three free calls, then you'll need quarters. Yes, they still have payphones in jail. My cell number's on the back of David's card. I'm flying out tomorrow night and should reach your apartment the next morning around 3AM. Keep David's card in your wallet.

During the arrest processing, make sure to write down your Voucher number for any property you bring to the precinct (the less, the better) as well as the name of the arresting officer and his badge number. Give the arresting officer any identifying information they need (name, birth date, social security number, etc.) but ask to speak with your lawyer before giving a statement. Call David. Don't go with the public defender. You will be fingerprinted and photographed. Precinct processing takes 4–6 hours, and you'll be held in a cell, possibly with other men. Don't talk to them. Don't sleep.

Johnny, I know this sounds scary, but be strong and serious. Muster through. Do what David tells you. The good news is you aren't wanted for any other arrests or warrants, and you don't have any unpaid tickets or fines. I checked. This is your first offense. And no people were harmed in the fire. The dogs that died—they would likely have been euthanized. You probably saved more dogs than were lost. Those dogs will not be unadopted. They will keep their homes. Keep that in the front of your mind.

Someone will have to repay the insurance money, but this story has been such big news, I know people will come forward with donations. That it was a crime committed out of goodwill (albeit misplaced goodwill) rather than a crime committed out of malice will help in the sentencing.

David can talk to you in person about sentences and fines. And we've still got Dad's money in the bank.

This is your chance to be yourself instead of Dad. I think you've already taken your own path. I think you chose this, and, for that, I'm proud.

Be strong. Remember, I'll be with you soon. We will work this out. In the meantime, be a law-abiding citizen. I'm on my way.

—Mandy

Mandy—

By the time I put this in the mail, you'll already be on a plane, but I want to get this down. I want this waiting for you when you get back to New York.

You're proud of me for the wrong reasons, Mandy, and you were wrong about my reasons for telling you. I'm touched you saw your version of goodness in my confession, but, the way you see the world, that lens of right and wrong through which you filter life, it's not my lens. We see the world through different telescopes, sister, and my confession wasn't meant for Tucson or the taxpayers who will soon incur the expense of feeding me and giving me a bed. My confession was to you, for you. I wanted *you* to know. And my penance was to them, the dogs I killed. The way I see it, I owe no one else. State Farm can fuck itself, and if it's *them* you're worried about, their 30K or however much it costs a large, bulletproof, multinational corporation to make fire damage repairs to a small, nonprofit outfit in the business of saving lives, then maybe we're not only watching the world through separate telescopes, Mandy. Maybe we inhabit separate planets altogether.

I'm not mad at you. If I'm mad at anyone, I'm mad at myself. Because I should have known better.

One time, hunting, I saw a snake on the trail—copperhead, a big one, super-venomous.

"Don't tell your mother," Dad said. He was worried she wouldn't let us hunt those woods again. But a six-year-old can't keep secrets, and I told Ma walking through the door. Dad shook his head and wouldn't talk to me for days. But he should have known better, should have known what he could ask of me at that age.

I asked too much of you, Mandy. You live by rules that other people wrote. You transcribe badge numbers and follow protocol. I can't say why I thought these letters might trump those things.

I don't know how long things stay crimes or when statutes of limitation kick in, but I'm finished confessing to you, Mandy. I promise never to put you or Scott in that position again.

I promise never to tell you, for example, that I used to smoke pot, or that I used to drop a lot of acid, or that, in high school, I once vacuumed a line of coke off your bedroom window ledge.

I'd never admit to being with a girl last year who, later, confessed to being seventeen.

I won't tell you about my adventures in shoplifting or ask whether you can imagine what it's like trying to get through the last days of a lean month by pocketing a few Clif bars or a pack of Publix deli meat.

I'd never say such things, just as I'd never say how a jail sentence might be coming at just the right time, how I might have taken it a little too far with the cookies and the milk, how, sometimes, it's the hand that feeds you that you're first to bite, or how, when the punch comes, even though you should be ready for it, you never are—how, in the end, you're mostly just left wondering why a woman would make such beautiful love to you only to turn around and tell her husband.

Now, Rob wants me out of the guesthouse, and Liz—well, it doesn't matter what Liz wants. She's gone back to Rob.

No, you wouldn't want to hear these things, would you, Mandy? Not you, you who are of the law and live for the law and abide by the law.

My things are packed and put in storage. I bought three months with the last of my money, and, if I'm still in

jail three months from now, maybe I'll turn on the TV and see my shit on one of those shows where people bid to cut the lock on your abandoned storage unit and rifle through your things. They won't find much: A bed, your letters, a lot of books. I wonder what they'll think of the five dog collars.

You were right about Tucson, sister. I shouldn't have come back. But, isn't it funny thinking that what you've done won't get me home, that the chain of events you set in motion will keep me here who knows how long?

I said I wouldn't take your money or your help again, and I won't, and I'm writing this too late to tell you not to come. By the time you read this, you'll have come and gone. Already you'll have watched me tell them everything. You'll have seen me turn down David's counsel and reject your bail.

You want the truth exposed, and I'm exposing it. But don't ask me to play by your rules too.

Don't lecture me about the system only to help me try to game it. You want me behind bars? I'm going behind bars. I'm going, and, in this way, you win.

Everything in its right place. Everything the way you want.

Love—
John

Johnny,

You wanted my love, but you didn't want our family to come together in any way except one you designed yourself. I know you won't believe me when I tell you that this was the kindest route for all of us. Of course I didn't want you in jail. Even with that crap public defender, I knew no judge would jail you. I couldn't say that in my letter. I wanted to. I came as close as I could to writing it down. But, if I had, they'd have seen it as evidence that I was cocky and expected special treatment. A female superintendent of corrections. It's a boys' club, Johnny, and they'd have you to get to me. So I couldn't say it. If you'd met with David, he'd have explained it all.

Johnny, you've got this look about you that makes people fall in love with you. You have a softness to your face that makes everyone flimsy and frail. Even that judge with his yellow teeth and bald head. How could he not love a boy trying to rescue his pups? Of course he loved you.

Everyone loves you. Dad was in love with you. Ma is in love with you. Mitchy is in love with you. I am in love with you. I imagine those dogs are in love with you too. No one would part you from the world. It hurt me to risk it. But I knew it was a bigger risk to let the mess sort itself out. A judge will sentence lightly when things are quiet. But if State Farm had blown things up, the story would have gotten too big for any answer but jail. This way, you do a month in rehab, come out dry, and the world is yours. Clean slate.

It's funny. Dad got clean in jail, but he never confessed to a thing. Even to Ma, he wouldn't admit what he did. His crimes were so stupid, stupid and everyday. Theft and drugs. He always said people set him up. "Wrong time. Wrong place," he'd say, "but I'm an honest man." Bullshit. He was a liar and a thief.

Remember that summer Uncle Jim and Aunt Lucy came to visit us at camp? Dad promised he'd be home on the Fourth of July to make a campfire and cook hotdogs and all that shit. Of course, he didn't show, but when we

whined about it, he pretended like he *had* been there. He said, "What do you mean you don't remember? We had us those Oscar Mayer reds. Johnny Boy burnt his, but Mitchy ate it up. Then Mandabear did that slapjack routine with her sparkler and burned a hole in her shoe."

He lied so well, I doubted my own memory. I went back and checked Ma's photos. That group shot down on the beach. I checked it and wondered if maybe Dad was the one taking the picture. He lied himself into so many vacant pictures. I think he even got to where he could trick himself. He made himself innocent in his own mind. But he belonged in jail, and I wanted to be the kind of person to keep people like him there. So that's what I did.

I know how you think I am. Amanda Rose always getting straight As in school. Never missing curfew or getting into trouble down at the docks. I don't follow rules because they're rules. I just don't wear my indiscretions on my sleeves. There are people who follow rules, and there are people who look like they follow rules. But, Johnny, don't you see? I broke the biggest rule of all. I turned you in. I broke everything apart. Nothing's worse than that. I know that now.

So, brother, I'll see you on the other side of all of this. I'll be waiting with cookies and Moo Juice. And maybe we can sit down and paint pictures of what it's like in our heads so we can look at each other on opposite sides of the shore and find a way to cross. When you're ready, come home.

Mitchy and Ma send their love.

Your Expandable Mandible.
Always.

Mandy—

I'm writing you from a desk at a window of the solarium at the facility Dad's money's paying for. It's too much. You should have let them send me to the county place. But, I have to tell you, when that sun sets over those mountains and the light hits the Joshua tree out back of here in just this one way it's in the habit of doing, I have to say I'm glad you didn't let them send me to the county place.

You got me. Boy, you got me good. When I saw you at the hearing, I was ready to watch you have to watch them throw the book at me. But there was no book. In two weeks, I'll be done here, and two hundred hours after that, I'll be done with my service to the state. They say you can do community service in libraries now, and I can't think of much that would be better than spending the six weeks after this surrounded by shelves and stacking books.

I haven't touched liquor in long enough that it's finally out of my system. The shaking was the worst part, the night I bit my tongue—but that part's over now. Now I feel new. I feel like an icepick's chipped away a fog that froze the space behind my eyes. And I can see.

What I want to tell you, what I want to say to you, it's like how it was for you, trying to say *love*.

I can't say it, so I'll say the thing you're waiting for, the word those words are wrapped in anyway, and that word's *home*. I have a few things to attend to first, some collars that need burying beside the bones to which they

belong, but I'll be home before you know it, month after next, if all goes well.

I don't want you thinking this all ends rosy. I can't say how the insurance fraud will play out.

The way that goes, you may wish you'd held on to Dad's money. And Tina, though the state's not after her, may never talk to me again. Maybe that's for the best, though. I need to spend some time away from the type of people who have to open up a beer to open up to you. I need to get away from married women and from the ghosts of dogs that haunt me when I'm here.

Things might get a little rough, sister. There will be nights it's going to take an earthquake to keep a drink out of my hand. There's more of Dad in me than you think. But maybe you and Ma and Mitchy can rock that Richter scale.

So, here you go. What you wanted. And, this time, it's mine to give.

I'm coming home. And I promise not to stop along the way.

Love—
Johnny

An Afternoon Slant

John Cotter and Shafer Hall have been writing collaborative poems for over a decade. "An Afternoon Slant" emerged out of their usual Call & Response method of accreting one line at a time, back and forth over email. Cotter explains: "Each line of Shafer's inspires a new line of my own, and vice-versa. Once the poem is completed, of course, we tidy and revise."

for Adam Golaski

I & my penchant for erotic thrillers
& parts of the car that are hidden from me
can't keep from smoking while I mechanic the
engine boiling in the afternoon air. I
strip & replace the brake pads, lube the push-rod,
sniff the mystery of rubber tires, stuff
the dank draft from the lake pipes, wish it was my
only responsibility. When I die
there will probably be no gunfire, just
mufflers backfiring & scaring the chickens
into havoc. & the purr in the red dress?

Everybody must have headlights, even her.
& a cigarette lighter, too, & new shocks
made of pretty little springs & automotive
'cals on her style: Bugatti purse, pumps,
& the boiling engine of her heaving breast
getting the lid all hot to touch, the shocks
shocking in their sexy dreamy springy bounce.
Once I dropped a lit cigarette from my mouth
and nothing blew up. I was so surprised
I smacked my conk on the lifted hood & fuzzed
for a while till I remembered my name.

And there she was, hair customized with a streak
of aluminum and teeth made out of chrome
and as she approached me through the film's pages

all of that chromatographic cinema
made the room a huge engine & it
boiled all of the air above it. Engine,
spool my projector ribbon, burn the rubber
cigars and moustaches of those movie-guys
gathering in the carbon haze, tools in my
trunk as I clatter into movie sunset.
I roll the windows up to keep her smoke straight.

Brandy Nālani McDougall

The Second Gift

This poem is in response to the scholarship, poetry, and activism of Haunani-Kay Trask, who continues to inspire.

for Haunani

The first gift of Western civilization was disease. The second gift of Western civilization was violence.
—Haunani-Kay Trask

1

I have no mercy or compassion for a society that will crush people and then penalize them for not being able to stand up under the weight.
—Malcolm X

For over four generations
they have said we are
a people with a history
of violence, accustomed to
the dark, cold cell, remedial
in mind and body. They write
of how we killed infants,
sacrificed humans, practiced
incest, how our kings and queens
were alcoholic, inept dictators,
how we owned slaves, how
disease comes with darkness,
how they must save us
from ourselves.

And we take
the new tongue and its historical
revisions, the low test scores,
the longer sentences, the water

shortages, the paid-off politicians,
the third part-time job, the cancers
and the radiation, diabetes
and the amputations, eminent
domain and adverse possession,
the overruling of all our objections
because now
their violence
is all we know.

2

We are not Americans! We are not Americans! We are not Americans!
—Haunani-Kay Trask

Violence is more than lodging
bullets into brown or black
bodies, but also burning
sacred valleys, stabbing tunnels
into mountains, damming streams,
dumping poisons into oceans,
overdeveloping ʻāina, bombing
and buying islands. Violence is
Arizona jail cells, GMOs,
and unearthed iwi waiting
under a Wal-Mart ramp, in boxes
in museums, in a church basement.
Violence is what we settle for
because we've been led to believe
green paper can feed us
more than green land.

Violence is what we're used to
as they measure our blood
to wait decades for a dollar-a-year

lease, when we forget how we once
fed and healed ourselves, how
our mouths hold life and death.
We are no longer shocked
by raids on what is left
in the pitched tents and tarps,
our evictions from beach to beach
and park to park, the poverty
of unfurling fists open only
to the smallest of handouts.

Violence is believing
you are in the United States
driving on a highway
built over the sacred,
carrying artillery to scorch
the sacred so more sacred lands
can become the United States
through violence.

3

Don't let anybody tell you not to be angry. We have every right to be angry—This is our country.
—Haunani-Kay Trask

You were born
into captivity,
a native in a racist,
anti-Native world;
yet, they call you racist.
They hate you
like they have hated
every warrior before you.

This helps them bear
the weight of dominion;
helps them keep their vacation
houses, golf courses, hotels,
and bases; helps them feed
their children denial,
so as adults they, too,
can say, "Don't blame me
for what happened
a hundred years ago."
They must keep
believing that
the United States
is our country
and not just
the country
that occupies
our country,
Hawai'i.

4

It always seems impossible until it's done.

—Nelson Mandela

You tell us:
"You are not a racist
because you fight racism.
You are a warrior,"
and you train more warriors,
show us how to sharpen
and land words like spears,
how to catch their spears
and hurl them back.
You call us the spears

of our nation, assure us
“Decolonization is all
around us.” You guide us
to the rope of resistance
so we can weave
the newest strands together
under a sovereign sun.

And so we tell our children,
our children tell their children,
and their children tell their children
until our words become
the chattering winds of hope
that erode the hardness of violence
from the earth, and we are sown
back into
and born from
Papahānaumoku

green and tender once again.

Mai ka Piko Mai

“Mai ka Piko Mai” (From the Navel) is a tribute to the literary genealogy of indigenous Pacific writers who have come before and inspired me, and all of us, to expand our hearts, guts, and minds inward and outward, backward and forward in time, to touch the wisdom and lived experiences of our ancestors, knowledge that shaped them and in turn all of us, laying the foundation of hope for the following generations. It is written with oral tradition in mind, weaving together the oral and the literary, traditional chants and modern writing, ‘ōlelo haole a ‘ōlelo maoli.

From the piko we flow
mai ka pakipika mai
native daughters
native sons, too, with
ancestors who rode whales
fished up islands
metamorphed from kalo
in Oceania, unwritten
from Ancient Tahiti to Civilized Girls
and postcolonial sons letting their pe‘a’s fly
over Auckland, Pagopago, Suva and Honolulu too
San Diego, Salt Lake, and Seattle, hmm
weaving ropes of resistance in tongues
modern and ancient
because the dead are within us
Shouting “HA!” to the sun
standing on the shoulders of ancestors
foxes flying free
amongst leaves of banyan and other trees
Kumulipo and Pō‘ele
i ka Pouliuli
and ke Ao panopano
contemplating daffodils and heilala
and dream fish floating
fast talkin’ P.I.s walking Ohiro Road
cousins
potikis
pounamu
tangi
sons returning home
to unincorporated territories
the alchemies of distance

cannot keep us apart
because the land has eyes
between the deep blue sea and me
the shark ate the sun
i ka makani pa‘akai
while the salt wind blows
over black stones
up among the stars
written in the skies
even babies without eyes are tusitala
telling our own tales—
korero, fangongo, mo‘olelo too
of ancestry and black stars
of tikongs and nederends
blood in the kava bowls
electric laulaus and buzzing dominoes
girls in moon circles
wild dogs under our skirts
howling dog side stories
with girls in moon circles
under breadfruit trees
tiare and frangipani
talking deeply to rivers
under extraordinary suns
from mānoa to ponsonby gardens
to gardens in spain at midnight
tell them
sky dancers
of tales, poems and songs from our underwater world
of lessons learned in Hawai‘i—
e kū maumau (e kū wā)
e kū maumau (e kū wā)
e kū wā huki,
e kū wā kō
e mau ma‘a mau
e huki e, kūlia!

our ʻōlelo is a taonga
rooting us to our ʻāina
and ancestors
through our memories—
mai poina

mai ka piko mai kākou
mai ka lā hiki a ka lā kau—
ʻo kīhā i ka lani, ʻōwē i ka lani,
nunulu i ka lani, kāholo i ka lani
wawā i ka lani
Eia ka pulapula a ʻoukou, nā ʻōiwi o ka Pakipika nei
E mālama ʻoukou iā mākou
E ola nā iwi o nā kūpuna iā mākou
mai ka piko o ka Pakipika mai
E ola.

Michael Puleloa

A Call for Ha‘eha‘ekū

“A Call for Ha‘eha‘ekū,” was written in response to an experience shared with Keoki Pescaia and Mikiala Ayau while volunteering on Moloka‘i at the children’s Makahiki games in 2011. The games are held in Naiwa, the ahupua‘a east of Ho‘olehua, the setting of the story. Both Keoki and Mikiala shared stories of Ha‘eha‘ekū’s life as we hiked past various wahi pana/wahi kupuna on our way to the Makahiki competition site.

We were offensive, for sure. Discourteous, foul, and downright vulgar. The list went on. We knew it. It was the nature of our curiosity. The nature of our age. We were children, all of us, a village of children fending for ourselves on our own near the new edge of the world.

Ours was a world of the sun and the moon, the earth and the sky, the winds and the rains. This was our way.

We didn’t think much of our happiness, or about our lot. We didn’t need to. When it rained until there was too much food in Ho‘olehua, we played in the clouds. We ran and danced in the white wind of Keauloa until it left us to settle west beyond the plains. When the ocean was calm and the sky was sunny, we went to the beach—to dive, to swim, to play on the shore. If there was wind, we went north to hide in the uplands, picking sweet fruit and catching colorful birds.

When we were children, we wore nothing. Or if we did, we wore wide strips of cloth fashioned from bark that we wrapped around our waists and tucked between our legs. We liked the feeling of the sun and the wind and the rain against our skin. It was a feeling that let us listen to the earth.

But we were sometimes mean, for sure. The feeling of completeness in our lives soon left us hungry only for the wild taste of trouble on our tongues. We searched and searched, tearing up the fertile landscape, overturning ancient stones and digging up deeply rooted trees, but found nothing there. We looked to the sky and the ocean, but they were the same perfect blue.

So we waited. We prayed. That taste became our obsession. The mere hope of the unknown filled our guts with excitement. To find just one thing we could huddle around and poke with our fingers. Something different. Something obscure. Something of interest in our world of peace.

Then one luminous morning after a midnight rain, he appeared outside his rickety home, and we were changed forever.

Ha‘eha‘ekū had grown. He rose from the doorway to take his morning stretch and he was twice as big as we remembered him. We carefully watched as he lifted his arms to the sky. We were drenched in his shadow. He let out a yawn and we covered our ears. We turned to each other in fear. When the dawn was quiet again, we whispered whether it had been the sun or the moon. The rain. Or whether he had ever been one of us at all.

We were content again, wondering how we had ever overlooked him. The more we thought, the more we whispered, the more we wondered why it had taken so long. He was quiet and lonesome. Reserved. Not like us. If we ate under the heavens at night, it was true he had never once shared our food. We made a pact never to be so slow again.

In the months that followed, the ground of our village shook when he walked across the plains. The earth trembled, and we were scared, too. But this time the fear felt good. It was a good kind of fear, bringing us closer together now that we were beginning to spread across the plains.

We found great pleasure in the fact someone had answered our prayers.

We were warm in the billowing night wind of the wet season.

Ha‘eha‘ekū grew until he no longer fit in his home—its grass roof shook as he turned and twisted to slip through the doorway. His arms and legs were like the trunks of old trees. Knots formed under his skin. There was nothing that might've prepared us for the things that we saw, for the terrible way that he grew.

He was a monster, we decided. Too big and too strong. Growing much too fast to be one of us. He was not like us at all.

To cope with his size, we decided to push back the only way we could: with words. At first, we spoke in secrecy at night, when we were certain because of the way his house shook that he was too occupied to notice anything outside. We planned. We schemed. We teased. We swore. We convinced each other there was just no room for a boy like him on the Ho‘olehua Plains. Things were just that simple.

***

One bright and glorious day, when the sun had risen to a point in the sky directly above the village, we took the new knowledge we had created among ourselves right to his door. We were tired of waiting. We were going to make the first move. We were not scared anymore.

"Ha‘eha‘ekū!" we yelled. "You have grown too big!"

He did not respond because he knew it was true. He had not come out to stretch because he did not fit through the door.

"Ha‘eha‘ekū!" we yelled. And when there was still no response, our voices echoed through the village and across the windswept plains:

"You are not one of us!"

"Monster! Beast!"

But there was still no reply.

We looked at each other and then toward his home. Some picked up stones from the ground. We didn't say a word. We didn't have to. We were together now. We were strong.

The sun beamed down on our little brown bodies. The deliberate wind parted our hair. We stepped toward his home. But when we looked inside, all we saw was darkness. Ha‘eha‘ekū was gone. He had vanished in the night.

For many years after that day, we lived in the way we had before the luminous morning after the midnight rain. We went back to playing in the clouds, dancing in the wind, swimming in the sea, and hiding in the uplands.

We forgot about Ha‘eha‘ekū. And soon, the only way we knew he had ever existed was when we returned to the beginnings of our village and saw the sad foundation for what was once his rickety home.

We were growing now in every sense of the word. We were bigger and we began to spread ourselves across the land. There were changes in the way we saw our world.

Before long, we did not want to be naked anymore. We did not want to feel the wind and the sun and the rain upon our backs. We were growing up. Our desire was the promise of prosperity in our ever-growing world. We began to push against the wind, against the sun, against the rain. We pushed and pushed until there was nothing left except to push against each other. And before we knew it, we had lost our way.

Some of us left Ho‘olehua in search of something new. They left their houses to be filled by the wind. The land to be scorched by the sun and flooded by the rain.

Our world was dying. It was true. And when those that had left returned no better than before, there were whispers in the air that one of them had seen Ha‘eha‘ekū.

Now we were together again, assembled under the heavens at night. We did not eat. We did not talk. The wind brushed against the cloth wrapped around our bodies. We sat under a wide map of stars with our palms resting on the earth, but we saw nothing except the grimness of our lives.

We cursed our fate and our arrogance until one of us removed the cloth from his body and set it to the wind. It rose above him at first, a white flame in his hand before sailing toward the lowlands like a thin, swirling cloud. We watched in silence as the cloth disappeared into the night. By the way we sat there—without even once looking back at each other—it appeared we had completely given up.

We began to cry. There was nothing else we could do.

We cried until our voices carried over the Ho‘olehua Plains. We wailed for the glory of our youth until the ground around us began to tremble.

Then the ground began to shake.

We raised our heads to find a mighty shadow covering the stars. We wept and wept in awful sorrow at the outstretched arms of Ha‘eha‘ekū.

Serena Ngaio Simmons

The Process

"The Process" specifically responds to Rumi's poem "Listen to Presences," which urges readers to stay in the moments that capture us in a poem, to hold on to them, to use them as inspiration for poems that we may write now or far into the future. Never give up on these moments. Never give up on poetry. Poetry is worth something.

Fresh nail shavings bitten to the root,

four-shots-of-espresso breath, full, and dust

keep the mix raw.

Knots burrow deeper with the night,

tightening this net round my temples,

and I'm found

tongue out and guessing,

a lamp on its 4th bulb.

If the birds insist on singing tomorrow,

let them sing of this work

and the strength it takes

to push through the drag.

Let them sing of the pockets

we manage to sew into these ramblings,

of the ones who refuse revision.

I am fortunate

to feel struggle like this.

Even if it wasn’t the best I’ve written,

at least I wrote it.

Indo-queer IV

These "chutney poems" respond to a genre of folksongs that are specifically Indo-Caribbean, modeled in form (a Bhojpuri chorus that functions paratactically to the piece, couplets roughly in a 11/12 syllabation) and drawing from our lexicons. To come to a form that resists my own erasure—whether a South Asian heritage or a queer subjectivity—I drew inspiration from CD Wright's Cooling Time *when she discusses the Native American poetry embodying music and being organic to its ancestor (music). "Indo-queer IV" is in conversation with Buju Banton's "Boom Bye Bye," which is a homophobic and violent reggae song. "Folksong" is in conversation with the medieval bhakti-poet Kabir who lived in India in the 1500s. The poem reflects, appropriates, and develops his voice and couplets in my own idiom through the lens of the folk singing duo Babla and Kanchan. Their Bhojpuri chutney songs are still very popular in my community.*

DOMA gir gayal, mubarrak, sab gaure fag ke
magar phir bhi coolie-man mar jaile sardkon pe

"What kind of antiman staggers from the straight
man's blow," the aunty asks, "the bad kind in cutoffs, who

dance wildness as children watch—or the good
ones who regret their sins?" What of the kind, curbside

gushing from the head? See those pavement stains, blots
of cinnabar and wine, read the abir as Vedas or

tea leaves: sanguine crimes morphing as they ride mouth
to mouth, until stories catch fire and "fall inside

de cane." He went down on the street before the bar
with rainbow flags for eyes. Boys—before you come out

in heels, open your blinds. Thirsty spirits of hate-
spiced rum traipse Liberty Ave and Jamaica.

DOMA fell, congrats to all the white fags
but still coolies are beaten on the streets

Folksong

rahe ke eke tikaana ke khoj mein udrat hai
bela jangal jangal gujarke hamar muluk nahin

You drown in a flood of birdsong; don't trouble
with lyrics. The body is disjoint; warbler

and robin, children of broken eggs. How long
can the belly hold a flame, lighting perch to perch

in sage migration? Take these petals of joy.
Place them on your tongue. Something inside does not sit

still. A cardinal flame lights into dicot
fireworks. This is your chest. This is your garden.

Searching for a single perch I wing
jasmine jungle to jungle; I have no country.

Jaimie Gusman

Ghazal

In "Portraits and Repetition" Gertrude Stein defines "repetition" as "the essence of emphasis." For Stein, repetition was not the act of repeating, but rather insistence. And insistence demands new meanings from repeated words. In the spirit of Call & Response I have "collaborated" with Gertrude Stein's prose poem "A Substance in a Cushion" from Tender Buttons *to create poems that use Stein's exact phrases in new forms. In this way, "Ghazal" and "Vegetable" become repetitions rather than rewrites, calling back to their originals while also engaged in playful response.*

In the morning, the weather of nonsense comes together
with red returning to its case, as though girls could wear it,
resolved into wearing it away, shaking the tassels to rain.

The calm circle of sugar, the ring of leaves left behind,
"Be reckless," one said, getting tired of the whole thing:
The men, those round eyes, might believe she is returning

a little later, when the blue cotton calms her nerves.
It means nothing, that her only reasonable sweetness
is an exchange between volume and littler things.

What is the use of the cardboard if it covers nothing?
The color of the top, three seasons of extreme joy?
I might as well be a bargain for some soft substance.

The genuine interest is a violent appearance, how
I store pink in the oyster of my quotations, as though
light could only be vegetable after light was a woman.

My pleasure has broken into parts: the same, the change,
the difference. What were we all cushioned together?
My rain making a face, wearing it like my dearest mistake.

Vegetable

A tassel tires,
hardens to an oyster,

suppose

no change,
resolves

for being prepared.

The girls
use their whole mouths,

purple cases.

The roundness
of their gratitude,

a returning season.

Take it away,
one says.

She pounds her elbows.
Helicopter sounds.

Their costumes
were a bargain

one mother says
to another.

The ordinary
appearance

of sugar
worn together

changes little.

The tassels
fall off their chins

onto the fine table.

Janna Celina Plant= "Codependency Archive"

xxxx Pine Street Apt #1• Boulder, CO 80302
e-mail: jcelinap@gmail.com

[JP]

Objective: How does language gender us into a knowable, ready-for-category place? How do we confuse language, and in turn confuse ourselves category-empty, readying the fascia for new learning?

Seeking position as Adjunct Professor in the Writing and Poetics Department.

Experience: to share a meal with you. A non-gendered some body. Empty out the expectation, the role performing a moonwalk, dancing backwards on itself, glittering decay and daffodil seeds.

Maria Rogers Oral History Program (Boulder, CO) Transcriptionist **[2011-Present]**

Transcribe audio files into text documents for the archive. Write abstracts. "Be was but a bad translation."

Tarpaulin Sky (Grafton, VT) Editorial Assistant **[2009-Present]**

Read and rate submissions for the literary journal. Downward-doggie style gets him all the way in.

Naropa University Summer Writing Program (Boulder, CO) Faculty Liaison **[2010-Present]**

I'm a Shakespearean actress. Provide clerical support and liaise between visiting writers and the SWP office. Help orient them to the university, its resources, and the Boulder area in general. What's that about crisis? What's that about identity? Since the divorce and re-marriage, my mother just has eight different last names that she plays around with. Actually seven. When I get a letter, and the return label just says, "Colette," I now know to keep it sealed. There's a demon in there screaming at all the men who silenced Colette. Eardrums are important, so I stopped sacrificing mine this year.

Double-Agent "origins as categorical imperative" **[1976-2011]**

Bust Down the Door and Eat All the Chickens Literary Journal (Boulder, CO) Associate Editor **[2009-2010]**

Worked in collaboration "with a palimpsest of origins" the managing editor, selecting and editing stories for inclusion in the journal.

Turtle Bay Resort (Kahuku, HI) Stables Supervisor **[1998-2009]**

Tension pushes us into new territory. Makes selves uncomfortable. Supervised crew of seven and herd of twenty-five horses at the luxury resort's equestrian facility. Reported to Stables Manager, and completed tasks of guest reservations, crew scheduling, feed and product ordering, as well as customer relations. Performed product presentations to potential clientele. Provided riding instruction. Guided private and group horseback tours. Trained cast of "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" how to ride (see deleted scenes). Assisted photographer Bruce Weber during on-site Hollister/Abercrombie and Fitch photo shoots involving horses. Drift creatively from theory to theory for immersion in life [enmesh] but also for technology of the structure. And how we think about writing and its possibility. Interfaced daily with "Lost" production crew, as well as other high-end clientele. Received Front-of-House Staff Appreciation Award—Ali'i Award—2005.

Codependency Archive

"Codependency Archive" is a conceptual poem/essay that is as much a visual text as a written text. This text internally responds to the call of the resume form as autobiography. The text pushes the resume form beyond what it is capable of containing. The packed visual quality is meant to express the excessive content that the resume form cannot hold. I'm looking here at the performance of the self, the self as an archive of experience, and the resume as an archive (one that is limited and limiting).

Robert Shepard, Anthologist (Honolulu, HI) Editorial Assistant **[2004-2005]**

Read and rated stories for inclusion in W.W. Norton's *Flash Fiction Forward: 80 Very Short Stories*, 2006, and *New Sudden Fiction: Short, Short Stories from America and Beyond*, 2007.

Education: smudge into clenched muscles. Add oxygen. Blink. Now Oedipus your eyes, and listen. There's a drum somewhere. Drum somewhere. It echoes into your throat. What are you singing?

Naropa University—Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics **[Graduating Summer 2011]**

MFA candidate in the Writing and Poetics Department, Prose concentration

University of Hawaii at Manoa **[Graduated 2006]**

BA-English with Highest Honors and Phi Beta Kappa distinction

Skills

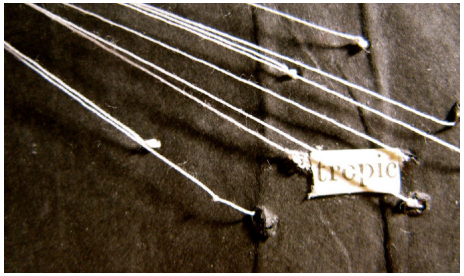
- Excellent listener and communicator
- Efficient, quick-learner
- Patient and detail-oriented
- Walks with bendable knees.
- Self-motivated and dependable
- Remarkable work ethic
- Works well with deadlines

References: Prehistory. That term causes an "amnesiatic gulf." History, in French, *histoire* means "a story." Prehistory then refers to the before the story we tell ourselves. Why not change the bedtime story. It's getting old. I can't sleep anymore. Permeable boundaries let monsters in. Sharp shiny teeth are actually—that's smiling. Let's make room for them in the circle. Gather round. "Poetry wants to get its hands in something." Ed Sanders, Yeats, and Blake. We can't go around writing poetry about poetry about poetry about poetry about poetry about poetry about poetry about poetry or up the spiral staircase into the white tower you locked, Rapunzel (with a shaved head). Perhaps the wind will let you down easy, pushing while gravity inhales you. Your limbs "plowing the clouds." So efficient, you.

Map Me Isolated

Inspired by the visual richness of Lyz Soto's body of poetry, Disembodied Spirits*, Joy Enomoto decided to begin a series of mixed media fiber objects as a response. As the works are in conversation with each other, they hope to create a third conversation within the viewer.*

"Map Me Isolated" is in response to Lyz Soto's "Pacific Coordinates," pg 46.



details of "Map Me Isolated"

The Mitosis of Papahānaumoku No. 1

This piece is in response to Lyz Soto's "Heterodissociative," pg 47.

detail of "The Mitosis of Papahānaumoku No. 1"

Hi‘iaka and Hōpoe

“Hi‘iaka and Hōpoe” is an art piece (acrylic on canvas) responding to Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio’s poem “What They Cannot See: He Mele Nō Hōpoe.” The poem describes the intimate relationship between the two women, and is written in Hi‘iaka’s voice, just before she embarks on her journey to fetch her sister Pele’s love, Lohi‘au, on Kaua‘i. The painting depicts the women in Hi‘iaka’s beloved lehua forest in Puna called Hōpoe (Full lehua blossom); Hi‘iaka gives her lover Nānāhuki (To attract the gaze) the pet name Hōpoe, linking the two together. The women have plucked and woven lei lehua and Hi‘iaka adorns her beloved Hōpoe with the lehua lenalena hōpoe so they may dance together properly outfitted.

See pg 48 for Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio’s “What They Cannot See: He Mele Nō Hōpoe.”

The Beautiful Mahealani Moon

"The Beautiful Mahealani Moon" is an art piece (acrylic and pen on canvas) responding to a poem by Youssef Hadiri. It is inspired by trips to Morocco in the summer of 2009 and winter of 2010, where I learned about the similarity between aspects of native Hawaiian and Moroccan culture; the beach scene depicted in the painting is an area of Casablanca called Ain Dieb, which translates to "Eye of the Wolf," which is reflected in the painting. I handwrote the poem in Arabic script over the visual image in a swirl pattern to suggest the sea breeze. I wanted to challenge myself as a Kanaka Maoli poet and artist to appreciate culture and ʻāina beyond the confines of the vast Pacific.

See pg 60 for Youssef Hadiri's poem by the same name.

Ka Maunu Pololoi

The response to this piece of visual art is April A.H. Drexel's
" . . . lying in wait . . . " pg 62.

Janet Lilo

Colonial Cake

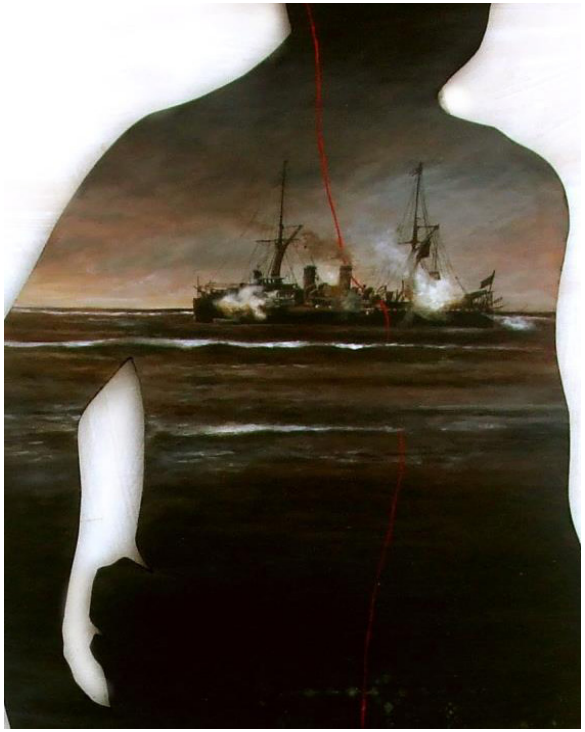
Janet Lilo and Leilani Tamu's collaborative relationship began when they contributed to a popular NZ magazine Metro *in 2012. Leilani wrote editorial content concerning social issues affecting New Zealanders and Janet responded with visual text. Injecting a Pacific perspective into* Metro*'s readership base was implicit in both practitioners' approach. Following the* Metro *experiment, Leilani and Janet wanted to continue the collaborative dialogue, but in a space where they could maintain autonomy over the "editorial eye" in the development process.* Hawai'i Review*'s Call & Response provided a natural space for this dialogue to unfold: this time as a reflection on the impact of colonisation in the Pacific. With Leilani physically based in Hawai'i and Janet physically based in Aotearoa, the development process was shaped by an unspoken yet shared knowledge of colonialism—an intimate yet simultaneously removed knowledge of the impact of the process on their lives. Accordingly, Leilani sent the poem "How to Make a Colonial Cake" to Janet who in response created "A Colonial Cake."* *See pg 81 for Leilani Tamu's "How to Make a Colonial Cake."*

Penny Howard

So'ogafai's Song

In this collaboration, artist Penny Howard and poet Doug Poole create works that explore cultural identity. This particular project responds to Maori and Samoan diaspora, specifically as they relate to war in the Pacific during the 1800s. The larger collaboration is entitled War of 1899. *Together Douglas and Penny explore the testimonies that Doug's great-great grandmother, great grandfather, great aunts, and great uncles gave as evidence to the U.S. representative P.C. Knox when they were claiming damages for the loss of crops and damage to land and house caused by the illegal bombardment of Apia in 1899.*

See pg 63 for Doug Poole's poetry.



details of "So'ogafai's Song"

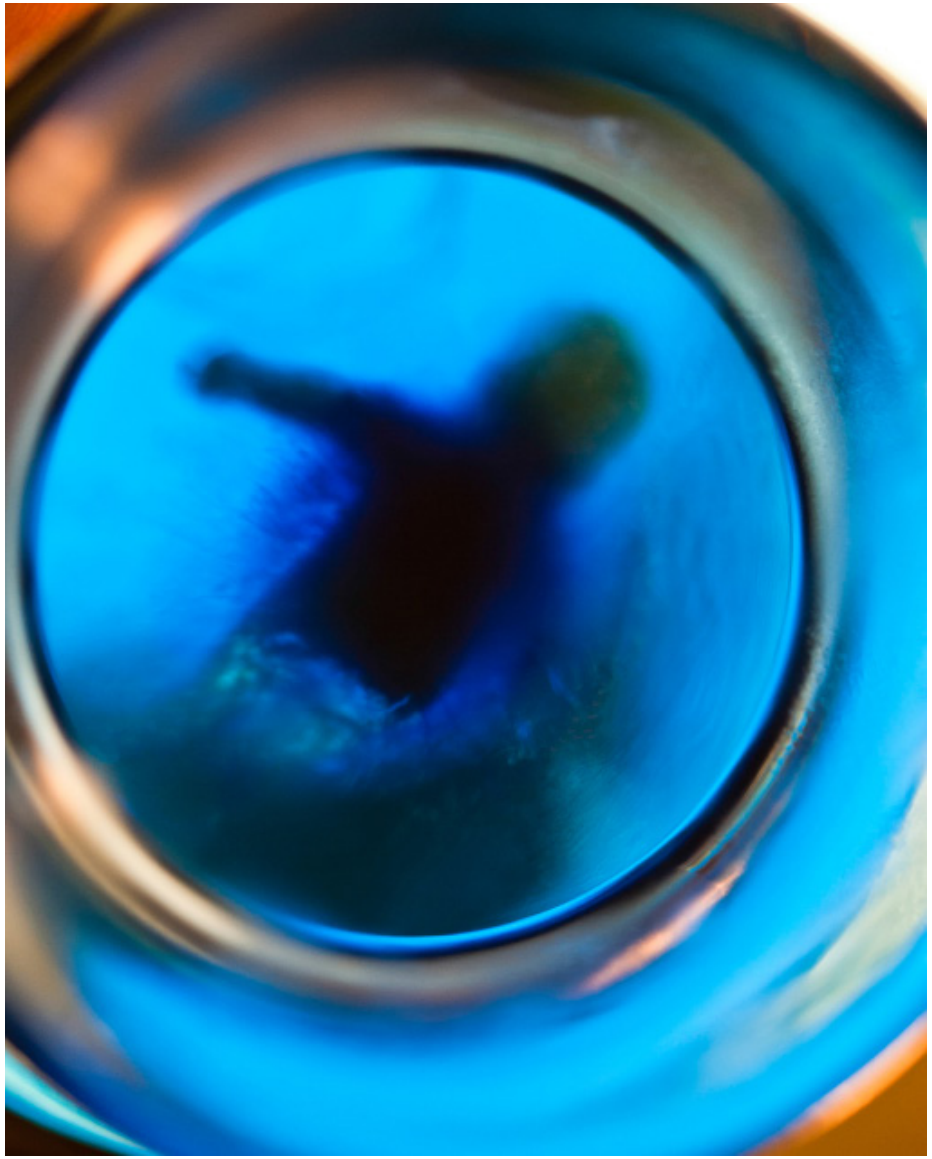
Will Caron

Couch Beneath the Heavens

A response to the poem "heavens" by Kelsey Amos, this painting seeks to capture the memory of that day in visual form to accompany the lyrical force in her work. The poetry expresses beautifully the way we felt that day. I hope my painting helps others visualize how amazing it was. The color, the light, the textures, and the mood we experienced were all otherworldly. So too are the colors, light sources, and textures I've chosen in the painting—hopefully it puts you in the same mood. While the strokes I used simulate a traditional oil painting and its textures, the work was actually created entirely digitally.

See pg 78 for Kelsey Amos's "heavens."

The response to this piece of visual art is Kelsey Amos's "in a new light," pg 79.



Brandon Otto

Flight 23 from Cincinnati

Last year during Mardi Gras, I ended up getting a slice of King Cake that contained the traditional baby figurine. This plastic baby was creepy enough to strike a chord; I started working on a sequence of art shots, the "baby series," which expanded as I collected more plastic figurines and played around with them. When Alice and I decided to Call & Respond to one another's work, I was drawn to the imagery in "Flight 23 from Cincinnati." I wanted to suggest that imagery, and the way it's viewed from above, without depicting it in some literal way. The central silhouette suggests the "chalk outline" of a girl mentioned in the first stanza; the baby figurine was floating in a bowl of water when I photographed it, and the circling effect ties into the fourth stanza—the halo and target visuals.

See pg 80 for Alice G. Otto's poem by the same name.

Joseph Han

The Phone

My fiction piece is a response to a story by one of my first creative writing mentors, "The Fridge" by M. Thomas Gammarino. I chose this piece because after having read it when I first started writing, it has always reminded me of the importance of language and voice. In a sense, every first person story that I have written since has been a response to this story. "The Fridge" deals with a married couple who each tell their own story. In a way this story is like two flash fiction pieces, but each complement and support the other side to make the overall story more impactful. With two characters speaking, and depending on who speaks first, this is also a sort of Call & Response among narrators. While these characters are older, Carver-esque individuals, my response attempts to take this format and make it contemporary.

Tommy impacted me the same way really great movies have. When we first started dating, every moment felt scene worthy and moved the plot toward some climax, but now I don't know. Tommy talked like he was in a movie and I could just close my eyes and listen. He had this way about him that was different from my ex: Jason got really depressed when we moved out to Hawai'i from Minnesota, and it only got worse when we broke up. Makes me feel guilty, but I don't think he's trying to—I think it's mostly me.

That's why Tommy was such a relief because even though Jason and I were broken up and still lived together, I was like his mom. I made his dinner and did his laundry. One time when Tommy brought me back to my place after we got wasted, Jason started shouting and asked if I was whoring myself to every guy in Honolulu. I still cared about Jason, but Tommy was something else. His lines stuck with me, and I could just splice our moments together and it'd be better than any rom-com because those moments would keep stitching together until the whole reel was just one big montage.

After my parents divorced in high school, I became a relationship monster and dated any guy I could. There was this guy that was really into coffee, and there was this old guy that was sweet but talking to him was like a history lesson. I was just so sick of Minnesota. One time when I traveled to Germany, this German guy named Alex asked me to get pancakes since I was American, and when I told him I was from Minnesota, he told me sorry. My favorite spot in Minnesota though is this bench in the Mall of America where I can just sit and watch people and invent stories about them. I could sit there forever hoping that I would see a robbery in action or meet a guy that I didn't have to make up a backstory for.

I didn't get bored with Tommy. It was different because I wanted him to date me, not the other way around. Living by my coffee shop paychecks didn't feel like a trash bag put over my head with a pinprick hole in it with me trying to breathe. I didn't feel like a black blob monster and Tommy was the one who helped me break my head and arms out of it and be prepared for rain.

When Tommy took me out to dinner and we had to wait on a bench for the buzzer to go off to tell us a table was ready, he was so hungry that he'd say, "I feel like all these people are dying anyway, and the only way I'll stay alive is if I eat them." That's when I thought, no I'm not full yet, and I'm not ready to die. We're going to sit here and think about eating everyone and nothing could be healthier.

But then it was like Tommy ran out of gas, his movie magic. Tommy would talk less, like he was constantly distracted or thinking about something else, or maybe he was just tired whenever he took me home from his apartment—the Tommy reel ran out. We were living in black and white, in some drawn out French existential crisis about identity when I just wanted my Bogart back.

Tommy didn't seem to care when I broke up with him. When all he said was "Fine," I had trouble breathing

again. But I missed him from time to time like a favorite movie, and we kept texting each other, and I'd joy at seeing those ellipses showing that he was there texting back, or the "sent" message changed to "seen" because he kept that feature on his iPhone. Even though we weren't physically together while texting, it felt like we were writing a screenplay and I just hoped that my phone kept buzzing, that I was being seen, and that our phones would be like pacemakers as we wrote a sequel alive with color, without feeling sorry or hungry anymore.

* * *

I'd do anything to have known Karen before she moved here. Right before she got into her phase of dating weirdos and when I heard about that old guy that really put a damper, or should I say diaper because I'd joke that they split because she'd have to change it all the time. And she'd get pissed if I said maybe that's what all of her exes were, diapers that eventually gave up because they couldn't deal with all her shit.

"Well, what are you then?" she said.

"I'm the guy holding your hand while you potty train."

The thing with Karen is that there was this way she would look at me, like I was the first person to be heard on the radio or speak on the telephone. It was completely exhilarating, at first.

Once when we were waiting to be seated at a restaurant, I pointed out this oafish guy being dragged around by a girl too pretty for him. I told Karen, "Guys like that, they're like very smart dogs."

She said, "Maybe I'm just taking you for a walk."

Never forget that. Karen could keep up with me. But at times, she got too far ahead, and she'd look at me like she was waiting for me to say something amazing. Like the way she describes her favorite things, or whatever she's enthusiastic about, she'll say, "It's delicious," and I always had to cook something up because I always wanted to be like that first guy on a talkie saying you ain't heard nothing yet. If I could be like every great character in the movies we watched together, then we could play something out with our lives that didn't have to end.

One night she called me and said she was listening to spaghetti western music to get motivated to write her senior thesis on the anti-hero in film, and it's shit like that makes you pay attention to a lady as being special.

But stuff like finding out a girl doesn't like a lot of people just like you do or has a problem with being bored all the time, that makes a guy fall hard and think, I can change that.

"We got the ball rolling," I'd tell her. "And now we just have to control the direction of its travel." And then I'd go on and say that the saying about people not being special snowflakes, we were the exception because we'd come together and roll down avalanche-style. I didn't mind sounding crazy as long as it sounded cool. Like whenever she'd suggest something drab or complain about something I would ask, "Where's the music in that?"

But dogs bark when they get excited or stirred up, and people run out of things to say. Sometimes I'd just go blank and didn't want to think about anything. Quote as many movies as you like, but life isn't all climax: there's

the first act and even the falling action. White noise. Static. Ringing in the ears that only goes away if the radio is on during the drives. I wanted Karen to fill that space and to see if silence could be enough for us.

Whenever she was pissy, I'd tell her, "That's not very Karen of you" in a southern drawl.

I learned in class that there's a Japanese aesthetic where using glue with gold in it to put an object back together like a vase was supposed to trace the act of reassembling as part of a new beauty. But how could you look at the rebuilt thing without thinking about how easy it came apart in the first place? Karen could cross her arms and look out the window to just be doing something. Or she could look at her phone and know what everyone else was up to. And I'd look through my phone too when I was with her, because sometimes it's easier looking at a lot of people from a distance than just one person close up. Sometimes I'd wonder what stories other people made up about us when we'd go places. Sometimes I'd search through radio stations hoping that there would be a song I knew the lyrics to so I could sing to Karen but only find commercials.

Sometimes I'd wonder if the stories that other people made up about us were better than the stories we were telling ourselves.

Carrie Collier

Parthenogenesis

"Parthenogenesis" is a type of asexual reproduction in which an embryo develops without fertilization. This process could be considered a type of virgin birth; it also does not depend on the presence of male and female progenitors. We can discover this phenomenon, which is arguably perverse in its suggestion of a variably sexed, self-fertilizing body, in texts that otherwise mandate the strict partition of one sex from another. On that basis, it could also become the foundation for new creation stories. The Old Testament creation story is a story of parthenogenesis in that God creates the world, and Adam, out of his own substance. My own piece came to me in fragments, while I was reading Genesis. It explores gender dynamics between the first man and the first woman in terms of language, agency, and naming. I consider this a Call & Response between myself and the Bible, one of the foundation texts of Western culture.

Adam and Eve walked in the garden at Eden. What's this, asked Eve, pointing to a spire of purple blossoms. Foxglove, said Adam. The story presupposes both the naming of the fox, and of the glove. Clothes hadn't been invented, and the Man and Woman had not yet felt cold. The hands were not objects of modesty and the exiles did not think of covering them until they felt their first chillblain.

Ocelot, said Adam. Echidna. Wildebeest. What silly names, said Eve. I'm running out of sounds, said Adam, and sighed.

Nasturtium, Eve whispered, nudging, with her fingertip, an aggressively yellow flower. Azalea. Mullein. Tobacco. Nasturtium! Adam crowed. I knew it would come to me!

The serpent hissed at Eve. Eve hissed back.

The apple was not an apple at all. It was a fat, black fig. Eve tore it in half, to see the pink mess of its viscera, then ate it in two bites. The seeds popped between her teeth. The pulp was sweet as honeysuckle. In fact the fig is not a fruit; it is an inverted flower bud, an urn lined with stamens.

Or, it was a pomegranate. Sanguinary, funeral fruit.

Eve stood. Her sticky hand fell to her side. She had not died. She looked at her body. Why, she wondered, have I no fur? Only this stuff on my head, and elsewhere these weird, vestigial tufts. She shivered, for the first time.

"Thank you, serpent," she said. "You have saved me from a lifetime of beautiful boredom."

"Why are you wearing those leaves?" asked Adam.

"It's cold," said Eve, "I covered myself, as the beasts do." She held out her hand.

"Try this. It's wonderful." The fig was in her palm, bruised from handling. Striated white fiber showed through the black skin, a sub-dermis.

"What is 'cold'?" asked Adam. "You're acting strange."

What if the fruit of the tree of knowledge was not fruit at all? Did the snake offer himself, saying: "Take, Eat. This is my body, this is my blood." Did Eve crush his skull? God gave them only "the green plants for food." Was this their first flesh? Was that sin?

It is good when the sacrifice goes willingly.

"It's not bad," said Adam, tearing the scaled meat from the vertebrae with his herbivorous teeth. "Needs salt."

Eve said: "I have heard of a thing called fire."

Maraea Rakuraku

The Circus Is in Town

On October 15, 2007, a series of police raids (described in the media as terror raids) took place throughout New Zealand as the first enactment of the 2002 Terrorism Suppression Act. Rūātoki, a rural Eastern Bay of Plenty community within Tūhoe Iwi boundaries, was locked down by the Armed Offenders Squad-AOS (a specialist unit of the New Zealand Police). Those entering and exiting Rūātoki were detained, forced from vehicles, and photographed while helicopters landed on school fields, and the AOS entered homes. I am Tūhoe and work outside of my Iwi boundaries for a media organisation. I found myself then, as I do now, defending my Iwi. "The Circus Is in Town" and "Who and What Is Te Urewera" are my responses to that day and my continued frustration at the media applying "Te Urewera" (a term used interchangeably with Tūhoe) to anyone associated with the October 15 raids.

Roll up roll up it's the newest show in town (insert circus music)
The Ureweras, Tūhoe, Te Urewera extravaganza or for those of you who aren't in the know the Uruwera 17 recruiting programme.

Now if you just bear with me, I'd like to talk about some of the advantages. One of the main being, there is no screening, it's automatic entry. All you need is some vague or maybe not so vague relationship to a few of the whanaunga. That's right comradees—you don't mind if I call you that do you? I feel we can be that intimate. I mean after all, you'll be talking on behalf of 40,000 people soon right?

Now where was I . . . oh that's right—your name will be tagged forever more with Urewera 17. And here's the best thing: you don't even need to whakapapa there, hell you don't even need to be Māori. Your association with some of our more high-profile sons grants you automatic access. No **taihoa** elevates you to Te Urewera status—you gain entry to any tino rangatiratanga gig in town, Waitangi Day, Pakaitore, and Declaration of Independence. And better yet, you get to talk on behalf of Tūhoe. What an opportunity! You don't even need to go back there and report to any hapū meetings about what you've been up to on their behalf. **Lucky,** you get to sprout your mouth off without any of those Iwi, hapū whānau obligations. This is so win-win.

Have you heard about the concerts? Well hold your horses there, folks. At these concerts, you'll be able to talk about the oppression of Tūhoe—who cares if that's something you've only become aware of a year before. Hmmm hmmm. You're the expert now, right? And let's not forget the collection buckets! We are so retro, you know. Talk about getting down with the brown. This way people can contribute directly to our pockets—oops, I mean legal fees. Faux pas, I'm faux sorry about that.

Now I am hoping I have covered everything . . . what else, oh yes, at public forums, you'll get to jump up and down about your suffering, yeah I know cah-ra-zee! The burdens you've only known for a few days have the same value as Tūhoe who have carried them for generations. Who would have known?

Now here are some of the downers:

Obviously, you'll need a degree of fitness. Even so, that's all good there sister, brother. We're like the Southland Polytechnic zero fees—you may have some legal costs but it's nothing your wealthy parents in Canada and Europe can't afford, right?

As long as you, comrade, are willing—I know you will be, I can tell just by looking at you. Trampling all over the mana of a people and, let's not forget, all mandated spokespersons like Moana Jackson, looks like something you'll take to quite easily.

Now I hope I haven't talked it up so much that you're feeling a little overwhelmed.

You don't need to know the other five areas that make up Te Urewera. You don't even need to know how to spell them—it doesn't matter. Anyone and their dog can jump onto this bandwagon.

Oh and don't forget you'll get to . . . come closer . . . whakatata mai, whakapiri mai . . .
I've left the best till last and this is exciting . . .
after all is said and done, the media's circling and you're pooped from all the attention . . .

You.Get.To.Walk.Away.
That's right folks.

After all your grandstanding, manipulating, trampling takahi te mana
and hijacking, you are so outofthere.

So I reckon before we get into any of this, any of the business, we just cut to it, eh . . .

FUCK OFF (mouthed silently)

Who and What Is Te Urewera?

For those of you who insist on using the term Te Urewera 17, 12, or 4 to accompany any newspaper headline or media soundbyte

Te Urewera 1 is 20 kms from Whakatane, 116 kms south of Rotorua along State highway 38, 10 kms south of Tāneatua, 4 kms south-east of Tāneatua. 19 kms from Opotiki, 32 kms from Opotiki, 63 from Wairoa, 125 kms south-east of Rotorua, 40 minutes from Kawerau, 2 hours from Rotorua, 5 hours from Auckland, and 7 hours 635 kms and a timewarp away from the life I lead in Wellington.

Te Urewera 2 is Rūātoki, Waiohau, Ruatāhuna, Maungapōhatu, Te Waimana, and Waikaremoana. It is not Kutarere, Kawerau, Tāneatua, Murupara, or a national park.

Te Urewera 3 is Tūhoe.

Te Urewera 4 is a Nanny shocked that Māori pay for their watercress and puha from the hinamana down the road when there is some across the fence in the paddock over there.

Te Urewera 5 is a bum wiggling and paraded upon television screens every. single. time the Iwi is mentioned.

Te Urewera 6 is a 15-year-old girl who sleeps sitting up fully clothed in her bed, which lies across the doorway of her bedroom, with the open window within jumping distance and knives in the door jamb.

Te Urewera 6 is a father pining for a son he hasn't seen in 20 years.

Te Urewera 7 is a lawyer working her arse off on the raupatu trying to get the best deal for her people with a tane undermining her every move.

Te Urewera 9 is a 9-year-old kid who still mimi's the bed because when he was 5, the ninjas boarded his kohanga bus.

Te Urewera 10 is a whānau in Australia making their biennial pilgrimage back for the Ahurei.

Te Urewera 11 is a boy asking what the mute button on the tv does.

Te Urewera 12 are artists graffing under the Onehunga Bridge—Te Mana Motuhake ō Tūhoe.

Te Urewera 13 are at Te Tirahou waiting for the tupāpaku to arrive before they accompany the whānau back to Ruātoki, Waiohau, Ruatahuna, Maungapohatu, Te Waimana, or Waikaremoana.

Te Urewera 14 are the many learning te reo Māori and reconnecting with their Tūhoetanga.

Te Urewera 14 are the ones who are not.

Te Urewera 15 is the Aunty who orders the whānau to empty their kai from their freezers and bring it to the pa when a whānau from Christchurch turns up with a tupāpaku no one knows, and no money.

Te Urewera 16 is the whānau waiting at the gate shy about walking onto the Pa bringing back the mate of their koro who left 40 years ago and never came home.

Te Urewera 17 are those at te hau kainga tending the flame and burning the fires so we always find our way home.

Te Urewera 17 are those of us who live away from home due to circumstance and choice.
They are not kaupapa hijacking opportunists who through the skinniest of links to one of its more well-known sons arrogantly associate themselves with a cause, a people, a way of life that is here forever and will be long after they move onto their next cause.

They do not privilege themselves over the historical pain of 40,000 Tūhoe.

Te Urewera is Tūhoe. Tūhoe is Te Urewera.

I am Tūhoe, I am Te Urewera.

When Does It Start? For Marama Davidson

Marama Davidson is a Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngāti Pōrou Mama activist, blogger, poet, and commentator on Māori issues. Tulia Thompson, is a New Zealand-born Fijian/Tongan/Pākehā queer feminist writer. When Dame Susan Devoy was appointed to the role of Race Relations Commissioner in March 2013, Marama publicly voiced her concern, questioning the robustness of appointment process and the qualifications of Devoy, a former squash player (who until that time held no public office). Tulia responded by writing a poem, "Now that They've Made Susan Devoy Race Relations Commissioner," and posted it on her blog, which then inspired Marama to create a Tumblr page called Susan Stand Down*, where poetic responses to Devoys appointment were invited. Fifty or so poems were received and I considered writing a poem until I saw a Facebook post where Marama was the brunt of racist vitriol. Instead, I wrote this.*

April 2013

It's not in waving a flag, holding a banner, knowing what post colonial theory means and when to use it, memorising quotes and lining them up like soldiers which are sent out in waves of attacks,

It's not in always being polite, remaining open, listening fairly, vigilantly assessing your motivation, re-writing your carefully worded response, marvelling how the person who has cornered you on-line, at a party, work-do or rugby game is not hearing how every word they are saying is offensive and may as well be slicing through your heart, with the intent-sity of a scythe clearing long grass,

It isn't even in realising dressing up racist rhetoric in flash language is still just racist rhetoric in flash language and sniffing that out in the first, I'm not . . . but,

It isn't in recognising white privilege and entitlement, functioning under white privilege and entitlement, loving under white privilege and entitlement,

It doesn't start with the huge fucking disappointment when a brown brotha is worse than the worst redneck you've encountered in your life,

It doesn't start by standing up for your Iwi, people, culture, colleague, son, daughter, lover, Missus, Koro, Nan, cuzzie, animals, papatuānuku, or even yourself.

It starts with that first step from the margins into the glare of light

and

opening

your

mouth,

that started

when the idea of you was born and took seed

that started

when the idea of you was born and took seed

that started

when the idea of you was born

that started

with the idea of you.

Eric Paul Shaffer

For the Anniversary of My Death

Every year without knowing, I have passed the day
when my last light will fade, and the earth will turn

away from sunrise, brilliant and blaring, imperious
as any minor moment. My last day will be my first,
a birthday, and though I will not draw breath to kill

the candles, I know what wishes I will make:

I'll wish for fewer question marks and one last asterisk,
a tiny typographical star to draw my vision

to the base of the page, for an apostrophe
to mark my grateful release of shabby possessions
stacked like sentences and old shoes in dimness

beneath wire hangers and a single swinging bulb.
I'll wish to widen the space between lines and letters,

shaping the snowy blankness around me into sense,

and to open landscapes to pines and play and granite.
I'll wish for an ellipsis trailing into a silver sky
in the thin minute before rain, without the suggestion

of more than there is, with no bow or map to suggest
my passage will leave a path for anyone to follow.

"For the Anniversary of My Death" responds to W.S. Merwin's well-known poem of the same name. Many undergraduates like me read Merwin's work when we attended college during the seventies. "The Drunk in the Furnace" and this one were among the first poems I studied seriously in my literature classes. When I moved to Maui fifteen years ago, co-workers at Borders told me that Merwin was living there, too. I started checking his books out of the library, attending his readings, and watching for his new work. I always loved the idea of this poem, and I kept returning to it. Finally, one morning, I decided to follow his lead.

Colleen Michaels

Medeski, Martin, and Wood at Dinner

The poem "Medeski, Martin, and Wood at Dinner" is my response to a performance by the trio that I was fortunate to catch at Jordan Hall in Boston this past year. My seat was high in the balcony, a somewhat obstructed view. My husband, like most drummers in the audience, leaned dangerously forward to see the action and didn't mind that he had missed dinner. I closed my eyes and imagined what it might be like to have dinner with the musicians. Check them out here: http://www.mmw.net/ Wouldn't they make great dinner guests?

For starters we'll serve
an old recipe in an African bowl.
I'll be Martin. Salt Peanuts! Salt Peanuts!
someone will yell. Slam down 1943
wine, leaving it dizzy in the juice glass.

And you, Wood (sure it's your turn
in the kitchen), will stand at the counter
plucking a chicken into consommé. Medeski takes the bones and pulls
that parlor trick—the one where he
makes us all ivory earrings that jangle.

Between courses, we all trade
places. The musical chairs of sugared up
Partygoers on Pop Rocks.

And now I want to be Medeski so I can tell a story, a-you're-not-gonna-believe-this kind of story.

But someone, maybe it's Wood
(who never sits for a minute),
says it's time for mashed potatoes.
And things get heavy.
We look under our plates for kin.
Salt a few napkins with tears.

But I'm still telling this fantastic story of the three-against-four bar fight where everyone walks away
Reservoir Dog style.

Then out of nowhere
Martin serves us cornbread
some on lollipop sticks, some in mugs—
which is how some food must be served—
and we all get quiet, thinking maybe we
should wait for John Cage
before digging in. Maybe
he's just
running late.

But then someone, maybe it's Wood, but it could have been Martin,
breaks the honeyed silence, yells with just his hands, *Pass the Goddamn Butter!*

Georgia O'Keeffe's *Hills and Mesa*

I was drawn to the wildly deep colors of the hills in Georgia O'Keefe's series of paintings Hills and Mesa. *Each painting makes me want to soak up the light. I can imagine Georgia half-drunk on the dusky colors, lost in the sensuousness of the shapes that always suggest something more, so lost, so drunk on color and light, she's oblivious to the dust coating her.*

she loved Texas
light coming on the plains

huge dust storms

sometimes she'd come in and couldn't
tell it was herself
except for her shape

she'd be the color of the road

The Tomato Packer's Recess

The Mississippi writer Eudora Welty began her career as a "junior publicity agent" for the Works Progress Administration, one of Roosevelt's "alphabet agencies." She roamed the Mississippi countryside and recorded the lives of the rural poor in the 1930s with her Rolleiflex camera. One of the extraordinary scenes in a series of haunting photographs, "The Tomato Packers' Recess" pictures a packer playing a guitar, surrounded by other workers standing and sitting on crates, all singing.

When the young lady got off the bus,
she walked in a shade of dust. Didn't look up,
or around. She had one of them cameras
you could hang on a strap 'round your neck,
a little black box with a fold up hood on top.
Little boss was picking at his guitar—
boss boss likes to hear us singing at lunch.
A singing packer is a happy packer. I don't
sing, just keep my eyes out for trouble,
one eye on boss boss and the other
wherever it needs to be. The minute
she edged over to boss boss, he got his back
up, wiping his face and wagging his head.
Only one thing—the government—brought
out that kind of racket. He thought we was caught.

I had a colored glass cat's eye marble
in my bag once, milky blue. Knocked
the wind out of me when I lost it.
I've always said that's why I don't gamble.
For weeks I was down in the mouth,
and on my luck. Never did win it back.
I felt those pangs all over again when she
brought her chin up off her chest. I have more
of a bead on her now—awful buck teeth,
pickle nose. But at the time you only see
milky blue eyes, big shiny marbles. They split
you open and read everything on your heart.
I'd say she draws her own conclusions.

Once boss boss gave her the go-on,
she dropped her head like a Baptist
praying for full immersion, poured them
eyes into the camera hood, pushed a button
and turned a crank, must've been nine
or ten times. She didn't look up.
Boys didn't ever see her, just kept singing.

Oh, hard times come again no more.

In memoriam E.A.W.
1909–2001

Susan Azar Porterfield

Sartor Resartus

Try this on.
Just for size. Just to see.

The shirt drops
over outstretched arms and got-

cha. Never unshirted again,
sans shirt,

as it was before the age of shirt.
Hang this job in your closet.

Fold this house into a dresser drawer.
Just needs. A little.

Dab of paint. Needs. Hem.
Twenty years of oh so and

so and nothing's perfect.
Therefore, nada suits all

even if, on the rack.
It seems baggy.

"Sartor Resartus" is also the title of a work by the 19th-century British writer Thomas Carlyle, who used the phrase (literally translated as "the tailor retailored") to suggest that society needed to rethink where it was going, i.e. it needed new clothes. In my poem, I apply Carlyle's metaphor to us as individuals. In life, we don certain "clothes"—jobs, houses—that tell the world who we are. At first, these clothes seem "baggy," as if we have room to grow, but eventually they wind up binding us. Instead of owning or managing these outward trappings, we become defined by them and struggle to create "new clothes." This poem is about trying to "tailor" what we have, even if it doesn't fit.

Francine Rubin

High Line, Manhattan

My poem reflects on and responds to the multilayered history of the High Line. An aerial public park, the High Line is built on top of elevated train tracks. When visiting, I think of the ways in which the space was used and perceived by those who came before me.

A metropolitan aerie,
a bird's-eye view of Chelsea: at 31st Street,
building tops cresting vacant streets,
pigeon dots.

Underfoot, steel tracks of the El—line to the past—
point north to my great-grandfather's grocery, tiny store
feeding his children and George Washington bridge workers
on break from shaping the landscape with steel.

His own childhood
lay east, in Jewish immigrant
slums on the lower-east side:
the tenement packing
his family into 200 square feet
within a grid of squalid apartments.

The western vista: the dark green Hudson bled
from the Atlantic, from family on the other side at work in ghettos.

Janna Plant

The Chimaera

"The Chimaera" performs a response to the call of Zadie Smith's essay, "An Essay is an Act of Imagination. It Still Takes Quite as Much Art as Fiction." Imagination becomes animate in this piece, which calls for greater diversity in written texts.

Head

I speak of the essay, therefore the essay and I are you/us and all of this. This is habitat. And to speak of the essay one must speak of habitat and breath. The essay is a site, an intersection, a channel of growing, from earth's molecular beginnings to human's molecular beginnings, and now. An essayist first inquires about this growing, takes a place in the laboratory of thought, then performs that inquiry. The essay becomes the artifact of the inquiry, from that site, from that intersection. The essay exists as a performance of inquiry. "What you call collage, I call thinking," Laura Moriarity writes. And from this I say that the essay, really the form of the essay, breathes as a chimaera. Define chimaera: 1. *a*. fire-breathing she-monster in Greek mythology having a lion's head, a goat's body, and a serpent's tail. *b*. an imaginary [born bloody and raw from the imagination] monster compounded of incongruous [ideas growing tendons] parts 2. an illusion or fabrication of [mindspace platform] the mind; *esp*. an unrealizable dream [bullshit] 3. an individual organ, or part consisting of tissues of diverse genetic [cross-species] constitution.

Zadie Smith, in her 21 November 2009 *Guardian* article, "An Essay Is an Act of Imagination. It Still Takes Quite as Much Art as Fiction," searches into the shape-shifting history of the public's perception about essays. I rustled into the den of the two quotes, which she defines as having somewhat negative connotations. In 1755, Samuel Johnson's mouth described an essay as, "A loose sally of the mind; an irregular undigested piece; not a regularly and orderly composition." I love a good sally: 1. an action of rushing or bursting forth; *esp*: a sortie of troops from a defensive position to attack the enemy ["Writing is refusal"] 2. *a*. a brief outbreak; outburst [Cixous] b. a witty or imaginative saying ["Whiplash genius"] 3. a venture or excursion usually off the beaten track [Re-read Frost's poem, all the way through]: jaunt. Later, Smith quotes Joseph Addison bemoaning "the wildness of these compositions that go by the name of essays." To that I present Eliot Porter, former Sierra Club photographer: "It has been said that wildness is a luxury, a commodity that man will be forced to dispense with as his occupancy of the earth approaches saturation. If this happens, he is finished. Wilderness must be preserved. It is a spiritual necessity."

The necessary wildness of the essay sprouts from the irregular wilderness of the writer's experience of life. An essay is a space for problem solving, a workspace, and then it becomes a record of that work, an artifact, a document. An essay allows for proper grieving; it is the road into the liminal limbic forest where concepts sally unrestrained. The writer carves a dialogue path between the woodland (concept) creatures and platforms these dialogues first in the body, then on the page. This is the theatre, the alchemy of interaction, where I control the

proscenium frame. Will you see my hand gesticulating *What ifs*? Will you see my sticky brain neurons tungsten-light popping with the tincture of interaction? Let us try: The tableaux vivant. Chimes rattle the inner ear. The chimaera snorts, chuckles a bit of fire, ruffles her mane. The eyes glint, wet. And an essay should have poetic intoxication. And an essay should have the incantatory elixir used for vivifying the dead. If we choose to accept the French base of the word—essayer (to try)—then should we try at domestication? I think that we should try for the diverse wildness of ecological life. If an essay has a well-manicured lawn in front of it, then it should damn well have that for a reason; I do not want the essay existing to keep up appearances. I want what Gary Snyder, in his essay, "Unnatural Writing," calls "a literature of blood-stains, a bit of piss, a whiff of estrus, a hit of rut, a scrape of sapling, and long gone." Once more, with teeth.

Body

Insert body of choice. Make sure the organs pump rich hemoglobin and also we want to hear the gut rumble with hunger. Or make it a dead space: whatever will best articulate the intangible. We want to feel the presence or absence of the rib cavity, the thirty-foot long digestive system and such. And an essay must acknowledge the primal streak if it is to be from life, and for life. We must also account for scar tissue, boundary, and fracture.

Dorothea Lasky, in her book, *Poetry Is Not a Project*, writes that "poems come from the earth and work through the mind from the ground up . . . poems are living things." I want essays as poems, and poems as essay. They exist in the world together and cross-species sex reverberates the wildness that Addison so fears, that Eliot Porter so celebrates.

Tail

Truth exists as a philosophized bauble. Of course we poets must eviscerate the inviolate, admire its parts, and platform the recombinant. Zadie Smith quotes Virginia Woolf: "Literal truth telling is out of place in an essay." And Smith says, "Writing is always a highly stylized and artificial act, and there is something distinctly American and puritan about expecting it to be otherwise." Fear keeps an essay behind a well-manicured lawn. And just think about the delightful neuroses occurring behind the artifice. Let us burn our way in, and observe the crinkling green, the yawning stucco. What do you see in there?

I see the dark crystalline geode interior of the den, sunlight blinking off the wet stone. And there's a kid, a blonde girl, with a bowl haircut. She wears a blue plaid pearl-snap cowgirl shirt with white fringe. She's on a swing—improbable—that's me at six. I stomp through the fire rubble and give myself an extra push. I want to get really high this time.

My perception of my own work has changed over the past year. When I think of my book, *The Refinery*, and how I previously described it, I feel ashamed at how I misrepresented that creature. I did not know how to parade it at the County Fair. Fiction? Poetry? Abstract autobiography? I even sent some of that beast's excised

organs (labeled as poems) for grad school applications, knowing full well that those organs couldn't function without the body, and they didn't. The readers smelled the stench of decay, and tossed the organs, and my application into the vortex of no-no land. But now, with eyes for essay, I see that creature in its fuller capacity. Goddamnit if she ain't a book-length essay—in the form of diary entries—interrogating the manufacture of gender. Anyhow, that's what the new meat tag should say. And too bad, she could have been the prettiest chimaera at the County Fair (but maybe I wouldn't have gotten her registered if I'd been gallivanting, telling everyone what she rightly was). You know how it is with the regulations and categorical fantasia. At least I got her placed.

I write these things down because I want to hold them collectively in one being. I come to understand through the practice of writing: This is a document of my attention. I want a reference point, a single animal to shimmer the concepts from her coat. Then I crack that whip, sending her off to the printer. I whip her good, and dance to Devo. She roars back; that's an essay for you.

Parallel

The anthropomorphic speaker in Plath's "Mirror" is the mirror itself, and this approach to entry—Plath as a mouthpiece for this mirror which recounts what it sees/reflects—allows for a not cruel, only truthful *account through a* silver and exact *lens to eventually introduce and expose a woman subject, Plath herself and/or the kind of woman Plath seems to identify with* day after day. *"Mirror," comprised of two stanzas with nine lines in each, structurally resembles a mirror.*

"Parallel," my response written in the first person, also uses a mirroring structure. Yet this poem attempts to explore the theme of separation—the speaker's awareness of onions and garlic (garden-variety bulbs separated from the ground) roasting separate from one another, and heirloom tomatoes . . . too expensive *(separation by relinquishment) for the speaker who forgets to buy* the terrible sardines *(separated from the sea)—with reinforcement from hinging conjunctions to signal temporality.*

I am silver and exact. The onions
in the oven are separate
from the roasting garlic, and otherwise
I don't know how to occupy
a feverish July afternoon or a Sunday
early evening. Most of the time

I meditate on the page anyway
and this reminds me that the salad
isn't made. I didn't buy the heirloom
tomatoes since they were too expensive,
and I'm sure tomorrow I'll forget
to purchase the terrible sardines.

A.R. Baxter

Performance Art

"Performance Art" describes a conversation I had with an artist about her painting that I found at an art market. Her choice of words coupled with the nightmare theme of the painting triggered an abuse memory, which made me realize that I ignore my own story in my art. This essay is about how her art awakened a part of myself that I hadn't expressed before. The essay is not about abuse itself, as much as it is about expression.

The artist on Frenchmen Street would really love to shock me. Though I guess I make it sound personal when I say it like that.

I found her at one of those outdoor art markets in the French Quarter while I was walking around with my friend Jeremy a couple of weeks ago. I usually steer clear of those things because it feels awkward when I'm looking at handmade necklaces and the jeweler is standing there staring at me, willing me to buy something. It's not that I don't want to buy art, it's just that my budget hasn't evolved past the basic-needs category yet and I feel like I'm teasing these people when I walk in, become interested in their work, and then walk away with nothing.

But when I saw the plastic, electric couch and love seat in the middle of the courtyard, I couldn't help myself.

"I think we should sit there," I said, pointing to the life-sized dollhouse furniture that was glowing like light bulbs. "So we can see what it's like to be lightening bugs."

He agreed so we walked over to the couches with the purpose of trying them on until we realized that we would be sitting on someone's art.

"Well, they look cool," Jeremy said, standing in their glow.

"Yeah. I bet they're too hot to sit on anyway. Being a lightening bug is probably uncomfortable."

He looked around at the booths encircling the chairs. "We could look at stuff. You wanna?"

"Can we sit on any of it?"

He glanced at the tables of paintings, homemade soaps, and jars. "No."

I sighed. "Art's too one sided. It should all at least double as an ottoman."

"Do you like art?" he asked.

"Well, yeah. I just don't always understand it."

"This is interesting," he said, leading to me to a table of interesting things. The maker of the interesting things was so skinny that the fattest thing on him was his Adam's apple. It felt like he was watching me. I felt guilty for walking away without buying anything.

It was a few booths before we found the lady who liked to shock. She was sitting in a folding chair, in between two racks of her prints. There was a third rack across from her, and it was that one I chose to peruse because then I didn't have to see if she had a starving Adam's apple. The paintings were sharp cartoon characters—faeries, trees shaped like women, and nightmarish things with claws. I was admiring the small details of them (the shapes of toes and hips) when she said from her chair, "Their stories are on the back."

I turned to face her, unsure that she was talking to me. It was then that I noticed she was beautiful in her black dress with blue eyes and dark hair.

She pointed to the palm of her hand and then turned it over. "Look on the back."

I flipped over the print of faeries that I'd been looking at and there was a slip of paper in the plastic case that told their story. I began looking at the pictures with new interest, now that I could know more about the creatures in them. Jeremy was interested in one particular picture of a little girl walking along who was being followed by a swarm of dark, fanged creatures inches from snatching her. The artist said it was inspired by a reoccurring nightmare she'd had as a kid, and I half-listened to their conversation while I looked at print after print. After reading one that was about strength and female sexuality I said to her, "You're a good writer."

She smiled sideways. "Thanks."

She began to talk about the painting, about how it was important to get the nightmares out, even if they disturbed people. Especially if they disturbed people, she said, because it was important to break them out of their own little dreams. It was Jeremy who was asking her questions so she addressed all of this to him, but she looked right at me when she said, "Some of my work disturbs people, but you know what? I just stick my tongue right in that hole and push."

Several things happened inside of me when she said this. First, I could feel what she'd described as if it were being done to me but not at all in a pleasurable way. Second, I felt like I couldn't breathe, and I wanted to knee her in the face. Third, the guardian in my mind that keeps me from going crazy shouted out a set of instructions.

"Shields up!" she said. "We have a potentially aggressive woman on scope! Let nothing in emotionally or physically!"

"Done," my brain said.

"Do not lash out violently."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Excellent. Are we disconnecting from any sex abuse memories that this woman has provoked?"

"Check."

"How's the inner child? She ok?"

"Eh . . . she's a little rattled."

"She always is. Tell her to get up here with the grown-ups and watch us work."

"Check."

"Sarcastic remarks at the ready?"

"Check."

"Fire at will."

I looked at the artist, the tongue pusher, and I wanted to suggest that she stick her tongue in the hole of a pencil sharpener. And I wanted to tell her that it was people like her, puffed-up peacocks strutting around with obscene gestures spray painted on their feathers, that were the stuff of my nightmares. People who want to push and shock, and push and push and push no matter how you feel about it. Hold still while I hold you down, just hold still if you love me, if you want me to feel better. Hold still and I'll force you open and I'll tell you a story and I'll show you a nightmare.

I turned around and set the picture on the shelf where I'd gotten it. Then when I looked back at her again,

my kid, the one who the guardian in my mind had invited to the captain's chair to watch me deal with the artist, looked out into her face and saw another little girl. That one had nightmares just like me but she didn't deal with them like me. I had become very still and quiet and thought if I just made myself small enough that the bad thing that was happening would eventually stop and everybody would be ok. The woman hurting me wouldn't feel bad about herself if I didn't bring it up, and I would be ok if I forgot about it.

The artist child didn't make herself forget to make everyone else feel comfortable. In fact, she decided to make everyone she could feel extremely uncomfortable.

"She's hurting too," my inner child said. She looked at the guardian and said, "Why are so many people hurting?"

"I don't know but that doesn't give her the right to hurt you."

"She doesn't know you're hurting," my brain said. "She doesn't know you're thinking or feeling any of this. She just knows her own stuff."

"She wants to shock me," the kid said. "I don't like being shocked."

"Then don't be," the guardian said.

I came out of my head. "Sounds effective," I said to her.

She nodded and then went on to describe her work, how it's used by children's therapists and by parents who want to help their kids deal with their emotions. She showed me a book of her work that had nude pictures of herself. I listened to her and flipped through the book, stony faced, not reacting except to say "cool" from time to time.

I don't remember most of the pictures she showed me because I spent the rest of my time in her booth thinking about what she said about sticking her tongue in holes. And now I've written about it. So what I told her was right—it was effective. It made me think about why I reacted the way I did, why I felt so uncomfortable, why it made me feel so violated that I had to work with different parts of my brain just to calm myself down.

It affected me in a way that her nightmare pictures had not—the ones that were meant to pull people out of their little dreams. There was no dream to pull me out of, just a bad memory to throw me back into, brought on by a poor choice of words.

Which is why I've never written about this. I don't want to scare and shock. I don't want to pull or push anybody. But I would like to speak to someone the way the nightmare painting had spoken to me, where the little girl inside of me reached out to touch the face of another little girl who'd also been clawed and bitten. To do this I have to make myself visible. Maybe not visible like the Frenchmen Street artist who was part of her display, but I'll still have to talk when the child inside of me just wants to stay quiet. Be very, very quiet, and still, and obedient.

"Go and get the electric couch," the guardian says. "Set it in the middle of the courtyard so that you are centered in all of that art you can't afford, and say to the people who come by, 'Let me tell you a story and you tell me yours. And the light, the art, and the talking will pull us out of bad dreams.'"

Contributors

Kelsey Amos is a Ph.D. student at the Universtiy of Hawai‘i at Mānoa who writes poems from time to time. She wouldn’t be publishing in a journal she works for except that she got caught up in the spirit of Call & Response. In other words, she is blaming Will.

A.R. Baxter lives in New Orleans with her three kids, who she sometimes leaves at home to go down to the French Quarter and be shocked by the locals. Her essays and short stories have appeared in *Mississippi Parent* and the anthology *Something in the Water: Louisiana Stories*.

Will Caron’s passion is for conveying meaning, story, and/or relevance through visual arts like drawing, painting, and photography. He would love nothing more than to get paid to write, draw, and produce graphic novels and comics with a literary edge and a keen eye for expression through image.

Carrie Collier has worked with visual artists and filmmakers to produce hybrid work that integrate text and image. Her writing has been published in museum catalogs and artist’s books.

John Cotter is the author of *Under the Small Lights* (a novel from Miami University Press) and executive editor at *Open Letters Monthly*.

Born to KalokeoSarona Waiamau of Waipouli, Kaua‘i, and Gilbert D. Drexel of Coatsville, Pennsylvania, **April A. H. Drexel** has spent a lifetime in the ahupua‘a of Wai‘anae Uka (Wahiawā), and the speical “hard core educational” summers of her youth in Mākua, O‘ahu. Drexel is an Assistant Professor at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies, Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

Christina Low has been published in local and national publications over her long career trying to become a better writer. She recently won *Bamboo Ridge*’s Editor’s Choice award and continues to write in her spare time when she’s not selling apartment buildings.

Joy Enomoto is a queer Native Hawaiian, African American, Japanese, Scottish, Sikh, and Caddo Indian visual artist. Her work is concerned with the descendents of the plantation diaspora.

Jaimie Gusman's poems have appeared in a variety of literary magazines, most recently in *Pacifica Online Journal*, *Sonora Review*, and *Trout*. She is the 2013 first place winner of the Academy of American Poets Prize (University of Hawai'i) and the 2012 first place winner of the Ian MacMillan prize (Poetry, *Hawai'i Review*). She has two chapbooks: *The Anyjar* (Highway 101 Press, 2012) and *One Petal Row* (Tinfish Press, 2011).

Youssef Hadiri was born and raised in Casablanca, Morocco. He has a Bachelor's degree in English literature from the University of Letters and Human Sciences II, Casablanca, Morocco, and most recently he has been working on a Masters degree in Educational Technology and Instructional Design at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He's had many professional experiences teaching, including but not limited to, French at Le Jardin Academy in Kailua, Hawai'i.

Shafer Hall is the proprietor of Mongoose versus Cobra, a bar in Houston, Texas, where he curates a monthly poetry reading series. His first collection of poems, *Never Cry Woof*, was published a few years back by No Tell Press.

Joseph Han is an MA candidate at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. His work has been previously published in *Metazen*, *Eunoia Review*, *Used Furniture Review*, *The Molotov Cocktail*, and *Word Riot*.

ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui is a Kanaka Maoli poet, artist, and mālama 'āina advocate. She is also an Associate Professor of Hawaiian Literature, specializing in traditional Hawaiian literature, Oceanic literature, and indigenous perspectives on literacy. She has published critical essays and creative writing in Hawai'i and abroad, and is a founding and current Chief Editor of *'Ōiwi: A Native Hawaiian Journal*. Her first book, *Voices of Fire—Reweaving the Lei of Pele and Hi'iaka Literature*, is forthcoming from the University of Minnesota Press, May 2014.

Penny Howard (b. December 1973 in Whangarei) is Ngapuhi, sub-tribe Mahurehure, canoe Ngataki-Matawhaorua, and ancestor Rahiri. She is also of Irish and Scottish descent. Penny places images on metaphoric silhouettes, Fols within the Va (space between all things) to launch from. Her "cut outs" recreate the emotive force of memory & reality; metaphor & motion. The construction of an image beyond the confinements of the frame. The images within the cut-outs take the viewer on a journey of association and re-construction. The viewer is free to construct & deconstruct. The viewer is free to commence and end at any point within or without the inner workings of the cut-out.

Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner is a poet, performance artist, and journalist born in the Marshall Islands and living in Hawai'i. Her work is a blend of storytelling and activism.

Carol Ann Johnston lives in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where she is Martha Porter Sellers Chair of Rhetoric and the English Language at Dickinson College. She fell in love with Eudora Welty's work in her first semester of college, and has never recovered. She is currently writing a book on Thomas Traheme and working on a book of poems. Publications include poems and essays in *Criticism*, *The Mississippi Quarterly, Shenandoah*, *American Poetry Review*, *The Drunket Boat*, *Illya's Honey*, and others.

Daren Kamali is an international Pacific poet/author/teacher/artist of Fijian/Wallis and Futuna ancestry who migrated to New Zealand in 1992, where he lives with his partner Grace Taylor and his two children. He is Co-Director of a Pacific arts company, Niu Navigations. He is in his final year of working toward a bachelor in creative writing from the Manukau Institute of Technology. He launched his first self-published bilingual book/CD of (English/Fijian) tales, *Poems and Songs from the Underwater World* in NZ, Fiji, and Hawai'i, translated into Ukrainian with Krok Publishers in 2013. Daren has performed/presented on stages in NZ, Australia, USA, Hawai'i, Fiji, Tahiti, Tonga, Rarotonga, and Palau since 1999 with dates booked in September 2013 for Ukraine, London, and Dubai. His dream is to take Pacific poetry as far and wide as possible.

Kapulani Landgraf was born and raised in Pū'ahu'ula, Kāne'ohe. She is the recipient of the 2013 Native Arts & Cultures Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship and is an instructor of Hawaiian Visual Art and Design and Photography at Kapi'olani Community College, Honolulu, O'ahu.

Lyn Lifshin's most recent books include *Ballroom, All the Poets (Mostly) Who Have Touched Me, Living and Dead*; *All True, Especially the Lies*; and *Knife Edge & Absinthe: The Tango Poems*. Black Sparrow, Texas Review Press, Red Hen, NYQ books, and Rubber Boots Press have published her work. For other books, bios, and photographs, see Lyn Lifshin's website: www.lynlifshin.com.

Janet Lilo (Ngāpuhi, Samoan, Niuean) is an established artist based in Auckland. Lilo works primarily in digital video and photography. Her vast body of work includes experimental documentaries, mash-ups, and video logs (vlogs) sourced from the internet. Since completing a Masters of Art and Design from Auckland University of Technology in 2006, Lilo has exhibited locally and internationally in solo and major group exhibitions. Recent exhibitions include *In Spite of Ourselves: Approaching Documentary; Contact,* Frankfurter Kunstverein, 2012; *Home AKL*, Auckland Art Gallery, 2012; *Identi-tee video*, Auckland War Memorial Museum, 2012; *Man in the mirror*, ICC building, Higashi Sapporo, 2009. More recently, Lilo was selected for the Fifth Auckland Triennale curated by Hou Hanru, exhibiting the mixed-media installation *Right of Way* 2013 at Artspace.

Dawn Mahi writes secretly on the side in late-night hours and furtive emails. During the day she is the Lei Hīpu'u Coordinator at Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services, exploring Pacific cultural connections and weaving community strengths and provider services into a coordinated lei of support for families. Her background and interests are in community development, talk story, public health, and liminality.

Born and raised on Maui, **Brandy Nālani McDougall**, is of Kanaka Maoli (Hawai'i, Maui, O'ahu, and Kaua'i lineages), Chinese, and Scottish descent. She is the author of a poetry collection, *The Salt-Wind, Ka Makani Pa'akai* (Kuleana 'Ōiwi Press 2008), the co-founder of Ala Press and Kahuaomānoa Press, and the co-star of an amplified poetry album, *Undercurrent* (Hawai'i Dub Machine 2011). In 2012, she was awarded the College Composition and Communication Convention Richard Braddock Award for an article on kaona and Hawaiian Rhetoric she co-wrote with Georganne Nordstrom. Her scholarship and poems have been published in journals and anthologies throughout Hawai'i, the Pacific, and Turtle Island. She is an Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies in the American Studies Department at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Kevin McLellan is the author of the chapbook *Shoes on a Wire* (Split Oak, forthcoming), runner-up for the 2012 Stephen Dunn Prize in Poetry, and *Round Trip* (Seven Kitchens, 2010), a collaborative series of poems with numerous women poets. He has recent or forthcoming poems in books and journals including: *2014 Poet's Market*, *American Letters & Commentary*, *Barrow Street*, *Colorado Review*, *Horse Less Review*, *Kenyon Review Online*, *Sixth Finch*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Witness*, and numerous others. Kevin lives in Cambridge, MA, and sometimes teaches poetry workshops at the University of Rhode Island in Providence.

Tessa Mellas's collection of stories *Lungs Full of Noise* received the 2013 Iowa Short Fiction Award, judged by Julie Orringer, and will be published in October 2013. She will be the Distinguished Visiting Writer at Bowling Green State University in spring 2014. She lives with a poet who likes bicycles, a three-legged cat who likes cream of wheat, and a four-legged cat who collects rubber bands.

Colleen Michaels's poems have appeared in journals and anthologies, including *Barrelhouse*, *The Paterson Literary Review*, *Blue Collar Review*, *The Mom Egg*, *Roar*, *Ilanot Review*, *Here Come the Brides: Reflections on Love and Lesbian Marriage, and Modern Grimmoire: Contemporary Fairy Tales, Fables and Folklore*. She directs the Writing Studio at Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, Massachusetts, where she hosts the Improbable Places Poetry Tour bringing poetry to unlikely places like tattoo parlors, laundromats, and swimming pools. Yes, in the swimming pool.

Rajiv Mohabir, a VONA and Kundiman fellow, is the author of the chapbooks *na bad-eye me* (Pudding House Press, 2010) and *na mash me bone* (Finishing Line Press, 2011). A PhD student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, his poetry appears or is forthcoming from journals such as *The Prairie Schooner*, *Drunken Boat*, and *Great River Review*. He received his MFA in poetry and translation from Queens College, CUNY.

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's artistic experience ranges from poetry writing/performance to fiction/essay writing and music while her academic interest span from ‘ike Hawai‘i, ethnic studies, literature, politics and critical race theory. 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 looks forward to finally moving home and beginning her PhD studies in English (kanaka maoli literature) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

Alice G. Otto is currently pursuing her MFA at the University of Arkansas, where she has received the Walton Family Fellowship in Fiction and the Carolyn F. Walton Cole Fellowship in Poetry. Her work has appeared in publications including *Harpur Palate*, *Yalobusha Review*, and *Surreal South ‘13*.

Brandon Otto is a music and portrait photographer based out of NW Arkansas. His work has been featured in journals such as *OVS*, *Off the Coast*, *Midwestern Gothic*, and *Blue Is Not a Sad Color*.

A migratory mammal, **Janna Plant** currently resides on the island of Manhattan, although she has been known to forage on the plains east of Colorado's Rocky Mountains. For many years, she secured shelter by sharing her days with horses in Kahuku, Hawai‘i. She was born in Santa Monica, and after her 18th year spent 11 moons breathing in Tucson, learning how to starve. Recent literary work include *The Refinery* (Blazevox) and selections in *Jack London Is Dead: Contemporary Euro-American Poetry of Hawai‘i* (Tinfish). She received her MFA from the Kerouac School, and is a University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa alumna.

David James Poissant's stories appear or are forthcoming in *The Atlantic*, *Playboy*, *One Story*, *Glimmer Train*, *Ploughshares*, and *The Southern Review*, and have been anthologized in *Best New American Voices* and *New Stories from the South*. His story collection *The Heaven of Animals* will be published by Simon & Schuster in March, 2014. He lives in Orlando with his wife and daughters and teaches in the MFA program at the University of Central Florida.

Doug Poole (b. 2 November 1970) is of Samoan and English descent. He is descendant of Tuailemafua o Safune Savaii and Ulberg of Tulaele, Apia, Upolo. Doug is a widely published and performed poet who identifies his poetry and editing work as a Pasifika Poet. Doug is the creator and editor of *blackmail press*, an online poetry

journal, which he has self-funded since June 2001. *blackmail press* has become a highly regarded online poetry journal: www.blackmailpress.com

Susan Azar Porterfield's three books of poetry include *In the Garden of Our Spines*, *Kibbe*, and a chapbook *Beirut Redux*. She is the editor of *Zen, Poetry, The Art of Lucien Stryk*.

Michael Puleloa, PhD, was born on Majuro in the Marshall Islands and raised on Moloka'i in Hawai'i. He has taught English at Kapi'olani Community College and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He is currently an English teacher at Kamehameha Schools, Kapālama, where he is also the advisor for *Ho'okumu*, the school's student literary journal. He thanks Josh Pestrana, Keoki Pescaia, and Mikiala Ayau for information that helped shape "A Call for Ha'eha'ekū."

K.L. Quilantang, Jr. is from the dry valley of Wai'anae and misses playing hide-and-go-seek in the forest behind his house. He graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and teaches English at Kapi'olani Community College. Ken lives in Wahiawā with his wife, new son, and two big dogs. His main goals in life are to write, write, write, and teach his son how to play hide-and-go-seek.

Maraea Rakuraku is a proudly indigenous woman with Tūhoe and Ngāti Kahungunu whakapapa coursing through her veins, which means part of her thrives on attention while simultaneously staunching herself out. She is a broadcaster, theatre producer, playwright, writer, theatre and book reviewer, and a performance poet.

Francine Rubin's chapbook, *Geometries*, is available from Finishing Line Press. Her poetry has also appeared in *Anomalous*, *Fringe*, *Ozone Park*, *Pank*, and *Rougarou*, among others. She works as the Associate Director of the Learning Center at SUNY Purchase College, where she also teaches writing. Online, she is at francinerubin.tumblr.com.

Eric Paul Shaffer is author of five books of poetry, including *Lāhaina Noon*. His poetry appears in *North America Review*, *Slate*, *Poetry East,* and *The Sun Magazine*; Australia's *Island* and *Quadrant*; Canada's *Dalhousie Review* and *Fiddlehead*; Éire's *Poetry Ireland Review*; England's *Stand* and *Magma*; and New Zealand's *Poetry NZ* and *Takahe*. Shaffer received the 2002 Elliot Cades Award for Literature. His novel *Burn & Learn* was published in 2009. Shaffer teaches at Honolulu Community College.

Serena Ngaio Simmons is an accomplished spoken word artist of Maori and European descent born and raised on O'ahu. Serena has attended and competed in the Brave New Voices international spoken word competition for youth in 2011 and 2012. Serena is currently pursuing her Bachelors degree in English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Serena has an affinity for chocolate but strongly dislikes broccoli. Her favorite color is the rainbow.

Lyz Soto is a poet of Haka, 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 toward 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.

Leilani Tamu (Samoan, Tongan, Pākehā) is a poet, social commentator, Pacific historian, and former New Zealand diplomat. She is the 2013 Fulbright/Creative New Zealand Writer in Residence at the Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Tamu's work has appeared in *Mauri Ola: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English*; *Niu Voices: Contemporary Pacific Fiction 1*; *Landfall*; *JAAM*; *blackmail press*; *Metro Magazine*; and *Snorkel*. Through her ability to draw on a diverse range of experiences, Tamu brings a fresh perspective to the table when tackling issues of social and cultural relevance to the Pacific region.

Grace Taylor is 29 years old, of English and Samoan decent, and born and raised in South Auckland, Aotearoa, New Zealand. Grace has been writing poetry for over ten years and performing spoken word poetry for six years. Grace won the Auckland Readers Writers Festival Poetry Idol 2008 and was a top-five finalist in 2009 and 2010. She has performed across Aotearoa, the Pacific, and USA. She has had works published on the online poetry journal *blackmail press*. Grace has been a key facilitator of spoken word poetry events in New Zealand; she has also been a mentor and teacher of the art form across Aotearoa for the last 6 years. She has also been guest judge for Hamilton Poetry Idol 2012, Going West Poetry Slam 2012, and the Auckland University Poetry Slam 2013. Grace is currently completing her Masters of Youth Development with AUT, and her first collection of poetry, *Afakasi Speaks*, has been published by Hawaiian publisher Ala Press. Grace is co-founder of the South Auckland Poets Collective, co-founder of Rising Voices Youth Poetry Movement and Co-Director of Niu Navigations (www.niunavigations.com).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is currently Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. Ngũgĩ is a novelist, essayist, playwright, journalist, editor, academic, and social activist from Kenya. His latest novel *Wizard of the Crow* was published in 2006 by Pantheon Books, NY, and Harvill Secker, London. *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* was published in 2009 by BasicCivitas Books, NY. *Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir* was published in 2010 by Pantheon Books, NY, and Harvill Secker. *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* was published in 2012 by Columbia University Press, NY. His latest book, *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir* was published in 2012 by Pantheon Books, NY, and Harvill Secker, London.

Maualaivao Albert Wendt ONZ, CNZM is Head of the Aiga Sa-Maualaivao of Malie, Samoa, and Aotearoa. An esteemed novelist, poet, short-story writer, playwright, and painter, he is also Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Auckland, specializing in New Zealand and Pacific literature and creative writing. Wendt has been an influential figure in the development of New Zealand and Pacific literature since the 1970s. In 2001 he was made Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, and in 2013 awarded New Zealand's highest honor, the Order of New Zealand, for his services to his country. Of his most recent books, *The Adventures of Vela*, a novel in verse, published in 2009, won the Commonwealth Book Prize for the South-East Asia and Pacific Region. A new collection of short stories, *Ancestry*, and a new collection of poetry, *From Mānoa to a Ponsonby Garden*, were released in 2012.

Aiko Yamashiro is a Ph.D. student in English studying decolonial/anticolonial literature and theory. She is grateful to Dawn Mahi, her co-author, for her love, valley wisdom, and powerful flowing spirit.

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Issue 78: 40th Anniversary Edition, Spring 2013

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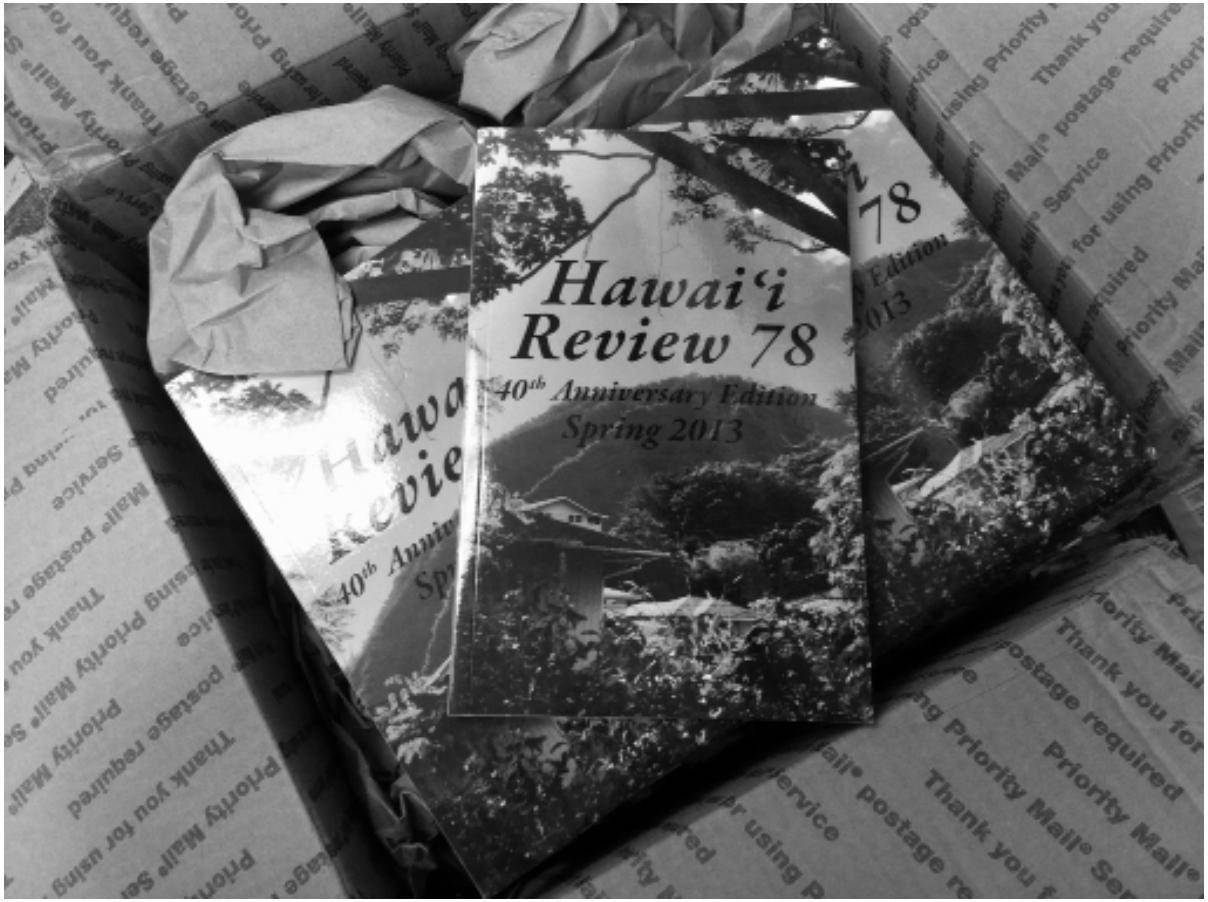

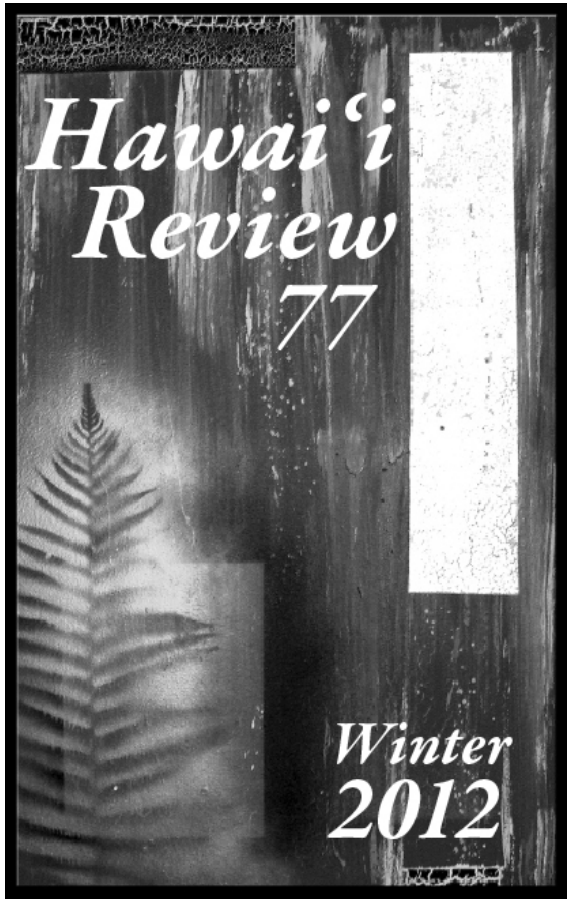

Issue 77: Winter 2012

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blackmail press is a quarterly online poetry journal. blackmail press was created to give writers of poetry and poetry lovers an online space to enjoy great poetry from Aotearoa and the wider pacific region.

The impetus is to promote poets from Aotearoa and the pacific, and to provide an environment for emerging poets to share their work alongside contemporary poets.

General issues of blackmail press have no specific theme; we like to present an eclectic range of voices from Aotearoa and the wider Pacific region.

We accept all forms of poetry, prose and welcome short stories. We also accept MP3 format recordings of poets in performance. *Review previous issues to get an idea of the type of work we present.*

Poets are asked to submit works they feel best showcase their unique voice and may submit a maximum of 5 poetic works for consideration and a maximum of three short stories. *All submissions must include a biography or will not be considered.*

Please email submissions to Managing Editor as an MS Word attachment, email body text, MP3 audio format.

Contact details: Managing Editor Doug Poole: editor@blackmailpress.com

2014 UPCOMING ISSUES & Submission Guidelines

blackmail press issue # 36 – February 2014 - No theme general issue. - Submissions now open, deadline 15th January 2014

blackmail press issue # 37 – June 2014 – Guest Editor - Submissions open February 2014, deadline May 15th 2014

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blackmail press 35 - http://www.blackmailpress.com/Index35.html

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