

THE ISLAND CHILD: STORIES FROM MOLOKA‘I

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ABSTRACT

This collection of stories explores the lives of characters from Moloka‘i. It also explores the nature of stories.

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PREFACE

The use of diacritical marks and the spelling of place names are consistent with the *Hawaiian Dictionary* (1986) and *Place Names of Hawaii* (1976) by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert.

In order to reflect the way words in the Hawaiian language appeared in early written records (such as in Hawaiian language newspapers), no diacritical marks have been used in stories set before 1881.

Diacritical marks are also omitted from: 1. words with apostrophes; 2. names of characters who do not spell their names with diacritical marks; 3. dialogue when characters do not pronounce them; and 4. place names or wind names with uncertain pronunciations (according to Pukui and Elbert).

A body of literature can be loose and disconnected—such as the literature around the god Kāne—or can be closely integrated by such devices as common terms and recurring character and themes. A study of such of a body of literature is important for understanding the individual works within it, the process of its creation, its place within its culture, and Polynesian thought in the broadest sense.
—JOHN CHARLOT, from *The Kāmapua‘a Literature*, 1987

There’s only so much [you] can say with words.
—J. MAKALOA, Cape Hālawā, Moloka‘i, November 2010

But words are so powerful.
—J. MAKALOA, Kamaka‘ipo Gulch, Moloka‘i, February 2011

This work of fiction has its roots in books like *Pouliuli*, *Potiki*, and *The River Between*.
Aside from the quote by John Charlot, nothing else should be considered true.

Genealogies: 1822

His arm had healed. The sour-smelling leafy wrap at his elbow had finally been removed, placed neatly now in a small dirt pit and buried. He stood bare-chested, a motionless silhouette on the eastern Molokai mountainside, on the southern side of the island's back, at the edge of the rainforest and a wide, worn pit of earth. It was something he hadn't done in what the only foreigner he knew had taught him was *one month*. Above Maui, the highest points in the sky over Hawaii still carried pieces of the night, a dense purple that softened only when his view fell slightly and his eyes very slowly panned down to the layer of gray and then bright pink clouds that seemed to erupt from out of the horizon. He watched the blossoming sky until it turned orange and yellow—the bottoms of clouds like fragmented bone lined in gold—reflecting on his time on the mountainside. There was an aching sound, and without choice he raised the remnant of his arm and fixed his attention not near his elbow, but where his right hand would be, and his fingers. He imagined the palm of a hand, his hand, now invisible, his fingers and their tips rolling toward him as in dreams since his arm had been damaged and then removed below the elbow. He imagined worn, muscular fingers peeling toward him like a wave.

He'd remember that forever, even after he finally returned from the mountainside and to his family—to the warm embrace of his wife and the many little hands of his children—even as he set off away from Molokai after leaving home toward a horizon much like the one he would see as he turned from the pit: a wave emerging as if from nothingness, while around him more than a hundred worn, chiseled men, dark-skinned and almost frail from lack of food, of poi and fish, continued to haul the cuttings of iliahi from the surrounding forest and place them neatly into a pit the size of a wooden ship's hull. It was enough sandalwood to last them a lifetime, and he listened to the men make a silent, aching noise before thinking perhaps it was the iliahi that he heard.

There would be a wave one day—he felt it now—a great and graceful wave that moved toward them all in a single moment. This wave, he knew, would have a profound affect for good upon the people.

He was Hoolehua—named for the high chief of his homeland whose swift nature he was said to have inherited before birth and whose genealogy stretched in time across Hawaii—and even now, with his right arm seeded and hidden in the fertile soil of the Kamiloloa uplands and a body that revealed the burden of a labor beyond human capacity, he led the silent, chiseled men through the fallen forest of iliahi with an unquestioned authority and a presence most of the men still believed had been bestowed to him by a god.

* * *

The wide, worn pit dipped into the earth like a curled, dry leaf, and stretched 142 paces. Hoolehua glanced down the vast slope of Molokai's western mountain range, toward the Kalohi and the Kaiwi channels, and then finally at an exposed, blank horizon. There was still a soft sky. He imagined the wave of his fingers pulling a handful of seemingly immense English ships with now tormented canvas sails toward him, over the bluish-green reef landings and patches of sand flats in his view, through blistering schools of mullet and weke and papio that clouded the shallow areas fronting Kalamaula, until the hulls of the ships crashed and splintered on the shoreline, shattering across the unspoiled beach between him and the Kalohi Channel. He imagined the torn ships shattered over the beach at Palaau for just one moment before his consciousness returned and he was confronted by the fact that he was now a man with only one complete and fully functional arm. He turned from the southern shoreline and then the pit, and then with his eyes on the men already exhausted by the task of cutting and stacking the sandalwood in the vast land that surrounded him, he resumed the duty that he had been told was passed down to him by the king, to ensure that the pit in the earth the size of a ship's hull was filled with an unmatched efficiency.

The early morning sun over Puu Kukui on Maui emanated a warmth that slipped through his pores and nearly flooded his gut. He felt temporary relief from the winds and events of the previous night, when he had lost two more men—his most trusted companions—in the unbending, unyielding Pai. An unforeseen rainstorm that lasted eight nights. It had led the men to delirium and then to an irreversible shock, and he had

watched the two writhe on the dark, wet ground. They had called with cracked and bleeding lips not for aid nor food nor for their own lives, but to see their families one last time before they succumbed to a certain death. The cold cut to their bones. The men, weak and rolling in and out of hallucinations, shed tears that slipped in droplets down the tiny cracks and fissures forming at the corners of their eyes before they fell onto the damp, black shadows of earth carved out by a delicate fire. Their tears continued to flow after the men had taken their last breaths, and they reminded him again of his own family, his wahine, Waiohuli, his daughter, four sons, and the youngest, the result of a calculated pregnancy whom he and his wife, ten months before the child's birth, had agreed should carry his own name. While the two dying men had quietly wept chant-like recitals of names and events from their lives, Hoolehua imagined his youngest son as he might now exist, at the breast of Waiohuli in the familial warmth of his hale and cradled in her arms. He hoped that without him they still sustained the comfortable life they all had shared, enjoyed the food and the prosperity he admitted now that he himself had taken—at times—for granted. He comforted the men though he knew they would die before morning, spreading the last bit of oil he had kept in the shadow of an old and lonely milo (that at one time had sheltered nearly all of the men) over their weathered faces. A musky scent cut through the wind in the space around them and reminded him of the sea and especially of Palaau, where he had gone when Waiohuli sent him to gather the oil. That day felt like a long time ago. And at the moment his thumb slid the last bit of oil near the eyes and over the lips of the men, he remembered Waiohuli and he decided too that he would begin a journey to end the destruction he now believed he'd done so much to cause.

When he had used the last of the oil, he leaned over and reached for the chief's feather cloak. It was the only piece of royalty he had ever worn, a gift before his departure into the uplands. He stood before releasing the cloak into the blistering night wind, and in one swift movement, he turned, and with his left arm, he pulled the billowing cloak in a circle around his back and over his shoulders before fastening it with

his at the front of his neck. Then he sat, surrounded by the aura of the two dying men and huddled like a boulder under the cloak as he waited for the sun to rise over Puu Kukui.

* * *

Waiohuli was his second wahine. And though by then they had shared a lifetime of both happiness and sadness, he remembered the events of their life with ease before he marveled again at the days she had come into his life forever. He had never told her as much, but he believed in her spirit there was a magic he would never understand, and he felt when he tried to, he was left with answers further removed from any truth he had known. Waiohuli had been the first woman to speak to him after the death of his first wahine, who had succumb to a feverish sickness that was said to have arrived with the ships. But in the angst and exhaustion following his eastward crossing of the Pailolo Channel to release the bodies of his wahine and their unborn child into the unmarked point in the ocean she had requested, he only glanced at Waiohuli at Maalaea before turning away and forgetting her. He returned his sight to the point in the ocean that now seemed just a stone's throw away from Molokai, Lanai, and Maui. Then he set off on the canoe for Puumoiwi, Kahoolawe and the adze quarry, to complete the journey that upon his return to Molokai would still be called impossible.

It was only upon his return to Molokai, nights later, on the shoreline inside the fishpond at Ualapue, when Waiohuli appeared again as if waiting for him amid a handful of men under the morning sky, that he saw her for the first time in a moment he'd later recognize as a lesson—even after the devastation caused by the passing of his wife and unborn child: that he still had much to learn about the world. He was drifting then, returning from Kahoolawe with the canoe now weighted and packed with stone blades that shimmered in the orange sunrise like the surface of the ocean. He was still mourning, nights after watching the finely woven mat with his wahine and their unborn child tucked securely inside slip over the edge of the hull of the canoe and into the marble depths of the ocean, but the image of Waiohuli on the shoreline at Ualapue was the one he'd identify as he sat among the worn men in the searing nighttime cold atop Kamiloloa near the sandalwood pit as the moment in his life when he realized there would always be

hope for him. And it was this image now, of Waiohuli adorned in white kapa and stepping into the calm waters of the walled fishpond at Ualapue, which allowed him to sit like a boulder with the furious Pai wind.

* * *

The triangular journey he made with the canoe from Molokai to Maui, and then to Kahoolawe and back had been deemed impossible by his two most trusted companions, the two men now dying beside him and who had reminded him of the required protocol involved not only for the interment of the body of his wahine, but also of those required for travel between islands. They questioned his ability to negotiate the wind and the currents of the Pailolo Channel during a time when it was necessary to keep canoes well lashed, especially as he made his way eastward, and finally, whether after releasing his wahine, he could return able-minded in a canoe weighted with enough stone adzes to cull the massive stands of iliahi in the Kamiloloa uplands. But Hoolehua persisted. He would acquire the adzes—a plan he had designed with his wahine when they realized her imminent death and one he had promised to complete—and now he knew, especially since she was dead, that he was bound to carry out the task.

On the night his wahine had died, he took the canoe of his trusted companions and set off from the southern Molokai shoreline before sunrise with olona cordage, a bone fishhook, and a single stone at his feet. His wahine and child were lying before him in the hull. At Kamalo, he paddled the canoe beyond the southern reef and into the Pailolo Channel, where he began to struggle in the wind. He persisted in the oncoming waves outside the reef for some time before the swells brought water over the bow and he thought for the first time that this too might be his own burial and that in the onslaught of current he would be lost at sea. He welcomed the idea—he and his wife and child together forever—when the warm glow of the sun began to draw the dark volcanic profile of Maui on the horizon. The currents and wind completely stopped, the surface of salt water in the channel was completely still, and the canoe began to cut through the sea as if on its own.

Death had found him again. This time with a wind and rain that had fallen over the men for eight nights. It was a cold, wicked death that had now taken his two most trusted companions, and he thought if he made it down the inhospitable Kamiloloa mountainside, his first duty would be to take the news of the men's deaths to their wahine and to their sons. He would do this in secrecy. He would tell the women of the precise location in the uplands where he had buried their kane, then he would tell them that the men had died before the fire and that he was certain no one would ever find them. In the hands of one of the women, he would leave a small piece of the finely woven mat he had kept at his side since the death of his first wahine. He would ask the woman to take the piece to Waiohuli. Then Hoolehua, against his will, would take the canoe of his trusted companions and leave eastward from Palaau without stopping at his own home to see Waiohuli and his children.

When the men were buried, he turned his attention from the horizon and the sandalwood pit. Waiohuli had proven there would always be hope for him, but he realized the dilemma that came with this revelation. Hope was something most necessary in the midst of uncertainty, chaos even, and these were the things that Hoolehua was going to deliver to the Kamiloloa uplands.

He examined the weary and sweaty, chiseled men on the mountainside, the worn, dusty trails, the scarred earth, and the scattered fragments of the iliahi forest. There were still imposing, even massive stands of sandalwood left on Molokai, and there were young, tender saplings spreading toward the east, but he saw with clarity their inevitable demise. The earth was suddenly drying up before him. The men would work with him until death. They would give of themselves like he had for the love of their homeland and perhaps even their chiefs. And when he thought of how the worn men might give of themselves for him, his body collapsed under the morning sun. He was awake and breathing and he remained on the ground until a few of the men noticed him there and ran to his side. With special attention to his right arm, four of the men carried him to the shade of the lone milo tree where he had kept his oil. They struggled as they leaned him

against the tree, then they called for water and within seconds there were men around him with gourds.

* * *

Waiohuli. Waters of change. The name like an omen after the death of his first family. And when Hoolehua had seen her in white kapa walk into the fishpond at Ualapue, he was sure without knowing her that she was there for him. During the solitary voyage across the Pailolo Channel with his wahine and unborn child, he was consumed by anger and driven by loneliness until he watched the mat slip over the hull of the empty canoe, until he felt after that instant the breath of his wahine in the act now before him. He was the vessel that had brought her there, to the place she herself had chosen for life ever after, and he saw that his torment, while seemingly unbearable, was in fact the result of a joyous mystery, and he was reminded of that instead. He would think of her and the unborn child and the image of the woven mat disappearing into the dark marble ocean as thin shafts of sunlight began to emanate from behind Haleakala. And in the turmoil and at the sight of the piece of woven hala left in his hand, he would forget the moment, just like the moment when Waiohuli first spoke to him, that after the mat had disappeared, he saw from the depths of the ocean come a rush of brilliant blue.

Against the milo in the uplands of Kamiloloa, Hoolehua felt in many ways just as he did when he had returned on the canoe from Kahoolawe to Molokai—forlorn and broken—under an unrelenting sun. He did not hear the men speaking before him like he had not heard the wind cutting through the hull of the canoe. He did not feel the throbbing pain in his arm or the burning strain in his shoulders from the paddle. He did not see the men or the canoe as they were, but like he would if he had left his body and was watching himself with them, as if his eyes were in more than one place at a time. In this dream-like place, he watched the men continue to gather around the tree and sit one after the other beside him on the wide landscape until he began to see the canoe and then Waiohuli standing on the thin shoreline in the fishpond, the green eastern slope of the island behind her rising until it reached the white clouds and light blue sky. He was drifting, tired, weak and hungry. With the sheer weight of the stone blades, the canoe had

seemed to take a life of its own, drawing him on a course between the islands in currents that had brought him closer to Molokai's southeastern shoreline than he had planned—he had given up paddling by then, resorted to firmly poking the paddle over the gunnel of the canoe on his left or his right to guide it home, so when Hoolehua saw Waiohuli step toward the belly of the fishpond, he pulled the paddle into the hull and let the onshore winds slowly carry the canoe over small channels between coral, like underwater tabletops, toward the island.

The ground under the dying shade of the lone milo tree was carpeted with yellow and gray heart-shaped leaves. Hoolehua had thanked the men for their aid, but could not partake in the last of their rations. This was not the work they knew as farmers of the land, and when they had approached him, he was reminded even more of their suffering. He sat in silence, looking at the ground, then at the blood in the cracks of their hands before he finally asked the men, *I mea ka apu me ka waiole?* It was a question he hoped would later bring them to forgive him for what he had done and for what he was going to do. He was fine now, he told them, just a sudden heat. And he watched the bottom of bright white clouds that were spread across the mountaintop turn gray before he told the men they should resume their work for the rest of the day only at a pace that allowed each man enough iliahi to carry off the uplands on his own in one haul. They were to cut, from now on, only the finest pieces of iliahi, and they were to stack the pieces not in the pit with what they had gathered that morning, but in small piles that they could tend to themselves. Then he asked them to leave him under the tree and when he was alone, he pulled from his waist a small piece of finely woven hala and buried it in his only hand.

* * *

Waiohuli had kindled a flame of meaning in the darkness of his life. When the canoe had finally arrived near the shore at Ualapue, she stood on the immaculately fashioned stone and coral wall of the fishpond. With an incredible poise, she stepped toward the canoe now grounded against the wall and offered Hoolehua two sweet potatoes and a small ipu filled with water that, in his preoccupation with her presence, he voraciously consumed without thought. His hands were empty and he was momentarily

embarrassed at having not yet told her his name, but he welcomed the awkwardness of the moment with her since it was something other than what he had felt while alone, repeating the silent song of lament for his wahine, and crossing the Pailolo Channel.

If there was something that took his attention away from Waiohuli, it was only the fishpond upon which she stood. He saw in the wall a timeless history—one before man and a kingdom—when the stones lay dormant in a rich, fertile valley on the north shore of the island. He marveled at the strength and precision behind the craftsmanship of the pond, and he wondered if the stones had been brought by hand or by canoe or by prayer. For centuries, the wall had withstood the most violent forces of nature, and the salt taste still in his mouth now brought him great comfort. He watched the brackish water in the pond empty from the makaha into the shallow ocean water around him. He heard Waiohuli's kapa play the steady wind as it moved between them. And he wondered if the stones had known that one day, too, he would become a part of their story, and for the first time, he began to see his journey not as his own but as the story of the island. He was still no doubt an imposing man, the muscles in his arms and legs like the smooth river rocks he now saw in the wall. He was a man who had achieved the impossible, making the solo journey with his wahine and unborn child into what should've been the oncoming currents and winds of the Pailolo Channel before returning to Molokai with a hull full of sharpened, solid slabs of stone. But in the presence of the fishpond, he could feel nothing more than a sense of humility.

* * *

When the sun began to fall toward the horizon, he was still under the milo tree with the piece of worn, woven hala tucked in his hand. He did not put any effort into resuming his duty after the fall, partly because that was no longer necessary, and partly because all day there had been no sign, even when he looked out to the stark horizon and channels surrounding the southern face of the island, of anyone on the mountainside except him and the men. It was as if they'd been forgotten.

His most trusted companions were now hidden in the Kamiloloa uplands alongside his right arm. Gone. He had lived his entire life with them—from infancy to

manhood—within a proximity that could be measured in steps. He had watched them grow up on the land while their fathers farmed sweet potato and banana, and while they listened to rhythmic tapping of wood on stone that could not be contained in the hale kuku while their mothers prepared kapa. As boys, they worked and played together, ate together, prayed together, and they fought against each other until they were bruised and sometimes bloody and until it was clear all they could do at these times was hurt themselves. When they became men, they shared the secret wisdom of their fathers and produced crops that became the envy not only of the ahupuaa, but also of the moku, and they began to raise families in the way they themselves had been raised, with a firm diligence and an unyielding love for the land.

It was this love, he thought, that allowed him to understand, many years before, how a woman like Waiohuli could embody the history of a place like the fishpond, that she, too, was intimately rooted in the earth, and why, when he thought later about her offering of uala and wai, he saw, even in the moments of his unconscious consumption, the act was a part of her very being. She was a woman like the fertile land, governed by nature, with brown skin and eyes that reminded him of the sky at sunset. In her bleached kapa, he saw the Makaolehua wind—a past and future—and that was when Waiohuli stepped into the water and began removing the stone blades from the canoe and gently stacking them on the wall of the fishpond.

Kamiloloa had seen its share of change. Toward the east, at Pakuhiwa, both Alapainui and Kamehameha had battled in wars on Molokai, each of them having brought a fleet of canoes that, upon landing, stretched four miles down the southern coastline. There were pockets here and there in the landscape that held stories from these battles. Kamiloloa's future was uncertain, like the fishpond's, but in time he knew the island would renew itself with or without man. There was still a complex labyrinth of koaia, lama, aalii, kului, and akia covering the mountaintops behind him, but amidst the falling leaves of the milo tree, he was reassured that there was no room for complacency on the mountainside, and that to love the land, even before his own family, meant to save his family for as long as eternity meant. Hoolehua stood as the bottom of the sun pierced

the horizon beyond the Kaiwi Channel, then he stared at the small remnant of woven hala still cradled in his hand.

* * *

When all but two of the stone blades had been neatly stacked on the wall of the fishpond at Ualapue, Waiohuli slowly climbed into the canoe. She did not face Hoolehua again. She waited until she heard his paddle slide from the hull and dip into the ocean. She kept her sight westward, toward Kaamola and Kamalo, and she imagined the bend in the path the canoe would take before it was carried by the currents to Kawela, Kamiloloa, and beyond. She had seen these images before in dreams about Hoolehua, the man who had lost his wahine to the ship disease and who challenged the Pailolo Channel to release her body. He rode night waves in the canoe to Kahoolawe for blades made of polished stone. He used these blades in competition, felling trees against men using iron, and his speed and efficiency would impress even his chief. Waiohuli would be the one to give him hope, and four nights before his arrival at Ualapue, she had predicted as much to the caretakers of the fishpond. She had given them her word that the man was righteous, and now she was staring down the southern shoreline and up the green back of the island, trying to guide him home. His solitary endeavor had left him in a dreamlike daze, the images of his youth and his wahine and the thought of work in the Kamiloloa uplands now balled up in his mind like the school of small mullet stirring just outside the makaha of the walled fishpond. He turned one last time to the shoreline and wondered how Waiohuli had been able to meet him without provocation amid the concerted collection of men and women and children now assembled around the shoreline of the fishpond and staring toward the wall and his stones. Then he set his paddle over the gunnel and resumed his journey home.

Nights earlier, before he had reached Kahoolawe for the sharpened and polished awalii now stacked on the wall of the fishpond at Ualapue, he had caught a single fish, an aweoweo with luminous eyes the size of his fists and which he would later carry onto the black Hakioawa shoreline with both hands. Near the shores of Maalaea, he had gathered opae oehaa before Waiohuli spoke to him and before he looked out one last time to the

Pailolo Channel from Maui. He had drifted north off Molokini after the moon had risen, still with the song of lament in his head, still with an emptiness in his gut, until he reached a place on the ocean between Maui and Kahoolawe where the stone he had kept near his feet pulled the full length of the olona taut and his hook and opae, he imagined, fluttered on the ocean floor. With his fingertips on the line, he felt the stone tremble over reef and sand beneath the canoe in the current while he waited for the fish and thought of the warmth of his wahine, her body now wrapped in the hala mat and drifting toward a dark underwater heaven. Above the canoe, stars soon settled behind thin clouds that slowly gathered before dissipating around an egg-shaped moon pinned in a purple sky. He looked for a sign, any sign, in the dry, lifeless wind.

* * *

I mea ka apu me ka waiole? What is the cup without water? It was a question based on the premise that while there was a timeless beauty in the tools and materials they created, beautiful things without function were useless. When the worn, chiseled men had returned to the gnarled base of the milo tree in the uplands and the last edge of the sun completely passed into the horizon, Hoolehua watched the first fingertips of the Pai wind flicker in the small fires the men had built for warmth and light. He had made a serious decision in the heat of the day, and now that the night was upon them, he would tell the men without reservation of his plan to release the fires into the Kamiloloa uplands. The land was sacred, the cup that brought them health and prosperity, life itself, but in his attempt to gain stature and rank, to appease the chiefs, Hoolehua no longer denied that his own work had drained the lonely mountainside that now housed the chiseled men and sat beneath a dome of stars.

There was a moment like this one, he remembered, when he had held the woven mat carrying his wahine and unborn child over the hull of the canoe in the Pailolo Channel, a moment when he had either refused or was unable to let them go, when he realized there was a piece of him that would go with them, sink into the marble depths between Molokai, Lanai, and Maui, and die. He would be a completely different man, the ocean and islands around him suddenly foreign without them. And he would not want to

continue on toward Maalaea and Kahoolawe. The ocean was completely still, and although it was still early morning, there was a tremendous heat radiating from the surface. He held them there until as if on its own, the mat began to sink and he was left still holding a small torn piece. He felt the sun emerging behind Haleakala when he turned back to the immense eastern Molokai mountains and saw the sky like an orange milky cream settle above them. Low clouds lined in gold above the mountains began to fill with orange and cast thin shadows over the ridges that also fell into the valleys. The surface of the water between him and the island was silvery sheen in the sunrise. Between the islands, on the ocean in the canoe, he was a small, small thing, a speck. Then he saw in the piece of mat still in his hand the consummate hands of his wife and the moment before they joined in union when she had presented him with the gift.

It was the piece of woven hala now tucked at his waist and silently reminding him of the many stories of his wahine that allowed him to sit with patience as he waited under the calm night sky north of Molokini for the fish. In the woven hala, there were stories from his youth, of his trusted companions, of his mother beating kapa in the hale kuku and his father planting uala in the moonlight, stories he had shared with his wahine, and stories she had shared with him. The canoe sat under the wide, night sky, the egg-shaped moon was still above him but on its descent toward Molokai. Molokini was a giant blade outlined in moonlight, and behind it, Haleakala was a black dome rising to dark dense clouds. There were faint flickers of fire scattered across the Maui shoreline. The only sound was when he sometimes tapped his foot against the inside of the hull, or when he rocked the canoe and the ama broke the surface of the ocean. He steadied himself and then listened in the silence to the stories of the woven hala with the olona line wrapped securely around his hand and in the crease of his palm. He was not a fisherman, but he was comfortable there. He knew the line in his hand connected him to the ocean floor, the sand and coral beneath the ocean stretched back, between Maui and Lanai, to the shores of his home. He looked up at the moon, stared there in the silence, hoping. He was no longer drifting. He was anchored now, grounded. And he would feel this way until a

sudden strike on the line shook him out of his thoughts and a sharp force pulled his hand with the line over the gunnel of the canoe.

* * *

In the days before his wahine had taken her last breath, long after prayer and sacrifice, while fierce winds cut through the Molokai lowlands, Hoolehua worked with his kahuna and with his two companions so that upon her departure from the physical world, she would be welcomed by the gods. While she lay dying in the hale moe beside his mother, he and his companions raised an elaborately carved ohia frame—a post and rafters—to extend the doorway of the hale. Upon the frame, they lashed a ridge-pole and connected the pole to the apex of the hale. Then they thatched lauhala to the frame. They worked in a familiar unison without speaking, their hands passing the lashing and moving around the wood and the lauhala like a machine until the hale had been extended, the new doorway completed, and from inside, near his wahine, his mother began to wail. Then his two companions, without looking into the doorway or acknowledging the cries, turned to Hoolehua and with tears in their own eyes, each handed him gourds filled with salt they had gathered near the shoreline at Palaau.

The fishpond at Palaau, Pohoele, was the largest on Molokai and was built for Kamehameha after he had conquered Oahu. Its stone walls did not stretch into the shallow waters and toward the reefs that bordered the southern Molokai shoreline like those at Kaamola, Kamalo, Kawela, or Kamiloloa, but Waiohuli saw its stones and the way the canoe would glide silently onto the sand just outside the eastern end of the pond before Hoolehua had even taken the canoe outside the reef at Ualapue. She saw the stones at Pohoele just as she saw the woven mat with the body of Hoolehua's wahine immediately sink when it slipped over the edge of the canoe at the edge of the Pailolo Channel. It was just as his wahine had told him, and the way Waiohuli had seen it in her dreams. Waiohuli had heard the ringing sound Hoolehua's companions would hear right before their death on the Kamiloloa mountainside. She knew that when they died, blood for Hoolehua would seep from their mouths. She knew these things as if they had already

happened, but she did not know what to expect when the canoe finally landed at night in Palaau .

Hoolehua had been told to find the fish for the stone blades by aligning the canoe with the western tip of Molokini before dropping the stone weight and the line, to slowly drift away from the island, back to Molokai, until he had completely uncoiled the line and the stone rested near the sand and coral bottom. The hook, which had been prayed over by his kahuna, would bring the fish to him. And now, with a supernatural strength, the fish towed the canoe in the night—Hoolehua holding on and worried that the line would snap—until darkness filled the sky. He felt the canoe head toward the direction of Molokini, but he no longer saw the island. He felt the bow of the canoe spin east and then west, facing Hakioawa on Kahoolawe, so he braced himself in the hull of the canoe, fought with the fish until he had brought up some line, and looped the line around the iako to wait for the fish to tire. His hand with the line was throbbing from the pressure. The soles of his feet burned as they slid against the floor and smacked up against the hull. But he did not feel pain, not like the kind he would when a stone blade, many nights later, came tearing out of the air and ripped through his right arm. He braced himself in the hull of the canoe with the line still taut around his hand as the fish pulled him and the canoe at a speed he had never felt the canoe take on a night without wind.

Kamiloloa had seen the chiefs of Kamehameha at Kaiana in 1795, and years before, the Oahu chief, Kapiiohokalani, die near its border with Kawela in battle against the Molokai forces and Alapainui. Before that even, there were families here who cherished Kamiloloa, dwelling near the seashore and moving into the uplands whenever life required it. There were families here before Kamehameha, before the arrival of Paoa from Tahiti, who were inspired to live a commoner's way of life. This was the life that had been passed down to Hoolehua. Not a chiefly life. Not a life with power over other men. But Hoolehua, who had taken Waiohuli as his second wahine, was now on the Kamiloloa uplands to prove he had the mana to regain that power, a place in the history of this aina where he was named alii. He had been born to the descendant of a runaway chief, who upon reaching Molokai, lived as a commoner and toiled in the earth under the

sun and the moon. Hoolehua was diligent and knowledgeable and trustworthy in exactly the same way as his father, but in the pursuit of power, he had been the polar opposite. Now, however, on the Kamiloloa mountainside and with men around him emaciated and worn like the dark earth, he saw how a man like an alii could relinquish his position without shame.

He felt almost dead when the red and silver scales of the fish flashed in the moonlight beneath the canoe in the Alalakeiki Channel, but he continued to pull the fish toward the surface and to hold the fish from running by looping the line he pulled around the iako of the canoe. He was still between Maui and Kahoolawe, but somehow the fish had pulled the canoe around to the southern side of Molokini, where he was no longer protected from the nighttime swells and currents. He let the fish take line when he realized he could not bring the fish aboard while waves pushed against the hull and kept the ama bobbing on the ocean's surface. He would need to wait for the stars came out again, for the water to calm. Even with the fish just a little more than an arm's length away, he was still at its mercy. The line cut back and forth through the water like a blade, but there was no sense of desperation in the fish, just an unyielding strength and pulse, as if it too understood its purpose.

* * *

After he had lost his arm, he was completely aware there were men who had left the Kamiloloa mountainside. He did not know if they had returned to their homes or if, because of shame or fear, they took their families to hide in the northern valleys of the island, where they could reestablish themselves and a fruitful relationship with the land. There weren't many of them who had left—he could count them on his hand—but when he thought about what they had done, the secret paths they had taken down the mountainside and the long trek with their families to Waikolu or Pelekunu, he was filled with both an anger and sadness he could not quench or understand. He was certain that the work on the mountainside was not the work for children, and he could not believe it when his most trusted companions had told him stories of women and children on other islands forced to haul iliahi on their backs. But when he noticed the missing men—his

own men gone without notice—his first impulse had been to track them down himself and to kill them. Now, however, as the remaining men continued to huddle in the night under the shelter of the milo tree near the wide, shadowy pit in the earth, as he looked over their bare silhouettes, he wished he had been so heroic. The remaining men, every one of them, were nothing more than bones.

His most trusted companions had died on a night when the clouds and the wind tore through the Kamiloloa mountainside with a vengeance, driving into the men and punishing them for their offense. The wind whipped and hissed in the trees, falling leaves ripped past the men. There were no stars, barely a sky beyond the clouds when they parted for a moment before sealing the men over the land. It held them there, the wind, flooded with the bittersweet scent of rain and wet foliage.

The bones of his most trusted companions, now settled in the earth, were one pace east of his own buried arm. And in the wind and the rain, as he huddled under the royal cloak, Hoolehua felt a throbbing where his arm once was, and he saw again the glistening blade of the adze attempting to sever it from the rest of his body. It was late in the day and four of the men, making a last push before sunset, had found a massive tree and were gathered in awe around it. They inspected the iliahi, rubbing their hands over its bark, looking up to see the top rise into quickly shifting clouds and a golden-brown sky before they determined there was enough time to fell the tree and process it for the pit before dark. In their fatigued state, the men hurried, each with his own koi, taking his turn making full arching swings near the base of the tree. They had been in the uplands for months by then—they had already made multiple trips back to the lowlands with cuttings bundled on their backs, had already seen others crumble to their knees and die on their way to the ships—and although their hands were blistered and callused, they worked at a habitual pace, rapidly scoring the immense trunk of the tree. Hoolehua was monitoring the pit, watching over the others as they chipped away at bark and sapwood before they stacked the last of the day's cuttings, but when he noticed from a distance the four men at the base of a tree over five times their height, he turned his attention from the pit and walked toward them. He saw there was danger, and he knew, as he watched the men

focused on the base of the tree, that above them when the wind pressed into the highest branches and flushed through the leaves, they would not see as he did that the tree was about to fall. As he watched the men, he quickened his pace, calling out to no avail until he heard the heartwood crackle in the wind, and he saw the tree rotate a bit and then come down over one of the men and crash onto the earth.

The injured man was in fact a boy, the son of the man now kneeling over him while the two other men stood in shock at the base of the fallen tree. Hoolehua moved over the boy's father, tried to calm him, to organize the men, but the boy's silence and his father's angry weeping created such confusion that he was unable to get their attention. The boy was pinned to the ground at his shoulder by the trunk of the tree. He was breathing. He was alive. But Hoolehua soon realized, when he saw the tree partially over the boy's chest, there was no certainty if they moved the tree that the boy would recover. He placed his hand on the father's shoulder and nudged him back into the present. He thought of his own son, and when some of the others had arrived, he asked the father of the boy if he was ready to move the tree. The father stood up, said nothing, and backed away, so Hoolehua leaned over to ready the boy. He put his hand on the boy's free shoulder. And then over the ground, he saw the sharp shadow of awalii curving toward him and he felt the sudden chill of looming uncertainty.

He knew the blade would hit him. He knew he would retaliate against the father because he had to, and then that the men would try to intervene. But it was only when he turned to see the blade glisten in the last bit of sunlight near his face that he knew for sure his only defense was to shield his body from the blade with his arm. Then, with his forearm hanging lifeless from the rest of his body, he shot from the ground and with his left hand pinned the father by his throat until his fingertips were buried in the dirt and they were staring face-to-face. He would not remember the men pulling him from the father or struggling to carry him to the lone milo tree in the darkness, only that at some time in the night he woke to see his two most trusted companions beside him, working over his right arm, and that in his left hand his fingers were playing with a piece of soft, woven hala.

* * *

Waiohuli had told him when they arrived in Palaau—after he had left the stones on the wall at Ualapue—that he had appeared to her in dreams. She had told him she dreamed the fish he caught led him to Kahoolawe when the wind and the currents arrived in the night. She saw the shimmering red and silver scales of the fish slash beneath the surface until it dove and was invisible, the precise way he finally brought the fish aboard when the canoe reached the southern tip of Hakioawa, and the men from Maui, who were on Kahoolawe preparing the koi, on the beach to meet him. He lifted the fish out of the water between the hull and the ama by slipping his entire hand under the gill plate, careful not to damage its appearance, and when the head of the fish was out of the water, he let go of the line and reached with his other hand to secure a grip at the base of its tail. When the canoe had landed, he carried the fish onto the sand in the bay, then dropped to his knees and stayed there, extending his arms with the fish above his head for some time until he felt the burning weight slip from his hands and heard the sound of footsteps walking away in the sand. He remained there, as the men were told he would, until he heard the dense crackle of the stone blades as they were being stacked neatly in the hull of the canoe. This is when he finally looked up and when behind him all the stars began to fall in the sky. It was Waiohuli, he knew now, as they made their way from the Palaau shoreline to the homes of his father and mother and his most trusted companions—she had helped him secure the stones. And since she didn't say as much, just let him imagine her dreams, he felt a chill run over his body when he suddenly thought about the ease by which he had found the opae oehaa.

The kiai of the fishpond at Palaau had granted them access to the shoreline because he knew Hoolehua's plight and because he was grateful for the brilliant stone blade. He knew the gift meant Hoolehua had done the impossible, and he took that as an indelible sign. He let them pass to the intricate complex of loi kalo at Palaau, where piko, hoakea, nohu, and kai bloomed like stars from the shimmering water in the moonlight. These taro patches, like the fishpond, were built by Hawaii men led by Hoolepanui, a favorite of Kamehameha, and because Hoolehua had watched the men build the loi as a

child, he knew the exact path on which to lead Waiohuli as they made their way home. He had walked that path with his eyes closed. As a child, he had called out to the kiai and then had hidden behind the stone terraces of the loi. Now, he was alive again, in the still and starry night, carrying the stone blade (that warranted his rise to the position of alakai—perhaps even as poe alii), the bone hook, the olona line, and the piece of woven hala from the mat of his wahine. He was home.

Nights after he had lost his arm, Hoolehua woke under the morning shade of the giant milo and was finally able to sit and speak with his most trusted companions. He was told the man who had struck him was gone from the Kamiloloa uplands. The man had left—with the permission of his companions—shortly after they had buried his son. They reminded him that after he was rolled off the man, his final order had been to let the man go. He had lost his son, and that was more than enough of a punishment. There might be no one now to bring life to his bones. Hoolehua struggled as he rose from the shade of the tree—he would need to relearn the simplest of tasks—but he soon resumed his work in all the same ways he had before the injury, except now he was precisely aware of the toll, both physical and mental, the work was taking on the men. While they would give of themselves for their alii—even work until death on the mountainside—they did not expect the same for their sons, and they would risk their own lives to prevent this. Kamehameha was hidden. And the men on the mountainside, worn and disillusioned, recognized they could no longer calculate the outcome of their efforts. They no longer trusted their labor would be acknowledged or rewarded. They might never return to their homes. Hoolehua had thought they were on the brink of chaos, but now he knew, they were in it.

Hope. Even Waiohuli, with all she knew, secretly hoped. There was a world beyond Maui, beyond Hawaii, and while she was sure any path there took her first to Molokai, she still hoped when she got there, after time, Hoolehua's mother would claim her as the favorite. Waiohuli had dreamt of ships before their stories crept up the western slopes of Maui, before she had seen them. She dreamt of iron and glass, of men and women covered in fabric and lace. But these were dreams, she thought, that's all. Nothing

now compared to the hope that one day Hoolehua's mother would teach her the uhaloa kapa. She walked alongside the multitude of loi in Palaau for the first time, quietly following Hoolehua. She had a new sense of purpose even though she knew full well they hadn't yet reached home, Hoolehua was not safe, and there was no guarantee she was either. There was a small chilly wind near the seashore that increased in force as they made their way north. And when mixed with the pleasure of knowing her dreams were coming to fruition, it was invigorating.

Hoolehua reached for the ball of olona and remembered his kahuna's prayer over the bone hook....

The men had faced a multitude of weather on the mountainside. Powerful rays of the sun ebbed until they were covered in clouds. There were days when sweat ran down into the corners of their mouths. Days when their bones shuddered in the cold. So many days. And nights, too, when the wind was still and they heard voices from the seashore, when it blew so hard the men struggled against each other for shelter behind boulders. Together, they had faced a lifetime of weather on the mountainside, and now some of the men would not return home. These, he thought, were perhaps the lucky ones.

Flight: 1880

On the highest point of the little dome-like island a mile from the Waikolu shoreline, he takes a knee on the soft ground and closes his eyes. The full moon, Mahealani, has reappeared above him, and he imagines the parting clouds and the hazy moonlight spilling outward in the wind across the sky. He rests his left forearm on his thigh and lowers his head.

The other men are working under the canopy of the loulu grove—they continue to lash palm fronds to the bamboo poles they have carried from Waikolu—and every now and then he hears the surf crashing against the steep shoreline in front of him amid the rustling fronds collected on the ground or hanging in the fiercely swaying trees that cover the island. He is praying to the akua, the aumakua, the kupuna—every single one he knows—but when the sudden image of his inevitable jump from the cliff (and the violent surf surrounding the island) enters his mind, he finds himself silently calling for Waiohuli. He is grounded again.

The violent surf is immediately replaced by the image of Waiohuli standing over the sleeping body of an ailing child in a dimly lit hale. The body is his, and the woman breathing dreams into him is his grandmother.

The clouds have parted and the moon is fully exposed—there is a radiant night sky and the surface of the ocean between the small, grassy plateau on Mokapu, where he is kneeling, and Kalawao, his next destination, is a glistening path from one dark body of land to another. He stays crouched in prayer as Waiohuli tells him now that his is his own fate, there is no turning back. The edges of loulu fronds scratch the skin under his arms and against his ribs, his stomach and his back. He is cold, but he feels a warm, sticky sensation beginning to form in his palms, so he tightens his grip on the bamboo in his hands.

Let the wind carry me into the sky. Let me be the one to bring honor back to his name.

* * *

The others will fly to Kalawao from Mokapu for makahiki like they have whenever the ocean is too rough for canoes. They will fasten loulou to bamboo frames with wingspans three times the length of their bodies. They will gather on the plateau—the largest stretch of level ground on the little island—as they are now, and run into the oncoming wind until there is lift and they are caught in an updraft that will carry them far above Mokapu before their westward decent toward Kalawao.

He opens his eyes and finds the men making their way toward him through long, slanted shadows cast by the palms. There are seven of them, and although they emerge under the dense night sky, he can see from a distance that they are in fine physical shape. Bodies like warriors. Tall, muscular. The flaps of their malo slap against their thighs in the wind as they step from under the canopy and make their way to the flat. He stands to face them. He has seen this moment before—he is comforted by this fact—the men are guarding themselves and the gliders against the wind. They lean into the current to keep themselves standing there in front of him.

He is Kauaua. Eldest of Awalii, daughter of Hoolehua and Waiohuli. He was born and raised in the fertile northern valley of Waikolu, the land of three waters, where his grandfather retreated with their family in the wet season of 1822. Now, he is the legacy to that name, Hoolehua, and the completion of this journey from Waikolu to Naiwa and then beyond will mark the first time a descendant has returned to the site of his grandfather's birth. He will return honor to the name of the one they call the runaway chief. His demonstration of strength and might and speed in Naiwa will bring a new dawn to the plains.

Kauaua looks at the ground around him, then at the grassy field leading to the edge of the cliff. There's enough of a drop there, he knows. Once he has jumped off the cliff and over the rocky shoreline and the crashing surf, there will be enough time for the wind to find its place under his body. He will dive into the wind, spread his arms, and fly—he will not be carried on a glider like the others. No. He will fly just as he has seen it in the dreams, at first by the updraft rushing against the sharp Mokapu shoreline, then by

the wind of his birthplace, Kilioopu. It will carry him across the channel separating Mokapu and Kalawao.

He will be carried by the ancestors. He will also be carried by his own skill and determination. He is a moho, after all. There will be flight, and when he finally lands in Kalawao, he will be in Makalii. He has dreamed this, too.

The dream of his journey to Naiwa is the fourth after a series of three confirmed dreams, the first of them being the birth of a child. For four nights during his fifteenth year, Kauaua dreamt of a child's birth. He woke mornings after these dreams still with the crisp image of the child in the palms of his hands. He did not know for certain how the little child came to be there, or whose the child was, only that the child would live to see a world far away from the one he knew in Waikolu. After the fourth night, when Kauaua told Awalii about the dreams and she began to cry, he was certain the child was hers. The baby was his unborn brother, Keonehanau, and when Kauaua learned this, his attention was soon consumed by thoughts of Hoolehua.

Hoolehua. The swift. The expert. The warrior. And now the runaway chief.

Kauaua stood there and listened to Awalii tell him of Keonehanau. He heard in her voice the voice of his grandmother.

Waiohuli. Waters of change. The dreamer. Giver-of-dreams. Who speaks to him from beyond.

Now it was her voice Kauaua heard. *Let the wind carry you into the sky. May you be the one to bring honor back to his name.*

* * *

Waiohuli was there in his second dream, at Leina o Papio, the night he was tossed over a cliff on the western edge of Waikolu with nothing more than a loulu mat. He twisted and turned in the dream until he was lying prone with the mat spread beneath him, until the mat was suddenly caught in an updraft and for a moment he felt completely weightless. He hung in the air looking back into the valley—until the image of Waiohuli pointing toward Naiwa appeared to him in the clouds—when the mat began to ride the wind toward the shore and then finally out beyond the breaking waves.

There were four nights before he was there again, at Leina o Papio, just as he had been in the dream, lying prone on a mat and floating out toward the sea. It was the middle of the day and the first time he felt what it was like to fly, to rise and fall in the wind, and he was surprised when he eventually landed in the water just beyond the breakers of the bay by the ease at which he had controlled the mat.

It is one thing to have her blood, but quite another to have her breath. He thinks of this as he watches the men form two lines facing the northern cliff of the island. They are warriors—this is clear. Even at night. Even in this time of peace. The moonlight paints their faces and bodies with shadows that remind him of hooks. They plant themselves on the grassy plateau and stand like stones in the violent wind.

He is the youngest of all of them. There are five who have made the trip before to compete in Naiwa, but only two who have traveled there through Mokapu. Only two who have braved both the turbulent sea and sky to reach a point on Molokai where walking up the northern cliffs to Naiwa became an option. He is the first, however, the first ever, to fly from Mokapu to Kalawao without the long, thin bamboo crossbar the others will use as the leading edges of their gliders.

He will be the crossbar that cuts through the wind and the air. His arms will be his wings, and the pieces of bamboo he holds in both hands will extend his reach and allow him enough fronds to rise in the turbulent night sky. The fronds are bound to his arms and fixed at the sides of his torso. They are lashed to his back and the back of his legs. The others do not question his method. By now, they know of the dreams. Everyone in Waikolu knows the path he must take. And they know to deviate in any way from the dreams will risk not only his fate, but everything thereafter. Everything that matters to them, in fact.

He is simply the strongest and fastest man in Waikolu.

He takes his place at the back of one of the lines, next to his most trusted companion. They are like brothers, the two of them. Without saying a word, they begin to make the final modifications to the loulou stitched to his body in preparation for flight.

* * *

Kauaua saved his most trusted companion because he remembered the third dream. The capsized canoe and the hand reaching up beneath the surface of the ocean.

After Leina o Papio, Kauaua had begun to prepare himself for the dreams by clearing his mind each night before he slept so by the morning after the third one, when he described the overturned canoe to the people of Waikolu with such fluidity and conviction, the two eldest now with him immediately told the people that they would need bamboo. The dream, the two knew, confirmed their own predictions about their journey to Naiwa. They remembered the year of their own first flights. They had seen the same signs in the sky in the days leading to their departure.

The people in Waikolu had meticulously prepared for weeks before the journey. The eight who earned the kuleana to compete during makahiki were their moho, the strongest and fastest, the embodiment of their land, and of them. The people did all they could—gathering food and supplies, keeping them healthy and content—before it was time for the eight men to leave Waikolu.

When the day came for the men to leave, the people gathered on the rocky shoreline of the valley at the mouth of the river. They circled the men in prayer before the men made their way through the crowd hugging and kissing their wives or their mothers, their brothers and sisters, their children. The moho listened to the people praise their strength as they turned from the crowd and carried the canoes into the oncoming surf. And some of the men, like Kauaua, felt the ancestors fill them with mana. *The wind will carry you into the sky. You will be the one to bring honor to our name.*

There was not enough time for them to wait for the weather to calm. They were due in Naiwa before the arrival of Lonomakua, the akua loa, whose procession had long since passed on its way around Molokai. By now, Lonomakua was making his way up Palaaau. The echo of his pu had already filled the back of the valley. After fourteen straight days of hammering winds and waves along the northern coast of the island, the eight moho packed two canoes with enough kalo and water for one meal. Then they left from the easternmost point of land in Waikolu, where their chance of reaching Mokapu was greatest.

It was afternoon when they were half way to Mokapu and the ama of his canoe rose out of the water and Kauaua knew he was seeing the third dream. He remembered the image of a white seabird skimming alongside a rolling swell under the hovering outrigger float just before the swell flipped the canoe. He jumped from the hull to anchor down the ama with his weight, and when he turned back and saw his most trusted companion do the same, he knew in that moment the hand rising from the black depths in his dream had been the hand he would soon see reaching up between the wide crests of waves and whitewater. He reached for the white palm of the hand and when he had a firm grasp of it, he pulled it toward him.

He remembers his shock when the hand did not pull back.

* * *

Now, the canoes are upside down just above the high water mark on the southern shoreline of Mokapu. His most trusted companion has recovered and is at his side. They are watching the two eldest men begin to lift the gliders above their heads, and when the first of them begins running across the flat toward the northern cliff, Kauaua sees the scene he most vividly remembers from his fourth and final dream. A man leaning into the wind. Running. The full moon. Flight.

By the time the first man reaches the edge of the cliff, he is already airborne. A full body length off of the ground. He rises in the wind until he is no longer above the island—it appears as if he is flying away into the night—the glider climbs in the ridge lift before it finds an easterly windshear and the left side of the wing dips toward Kalawao. Then the second man begins running down the same path across the flat.

Soon, the first four men are gliding westward, one after the other. They have risen in the winds moving up and over Mokapu and are already descending toward Kalawao. The fifth man lifts off and the sixth one begins his sprint toward the cliff. Kauaua steps back, as he did in the dream. His most trusted companion lifts the glider above his head as he waits for the sixth man to lift off of the ground.

The people of Waikolu have waited many months for makahiki, and when it was deemed necessary to reach Naiwa through Mokapu, they began to ready themselves for

this night. Some of the young ones have made their way to Leina o Papio, at the cliff with the best chance of watching the men soar in the night sky toward Kalawao. They have made a fire on the point, and when the men begin to land, they will pull sticks from the fire and throw them out toward the sea as a signal to the others in the valley that the men have made it safely to Kalawao. They huddle around the fire in the turbulent wind watching the gliders like a thin stream of shadows in their westward descent across the purple sky.

Kauaua sees the glider of his most trusted companion begin to lift off Mokapu. He hears the distinct booming sound of wind catching the wing of the glider and filling its sail, and suddenly he is running with all of his might across the grassy plateau toward the cliff. There is no certainty as to what will happen when he dives from the edge of the island, but he is absolutely fearless as his feet dig into the turf and he hears the sound of a wave explode against the momentarily indiscernible shoreline. His legs burn, his arms and hands rise and fall at his sides, his chest and gut fill with adrenaline.

There is silence. The grass once beneath his feet becomes a steep, black wall leading down to foamy whitewater and a churning black ocean surface. He is over three hundred feet above sea level, falling, the wind pressing up against his chest and face, his eyes. He tightens his grip on the bamboo rods and spreads his arms and he immediately soars in the updraft rising against the northern face of Mokapu. He is weightless, ascending until the wind has carried him above the island and he tilts his shoulder and begins on a slight roll toward Kalawao. Then he hears the loulu fronds shuddering in the speed of his descent.

Along the northern coast of Molokai, at Leina o Papio, he sees a fire and then two tiny flames falling toward the sea. The eldest moho have already reached Kalawao. And although he cannot hear them through the wind funneling across the loulu and over his face and ears, he knows, too, that the people of Waikolu are calling to them and cheering from the shoreline. His eyes begin to tear because of the air rushing over his face. He tries to listen for the people in the valley, but there is only wind. Then the voice of Waiohuli tells him to close his eyes.

He sees two more flames fall from Leina o Papio before they are caught for a moment, just as he was, in the wind near the cliff, and when he closes his eyes, he imagines the flames floating out toward the sea.

He is Kauaua. The swift. The expert. The warrior. The one who dreams. His eyes are closed, but he fears nothing as he descends from the sky. Makalii, the Pleiades, has risen above Makalii, the place where he will land on the Kalawao shoreline. The Kilioopu wind has left its place in Waikolu to cradle him there.

Waiohuli was only half correct when she had told him his was his own fate. He knows this when he opens his eyes to find himself heading toward the moho. *The wind will carry him. He will bring honor to their names.* His is also the fate of the people. And it appears, by the way the men stand and wait for him on the Kalawao shoreline, that they know this, too.

He pushes out his chest and tilts back his head just enough so that his body pitches upward and the wind of his homeland spills out from under his wings. An easterly wind pushes him from behind. And soon he is lowering his arms and running across the rocky ground.

It is a feat that confirms the first half of the fourth dream. The men gather around him to place their hands upon his broad shoulders. They inspect the fronds covering his back. They tell him there is no other like him on Molokai.

After they watch the young ones extinguish the fire on Leina o Papio, the men stash the gliders in a cave at Makalii and walk north along the coastline of Kalawao until they reach the point, Laehoolehua. They find boulders to sit and lean against, to protect themselves from the wind. Kauaua turns toward the raging surf and leaves them, but the men say nothing. They turn to each other and begin talking about Mokapu, the wind, and their landings at Makalii. They tell each other of the way it felt to fly.

When he reaches the jagged lava shoreline, Kauaua raises a loulu frond into the air. He lets it go and watches it circle above him before it heads out toward the sea in the driving wind and then into the night, high above the rolling swells on the surface of the ocean. It wasn't always like this. He was not always so respected by the others. He was

born in Waikolu, yes, Waikolu was his birthplace, but he had to earn his rank with the men of the valley. As a child, they had frequently reminded him that his family had been a family of the plains, a Kona family, that he lived in the valley now because of the kindness of the Koolau people.

Kauaua knew this last part, like Waiohuli's claim about his fate, was only partly true. His grandfather, Hoolehua, was more than just a runaway chief. He was a man with an insatiable desire to protect his family—especially his children—and to provide for his people. He had proved himself worthy of a place in Waikolu when, in protest, he burned the iliahi of Kamiloloa. The chiefs had left him and his men forgotten on the mountainside well into the wet season and Hoolehua had to protect them. He had proved his courage when he returned to the desolate plains to gather his young family and retreat into Waikolu, and again when the chiefs sent men from the plains and he met them by himself in Kahanui.

Now, his spirit rests here, in Laehoolehua, where his own son, Awalii's older brother, Hoolehua, carried his body from Waialeia and deposited it into the sea. These facts were the backbone of Kauaua's defense against the men of Waikolu. He knew these things, and he used them as his inspiration until they gave him their utmost respect.

He looks for the loulou frond in the dark sky, and when he cannot find it, he reaches into the waist strap of his malo and pulls out a soft piece of a finely woven mat. He finds the biggest boulder he can tilt and he tucks the piece of the mat beneath it before he lets the boulder down. *The wind will carry me. I will bring honor to your name.*

He turns back to the men sitting on the ground behind the boulders and begins to walk toward them. When he is near, his most trusted companion rises to his feet and waits for him to pass before following him toward Naiwa. They will not complete the journey tonight, but they will cross the peninsula until they reach Kalaupapa and a beach the eldest moho has told them is protected by a reef named Papalooa.

The eight men walk for nearly two hours under the full moon and a sky riddled with stars. They are cold and tired—they must be—but they maintain a steady pace across Makaanalua. They stay together, in rows just like the ones they used to depart from

Mokapu. They do not stop to rest until one of them says he needs to relieve himself behind a bush.

Tonight, they will make it to Papalooa, where Kauaaua will walk through a shallow pond until he is standing on the small barrier reef. He will gather aama for himself and for the men. He will look west to Nihoa and the ili of Kipu. Then he will imagine the rolling plains of Naiwa, and Waiohuli will tell him he must sleep if he intends to meet Lonomakua at dawn. When he returns to the beach and has eaten with the men, he will lie down to sleep on the sand. He will dream of a time long after makahiki. He will see the travels of Keonehanau. And he will wake when he learns that his brother will travel far from Molokai—to a land far beyond where any chief has gone—before he finds his way back with children of his own.

A Call for Haehaeku
(a children's story)

We were sometimes 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 Hoolehua, 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.

We waited. We prayed. The 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.

Haehaeku 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 him lift 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 or not 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, in fact, how we had ever overlooked him. The more we thought, the more we whispered, the more we wondered why it had taken us so long. He was quiet and lonesome. Reserved. Not like any one of us. Different. When we ate under the heavens at night, it was true he had never once tried to share 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.

Haehaeku 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 him back the only way we could: with words. At first, we spoke in secrecy. We waited until 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 Hoolehua 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.

‘Haehaeku!’ we yelled. ‘You have grown too big!’

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

‘Haehaeku!’ 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. Haehaeku 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 all about Haehaeku. 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 Hoolehua 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 Haehaeku.

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, 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 Hoolehua 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 Haehaeku.

The Automobile

July 8, 1945 (Kipu, Molokai): AM frequencies, folk and big band music, Glenn Miller, Billie Holiday, Tommy Dorsey, and the Kingston Trio, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Hemingway and *The Robe* by Douglas, a gas mask, matches, postcards, and a small figurine of a girl (commemorating the occupation of Japan), a bullwhip, an endless supply of pineapples and Primo, a government pamphlet titled *You Can Survive*, doubts

July 8, 1947 (Kipu, Molokai): Ted Weems, Tex Williams, Frank Sinatra, a Zippo and “Luckies,” four issues of *National Geographic*, a 35mm camera, a pencil, a sketchbook, (anything to document a flying saucer!), amphetamines and opium, white sand, brown sand, black sand, inklings of “The Cold War,” pineapples, Primo, a desire for intellectual stimulation, an open-ended airline voucher...

June 5, 1950 (Kualapuu Town, Molokai): Fats Domino, Nat "King" Cole, Muddy Waters, *Hawaii Calls* (Alfred Apaka, John Almeida), boxing gloves, a Zippo and a pack of Camels, two cans of SPAM, a bottle of milk, letters regarding sales and acquisitions, letters from China, military fatigues, a marriage license, a rifle, the promise of wealth, the promise of prosperity

December 12, 1953 (Kualapuu Town, Molokai): The Dominoes, Johnnie Ray, Hank Williams, Faye Adams, newspapers with headlines reading: “Executive Order: Kahoolawe to Navy,” “Japan Prince Visits Hawaii,” and “Manhunt,” a bobble head, a zoot suit, a Chinese hairpin, an ad for a '54 Studebaker...

December 12, 1958 (Hoolehua, Molokai): Elvis Presley, the Everly Brothers, and Chuck Berry, a Medal of Honor, a hardhat, a clipboard, a flashlight, a shovel, and construction plans (for a five-mile tunnel), a bible, a Matson bill of lading, a crinoline slip, a Tonka truck, Silly Putty, jacks, laughter, love, and dreams

May 9, 1962 (Hoolehua, Molokai): the Four Seasons, Patsy Cline, Roy Orbison, the Drifters, the lyrics to Hawaii Ponoii, construction plans (for two-story house), two hard-boiled eggs, a little American flag, a ticket to the Arizona Memorial, mud, leaves, a bottle of scotch, anger, dirt, frustration, a divorce decree...

November 12, 1970 (Lahaina, Maui): a lauhala hat and a feather lei, a surfboard, a canoe paddle, the newspaper headlines, "Hawaii First to Legalize Abortion" and "Hilo's Merrie Monarch," a Jimi Hendrix Rainbow Bridge t-shirt, a hammer, a chisel, a veining gouge, a transistor radio, a block of wood, rust, a funneling wind

November 4, 1973 (Lahaina, Maui): KMVI and cassette tapes, Gabby (and the Sons of Hawaii), the Beamers, Dennis Pavao, the Ka'apana brothers, Hui 'Ohana, Olomana....The New Beats, Three Dog Night, a fist-sized carving (wrapped in cloth and placed in a shoebox), maps, Olympia, whiskey, weed, LSD, a desire for some kind of spirituality...

November 5, 1974-January 4, 1992 (Hoolehua 2): empty/gutted, waiting

November, 12, 1993 (Hoolehua 2): a 427 single overhead camshaft (hemi) engine, cds, Beck, Nirvana, Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg, Bob, Alpha Blondy, UB40, Hapa, Kaau Crater Boys, Iz, baggy jeans, a denim jacket, a disposable lighter and a pack of Newports, a leather interior, car wax, a sticker reading "Sovereignty," a personalized license plate reading "Touch"

November 16, 1996: Hoolehua (2): an Alpine amp, 2Pac, Biggy, The Fugees, Outkast, Tracy Chapman, Mariah Carey, Mary J. Blige, two diplomas, one letter of intent, a throw net, a spear, a blanket and towels, a cooler with mountain apples, a letterman jacket, a pair of Jordans, a Hawaiian Bracelet, a hand under a skirt, kisses, lovemaking...

Uncle Louie & Me

He begins when we are deep in Hālawā Valley on the island of Moloka‘i. We’ve suddenly stopped on our way to Mōa‘ula Falls. He leans over and motions for his stool, so I slip it out of the carry bag and hold it steady until he sits. He sighs. Uncle Louie (UL) is in the middle of the trail, beside the river. He is 66. My grandfather’s brother. I am 17, still standing. He watches me carefully take out the pen and paper. Then I sit on the cool, rocky ground in front of him. It is January 14, 1956.

UL: You patient, Boy. I give you a good one. One good Hālawā story. Right here. I seen him right here. Right where you standin’, in fact. Kamapua‘a, Boy. I seen ‘im.... Believe me. Put dis on yo’ pepah! He was pig-form. Big buggah. Biggest I evah seen all my life. Pas’ my wais’, easy.... One day, small kid time, I chrowing rocks, skippin’ ‘em across [motions to river]*. Jes’ me. I skippin’ away. I stay like fifteen minutes, I hea’ part of da wall on dat side [points to the opposite side of the river] come crashing down, boulders and all. Da rock come crashing down, so I stop. Make planny noise. Da rocks knocking against each uddah when dey roll down insai da rivah an’ da current. I watch da water turn all murky. I look upstream.... Not like dis before, da trees ovah here, Boy. No trees. Da whole valley, only lo‘i. Over thousan’, Boy. No’ mo’ trees like this. Ha! Only lo‘i.... I still had one rock in my hand, but if him, if Kamapua‘a, no use, ah.

Me: Naht. Kamapua‘a?

UL: Was Kamapua‘a. Guarantee. Jus’ wait. I getting to da good part yet. Was morning time. I lookin’ up da river—da sunlight poking through all the trees, to da edge of da rivah and da watah, too—and I heah.... Wasn’t like dis, da watah, you know. Before time, was high. No can walk, you gotta swim. And back den, I no swim insai da rivah.... Dat day, I heard grunting, so I had fo’ see.... I always hea’ grandma folks talk about Kamapua‘a. Dey tell da Hālawā stories alla time. I heard da grunting and I had fo’ check.... Shucks, back den, more den anything, I think I j’like tell stories, too. With grandma dem. An’ wit’ my friends. Dat’s good times,

boy. All kine stories back den.... I look by da noise on da bank, den I jes' crouch down and wait...

Me: How long?

UL: Less dan minute, Boy. Fo' real. I seen him pop out behind da 'awapuhi. Jus' black fur, but I knew. How high, da back, yeah. No can be ordinary pig. No can. Too massive. [lifts an arm into the air, provides approximate height] Ha! You know da pig Keaka brought las' month. Fo' Baby's pahty. Das notin'. Dis one twice as big, easy.

Me: Keaka's was massive.

UL: Eh, I no lie. I telling da story.

Me: Sorry, Uncle.

UL: When I see him, Boy, I sked. I drop da stone on da ground. Slip from my hand. No lan' on da dirt or laua'e. Buggah lan' on top one stone.... All da places, an' land on one stone. Crack! I busted. Da 'awapuhi rustle, den some break off an' fall from da bank. He stick out his head in da puka, over da edge. He turn toward me. Slow. I frozen. I no like make trouble, Boy.... Grandma dem, dey always tell no make trouble. But I sked, I fo'get. I yell, but he no run when I make noise. I yell, "Hah!" But he no sked. Buggah looking straight at me. Red eyes, like bloodshot. His tusks curving out from his jaw pas' his cheek. Razors, Boy. Shahp.... He bus' down da res' of da 'awapuhi from da bank and dey drif' down da rivah. T'ick buggah. Mo' big den pig pen kine. Everyt'ing jus' fall aroun' 'im. He get muscle. T'ick shouldahs. Da bristles down his back standing straight up. From fa', look like get black nails insai da fur. He staht fo' pace back and fort' on dat si' [across] da rivah. He lookin' at me da whole time. Back and fort'. I try move back real slow, but he stop, so I stop. Dat was da most sked I got. Right den. Das when I knew he was t'inking about making one move.... Before dat, ah, he could've jus' pop out, look at me. Get dat kine stories, you know. Da kine he like you know he stay.... But when he stop pacing, I know, bad shape. I drop my head. I figgah maybe if he see dat, he take pity [laughs].

Me: Had work, den. You still alive. Mus' be.

UL: Little while. Long enough so I fo'get I stay in danejah. I get my head down. Tryin' fo' stay calm. Relax. I try no t'ink about whe' I stay. Whe' we stay [now]. I t'ink about da valley. Hālawā. Mountain to da sea. Den I t'ink about my grandma and my mom and dad. I t'ink about my girlfren' [laughs]. My frens.... I keep my head down. I imagine all da lo'i. I tell myself, he no like me. He like work da lo'i. You know dat, ah, Boy? When he dig da earth [laughs].... I no hea' nahting. I jus' about look up when I hear him grunt.

Me: Ha?

UL: Real low, Boy. No squealing, no way. And constant...Den I hea' rocks falling insai da rivah. Movement. So I look up. I no can help. But as soon as I look, my haht sink. He gone.

Me: Wha? Dat's it? Uncle, da's not da story, ah? No can just end li' dat.

UL: Eh, you see how erybody leaving da valley dese days? Maybe make sense, ah [laughs]....

Me: Nah, c'mon, Uncle.

UL: Now dat dey leaving, what you t'ink? What he gon' do without lo'i? He gone [laughs].

Me: Not funny.

UL: No worry, Boy. He came back. He came running back! I heard him crashing tru da 'awapuhi before I even seen 'im. I stahted backin' up, but I no could turn aroun'. I had to see. I had to see, Boy. You seen Kamapua'a befo'? I no t'ink so. Believe me, when you dat sked, haht time no look. Feel like you *gotta*. J'like he caught you already.... I back up. Fas' too, Boy. So fas', I fall right on my ass. I use my ahms prop me up, but I no can stan'. I just watching him bolt towards me....Boy, he no look like one pig when he run. J'like one horse. Jus' not as tall, but all bulk. One bull. I see his muscles pumping. His skin rippling 'cause da speed. His feet tear up da dirt. Dirt flying all ovah....Boy, fo' long time aftah, I dream about dis moment. One slow motion dream. An' in da dream, I even hea'

his breathing. Low, Boy, grizzly.... I no like sleep aftah dat. I remembah one time my auntie tol' us if I evah hea' his breath, I dead. Too late.... When he get close, he looking straight at me. I frozen, Boy. No can move. I watch 'im in full stride jus' plant down at da edge of da bank and leap into da rivah.... I not gon lie, Boy. I scream as loud as I can [laughs]. I know not gon do nahtin' to him—he spread out in da air a'ready—but I figgah, maybe someone else hea' me. I suppose' to be cleaning lo'i. Dey know whe' I stay....

Me: Scream? You nevah run?

UL: Eh, I not shame say dat. Of course I scream. You no can imagine what like when you see 'im. No mo' words, Boy. No' mo.... I sorry. I like you know how sked I was. Fo' real. I like you know.... When I was young like you, I always come up hea'. I see all kine stuff. I hear 'em. Honest. I no sked, Boy. I know get kūpuna. Mine's too.... But when I seen 'im, pau. And by da time he stay in da air, I know already, he mad 'cause I foolin' around, chrowing stones. He gon' teach me one lesson.

Me: Nah, Uncle. So what. What happen?

UL: J'like I leave my body, Boy. My mind all jam up. I see all da good t'ings in my life—my family, all da pretty girls, my frens, waves. I feel da moments wit' dem running in my veins. I feel all full. I see all da bad stuff I did, too—making trouble my sistahs an' yo' grampa. I remembah da lies I tol', da times I steal. I feel like I burning inside, but I looking down at my body.... I jus' one boy, skinny, stuck on da groun'. He splash down, right in da rivah. When he land, one whole pile shrimp in da rivah explode. Dey shoot out da watah. Thousands... I watch him heave himself tru da watah, towards me.

Me: In da rivah?

UL: Yeah, Boy. One jump an' he reach right dere [points a quarter of the way out into the river]. I nevah heard no stories befo' dat 'bout him swimming. And I know he swimmin' now. Was deep. When I seen 'im in da rivah, he coming for my body, dat's when I firs' wen' move. J'like I snap. I scramble to my stomach and push all

my might. I run and run until feel like I flying. No can feel my legs. My feet.
Nahtin. I not even tired.

Me: Dat's how you got away? Run?

UL: I wish dat was how. I ran fast, yeah. I nevah look back. I cut across da lo'i. Not even da mud slow me down. I run so fas', I lef' all da sound behin' me. No footsteps on leaves and twigs. No splashing mud and watah. Only get ringin' in my ears....I bet was world record speed, Boy [laughs].

Me: He caught you, but?

UL: He caught me, Boy. You know, as fas' as I was, I knew. How you gon outrun 'im? J'like I know I runnin' ovah mud and leaves even tho' I no see 'em, I no he stay righ behin' me. I thinkin' now, I j'like somebody see. I j'like somebody know. Proof, ah. But now I running so fas', I no can make noise wit' my mout'....You know, I remember all da stories I heard about Kamapua'a. Funny, Boy. Dey was my favorite. I love 'em. He tricky, dat's why. He change shape. He one pig, he one man, he one fish, he da grass. He any kine. He big, he small. He old, he young. He handsome. And when he like, he get planny girls, too. I always use' to laugh when my grandma dem tell us stories. I like be like him [laughs].
What you t'ink?

Me: Grampa tol' stories. He said dat, too. Das why, Uncle. I no un'astan' how come he chasin' you....

UL: I tol' you, Boy. Uncle hahd head small kid time. I fool aroun' too much. I suppose' to work lo'i but I like play, surf. I listen his stories an' I like be like him. I t'ought, Kamapua'a kolohe, so I be kolohe, too. But you know what?

Me: What?

UL: [Laughs] He not jus' li' dat. An' I knew dat, too. He work hahd when gotta. Help his family, ah. Grampa tol' you doze stories? But, me, I like t'ink only about da kolohe paht. Only da games and da girls. I seen 'em in his eyes when he was standin' across da rivah. He nevah like dat. Can tell. He mad at me. He jus' look

at me an' I know why. When he seen me, he like make shua I know he *not* foolin' aroun'.

Me: So what, den. He caught you an you tol' him dat?

UL: [Laughs] You funny, Boy. J'like yo' grampa.... No! I was running and he slam me from behin'. Right insai da lo'i. My face buried in da mud. I no can see. Mud in my ears. I spin around. I slippin' and sinkin' and sliding all ovah. His bristles brushin' and scrapin' my skin.... I wearing malo, Boy. You knew dat, ah? We no' mo' pants back den.... I feel da mud on top my whole body. My mind making any kine again. Telling me, *Stay in da mud! No, run! No, Stay in da mud!* I tryin' fo' bury myself and I coughin' up mud at da same time.... Lucky t'ing no mo' kalo insai da lo'i. Bumbye, I drown.... My mind telling me, *Get out da lo'i! Get deepah! Get deepah!* I try ball up. I get one han' cuvah my head, one han' between my legs. I kick and kick.

Me: Was da mud, Uncle! He let you go 'cause you stay in da lo'i!

UL: No, Boy. He nevah let me go. I kick and kick until one time my foot get stuck. When I try pull 'em back, no can. My foot stuck. Buggah burn. Cut. I kick wit' my oddah foot, but I feel 'em sliding ovah his body. We covered in mud. Da burn on my foot getting mo' an' mo' hot. Stinging. I feel sometin', one tongue, sliding ovah da pain. Den da tusk, Boy. Da tusk slice my calf and my leg just go numb. One dull presha moving up my leg.... I like punch, but I still no can see. I no like hit da tusk. I sked I gon' cut my han', my ahm. I sked I gon' break 'em.

Me: I like see da leg.

UL: You seen 'im, Boy. [He sticks out his leg. There's a scar running from his ankle up to the back of his knee. There are pock marks around it.] Right hea. [He runs his finger over the length of the scar.] Dat's how come I get dis. Dat's how come I limp sometime, yeah.

Me: Oh. I nevah know.

UL: When I feel da presha reach by my knee, I give up. I know, no sense I fight. I jus' play dead. I imagine what would look like if I was standing outside da lo'i. I see

myself balled up in one small mud pit. I see Kamapua‘a with my leg in his mout’ Den I jus’ feel him pulling and pulling, like he trying fo’ get me out of da mud. I play dead. I tell myself relax. I tell myself somebody gon’ come. Dey lookin’ fo’ me. When dey come, I be okay. Gon’ heal. Gon’ be okay.

Me: Who came?

UL: Nobody.

Me: What happen?

UL: I no remembah nahtin aftah dat, Boy. I jus’ woke up in da mud.

Me: He let you go?

UL: I no remembah nahtin aftah dat, Boy. Only dat he kept pulling and pulling.

Translation from Hawaiian to Pidgin [and English] with the assistance of Jon Kainoa
*all gestures noted in brackets are found in the original transcript

Papaloa
In Memory of Lawrence Kamai

March 4, 1970

As the tide rose around the Makanalua Peninsula, Lawrence Kamai planted his feet at the far edge of Papaloa Reef. He was 100 yards from the sandy shoreline of the peninsula, facing west, standing just beyond a large saltwater pool. There were schools of fish circling the reef—manini, pālani, and nenuē—and small waves surging over the black lava and up to his ankles.

In front of him, beyond the calm ocean, there were green sea cliffs stretching up more than 1500 feet and running for more than 15 miles. He held his hand over his eyes and looked down the coastline—to what he imagined was Kaluanui and Nihoa, Kīpū, Anianikeha, Pu‘u ka Pele, Wai a Kanapō, Mokio, ‘Īlio, and then the faint outline of O‘ahu.

Lawrence Kamai is old and partially blind but seems to find great peace in the fact that he has lived long enough to see visitors in Kalaupapa from all around the world. He especially likes it when the visitors are family members of his friends.

He said Papaloa is his favorite place on Makanalua because he knows there he has a clear view of the ocean and sometimes, when the sky is clear, of O‘ahu, the place where he was born. He drove us through town, then past the pier, out to the graveyard, and to the beach. Then he climbed over the slippery rocks in the saltwater pool to get to Papaloa all by himself. He stood at its edge and looked west for nearly half an hour. There were moments from the shore, as the small waves poured over the reef and then began to recede, that it looked like a man standing on water.

* * *

March 5, 1970

From now on, I am to call him Uncle Lawrence. I am family, he says. One full day with him, and he’s already more open with me than I am with my classmates. Under the shade of a gazebo overlooking the ocean, he told me about the first time he kissed a girl and the first time he had sex. He told me, how as a young man, he sometimes contemplated

suicide. He sometimes drank too much. And within the first hour of our second day together, I believe he is the most open person I know. Not anything like I had imagined when we were told we'd be the first med students to visit Kalaupapa for a week-long clinical rotation.

He wanted to fish today. Pole fishing, he said. Papaloo. He went to the garage and came back with a rod, a tackle box, and a block of frozen squid. He told me to drive. He wanted to go fast. When we had set the pole and sat down on the white sand beach, he said:

Da stories you read before you came for your class, dey probably good stories. But when I forty-one, I almost die outsai dis reef, you know. I came one day. Stand right on top da papa. J'like yesterday, ah. I out there looking in da ocean and I hear someone calling my name. Not Lawrence, ah. Was calling, "Bubba, Bubba." Das what my maddah used to call me. So I turn around, I look da beach, I look by da graves. I no see nobody. But I look and look 'cause I know I heard something, someone calling my name. I was looking long time and all of a sudden one wave came and wash me right off da papa. Was calm dat day. One freak wave. I hit my head, knock out. You know what happen? One shark came, save me. Big buggah, too.

My friend, Kino, he like his fishing. He seen me from Kalaemilo, da next beach down. He said when he seen me fall, he thought I dead already. No way, ah, he come save me in time. But when he get right here, he see me floating on my back on top da shark. Da shark mo' big den me, he said. We floating outside da papa. Da fin sticking out da watah, tucked between my arm and chest. Da shark swim right through the channel and come to the shallow until da belly on da sand. Kino tell me he sked, but I his fren, ah, so he walk up and slip me off da shark. My head all bleeding and I unconscious, but da shark all calm. And when Kino get me on da beach, da shark swim right back out into the ocean.

* * *

March 6, 1970

We drove to Kalawao today. Uncle Lawrence told me he hadn't made the trip in a long time because it brings back bad memories. Too many unmarked graves, too many ghost

stories. He pulled off the road at one point to show me where he's seen the ghost of a girl running through the woods. He pointed off into the shadowy, moss-covered understory. She was raped there, he said. Bounty hunters. She can't ever get away.

We pass churches and the concrete remnants of what he calls the "old hospital" before we reach a lookout with a view of Mōkapu and 'Ōkala Islands. I don't ask questions, I just wait to listen when he's ready to speak again:

When my wife die, all my friends came our house, pray. Dey tell me how beautiful, how good she was. Dey cry.

She died Kalaupapa when we was thirty-two, but I always remember her when I'm here. I don't know. Maybe 'cause get so many of us dis side, too.

My friends, dey say I lucky because she special. Dey say she prove her love and dat I no can forget dat. But I like, ah, I cannot handle. When they leave, I lock the door. I find all my old medicine and put 'em on the table and sit there all night next to a full glass water.

Da next day, my fren Danny came my house. He see me through the window. I sleeping with all da pills still on da table. He pound da door, and when I ansa, he come inside, sit down. He tell me no good stay home. We go do something. Go out. He said he dream about me and one shark. And because he heard music in his dream, he thought my wife, Melelani, was in the dream, too.

That night at the card table, I get all drunk. Pilau. I try forget my wife, but no can.

Da next day, I wake up in da hospital. I no drink since then.

* * *

March 7, 1970

Today we gathered salt on the shoreline near the airport. Uncle Lawrence called the spot, Kāhili. Every so often, I heard a plane or helicopter, and after the fourth one, I stopped and asked him if he ever planned to leave Kalaupapa. He turned back to the salt with a special tool he'd made that fit snugly in his hand. He was quiet. I didn't know if he'd heard me. The sound of the plane's engine seemed to go on forever.

Finally, he said, no, that now that he could leave Kalaupapa, he didn't think much about it. He was quiet again for a while. Then he said:

I was twenty-five. Fighting wit' my wife. She don't want to go. She tell me get everything here, but I cannot help. Stupid. I curious, yeah. All my life, Kalaupapa all I know. I not born here, but I stay so long, 'ass all I know. I listen radio. I read paypah. I like go. I like see.

I pack one bag and jus' leave. I leave da house. I walk insai da bush, toward Kalawao. I sked, but I mad, too. Da mo' I walk, da mo' I wonder about da world outside, da mo' mad I get. I no see nobody. Nobody see me. J'like nobody know.

I heard when I was small, dis guy leave Kalaupapa, ah. He climb topside and when someone stop 'im, he tell 'em he mea kōkua. Like you. Not sick. I guess no could tell, ah, so they let him go. He go alla way Kaunakakai, den take one canoe go Maui....

Me, I like try. I go jus' like him, climb right up da mountain. Four hours, maybe more. No trail. I no see nobody. I think I free, ah. But when I reach da pali, I turn around one time jus' to look. First time, ah, topside. Oh, I see Kalawao, Kauhakō, Kapapakikane, even Papaloa.

I look couple minutes. I like stay right there, just looking. I feel free. But no can stay, ah. Dangerous. Gotta move. So I try turn back Kaunakakai, but then I see my house and I know my wife still inside.

* * *

March 8, 1970

The last day of our stay in Kalaupapa. Uncle Lawrence asked me to stay with him inside his home today. He took out an old 'ukulele and began to play a medley of tunes as I sat in front of him, watching him and looking around his living room. There were small framed pictures hanging on the walls, books, shells, and small glass balls on his shelves. He had kept everything in the small house neat and clean. He played "Aloha 'Oe" for me and then a song he wrote named "Papaloa." And when the song was done, he held out the 'ukulele and asked me to take it.

Uncle Lawrence told me he has been married three times but has only had one true love in his life. And if there was one time he ever seemed sad while I was with him, it's when he told this story:

We fourteen. Maybe twelve. People tell I lucky, yeah. I know. Melelani was beautiful.

We was Kalihi. Playing in da street, da backyard. Kids. One day, I find out I sick. I know I coming Kalaupapa, but I no tell her nothing. Shame. I no like her get scared. I no like her know.

I come Kalaupapa in one month. I live without Mom and Dad. My braddahs, too. I still don't know why I sick. But now, like I living alone. The last time I seen her in Kalihi, she was climbing a mango tree, wearing a white dress.

I alone, yeah, so I always sneak out, especially when da boats come. I wait for my family. But one day, I see Melelani. She getting off a boat and standing on the pier. And later on, I find out she came for me. She knew I got sick. She found a sick girl, our friend. She share cup wit' da girl until she get sick, too.

After that, I only think about her. I take care her. She take care me. I stop sneaking out. I forget about my mom and dad, my braddahs.

When she die, I spread her ashes outside Papalooa.

More Than Anything

He needs the ocean, so when the refrigerator is full at home, he'll sometimes swim out from the shoreline just to watch fish. He's broken state records. A six-pound mullet. A twenty-pound *ō'io*. A one hundred-ninety four pound ulua. He knows what he's doing out there, so he doesn't even send updates to *The Maui News* anymore. For him, what happens in the ocean—like in his home—stays there.

There might be days he'll stay out in the ocean by himself more than four hours, the boat anchored somewhere off the reef. It's a weekend, a Saturday or Sunday, whenever the water's clean and his wife can watch the kids.

Maybe he'll have his girl Keo, the oldest. His beautiful daughter, Keo. He stays humble about it—he knows it's true. Boys line up at the Wharf whenever they launch the boat on weekends.

He's a diver. A good one, too. A big fish diver. He thinks he's got world record status. Caught all the fish on the reef and now he's looking for monsters. Big boys. Now he's looking for record breakers. But he stays humble about it.

Keo broke her leg last summer when she belly-shot an ulua and it ripped the shaft line around her leg. She's lucky she didn't drown. Lucky he was there to cut the line. Lucky she could roll out and get to the boat without more than red marks from the line imprinted on her leg. He was glad when she climbed into the boat.

He's Keo's father, and if anything happened in the water, there'd be hell to pay back home. Everyone tells him, the ocean is no place for a girl like that, but he just can't bring himself to believe them.

Maria is Bad

Me and Willy went diving. Pālā'au was flat, so we figure grab fish. Willy get baby party.

Willy, he call Maria on his cell phone when we reach Kalama'ula, right outside Kalaniana'ole. He tell her bring da truck and trailer, meet us at the wharf.

Get plenty fish, so Willy, he rushing, he push his engine near full throttle. We laughing, cracking beers and jokes.

Beautiful day. Choke flat-bottoms. The sun going down, but Tanaka guys still stay the Pālā'au house. Delacruz still looking squid. Da water glassy-flat. But we get plenty already, and Willy, he like clean fish, he no like grab ice, so we haulin' home.

I know Maria. She gon' be small-kine mad. Was Willy's day with the kids. But they young yet, no can dive, so he promise her tomorrow. *Gotta dive on days like these*, he tell. *Not everyday like this*.

I know Willy. He keeping his word. Especially now. When we climbing on da boat, he slipped. Crack his ankle right on the engine. He feeling good now because we get fish and he drinking beer, but tomorrow, he staying home.

When we reach da wharf, Willy idle da engine and I grab the anchor rope and jump on top the catwalk.

Maria, she jump outside da truck. She get 'em, da trailer already on da ramp.

But Willy, he tell us stop. He like me hold da boat so he can get out, too. He no like hurt his ankle.

Maria, she see Willy, she shake her head. She walk by us on the catwalk and jump inside da boat. We look at her like, *Huh?*

She motion with her arm, so I give the anchor rope some slack. Back up, little bit. Then she grab the throttle and gas 'em. The stern drop deeper into the water. Willy's boat small-kine fish tail. The prop scrape up da ramp. Willy go, *Whoa! Whoa!* And da bow of da boat slide right up to the trailer hitch.

I no can help, I crack up.

Willy, he shake his head.

Then Maria jump off, right on da ramp. She no slip.

She hitch up da boat, blow Willy one kiss, and climb in da truck.

It's Raining Stars Outside: 1984

They were walking north toward Manawai, to a spot at the base of a mountain he had found while hunting with his friends. He had told her about it while she was still standing at a payphone at an L.A. airport on her way home from Utah. A crack in the mountain, he had called it, and when he told her he was sure they'd find a boar there, she took it as another sign that she had made the right decision when she had decided to return home to Moloka'i.

They were hunting at the base of an eastern mountain range. She was still looking him over, assessing the way he had grown. He was big now, easily 250 pounds, with hulking shoulders and a body that reminded her of some of the linebackers in the training room when she had been in rehab. He had shaved his hair so that it was the same length as his goatee. There were tribal tattoos covering his shoulders and his neck. Down the back of each forearm, he had the names *Justice* and *Honor* tattooed in script from elbow to wrist. He made his way through the bush like an animal and soon she was forced to keep her eyes on the ground just to have any chance of keeping up with him. When she looked up from her feet and the river rocks, the boulders and the tall, dry brush, she saw the deep-green mountains rising up to brilliant white clouds.

It was just the two of them. And the dogs circling around them, slipping between their legs and shooting out into the brush, belonged to Kekama.

There were six dogs. Hounds and pitbulls. Trackers and grabbers named after the color of their hair or for their demeanor. Lei kept her guard. The hounds were: Ua, the gray one; Lepo, a brindle the colors of fertile soil; and Ke'o, the white one. The pitbulls were named Makakoa, Mau, and Ikaika, because they were fierce, ever-present, and strong.

They were siblings, a brother and a sister who hadn't seen each other since she'd left to play ball for Utah State. Gone more than two years. But they had always stayed in touch—even when Lei took road trips with teammates in the summer instead of coming home, even when Kekama moved off the grid and began living in a house without

running water and electricity—so when they spoke to each other it was hard to tell that they had ever been apart.

“Keep up,” Kekama said in a low, grizzly voice. She was already falling behind. “We’ll rest by the heiau.”

“Yeah, yeah,” said Lei. “The knee acting up. I get ’im.”

They were two miles into the bush and already into what Kekama liked to call “sketchy terrain,” his favorite, where every step was a calculated one over unstable rocks or through thick, knee-high brush. Kekama easily kept up with the sound of the dogs. He moved like he was on pavement. He cut through the grass and over the rocks as if he wasn’t carrying a backpack with about a gallon of water and a lunch for the both of them. She listened to the water slosh back and forth as he hurdled over stumps and boulders, and for a second she thought of what it might be like to live in a home like his.

Lei was slower because of the knee injury, but also because her mind was elsewhere, not on the landscape right in front of her. She wondered about the years right after he’d finished high school, and whether or not they’d ever be able to return to the way they were when they were younger. She was more than just the “big one” back then. She was the leader. The one Kekama followed into the bush.

“Where’s the heiau?” she asked her younger brother.

“A few hundred yards,” said Kekama. “Almost. It’s buried under vines, still in good shape.”

Lei forced herself into the moment, tried to concentrate on the gnarly landscape and the sound of the dogs. The land beneath her was rising at an incline now. The sides of the valley converging so that she knew they were close to the spot Kekama had described to her. She was glad Kekama was there, but when it came time to kill the boar she wanted to be ready. She was certain that in the final moment, things would come back to her like second-nature—it was everything leading up to that point that bothered her.

When Kekama reached the vine-covered heiau, he stopped and opened his backpack. He removed a large cutting of ‘awa and began to rinse it off with some of the water from the gallon jug. He held up the ‘awa and looked at its large brown, succulent

roots, then toward the heiau. He turned and let out a loud whistle and within a minute, the dogs were circling back and then sitting beside him.

Lei appeared from behind the trees and took a seat beside her brother. She opened up her own backpack and pulled out a couple of ti leaves. She was tired. Glad they had stopped. “Here?” she asked. “The heiau?”

Kekama pointed toward a mound of rocks covered in vines. “There,” he said. “Let ’im know we stay.” Then he handed Lei the salt. “Wrap ’em here.”

Lei took the salt from Kekama and then they sat in silence for a few minutes. The dogs stayed on the ground at their sides, every once in a while lifting their heads in the passing breeze. When Lei had wrapped the salt in the leaves, they both stood up.

They had decided that since she had come for the boar, she would do the ho’okupu, so when she climbed over the thicket and got up to the heiau, Kekama was standing behind her. Lei cleared off the vines from a corner of the heiau, then placed the offering upon the stones. She stood there for a while, facing the platform, and then she said softly, “We came for a pua’a. Ho’okupu. Please help keep us safe. Mahalo. Mahalo nui.” Then, just as she had done when she had sat down beside her brother to wrap the offering, she stood in silence until she felt it was time to continue north.

When she turned around and faced Kekama, there was a moment between the two of them that made her believe they had done this before.

* * *

Lepo was a stealthy hound, usually first to pick up a scent. He’d locate the pig with his nose and then sneak up on it until he made visual contact. Then he’d let out furious barks while he waited for the arrival of the other dogs. He’d watch for Makakoa or Mau or Ikaika to latch on before he finally attacked the pig.

When Lei heard Lepo barking in the distance, she knew it was time. Kekama pushed his way through the bush and hurdled over boulders. Lei forgot about the pain in her knee. They were under a canopy of trees—milo, ohia, kukui—running up an incline, stopping for a second to determine where the dogs were, then taking off again.

The dogs had already surrounded the boar and pinned it with its back against a tall, wide slab of stone. The pit bulls were taking turns attacking from different directions, but the boar kept them away with the threat of his tusks, rapidly swinging them back and forth whenever attacked by the dogs. Barks and grunts echoed through the brush. And she was momentarily concerned that she'd forgotten this kind of chaos.

She watched for a while, hoping that somehow the dogs got the boar away from the boulder, where he'd be exposed from the back and vulnerable to an attack. But the boar held his ground, and soon it was apparent—when the boar and the dogs came to a standstill, heavily breathing, and staring each other down—that one of them needed to step in.

“I get 'im,” Kekama said. “I gon' *make* him attack. When he come, da dogs can grab. Just move fast.” He stepped away from Lei and right behind the dogs. Then he pulled out a knife hanging from his belt and stepped forward. He grunted at the pig, “Harh! Harh! Harh!”

Lei felt her heart pumping hard. The dogs were violently barking again. So much adrenaline pumped through her body that for a second she felt he might actually be able to attack the boar on her own. She tried to calm herself, but things were happening too fast. She saw the boar lunge for Kekama, and then she saw dogs, Makakoa and Mau, flying through the air after being tossed by the boar—the boar was grunting at the dogs and Kekama—Ikaika shot out from the pack, angled in, and hooked himself to the boar's neck.

The hounds jumped in, attaching themselves to the boar's back, and Lei suddenly found herself with the boar's hind legs in her hands, holding on like the boar was a wheelbarrow. She spun the boar to its side and the dogs held it down at its head. She looked over at Kekama. “Move Ke'o!” she shouted.

Kekama grabbed Ke'o by the collar and tugged her away from the boar's front leg. And just as he did, in one swift movement, Lei pulled a knife sheathed at her belt and shoved the blade right behind the boar's shoulder, into its heart. Blood shot out in spurts over the handle of the knife, and before long the boar was limp. Kekama pulled the other

dogs off the boar and smiled at his sister. “Looks like you get something,” he said. “Lonoikamakahiki.”

She watched him zip open his backpack and pull out the old gallon jug. He offered her water, and as she took her first sip, she thought, it was as if it was meant to be.

* * *

Both the plane trip to Maui and the boat ride to Kaho‘olawe had given Lei more time to reflect on her relationship with Kekama. There were the Little League games on Saturday mornings, when she’d wake her brother up to get him ready before they walked down ‘Īlio Road and Ala Mālama Ave, into Kaunakakai Town. There were hunting trips they’d gone on with his friends. Out to the west end, to Wai a Kāne. North, to Pu‘u Ali‘i. East, into Hālawā. There were nights when she took her younger brother for long drives across the island just so they could look for trouble. There were so many memories, but in all of them there was one constant: she was always the older one, looking out for Kekama, helping him find his way. Now that he had led her to Manawai, she felt the world had somehow been turned upside down. It had been the first time she had followed him anywhere.

When they finally reached Kaho‘olawe and someone on the boat began the mele komo, Lei was instantly reminded that she wasn’t entirely certain of what to expect while she was there. There was a line in the mele, “*Pehea e hiki aku ai,*” that she knew meant, “*How is it that the one lands,*” and she suddenly thought that for the most part, the trip itself was an unknown. She hadn’t completely understood when only two weeks before her return from Utah, her friend, Kekoa Pili, had invited her to Kaho‘olawe and to Hakio‘awa Bay. She had so many questions that hadn’t been answered. Kekoa just said, “You’ll see. No worry. You know da history. You related to some of the people. Dey PKO.”

Kekoa had told her she was good for the trip, too. Lei had the time, she was ma‘a to huaka‘i like these—she could “rough it”—and most of all, she was interested in

learning all she could about mea Hawai‘i. “It’ll turn you on,” Kekoa had said. And that was all Lei needed to hear to say okay, she’d go.

After the mele kāhea, when the few already on the island had welcomed them ashore, Lei followed the others into the waters of Hakio‘awa Bay. She jumped in and treaded in the water as floating garbage bags, coolers, and water containers were tossed at her from the boat. She grabbed them and pushed them toward Kekoa, who in turn, turned to pass them toward the next person and toward the shoreline. She stayed in the water for nearly a half hour before all of the supplies were out of the boat, then she swam toward the shore.

* * *

She was immediately fascinated by Kaho‘olawe. There was something about the island that made her feel both at ease and quite tense, at home and in some distant far way place, in another time, in fact.

The hi‘uwai very early that morning had reminded her of her purpose for being there. Under a nearly full moon, she walked down the dark Hakio‘awa shoreline and stepped out into the icy, luminous sea. She was afraid and a little embarrassed, her naked body exposed in the oncoming surges sweeping up the shoreline, the slippery river rocks under her toes and the soles of her feet. But when she was knee-deep in the ocean, tiny glowing particles began to light up in the water. They flashed whenever she took a step, lighting up around her feet. Then they began to light up as if on their own, forming a sparkling path over the slippery boulders toward a sandy spot where she could stand with the water up to her shoulders. She was surrounded by signs. She was looking for them now. And within a matter of seconds after the last of the glowing particles had disappeared in the water around her feet, she looked up to see a star dropping from high above in the wide, purple sky. She watched the star fall like an ember, slowly and quietly, until it disappeared right above where she believed was the place Kekama had taken her to find the boar.

When the star was gone, she returned her attention to the others now standing in the water around her. They were silent, and in the darkness of morning they looked liked

stones guarding the shallow waters of the bay. She felt an immense rush. And soon stars began to fall— like the first one did—from all directions in the sky.

A voice boomed from somewhere in the water: “Lonoikamakahiki!”

She cleared her throat and joined the others responding to the call.

“Lonoikamakahiki! Lonoikamakahiki! Lonoikamakahiki!” she yelled.

The others cheered and splashed in the water around her. The cleansing was complete. She took a deep breath and sank until she was enveloped by a warmth that wrapped itself around her.

* * *

She was certainly comfortable with her new living situation—surrounded by the natural world and the sense of communality (even though she still really didn’t know most of the others there)—but there were things happening around her that she knew she could not yet completely understand. And she made herself think, just to calm down, that she had felt like this at other times in her life, even when she had first arrived in Utah.

The group of 18 was a mix of men and women from Moloka‘i, Maui, Hawai‘i, and Kaua‘i. All except three of them had been there before, on island for the makahiki opening ceremony, so Lei just tried to keep up with them. They worked diligently under the shade of kiawe trees, meticulously preparing the items they had gathered from their respective islands. They worked in pairs wrapping ‘awa, kalo, ‘ulu, ‘uala, mai‘a and other appropriate ho‘okupu for the ceremony that would take place over the next two days. And as she watched and worked, she thought about all the ways the ho‘okupu might be connected to Lono, the god of fertility, agriculture, music, and rainfall.

She was honored at the chance to be a part of the ceremony, thankful to Kekoa for putting in a good word. She was already overtaken by it all. Moved. But she found herself, as watched one of the women wrap ti leaves around ‘ulu, thinking about Kekama, her brother, and the heiau at Manawai.

Kekoa gently elbowed her back to the present and to the boar meat in front of them. His hands were covered in blood. “Make three ho‘okupu,” he said. “Put backstrap and hind in all of ‘em. I neva ask about da po‘o yet.”

The po‘o. The head. Kekema had asked her if they were going to use it, and when she said she didn’t know, he wrapped it in a white pillowcase, stuffed it in the cooler, and said that they should. The way he’d said it bothered her at first—he was telling her what to do again—but she thought to bring it and then to ask Kekoa when they met in Maui.

She had heard somewhere that the po‘o, which held the brain, was symbolic of enlightenment. An appropriate offering since the po‘o held mana, too. Plenty, in fact. Maybe that’s why she let Kekema’s comment slide. She was thinking about Lono, hoping that the god would accept the ho‘okupu with more favor.

The heiau at Manawai found its way into her head. She pictured the corner she had cleared for their ho‘okupu, the ‘awa, and then she imagined the tips of the vines she had pushed away beginning to move. They curled slowly at first, swirling toward the ‘awa until they were inches away, where they suddenly rose upward or splayed to the side, peeling themselves back and then off of the heiau. She didn’t know what to think about the images, and when she saw the men and women preparing ho‘okupu under the shade of the kiawe trees, she tried to remind herself why she was there.

She looked over at Kekoa. She had always told him he was solid, and he liked to joke with her about it, too. Because his roots were in Moloka‘i, he’d say. She was glad he was there, on Kaho‘olawe, with her. Hadn’t thought she’d ever hear from him once she left for college. Now he had called her up and brought her there, just as she had found her way back home. Another sign, she thought.

She began to wrap the second ho‘okupu, and before long, she could not stop Kekema from appearing again in her mind. At first, he was older, sixteen or so, inside his room on a hot, sunny day, sharpening a knife. Then he was twelve, laying on the ground, bloody after a hunt. He was ten and taking his first dogs up mauka. He was seven and walking down a two-lane street with cuts on his knees and burns on his back. She wanted to believe he was glad she was home, but she knew, like her, he had dreamed her dream, so any deviation from it meant a broken promise between them. She had always told him they were more than just a sister and a brother. So it upset her at first that she had come back before she finished school in Utah.

The others finished with their ho'okupu and began carrying the wrapped offerings toward the imu, so Lei nudged Kekoa with her elbow. "Good?" she asked. She looked down at the ho'okupu on the table in front of them.

Kekoa picked up one of them. He inspected it from all angles. "Perfect," he said. "I like you did it before."

Around them, sunrays cut through the kiawe, creating blocks of light on the brown sand bordered by thin black shadows. She took the ho'okupu from Kekoa and began walking to the imu. It's going to be a hot day, she thought.

After a few steps, Kekoa called after her. "Eh, Lei," he said. "When you pau, go unpack your kikepa. I gon' check about da po'o."

* * *

When they were still in grade school, Lei had saved Kekama's life. They were playing in an open lot at the top of Ranch Camp with some of the neighborhood kids one afternoon. She had just sat down to rest when she heard Kekama screaming in the distance behind her, and when she turned to find him, he was on fire.

One of the older girls told them later that it had been an accident, that she had been using Kekama to block the wind as she lit a cigarette, and that Kekama was aware of what she was doing behind him, but Lei never forgave her.

She had heard Kekama cry out for help, and when she looked up, he was already running through the open lot toward Kaunakakai. She had been sitting on the ground when she heard him, but within seconds she was on top of him and they were rolling in the dirt.

After they came to a stop, Kekama seemed a little shaken up for a few seconds, but he quickly stood up and brushed himself off. He pulled Lei to her feet. He had sustained some pretty bad burns, mostly on his back, near his waist, but he told Lei she shouldn't do anything to the girl, no matter what the girl said, and that they should just go home.

Lei looked at the droplets of blood forming in her palms. She wasn't about to listen to Kekama even though there was a part of her that knew no matter what she did,

she wouldn't feel any better. In fact, she knew she might even make things worse. But the fact that she had to face their parents when they got home made her furious. They were covered in dirt, bleeding at the knees, and it was clear Kekama had been in the presence of fire. She bit her lip and clenched her fists. There was going to be a world of pain when they got home.

She walked right up to the girl and listened just long enough for the girl to say it was an accident. Then she lifted her shirt until she had exposed the burn on her stomach, and when the girl looked down at it, she pushed the girl to the ground and jumped right on top of her. Some of the children were in shock, but some cheered at the action. It took all of Kekama's might to pull Lei off of the girl, and even when he did, he couldn't back her away. She wanted to tear the girl apart, to drown her in a fury of punches, but with Kekama holding her back, all she could do was spit in the girl's face.

It was ugly, and she wasn't proud that she'd done it, but a line had been crossed and it was clear there was no going back.

As they walked home, Kekama tried to make her feel better by telling her she had saved his life. That before she had tackled him, he thought he was going to die. He had been too scared to think to roll on the ground. He just started running.

As they headed for home, the afternoon sun left an orange glow on the roofs and in the windows of the houses lining the street. Behind the houses, a long, wide, sloping plain of dry brush and brown dirt rose until it reached green mountaintops. The older children still in the empty lot had gone back to talking to each other and the little ones were singing.

She began to think of all the ways she might explain what had happened when they got home. Kekama was her kuleana. And because of this, his injuries were her fault, no matter how they happened. Still, she found a bit of comfort in the fact that she had saved him and that he knew it.

* * *

The makahiki opening ceremony on Kaho'olawe included three site visits where the 18 men and women made offerings to Lono. Two of the sites, the Hale o Papa and Hale Mua

were in Hakio‘awa. Hale o Papa, the women’s ahu, stood on the northern ridge of the bay, and as Lei waited there for her chance to approach the mo‘o Lono, Lono’s priest, and make her first offering, she looked down at the bundled ti leaves encasing the boar meat in her hands. There was life there in the ho‘okupu, she thought. Mana. Just a few days before, the boar now in her hands had been a ferocious adversary, brutally strong, warranting both her and her brother and his dogs just to take it down. She felt a sudden charge emanate from her hands, enough to make her look up and into the bay, where she saw a rainbow appear in the distance between Maui and Kaho‘olawe. For a few minutes, she watched the rainbow grow as it approached, and then she turned and made her way toward the ahu, where two kia‘i stood side by side, holding out their spears in an ‘X’ to stop her until the mo‘o Lono was ready to accept the offering.

Lei held the offering with both hands held just above her head until the kia‘i withdrew their spears and the Mo‘o Lono stepped forward from behind them. Then she placed the bundled ti leaves in his hand, and when they were both holding the offering, she said, “Aloha, e. ‘O wau Leialoha mai Moloka‘i Nui a Hina. He pua‘a no Manawai.” She waited for the weight of the offering to disappear from her hands, then she lowered her arms and watched the kia‘i lower their spears, the mo‘o Lono retrace his steps to the ahu and to the ali‘i, who placed the offering on the alter beside the rest. She turned to see the rainbow now in the center of Hakio‘awa Bay, its colorful brilliance reaching from the calm ocean surface in an arch to a long white cloud in the sky.

She took her place on a rocky embankment next to the women who had already made their offering. She listened to their kikepa rattle in the breeze as she waited while others filed one by one toward the kia‘i, their spears, and then the mo‘o Lono.

* * *

Kekama’s house was a one-room, ply board shack with a corrugated aluminum roof that fed an 800-gallon concrete water catchment attached to its side. At the front of the house, there were wooden steps that led to a little porch and then to a screen door. Inside, sunlight filtered through windows from two of the walls. On the floor, there was a

pune'e, a glass coffee table, a wicker sofa, and a multi-component stereo system. "No need TV," he told his sister. "Music is all I need."

Lei stood in the doorway as he gathered his backpack, his knife, a jug of water and a container with what he said was lunch. "The bathroom?" she asked.

"Outside," he said. "If it's number two, there's an outhouse in back."

Kekoa had been right when he said she could "rough it," but the thought of her brother living without modern plumbing made her cringe. They'd grown up in a four-bedroom home in Kaunakakai with all of the luxuries of contemporary living—even a dishwasher—and she was somewhat bewildered by the fact that Kekama had chosen to live this way now that he was older. It didn't necessarily surprise her. He'd always found happiness in the things he did rather than the things he owned. So she guessed maybe he was just trying to prove something to himself by literally living his life alone.

"I hope you don't bring girls back here," she said. It was a joke, but she was also curious to hear his response to the comment. They hadn't talked much about his relationships since she'd left for Utah, and she was suddenly very interested in what he was going to say next.

Kekama put down his backpack and looked at her. "Only the malihini," he said. And then he smiled. "They get a kick out this place, like they're in some other world."

"You crazy," said Lei. "Some guy bring me back to a place like this, I'm gone. No questions asked." She laughed, but it was the truth.

"You not malihini, dat's why," said Kekama. "You no can imagine what it's like live one city, in one apartment, all your life, then wind up at the end of one dirt road one night in a house lit by candles and soft music playing in da background."

"You off," said Lei.

"Maybe," he replied. He ran his hand over his face, his goatee. "But I damn handsome, too." And he laughed back at her.

"So that's it. You move back Mom's kuleana land and stay da rest of your life like this?"

“Fo’ now,” he said. “Good life. Only gotta worry about water. And most times, get plenty.”

* * *

On the hike to the summit of Kaho‘olawe for the final offerings of the makahiki opening ceremony at Moa‘ula, Lei and Kekoa walked side by side a few hundred yards behind the hāpai ki‘i, who carried the tall crosspiece which held the carving of the akua loa, Lono, at the very top. Lei watched the white kapa hanging from the horizontal arms of the crosspiece billow in the wind toward the line of men and women in front of her. “How da knee?” Kekoa asked.

“Good, good,” she said. The steep rocky terrain at the beginning of the hike had slowed her down, but now that they were nearing the higher plateaus of the island, she felt like she was getting her second wind. “It’s beautiful up here,” she said. “Plenty erosion, but plenty to see too. I never thought it’d be like this.”

“Yeah,” said Kekoa. “First time I came, I was shock. I neva knew had so many sites, all connecting us to our past. That’s da beauty, I think. I walked da land, I saw a time dat I forgotten. And I just connect, right away.”

She was sweating, tired, and thirsty, but when they stopped for a moment to take in the panoramic view of Molokini, Maui, Lāna‘i, and Moloka‘i, she was thinking more about the land around her than about herself. It was beautiful, certainly—especially when the procession had cut through outcrops of pili grass or under the shade of a wiliwili—but she also saw destruction. She could not overlook it. There were massive scars on the landscape, giant sections of topsoil completely eroded down to the hardpan. When she resumed walking, she did not feel any sense of pain. “Mahalo, Kekoa,” she said. “You was right. I needed this.”

“You were the first person I thought about. When Kama told me you was coming back Hawai‘i, I figgah, was meant to be.”

“I’m sorry,” she said. “Before we get to Moa‘ula, I need to say that. You were always really good to me. Even after I left. I’m...”

“Nah. You back now.” He quickly brushed off what she was about to say. “Dat’s what mattah. You hea’ now. If I had free ride leave Hawai’i back then, who knows.”

“You’re too much like Kekama,” she said. “You probably would’ve stayed back, like him. I still don’t understand it. All he said when I used to ask was that he wanted to live by his own rules.”

“He always li’ dat. No worry about him. He get ’im. T’ink about Moa’ula, Lei. Your ho’okupu. When we get deah, you see, everything goin’ change.”

Lei looked up for the hāpai ki’i. In the distance, the members of the procession were cutting into a row of kiawe trees. Sunlight reflected off of the tall grasses around them. She saw the long white kapa tailing off the crosspiece in the wind. She was following a god, she thought. And she continued on.

* * *

When they reached the bottom of Moa’ula’iki, the ali’i, the hāpai ki’i, the mo’o Lono, and the the kia’i, continued to the summit. The remaining men and women split into two groups to prepare themselves for the last offerings of the ceremony. Each group found shady spots behind kiawe trees to change from their hiking attire into their malo or kīkepa. They organized the last of the ho’okupu and then they began to line up at the base of the hill that rose to the summit. Lei and Kekoa stood side by side. Kekoa had taken on the kuleana of carrying the po’o to the Moa’ula, but now he passed it to Lei. He didn’t say anything to her, but when she looked at him, he gave her a reassuring smile.

As the procession began to make its way up the hill, Lei kept her focus on the ground. She was bare-footed, and unlike the trail leading to Hale o Papa, the one to Moa’ula’iki had not been thoroughly prepared to ensure there was a clear path to the ahu. Each step was a meticulous one, taking her closer to the summit and to the completion of something she knew now was more than just a final offering. She felt little pieces of rock lodge themselves under the soles of her feet. The wind began to swirl around her. She heard malo and kīkepa rattling just ahead. Sunlight pressed her shoulders. She felt lightheaded, and then there was a silence.

Kekama, she thought. My brother. My kuleana. Mahalo, my brother. Mahalo.

When she raised her head for the first time, she could see all the way out to the Kaho‘olawe shoreline. Then she looked out to the ocean channels surrounding her— ‘Alalākeiki, Pailolo, ‘Au‘au, and Ke ala i Kahiki. From the summit of Kaho‘olawe, they looked like one glassy blue floor. She looked out to the islands again, and before she looked back to the ground, she saw Manawai.

The procession came to a halt. She stepped beside Kekoa and when she stopped, he put his arm around her shoulders and held her there. She felt grounded again.

Kekoa whispered, “We do all the same ho‘okupu first, j’like down below, and after they’re all on the ahu, the mo‘o Lono will come back to ask if there are any others. Then we’ll go, me and you, and I’ll stop just behind you as you offer the po‘o.”

She waited there. She wanted to put an arm around him, hold him back, but she was afraid to take a hand off of the offering. The wind was moving now, cutting over the summit and ripping down the sloping plains toward the shore. She imagined them reaching the shoreline and dancing across the channels. The men and women were still. The rattling of their malo and kīkepa now sounded like a kind of music, each length of fabric creating a beat blending with the ones beside it. She saw the mo‘o Lono return to the kia‘i and then the kia‘i raise the tips of their spears.

Kekoa lifted his arm off of her and placed his hand in the small of her back. She looked over and smiled at him. She wanted him to know at that very moment she was deeply grateful for the things he had done. Then she turned back toward the kia‘i and stepped forward until she couldn’t feel him there anymore.

When the mo‘o Lono took her ho‘okupu, she did not look up as she had when they were at Hale o Papa. Instead, she kept her eyes closed, put her arms to her side, and imagined the kia‘i lowering their spears as the mo‘o Lono returned to the ali‘i and the ahu. She kept her eyes closed until she felt the heat on her shoulders replaced by a cool wind. She kept her eyes closed even longer, until she felt the first tiny drop of rain.

* * *

They were walking north near the Kaho‘olawe coastline, over slabs of lava, toward a bluff Kekoa had told her would allow them an evening view of Moloka‘i. It was still

drizzling. The light rain had followed them all the way down from Moa‘ula. It had followed Lei and Kekoa and some of the others when they had broken off from the group and made a brief stop at Pu‘umō‘iwi, where one of the members of the PKO took them into the adze quarry to teach them about the site’s history. Lei had been amazed by the size of the quarry. Under the sun and the drizzling rain, the ground had sparkled in some places like diamonds. There had been chipped shards of rock in one area for as far as she could see, and when they began back down toward Hakio‘awa, they had been led down a dirt road that cut between two hills, where they saw layers of adze chips between layers of soil.

When they arrived at the bluff, Kekoa pointed out a spot on the ground where they could sit and lean against the smooth lava. The sun was setting, and it was getting colder now. “I’m going back to Manawai,” Lei said. “Got to find out about a heiau there. Kekama might know, but I think it’s time for me to find out.”

“That’s good,” said Kekoa. He sat there next to her, looking off toward Moloka‘i. “Maybe I can come back soon. Visit.”

She wanted him to hold her again, put his arm around her shoulder, just to feel that grounded feeling she had when they were on Moa‘ula. “Mahalo, yeah,” she said. She felt the last of the sun slip below the horizon. “You’ve done plenty and I don’t know if I can thank you enough.”

“Nah,” he said. “No worry, Lei. I’m just happy to see you again. That’s good enough fo’ me.”

There was a crackle of light in the sky behind them and they turned to see lightning gathering in the clouds above Moa‘ula. They stood up and watched the bolts move back and forth across the summit of the island. White veins in the sky, appearing every minute. There was booming thunder. It just kept going. Soon, the others were cheering somewhere in the distance. A faint sound she could still make out: Lonoikamakahiki!

Then, the clouds split and there were two distinct bodies of light and sound moving in opposite directions over the island. She stood there in awe, still in the light

drizzle, still hoping Kekoa would hold her again. She imagined the cloud moving south would make its way across the ‘Alenuihāhā Channel and reach Hawai‘i Island before finding its way up through Waimea. And she imagined the other, moving north, would make its way to Moloka‘i before finding Manawai. She heard sheets of rain splashing over a corrugated tin roof. She saw a concrete water catchment overflowing onto a little wooden porch.

Dream Stories: a tribute

1.

We are lying in bed. The children are awake in their rooms. They are playing with guns.
This is a dream in a dream.

2.

A man runs over lava near a shoreline. There are bombs falling. Artillery. The lava
shakes. A pool of trembling saltwater, the water spills. The sound of heavy breathing.

3.

Rainwater falls from a cliff into the sea. There are millions and millions of gallons.
Spilling into the sea.

4.

A windy dirt road. Tall dry brush. Deers squeak, whistle, grunt. White sand. A deep, blue
ocean. A cloud-like school of fat, silver fish. Run. Jump. Jump. Jump!

5.

This is the dream of questions: How does a bud bloom in the dark? Where can we find
them? How will we know?

6.

Tentacles splay in the sunlight. There is a birth. Crying. A woman calls for her son.
Singing. Singing. Singing. Crying.

7.

A boat. A spider. A baby deer. Thorns. A wide, white cloud. A wide, white sail. Dew.
They are all caught in a giant web.

8.

Hands holding ti leaves. Hands near a fire. Smoke seeps from the earth. An imu.
Something is burning, but it is not food.

9.

There's a tent on the beach. It's shuffling in the wind. Inside, a man and woman are
making love. Outside, someone's watching.

10.

A crowd holds signs outside a building. They are yelling, arms in the air, but there is no sound. Their signs are red, but they don't have words. The people have faces, but they don't have eyes. Just skin.

11.

A president in a blue suit standing behind a podium. He is talking and talking and talking. He speaks to a one-person crowd.

12.

The people pass a stone down the line. It swings in their arms, their hands. It's picking up speed, picking up mana. It is going to become something more.

13.

A farmer kneeling in the red soil of his yard. He's praying. He follows a man with a Y-shaped stick. They're yelling, yelling, "Water! Water!"

14.

The end of the Wharf begins to crumble. Concrete pillars fall like dominos toward the shore. The road of the pier slides into the ocean. All that's left is a broken harbor.

15.

Brothers at Point. One surfing. One takes notes. The second one is high on a bluff, looking out to the sea. The first one might still be thinking violent things.

16.

Wars with spears and clubs. Wars with slings and stones. Wars with guns and bombs. Men. Women. Children.

17.

In the sky: the sun and moon, the clouds, the jets, the choppers. All these things moving every which way.

18.

From the sky: Moloka'i—Lāna'i—Maui—Molokini—Kaho'olawe. Kaho'olawe—Molokini—Maui—Lāna'i—Moloka'i.

19.

Beach glass. Driftwood. Bone. Plastic shards. Plastic Bottles. Cargo nets. Feathers. They morph into birds, fly away.

20.

A white dream about music. There is nothing to see, only the ripe sound of guitars. They play. They play. They play.

21.

Sheets of paper spread on a floor: handwritten notes, typed letters. Editing marks. Names. The sun shines through a window and stories rise off the pages like smoke.

22.

Shirtless men. Brown, tanned men. Ti leaf lei wrapped around their heads. They are dancing hula. Women watching men.

23.

A family sits around a table. There are stars in the sky outside. Yellow flowers still in bloom. They eat and talk and laugh. They laugh and laugh. They eat.

24.

A long, white cloud. A god. Kohemālamalama. Keiki kāne. Keiki wahine. Keiki. Keiki. Keiki!

25/26.

Two young men. Strong men. Miracles swimming home in the sea.

The Man With White Hair

The beginning of every celebration on Moloka‘i—no matter the site or the preceding weather—often includes a passing rain. So when clouds appeared in the distance over Kamakou at noon and then began to hover down toward Kalama‘ula and the dry southern shoreline of the island, almost no one seemed to notice. It appeared until then an almost wickedly hot day, but in the open field that was the land on which her family had lived as far as they could remember, sixty-four uncles and aunties, cousins, and lifelong friends of Piilani Moe’s family had come to prepare all the necessities for her baby lū‘au. They moved in a familial harmony, each person a member of a unit carrying out a final task—hanging fresh floral decorations, chopping vegetables, frying fish, and covering up the imu.

When the light rain had finally reached her Kalama‘ula homestead, Piilani was asleep in a stroller under the shelter of a large carport that had been emptied and then filled with four park tables topped with trays of Hawaiian food for those who had come to help set up for her party. The soft rain played a rhythmic tickling sound over the corrugated tin roof of the carport in a way that seemed to accentuate her dreams, and while her head gently rolled from one side to the other, her eyes remained softly shut.

In the field, some looked up and smiled, but the others continued talking story while they prepared pūpū, set up tables near the stage, and hung floral arrangements with flowers gathered from different parts of the island the evening before. It was not until just after the rain had passed and Kalani Moe, Piilani’s uncle, walked over to his younger brother, Keaka, her father, and said, “There’s the blessing,” that Keaka stopped raking the area around the tables. The clouds now dissipating over the shoreline near Pāla‘au looked like a disappearing sandbar in the sky.

* * *

By the time the sun hung beyond the landscape of kiawe where Keaka had stopped to watch those clouds, the moon was already an overturned faint white bowl over the eastern end of the island, the bell of a giant jellyfish ascending up into the heavens. Cars were now parked on the outskirts of every side of the field that had been prepared for Piilani's luau, and hundreds of guests were filing in via the dirt road that bordered the makai side of her homestead. Hundreds of guests who had already arrived were talking story at tables nearest the stage as they waited for the pule to formally mark the beginning of the event.

Keaka Moe quickly stepped inside his modest plantation home to change into a clean aloha shirt and a pair of shorts before he looked himself over in the mirror of the only bathroom in his house. His eyes were bloodshot. And he stared for a while when he took a washcloth over his face and forearms and found it had wiped away a dirt that was the same brownish-red color as his skin. Then he ran both hands through his hair and was pleased when he saw that although the radical transformation his hair had begun to take over the last week had continued—turning from a dark, earthen-brown to a very pale white—it was still thick and full. He rinsed out the washcloth and looked into the sink until the last of the reddish-brown water spiraled down the white basin.

Outside, Kalani Moe had taken an old guitar from his truck and had made his way up to the stage in front of what was now more than five hundred guests. He was playing an instrumental version of what Keaka immediately recognized as the “Molokai Waltz,” a song he had first heard performed by one of his heroes, the Hawaiian musician, George Helm. That was over ten years earlier and just a few homestead lots away from where he was now standing and listening to his own brother. The soothing sound of Kalani's music eased the pressure Keaka had felt all week, and many of the guests had stopped their conversations and were now looking toward the stage, their eyes fixed on Kalani's guitar until his strumming built to vibrant crescendo and then stopped.

* * *

From a very young age, Keaka had always dreamed of being a father. As the youngest of three children, he was often left without the ability, he felt, to control his own fate. It was a simple dream, he thought, and Kalani often reminded him of this. “That’s all you like be?” Kalani would ask. “One father? That’s it? I hope one day you get bigger dreams than that!”

As boys, they had spent their days after school near the seashore at Kalama‘ula, Kalani always in the lead as they foraged through the kiawe or mangrove or over the brown sand and coral of the shoreline. They had spent more time in these places than anywhere else on the island—on earth, for that matter—and in time had become so accustomed to the geography and terrain of these areas that they had measured in footsteps the distances between stone terraces and fishponds and boulders covered in petroglyphs fashioned centuries before they were born.

Neither of the boys ever wrote down what he had found or even what he knew about the distance and direction from one site to the next. For months and then for years they kept their knowledge and the location of these places within and between themselves.

“One day,” Kalani would say, “One day we’ll clear this kiawe and make sure your children get to see these places, too.”

* * *

After handshakes, hugs, and kisses with as many guests as he could reach, Keaka Moe finally made it to the stage. He thanked Kalani for his music, and then took the mic. “Aloha kākou. Welcome. And mahalo for joining us tonight to celebrate the first year of our daughter, Piilani, on this very special occasion.” There were smiles in the crowd. There was clapping, and some even raised fists or a cup in the air. From behind the temporary windbreak of coconut fronds, those still making their way to a seat and those choosing to stand in the periphery of the party cheered in agreement. But amidst it all,

Keaka could see there were a few of the guests, especially the kūpuna, who were looking up at him with wonderment.

It was cooler now, the sun partially dipped somewhere into the horizon beyond the kiawe, its orange rays filtering in through branches and leaves, but when he saw the kūpuna had looks of perplexity, he immediately began to tug at the front of his shirt. He peered back at his house for what seemed like many minutes and then almost stepped off the stage before he saw his mother appear in the doorway of the house cradling Piilani in her arms.

“Family, friends,” he said, “My ‘ohana, please help me welcome my mom, Evelyn Moe, and my daughter, Piilani.” And suddenly he felt an enormous sense of relief. “Many of you know, my wife, Pii’s mom, can’t join us tonight, but I promise you she sends aloha and a mahalo from O‘ahu to you all. She was adamant—you know her—that we have Pii’s party even though she can’t be here.”

As his mother cut between the food lines toward the stage with Piilani, everyone cheered. And everyone, even the kūpuna, were smiling. Keaka helped his mother step up on the stage and kissed her on the cheek before taking Piilani and cradling her in his own arms. Then he smiled before bowing his head, closing his eyes, and saying, “E pule kākou. Let us pray.”

* * *

He watched the three of them tie the beaten man’s wrists with ropes and then stretch them apart until the man was secured by each of his wrists to a tree. One of them held the man up while the other two hitched the rope over branches and tightly secured their ends. The man hung there just above the ground, his arms stretched out, his head tilted down, his chin nearly resting on his chest. It looked like the end of a crucifixion.

They had hung the man in silence, the only sounds had been when the rope was lashed around the tree and when one of them had stepped on a branch hidden under the pine needles. Even the man was quiet once they had driven him deeper into the forest. And that had been more than two hours ago.

By now, the sun was setting and the wind was close to dead. The four of them stood back to see what they done. They didn't look at each other once the man was in place. Nor did they say a word.

* * *

The lū'au was finally underway and Kalani was back on the stage introducing the first performers, an all-female trio named Leonahe that had arrived a few hours earlier from Maui. On cue, the lights hanging from wire stretching above the tables began to flicker on. Some of the guests were already back from the food lines, their paper plates and side dishes heaped with kalua pig, chicken long rice, lomi salmon, sweet potato, smoked deer meat, poke, raw crab, 'opihi, limu ele'ele, dried squid, and an assortment of desserts. Voices and laughter filled the field, and above it all, the sweet sound of Hawaiian music blew gently like an 'Ūkiukiu wind.

Keaka walked through the crowd, greeting guests and thanking them for attending the party. Many were family. Many had been his closest friends. Many, in some way or another, had supported him all of his life, especially after the death of his father. In his teens, he had stayed with them on weekends, had taken trips with them to Maui and to O'ahu for baseball games or basketball games, had even seen them bring dinners over to their homestead when it was just him, Kalani, and their mom.

Now their jokes about his hair abruptly turning white even seemed to diminish the fact that he still wasn't entirely sure why it was happening; their jokes even seemed to assure him that his wife, Hoalani Moe, would ultimately regain her health and soon return home.

* * *

Hoalani had always been beautiful, and Keaka hoped from the moment he saw her that she was going to be his wife. It took time to convince of her of this, however, because when they first met, she had already had a life of her own.

She was three years older than him, a first-year flight attendant for a local airlines with routes between Maui and Moloka‘i. He was a senior in high school on his way to the Maui Interscholastic League Baseball Championship. He certainly looked like a man by then, a 6’2”, 220-pound pitcher with a right arm that fired out fastballs over 90 miles per hour. But in her presence that day, he could not help thinking he was just a boy. And when he called her over from the back of the Dash-7 in front of all of his teammates, she had told him as much, too.

He paused for a moment, letting the hum of the prop engines completely fill the space between them. Some of his teammates were now turning back to see if he’d make it to first base. “I’m going to need to know how I can see you again.” *Not so smooth*, he admitted, but he continued, “And I think that’ll mean I’ll need your number.”

Some of his teammates cringed. Some covered their mouths to hold back their laughter. And somehow now in the space between them all, there was complete silence.

Hoalani smiled graciously. There wasn’t a chance he was getting her number. “I’ll see what I can do,” she said. She offered him a sealed cup of water, then turned away and walked back toward the cockpit.

Alone in the row and at his seat, Keaka watched his teammates lean their heads into the aisle as they tried to catch a final glimpse of Hoalani before the landing. He was anxious. He turned away and looked out the window until he saw a mirage appear in the sky like an omen, the sunlight glimmering across the top of the clouds, a mythical pond nearly 2,800 feet above the Pacific.

* * *

He could also tell you almost to the exact number of footsteps where the beaten man was now hanging. All four of them knew the land near Molokai’s summit like this. There were fourteen people in the world who knew this place like he did. And three of them, he could be sure, would not tell another soul. There were ten others then, and he knew with just about as much certainty, that they would’ve at least found themselves in the same predicament he found himself in now. They’d understand.

He thought about these things as he watched the beaten man hanging in front of him and then he began to think about his children, his daughter and two sons. He wondered if they'd ever understand how he could find himself in the one place that he truly loved, with three men he had considered his own brothers, looking up now at a man near his death, without any remorse for what he had done.

He walked in darkness for a few minutes out from under the canopy of the forest to a small bluff and sat down to watch the stars begin to fill the night sky. He sat there listening to the soft and intermittent sounds of footsteps behind him until the stars made a web-like dome separating him from the heavens.

* * *

Keaka Moe waited until his coaches and teammates and all of the other passengers who had been on the plane were well ahead of him before he finally got up and approached Hoalani to ask her where she was from.

“Country,” she said. “Upcountry. Maui.”

He was pleased. Almost no longer anxious. Even in her uniform and all made up for the airlines, he could tell she'd be equally as beautiful with nothing but a pareo. He imagined the wavy curls that would fall from the bun when she removed the pins and the hibiscus from her long, brown hair. He imagined the soft glide his hands would make as he slowly shaped them over the subtle curves of her body. “Kula girl?” he asked. “So what? The number?”

Hoalani smiled. “Yeah, Kula girl,” she said. “I don't give it out to passengers.”

“Pau,” he said. “Pau da flight.”

He felt he should speed things up. He pointed to the threshold of the door and then onto the ramp. “Technically,” he said, “once I make *that* step, I'm no longer yours.” And then he moved past her and onto the ramp before turning back. He was reaching, he knew, but he couldn't help himself. “Just friends,” he said. “Friends.”

She laughed in a way that assured him it wasn't going to happen. “You're cute,” she said. “But full of smoke.”

And like that, it was over. He smiled, then turned to make his way to the tarmac. He saw his coaches and his teammates looking back from the entrance of the baggage claim. Some of them, even one of the assistant coaches, were gripping their throats with both hands, so he turned to face Hoalani one last time. He walked back up the ramp and pulled a torn page from the in-flight magazine from a pocket of his jeans. There was something he had written in Hawaiian and then in English on the page. “How would I know you’re a Kula girl?” he asked. Then he pulled out a pen and said, “I forget things ‘cause I never write them down.” He quickly scribbled on the sheet of paper and then handed it to her. “Our number,” he said. It was the number to the only phone on their Kalama‘ula homestead.

He watched Hoalani mouth the words he had written above the number on the page. She seemed amused. Maybe even impressed. Then she folded up the sheet of paper and slipped it in the small shirt pocket beneath the winged nametag on her uniform.

“I’ll remember you, Hoalani,” he said. And he turned to find the bright sun above Maui momentarily blind him.

* * *

From the doorsteps of his home, Keaka Moe kept Piilani cradled in one arm. The lū‘au had taken on a life of its own, and when Hawaiian Pride took the stage after Kalani had introduced them, some of the guests had spontaneously risen from their seats and had made their way in pairs to the grassy area just in front of the band. They held each other, swaying to falsetto voices and slack key guitars. Keaka watched them dance for a bit before looking up at the moon suspended high above them all. Around him, the atmosphere of the lū‘au appeared almost electric, a fine network led by the music, everyone in harmony. But amidst all of the smiling and laughter, and with his daughter near his heart, all he could feel was torment.

“Piilani,” he said. “Mommy sounded good on the phone. She’ll be home soon. With us.”

* * *

On the night of the accident, Hoalani had been driving home from the hotel bar where she had picked up shifts on nights when she wasn't flying the next day. She took the job before telling Keaka about it, and although he was opposed to the idea at first, he agreed in the end because she convinced him the job meant money for Piilani's future.

On the way home, she had stopped in town at the bakery. He had asked her to do this before, but she had never done it.

She had seen the boys stumble into to the rent-a-car and drive off before she parked there in Kaunakakai. And because of this, she felt just as much at fault for the accident.

"I saw them," she later told him. "I wondered how they were getting home. Not home, I mean, wherever they were going. They were drunk. They wouldn't make it far. I could've stopped them.

"I passed the church and then I could see them again. Parked just on the side of the road. The lights were off. I thought they had pulled over to sleep in the car."

In the hospital and then many times later, Keaka played this moment over in his head: He'd imagine the drone of the pickup's engine, the wind funneling in through the open window, the unlit, two-lane road and the white dividers sweeping by and separating the pickup from the darkness surrounding her. He'd imagine the way the rain had given the black pavement a glossy sheen and how the truck sped up in anticipation of its arrival home. A silver car in the corner of his vision would pull onto the road. And then things appeared in slow motion. There was plenty of time, but when the truck swerved, he always heard the sharp ping that a rear-view mirror makes when it collides with metal, the piercing scratch of a car fender against the side of a truck, and the sound like a gunshot when a tire explodes.

When he thought of these things, his hands began to sweat, and he'd feel them slide across the steering wheel as he tried to keep the truck from shaking while it veered

across the dividers on the road and slipped into a ditch. He'd imagine himself, as Hoalani would've been, trapped in the truck but trying to remove himself and stumble the rest of the way home. He imagined himself trying to get out of the truck for minutes before he saw her running towards him, as he had done, from their home.

* * *

Sitting on the bluff under a net of stars that stretched over Maui and Moloka'i and into the Kaiwi Channel, he decided he would not be able to keep the secret of the man he had beaten and watched hung from the trees. He was already sure of it. And he saw while he sat there the irony of it all, how this attempt to protect the land and his family was ultimately the reason he could not keep quiet. He began to see the days, years later, when his own sons would bear the same kuleana. He saw then the dangers they'd face and the decisions that would determine not only their fates, but the fate of the island.

He listened to the wind sneak up behind him and then watched it carry itself down the mountain, across valleys, and toward the southern shoreline. And he trembled at the thought that this same wind might travel alone, without him, into the windows and doorway of his Kalama'ula home.

Girls Named After the Moon

Part I: September 1977

It's ten p.m. and wet outside when Kela Ahonui walks up to the sliding glass door of his sister's home in Kala'e with a loaded rifle. He's wearing military-grade camouflage pants and all-purpose boots. He taps the muzzle of the rifle on the glass, and when his sister lifts her head off the couch and sees him, Kela leans toward the glass door and smiles.

Malia Ahonui is the older of the two. They're the only children of Mary and Duane Ahonui, both of whom are now buried in Ho'olehua Cemetary. She's a little stunned at the sight of her kid brother in the doorway. The hunter. But she gets up off the couch, turns off the t.v., and slides open the door. She turns on the porch light and sticks her head out to see if Kela's come with anyone, and when all she sees are the shadows of bushes and trees lining the driveway, she gives her brother a hug.

"It's frickin' late," says Malia. "Dennis and the twins, sleeping."

Kela's holds his smile. "You, too. You never heard the truck. Where the dogs? You slipping."

"I told Dennis you said this afternoon. Where's the call?"

"Stuck at home. I'll tell you when we get there."

Malia is tired. Her sons can be taxing, no doubt. But she knows something's not right. She hasn't seen her brother in a few weeks, and the next thing she knows, she gets a call at work and Kela's at her front door with a 40-caliber rifle that night.

Outside, the rain has stopped and the wind is pushing clouds down the Ho'olehua Plains. Soon, the sky will clear and there'll be nothing up there but stars.

Kela takes a seat on a bench just outside the door and Malia slowly begins reaching around the dimly-lit living room for warm clothing. She slips a long sleeve t-shirt over her shoulder and stuffs a pair of jeans in a duffle bag. Then she steps out of the house and picks up a pair of boots. "Ammo?" she asks.

"Four rounds. 'Nuff."

Kela is a real killer. An excellent rifleman. And if he has to, he can drop axis deer in full stride from more than 200 yards with a single shot. He's good with a knife, too. Malia has seen him debone a deer in less than thirty minutes. He can do it in the dark on a night like this.

Malia shuts the glass door, walks to the truck, and tosses the duffle bag in its bed. "Leaving my rifle," she says. "It's all you." And suddenly, before she can even climb up and in the truck, the rumbling sound of an engine fills the space between them.

* * *

As they make their way down the dark and winding two-lane highway from Kala'e into Kualapu'u, Kela slows the truck down and pulls off through an overgrowth of tall wild grass and then onto a dirt road. The truck bounces for a while, the sound of metal tools sloshing around in plastic buckets in the bed of the truck mixes with the sound of squeaking suspension. Malia keeps her gaze through the windshield. Beyond the head beams of the truck, there isn't much to see, but she knows it's best to be ready for anything. It's pastureland, and for the most part, still dry season. They might not have to drive more than a quarter mile before they see game. "You never said we're gonna walk," she says. "How hard, empty out the back of a truck?"

"Work early," says Kela. "Was late today. Save time." Then he looks over his shoulder at his sister. "Besides, the truck's loud. And Dennis told me you need exercise."

Malia smacks him on the shoulder. "Yeah, right," she says. She points to his stomach. "You look like you're the one expecting?" And she laughs.

The truck bumps along for another half mile or so until in the distance they see tiny lights dotting the lowlands of Kaunakakai. Kela shifts the truck into park and turns off the engine right there in the middle of the dirt road. Malia opens the door and jumps in the back. She begins to unzip the duffle bag, so he reaches behind the seat for the rifle and a spotlight.

* * *

They were born six years apart. '48 and '54. And as far as he's concerned, Malia has been his caretaker all of his life. She looked after him when they were in grade

school. Helped him with homework. Cooked when their parents came home late from work. She was the good one. She did things for him even though he knows he sometimes didn't deserve them. He was a kolohe boy. He could be kolohe with her, too.

She was 18 and working when their parents had died, so she was his legal guardian until he came of age. She was good at everything. Smart. And the only problems he had with her were when she started to get into serious relationships with men. He was over-protective, maybe even a little scared for his own well-being. Back then, right after he had graduated from high school, he thought Malia might ask him to move. She wanted to marry Dennis.

It was a strange time. A brother and a sister, both adults, living together in their childhood home, trying to figure out their futures.

But Dennis wound up being a decent guy. A solid guy, in fact. He was book smart, like Malia, and street smart, too. It didn't take him long before he was acclimated to life on Moloka'i. He found a good job first as a biology teacher at the high school, then as a State employee at the settlement on the island's north shore, Kalaupapa. When they were married a year after Kela had graduated, he bought the house in Kala'e with enough of a down payment so Kela didn't have to move. Dennis even understood when Malia told him she wanted to keep her last name. It was enough for Kela, on the night of their wedding, to walk right up to Dennis and apologize for threatening on multiple occasions to kick his frickin' haole ass.

Kela had watched them raise the boys, Duane and Denny, who were now two years old and already a fine testament to the strength of their marriage. They were perfect boys—if there were such a thing—and so he thought it strange when he was with them, he sometimes felt very much alone.

* * *

There must be a million stars in the sky. Malia is holding the spotlight, but she hopes she won't have to turn it on. She's walking east on the dirt road beside her brother, waiting for him to give her the news. Maybe it's his girlfriend. Maybe a little money. Maybe

both. She's known him all his life and there's still no telling what he'll say until he says it. For all she knows, he could be moving to Alaska. He's brought it up before.

Malia doesn't mind the waiting. There's something reassuring about the fact they're walking side-by-side, silhouettes in the quiet, cold night. They haven't done this since Malia found out she was pregnant with the boys, and when she broke the news to Kela, she promised him when the boys were old enough, she'd be back. They'd do it again.

There's a rustling up ahead. Kela lifts an arm, a sign to stop, and Malia holds out the spotlight, ready to fire it on. They stand for a few seconds. Listen to the movement, hoofs scuffing dirt, branches scratching against each other. There's plenty of noise in front of them, so Kela steps closer and Malia follows just behind him.

This is the drill: Kela keeps his arm in the air until he thinks he's close enough to fire the rifle. He drops his arm and takes aim in the dark. She'll flash on the spotlight in the same direction as the gun. It'll be quick, only a second, just enough to give Kela time to find his target in the scope. She'll anticipate the boom of the rifle, and she'll be ready to light up the spotlight again if he calls for it.

* * *

It's Kaho'olawe. He's thinking about it now. Right in the middle of a possible kill shot. The island's calling and he can't stop it. He wants to be there. But he can't.

He has too many questions about the island. Jarrett and Kimo. He's confused, angry. He knew Hui Alaloa would lead them all to something he couldn't entirely anticipate, but he also believed the hui would always be there for each other. It's his fault they're gone. He should've done more. He should've been there, on the island with them, on the night they disappeared. He has all these questions, and now he knows he'll never be able to answer them. He's afraid he won't be a part of the dream.

He's close enough to whatever's penned in behind the kiawe in front of him.

There's no need for a better angle. It's dark, but he can see it's big. He's right there.

* * *

She wants to see him lower his arm. She's pumped with adrenaline, ready to fire on the light. She wants him to take the shot. And she realizes now that she's missed the sound of a rifle firing off into the night.

She begins to wish for her rifle. The shadows are impressive, even in the dark. This is too easy, she thinks.

Then a falling star disappears somewhere behind the kiawe, and she's thinking, This is taking Kela too long.

* * *

Kela keeps his arm up and slowly begins backing away. The dirt crumbles under his feet and he thinks Malia can hear it, too. He's not going to take the shot. He's decided. He turns to his sister and whispers, "Nah, I just don't feel like shooting tonight."

Malia can't believe it. These look like monsters. And all he has to do is pull the trigger. If she didn't know any better, she probably would've been pissed at him. She drops the spotlight to her side. She looks at him and then back toward the truck even though she knows she won't be able to see it. "Let's just shine," she says. "Nothing to lose."

Kela's still hesitant. But he's woken her up and brought her out here in the middle of the night. He has to give her *something*. "Shoot," he says. "Alright." He raises the rifle, just in case.

* * *

Axis deer on Moloka'i are already a menacing force. Even Dennis agrees they tear up the landscape, causing soil erosion, a significant decrease in the native plant population, and turmoil to the island's watershed. As far as Kela is concerned, local hunters—even when they're poaching—are saving the island's ecology. And for that matter, the people.

Kela thinks for the island's largest landowners—Moloka'i Ranch and the State of Hawaii—to place restrictions on local hunters is bullshit. He's told Dennis this. These guys are simply letting the animals take over the land. There's a better way, Kela believes, and this is to give the kuleana back to the locals, the people.

Kela Ahonui survived after his parents died in large part because he is an excellent hunter. There were tough times, even with what their parents had left them, but it wasn't because they couldn't afford food. The way Kela sees it, in a perfect world, the Ranch or the State would understand all they needed to do was work closely with the community, in this case, the local hunters. They could create jobs for locals, stimulate an economy, all the while saving themselves time and money. They'd establish a relationship with the community that might allow them the opportunity to develop the island for the betterment of all. It's a no-brainer, and the fact they don't seem to understand this makes him angry.

Kela's not going to Kaho'olawe. Not now, anyway. There are at least three reasons for this, the way he sees it, and the last one is the real clincher: his girlfriend is three months pregnant. It looks like they are going to have a child.

* * *

When the spotlight shoots on and Malia sees the eyes reflected in the beam cutting through kiawe branches, she immediately takes a step back. It's pitch black within a second, so she puts her hand on Kela's shoulder to gently guide him toward her. She blinks her eyes, trying to get them re-accustomed to the dark, and when they are, she whispers, "Move back. Slow."

She's not exactly sure what she's seen, but she knows it isn't deer. And she's not so sure anymore she wants to find out. Kela keeps the rifle pointing in front of him, but he does as Malia says. He doesn't say a word.

A breeze shuffles down the dirt road toward them. There's a smell like smoke. Something cooking on a fire. But the only lights for miles around them are the tiny dots near the Kaunakakai shoreline and the stars in the sky. They back up until it seems like they're alone again. And Malia asks, "You see them?"

Kela is still pushing backwards. He's bumping into Malia. There's a tension in his shoulders, and it's not because he's holding the rifle. He's thinking, *Keep moving. Just too much on the mind. Keep moving.* Finally, he says, "I almost fired. I don't know."

* * *

Part II: September 2000

Hoku and Māhealani are the daughters of Kela and Sandy Ahonui. They were born on nights of the full moon, and like their father, they are excellent shots with a rifle. Some of the hunters on Moloka‘i who remember their father say they’re even better than he was. Faster and smarter.

The girls are avid readers, too, like their Aunty Malia. They are 22 and 19, and have just landed well-paying jobs. They’re federal eradicators, thanks in part to the good word of their uncle, Dennis Milner.

* * *

Hoku and Māhealani are fully dressed in Gore-Tex camouflage. They are sitting at the edge of Waiakala‘e Gulch and looking down into a dry riverbed. They’ve been here in the tall brush for nearly half an hour, waiting for the first sign of daylight. It’s a crisp morning. Cold, even in the camo. They’re tough girls, but they don’t want to be caught up here on a rainy night. There’s dew on the grass, and a pair of little olive and gray thrushes are singing in a wiliwili tree beneath them.

Hoku picks up her rifle and uses its scope to see if she can get a better look at the birds. “They’re oloma‘o,” she tells her sister. “Guarantee.”

Māhealani doesn’t want to look, even though she’s read the birds are supposed to be extinct. She’s had an eerie feeling ever since they sat down. She’s surprised Hoku hasn’t said anything about it.

She keeps her attention on the empty riverbed. She knows the deer are coming. They’ve been planning this for weeks, and as soon as the sun breaks above the horizon and there’s enough light, a herd of more than 100 deer will begin to file across the riverbed. They’ll be led by a doe, a big one. When she appears from under the canopy of wiliwili, she’ll stop and look both ways, just like she’s crossing a road. She’ll stand there to let the herd catch up, and when they do, she’ll lift her nose to test the air until she hears the guttural call of a buck hidden somewhere at the back of the herd.

Māhealani suddenly feels a tension in her shoulders. It’s holding her down, so she tries to shake it off, telling herself it’s a big job, their first real test.

The girls have already eradicated plenty of deer. Across the arid west end of the island. In the fertile valleys to the east. They've even taken turns gunning down deer from the chopper. But this is different. This will be a mass kill from the land. The removal of almost the entire herd. It hasn't been done before. Not like this.

And then she's thinking about her father.

* * *

Hoku knows what Māheani is feeling. She feels it, too, but she doesn't want to bring it up. They were lucky to get these jobs, but they've worked hard for this, too. They've designed this plan for weeks. It's an eradication plan that even impresses the big wigs. They've scouted terrain by air and by foot. They've determined this is the spot. This is the time.

The herd of deer that will emerge from under the canopy is a relentless herd. It migrates up and down the northern cliffs of the island, circling over Kahanui, Kalawao, and Mokokoko. They are elusive, led by a doe that seems to know exactly where to retreat when threatened. When they approached the herd in Kalawao, the doe screamed off into a mass of clidemia and bedded herself in the thorny thicket. She stayed there, and when the herd caught up, they followed her lead and tucked themselves beside her. They were invisible, hidden in the landscape, even after shots were fired and the chopper hovered right above them. They didn't move. They were safe in the thicket. They simply waited it out.

It's here in Waiakala'e where the doe leads the herd across a riverbed that exposes them in a way that makes eradication like this possible. And the girls have figured this out. The herd will trail behind the doe in three rows, and when she reaches the other end of the bed, there'll be a momentary pause, a slight hesitation because of the buck, and that's when the girls will open fire. The herd will be stunned in the chaos. The doe will hesitate because she'll have to decide before leading the herd north or south, toward safety. She won't have time to listen for the buck. And from above, the girls will have clear shots while the deer scatter and then regroup in the riverbed.

* * *

Māhealani sees the doe emerge from under the wiliwili and she looks over at Hoku, who's already kneeling and taking aim down the barrel of her rifle, so she rolls over onto her stomach, gets into a prone position, and peers through the scope, like her sister. Everything is just as they planned, right down to the minute, but something isn't right. The tension in her shoulders is worse, starting to sting, so Māhealani puts the rifle down.

Hoku turns to her younger sister. She can't believe it. She thinks Māhealani doesn't understand that this means job security. If they complete this simple task, they're good. They'll be lead out of the field and into real management positions. They'll have opportunities to make a difference on the island. That's always been the goal.

The hard part is over, Hoku thinks. All that's left is to shoot. Just about anyone could carry out this part of the plan.

Hoku returns her focus down the scope—to the doe and to the herd. Then she watches the doe reach the far side of the riverbed. The sun is emerging and the soft blues of early morning are finally giving way to light and shadows. She's playing out the order of her shots in her head. It's time. But when she wraps her finger over the trigger, she finds she just can't pull it.

One of the bucks steps out from under the canopy and the doe immediately begins to head north, toward Kahanui. The herd trails behind her and within a minute, there isn't any evidence from above that they were ever there. Hoku drops her rifle and when it hits the ground it's loud enough so Māhealani can hear it. She takes a seat on the grass and begins to wonder what she's going to say to her boss. She's worried about her sister, but she's mad at her, too.

Māhealani rolls over onto her back. She looks into the pink sky and then closes her eyes. It's over. It's really over. She isn't coming back tomorrow. She isn't going through this again. She keeps her eyes closed and listens to the birds singing in the wiliwili tree until she can't feel the tension in her shoulders anymore.

"What happened?" asks Hoku. There's nothing Māhealani can say to make her feel any better, but she can't think of any other way to break their silence. She's

wondering where they're going from here, both literally and figuratively. She's big sister. She needs to fix this.

"You felt it," says Māhealani. "It didn't feel right. It doesn't. What are we doing, anyway?"

"What?"

"This. What are we doing?"

"We're working. That's is the plan. You know how many guys would want to be here right now?"

"Yeah, plenty," says Māhealani. "But why? Why would they want to be here? Aren't we doing more than shooting deer?"

"I don't get it. That's why we're here. We shoot the deer. Control the population. We're doing good for the island, too." Hoku hasn't been irritated by Māhealani like this in a long, long time. She's concerned about her sister, but she can't overlook the fact that they've just blown a big opportunity. Now, she'll have to lie if she wants to save face. She wonders what she'll say to Uncle Dennis.

"No," says Māhealani. She understands what it is now. "This isn't good."

Hoku's thinking she should've fought the feeling and pulled the trigger. She's almost sure she could've carried out enough of the job on her own. They've put in all this time. They've planned and planned. Now her sister's pulling back when Hoku needs her most. "Dad would be pissed," she says. "Nothing else to say."

"No," says Māhealani. "If he was still here. If he saw this. He'd pull our ears all the way back to the truck."

Hoku feels a flash of heat on the back of her neck. She clenches her fists. "You're dreaming," she says. "He's turning over in his grave."

The sisters stare at each other. Māhealani reaches for her rifle. There are birds singing somewhere in the canopy covering the riverbed.

* * *

Part III: September 2023

A week before groundbreaking for the construction that will increase the size of the Moloka‘i Slaughterhouse by ten times, the community votes to name one of its wings Ahonui. It’s a tribute to the sisters, Hoku and Māhealani.

The sisters have done a tremendous amount of work over the years to see this come to fruition, but neither of them has any doubt it’s the culmination of their father’s efforts. They immediately thank the community, but ask that the wing be dedicated to their father, not them.

The community gathers on the Ho‘olehua Plains on the day of the ceremony. They’re only a minute from the airport, so they know they are finally about to begin when they see the arrival of the Governor’s plane. It’s a warm morning, but no one seems bothered by the heat. The people—old and young, men, women, girls and boys—are talking story in small groups at the end of a driveway that leads right up to wide, green ribbon that hangs horizontally between two forklifts. They’re all dressed in aloha attire, and some of them are holding a water bottle or a camera. There are already bulldozers and dump trucks parked around the existing infrastructure. And in the distance, there’s a crane.

Hoku and Māhealani are holding hands beside one of the forklifts. They are trying not to cry, but they can’t help it. Their tears fall to the soft, red dirt. All they can do to keep in their emotions is look to their feet, try not to let go of each other. They’ve dreamed of this day for over twenty years. It’s finally here.

It’s been a lifetime of planning, community meetings, legislation. There’s been enough bureaucratic red tape to stretch across the island. They say that’s no joke. They’ve made this their lives. Spent money they didn’t have to get things this far. And now they know, because they are surrounded by hundreds of people—maybe thousands—nothing’s going to stop this dream.

The Governor arrives and he’s met by a people’s ‘oli. There are so many voices, it’s easy to believe the sound carries itself across the plains. Māhealani imagines the sound slipping through the oncoming wind until it reaches Kala‘e. She squeezes Hoku’s hand when she thinks it gets there. And she is comforted when Hoku squeezes back.

There is a prayer for the land, for the people, for the new building.

The Governor takes a microphone. “This is truly an historic day,” he says. “And I’m more than honored to share it with the community of Moloka‘i. I’ve seen this project develop over the years, from when I was mayor. This facility marks the beginning of what will become common practice in Hawai‘i.”

* * *

The Moloka‘i Slaughterhouse becomes Moloka‘i ‘Ai Incorporated, or MAI. It processes 92 percent of all food and beverage items grown or gathered on the island. It’s an all-organic facility that includes a health inspection department and a department for exporting and distributing goods. There’s a wing devoted to processing meat from the site’s piggery. And a wing devoted entirely to animals caught by local hunters and fisherman, who use their meat or fish to receive payment or to use in trade. The third wing is a farmer’s market, which is run by both private farmers and by MAI. Including the farmers, the hunters, and the fishermen who utilize its services, MAI employs over fourteen percent of the island’s population, who in addition to monetary pay, receive produce, meats, and dairy products on the second and fourth Friday of every month.

Hoku and Māhealani are sitting beside each other on a table in one of the offices in the wing that carries their name. They are preparing for a meeting with representatives from various high-end eateries from across Hawai‘i and the continental United States. Hoku completes an outline of their distribution plan and then stands to begin setting up the A.V. equipment for the conference. Some of the representatives won’t be attending in person. “Your best shot was the one you didn’t take,” she says.

Māhealani is quiet for a moment before she shuts the laptop in front of her. She looks up at her sister. It’s the first time Hoku has said anything about that day. She wants to tell Hoku she would’ve picked up her rifle and fired at the herd if Hoku had pulled the trigger first, but she doesn’t. Instead, she slips the laptop into its case and says, “There’s still plenty to do.”

Waves

The waves out Point stay glassy. They bowling, firing down the line. I bet Braddah skip school. Honouli Wai, he live. He seen 'em, da waves, garanz. He probably heard 'em bombing from his bedroom.

Braddah lucky his dad pro surfer. The dad probably told him, *Go surf*. Planny money, his dad make, 'cause he rip. And ripping take practice. You can imagine that, one dad telling his boy go surf instead go school? Even though his dad make fifty grand one crack, I get hard time.

But when Point go off like today, I guess make sense. Braddah not going college. He no like. Braddah staying Moloka'i. He going fish. And farm. And surf. He going live Honouli Wai because Honouli Wai is cherry. He going rip and make money and his sponsors going pay for him travel. He going get chicks, dat guy.

Here I stay in earth science, learning about waves. We get test tomorrow, and Braddah, he surfing. Lucky. I can hardly hear the teacher because the Ranch let out the cows again. They're grazing in the pasture, making all kine noise. Everyone crack up when Denny Hewett shout, *Holy cow!* Everyone except the teacher.

The teacher, he telling us what on the test. He tell, "There are three physical characteristics that all wave forms have in common—wavelength, frequency, and velocity," so I hurry up and write that down. But the teacher, he talk fast, and since hard spell velocity, I cannot keep up, and soon I drawing waves instead of taking notes. No need raise hand. For nothing. Get twenty-eight kids in class even with Braddah gone. We cannot stop for every question. Too many. And we already two chapters behind.

I getting 'B', anyway. And I always get 'B' on my tests. I keep to myself with my pencil on the paper until the teacher pau talk and then I smile, like I understand. When I see the question about waves on the test, I just gotta bubble the right answer. Going be the one with three words that start with w, f, and v. Easy.

Right now, Braddah paddling out. He just pau jump inside the water. He get chicken skin, partly because the water feel like get ice inside and now he all awake, partly

because he know he going rip. He paddling out, watching the Point lefts break until he stay in the lineup with guys his dad's age. It's a huge north wrap and low tide, so he know if he eat it, he pau.

It's all I can think to convince myself maybe school more better today:

I learning about waves. No mo' chance I going drown.

The Lay Netters

Jason Murayama says the Miloli‘i fisherman was standing behind a podium in the Grand Pīkake Ballroom of the ‘Ilikai Hotel. He wore a dark t-shirt, jeans, and rubber slippers, and because of that, he didn’t look like any of the other attendees at the conference, not even the other Hawaiians.

Jason was impeccably dressed. In an aloha shirt and a pressed pair of fitted slacks. He says when the Miloli‘i fisherman took to the podium, he was sitting in the ballroom and looking down at his new wingtip shoes. The light from the giant chandeliers in the ballroom reflected off the polished black leather. He sat in a row of fifteen chairs that ended at an isle in the center of the room and then began again so there were fifteen more beyond that. He was in the forty-fifth row of fifty, nearly eighty yards away from the fisherman. There were men and women in all but a few of the seats in the ballroom. All in aloha attire. Some wearing lei.

The fisherman was going to be the last speaker, Jason says. He hadn’t learned much while he’d been sitting there. He was bored. There was really nothing he had learned about fishing. Only that speakers at conferences sometimes drone on about hypothetical situations that have nothing to do with the lives of people like him. Jason says, by this time he was waiting it out. He’d heard there was going to be an elaborate lunch buffet after the last speaker.

The Miloli‘i fisherman began to speak, and Jason says he immediately looked up. He hadn’t expected anything would bring him back to the podium, but now he was intrigued. The fisherman was a thin man, in good shape, and from what Jason could see, there was nothing about him that might make him think he wouldn’t see the man fishing somewhere off Moloka‘i.

Most of the other attendees, Jason says, were older than him. Jason had just graduated from high school, and the people around him looked thirty and forty, so he must’ve connected with the fisherman, because the fisherman looked pretty young, too.

Jason was a fisherman. Or he had been. Now he was living on O'ahu. Without a boat.

When we were younger, Jason had been groomed by his uncles, so he knew plenty about the ocean. Whenever families on Moloka'i had big parties, they always sent someone to see him. The families had known Jason's uncles, and over time, they had come to know Jason, too. His mother had been a Lu'uhine before she married Murayama, and on Moloka'i, the name Lu'uhine was synonymous with fishing. All the Lu'uhine were fishermen, and the brothers, Jason's uncles, they knew their stuff, especially when it came to laying net.

Jason was young, still in grade school, when his parents took him to his uncles, Paul and Brian. They asked the uncles to teach Jason. The brothers were the best, the parents said, and Jason was a smart boy, 'eleu, and naturally inclined when it came to the ocean. But the brothers told the parents, no, it wasn't a good idea, that they'd be too rough on the boy. It was just their way.

The Miloli'i fisherman began to tell a story, Jason says. When the fish arrive, he said, he wakes his son at four and gets him dressed before breakfast. He hands his son lunch in a bag. It's just him and his son. His wife, she watches the daughters. She wakes up later and takes them to school. His son is four, but he doesn't complain. In fact, the fisherman thinks it was the son's idea the first time the son went with him.

For the most part, the crowd at the conference listened intently, Jason says. But some attendees stood up to leave. They cradled binders and notepads and other conference handouts as they filed out of the aisles.

His son, said the fisherman. The boy reminds him about gas and ice because he knows before he came, the father used a canoe. They walk to the shoreline before any sign of the sun. He's good, said the fisherman. His son can find their boat in the dark.

Jason says he remembered the day his uncles finally agreed to teach him. He had impressed them, just like the fisherman's boy. He had walked down Seaside St. in Kaunakakai one Saturday to meet them on his own. The uncles, they had mentioned to his mother that they'd been ask to kōkua for a party. It had been a piece of a much larger

conversation about the weekend, but Jason had heard it, and without telling his parents, he woke up early the next morning and met his uncles to help them pick up their nets.

This fishing, said the Miloli‘i fisherman. His father taught it to him. And his grandfather taught it to his father. The fisherman said it goes way back like this. He’s at least the fifth generation.

Jason began to wonder what he was doing there. Not there listening to the fisherman, but there in the ballroom. He was all dressed up, ready to take it to the next level, he says. He was ready to learn about fishing from people who had studied fishing all their adult lives. From people who’d been qualified to make big decisions about Hawaii’s fisheries.

The Miloli‘i fisherman said when they get to the school of akule, it’s him and his boy. They find the giant ball of fish in the dark because he’s been taught where to find it. He doesn’t really even have to look. Even if the school’s just arrived in Miloli‘i, he knows where it is.

Maybe it was the fisherman’s voice, Jason says. The way it had gotten louder and then seemed to crack. But soon there were others who stood up to leave, who picked up their conference bags and their binders, the handouts, and slid out their rows, down the aisle, and out the door at the back of the ballroom. Jason was getting mad, he says. Distracted. Annoyed. Irritated. Here was a fisherman, like him, telling a story—a good one at that, finally—and these people were walking out as if no one could see them.

The fisherman stopped for moment to collect himself in a way that made Jason think something big was coming. The fisherman might snap because he came all that way, and like Jason, hadn’t heard anything of much real use when it came to fishing in Miloli‘i. The fisherman was obviously uncomfortable up there—he was standing behind a podium and a microphone, in the front of a massive ballroom and more a thousand attendees. He was a fisherman, after all.

It surprised Jason when the fisherman resumed talking as if he didn’t see the people leaving the ballroom. The fisherman just continued, Jason says. He said there was one last thing: When he’s out on the ocean at times like those, he doesn’t think much

about catching the fish. He thinks instead about the bond between his son and the fish. He imagines the school of akule that migrates through Miloli'i are the same fish, from the same school, that his father took him to catch when he was a boy. He imagines his son—now that he's catching the fish—has become part of a cycle that's older and truer than anything else he knows.

It was a moment of clarity.

Jason says he felt something come over him when the fisherman said this. It was right then, he says, that he wanted to stand up. He was charged. He clenched his fists and leaned forward in his chair. He was going to applaud. But then, he says, in the moment of silence, the fisherman turned from the podium and made his way to his seat.

Jason looked around. The ballroom wasn't full anymore.

Before he knew it, people were standing up to leave, even the fisherman.

I don't believe Jason when he says this, but he tells me he cried. He brought his hands to his face, and cried right there in his seat. He stayed there until it was quiet. He didn't know what he was going to do.

After a few minutes, when he had cleaned himself up, he walked out the ballroom and into the lobby. He saw people in line, smiling at each other, chatting, on their way to the buffet. He hadn't eaten all morning, but now he wasn't hungry. He kept walking through the lobby until he was on a balcony overlooking the Ala Wai Harbor. He was standing there, looking out above all the cars lining the street, beyond the boats docked in the slips, toward the horizon. He stood there for some time before he finally moved, and when he did, he finally saw me.

I was right there below him, maybe a hundred yards away. I was sitting in a boat, docked right there beside the 'Ilikai. I'd just crossed the channel with some boys from Mana'e. We'd been escorting a canoe all morning. I raised my hand and yelled, "Molokai!" And all the boys in the boat looked up and yelled it again.

Jason raised a fist in the air, then left the railing on the balcony. Within a few minutes, he was standing above us on the pier, taking shots from the boys because of his slacks and his shoes. We offered him food, and before I knew it, he was in the boat

beside me. He'd taken off the aloha shirt. He had chopsticks in his hand and was poking at the fresh sashimi. "Brah," he said. "It's crazy up there. You wouldn't believe it." Then he started telling me his story.

The Stone: 1992

He doesn't care what you think about what they've done. They're breaking new ground.

It's a big stone.

Five-feet tall.

Cone-shaped. Upright.

It's smooth like skin.

When father says, It's time. The stone is ready. It will take all six of them to move it.

It's been years and years and years. They've fed it and bathed it and watched it grow. Yes, the stone grows!

* * *

The multi-platinum, Grammy Award winning rock musician sitting in front of Francis Palikiko doesn't look like he has money. He's unshaven, in a tattered t-shirt and torn, faded jeans.

The Palikiko kids are whispering to each other, and Francis hears one of them say, "He kāpulu, yeah?"

Francis calls for his wife and asks her to take the children in the house. It's time. He can't stop the stone in his front yard. He doesn't want to, anymore.

The only evidence of financial wealth—the only reason Francis is sitting with the rock star right now—is the \$60-million Gulfstream jet parked in front of the command tower at the Ho'olehua Airport. He'd never seen anything like it, and he joked with the rock star the first time they shook hands that the rock star must really be a god.

They're sitting at a picnic table under a 20' x 20' E-Z Up in Francis's yard, less than two miles away from the airport. On a small yard in front of a small wooden house. There's a little garage with an old rusty car on blocks. There are a few mango trees. An old forklift. An old mini-dozer. And the rest of it is overgrown bush and koa haole.

The rock star has seen the stone, and though it's not as grand in appearance as he had hoped, if it's what Francis Palikiko says it is, he's still very much interested in

purchasing it. It's a beauty, and there's no doubt it'll fit in nicely with the renovations currently underway outside his Los Angeles home.

The rock star has brought an archeologist with him. He introduces her as Love, and she doesn't offer another name when she shakes Mr. Palikiko's hand. She's here to substantiate the historical value of the stone and verify its authenticity. She's brought copies of sketched images taken by early European explorers that have been stored in the archives of the British Museum. And now, under the tent, after she takes another sip from a bottle of water, she shows the sketches to the men. She points out how the details in the image correspond to details on the stone in the yard. "It's a definite match," she says. "This is the one."

The rock star is happy. He'd planned to be Italy right now, but the promise of obtaining one of the most storied stones in all of the Hawaii's history was too appealing to pass up. Compared to this, Italy is a stroll on the Venice Beach Boardwalk. He slides the photocopied images of the stone toward him on the table and lifts one of the copies to get a closer look. "It appears that way, doesn't it," he says. "I'm almost afraid to ask what it's worth."

Francis Palikiko laughs. He knows the rock star hasn't flown all the way here to worry about cost. "It's priceless," he says. "But you can make us one offer."

The rock star lets out a sigh. Francis has seen it coming. He motions for the rock star to take the photo over to the stone. Francis says, "Go. Take one closer look. Think about it."

The rock star gets up and leaves the table. Heads for the stone. When he's there, he lifts the paper in his hand next to the stone so he has both the photocopied sketch and the stone in his view. Before long, the rock star says, "Any way we can get the original of this sketch from the museum, Love?"

* * *

They decide the whole thing is destiny. Not for them, but for the stone. They're just vessels. It's the stone that's special. It's been confirmed.

The stone heals them when they're sick:

Common colds, flus, fevers, pneumonia—no problem.

Headaches, backpain, depression—no problem.

* * *

Love tells Francis Palikiko she has Ph.D. in archeology from UC Berkley. She's been on assignment in Hawai'i before, to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, but her last real fieldwork was in Egypt, at El Hibeh. She's never been to Moloka'i, but she says the view from the jet and the short ride from the airport have already piqued her interest in the island. "Mr. Palikiko," she says. "I'm hoping, really hoping, you're not going to sell it."

Francis is a little stunned, but he reaches for the remaining photocopies on the table. He's made up his mind, but he wants to hear what she has to say. "You came all the way over here to tell me *not* to sell? Strange."

Love smiles. "This was a last minute change of plans, Mr. Palikiko. We were supposed to go to Italy. We were going to look at art."

"This is it, ah?" asks Francis Palikiko. He keeps his eyes on the sketches. "Real art." This was meant to be.

"It's quite a find. I'll give you that. But sell it? That just doesn't seem like something a man like you..." She stops.

He looks right at her. "What you mean, Ms. Love? What about a man like me?" He doesn't look away. He puts the papers back down on the table. He continues to stare at her.

"You have something truly remarkable. I don't have to tell you that, but I will. You don't want something like this sitting outside a mansion somewhere in L.A., do you? There are probably museums..."

"His yard, my yard. What's the difference? Look around. At least it'll have a nice view. Maybe a pool."

She smiles. "I can just tell him it isn't the stone, Mr. Palikiko. Think about it," she says. "If you really want to sell it, at least consult with a few museums."

"Why's a museum better?" asks Francis. It's a question he's not really expecting her to answer. "What, because they care? I tell you, if your boyfriend pays the price, he'll

care.” He looks over at the rock star, who is now leaning over with his face inches from the stone. “Eh, rock star,” he says. “You be one stone star, too!” He puts out a big laugh.

* * *

They use a twenty pound ‘ō‘ō and brand new shovels and dollies. They have machinery, heavy equipment, but they use their hands. It takes a full day.

They sweat.

They bleed.

They pray.

They cry.

They hear the stone cry, too. It sounds like singing birds, they say.

* * *

The rock star is back at the table. He places the photocopy of the stone with the others. “I admit, I don’t know these things like Love,” he says. “It’s in good shape. How is that?”

Francis smiles. “It’s a stone.”

They’re both laughing.

“I mean, what have you done with it?”

“We can write some things down.”

Love reaches over for the papers on the table. She collects them up, puts them into some kind of sequential order, and then places them neatly in a stack in front of her. “It’ll be quite a chore having to move it,” she says.

Francis stops smiling. “A ‘ole pilikia,” he says. “Crate and transportation to the airport are included in the fee.” Then he smiles again.

Love smiles back, but Francis can see she’s just doing it to keep things civil, and as far as he’s concerned, it’s more than enough for him. She stands up with the stack of papers and says, “I’m going to take another look. I’ll be right over there if you need me, boys.”

The rock star turns to watch her walk away. He keeps his eyes on her until she’s sitting on the lawn, right next to the stone. “She’s beautiful,” says the rock star. “Smart, too.” He glances back and then continues, “I know what she said while I was over there. I

understand that. I will take care of it, Mr. Palikiko, the stone. You haven't changed your mind, have you?"

Francis knows the stone. He believes the rock star even though he also knows the rock star himself doesn't completely believe his own words. "That depends," says Francis.

"I haven't toured in a while, Mr. Palikiko. Not recording this year, too."

"Then you're in the right place," says Francis. He points toward the stone. "There's your inspiration."

The rock star looks back at Love and the stone. He looks at them for about ten seconds. "Five hundred?" he asks.

Francis smiles. He keeps looking at the rock star.

"One?"

"Higher."

"One-point-five?"

"Higher."

"Two."

"Close."

* * *

He doesn't care what you think about what they've done. And he doesn't have to explain why they've done it, either.

They've lived years and years and years with the stone.

They've fed it and watched it grow.

The stone called to him in the first place. So why should he tell you? No, he won't.

Would it matter if it did? If the stone had called? You never heard it.

* * *

They are sitting at the table under the shade of the E-Z Up. The rock star and Love are on one side, Francis and his eldest son on the other. In the middle of table, there's a large wooden bowl with a creamy, gray liquid that Francis tells them is 'awa. "I know you rock stars like your medicine," he says. And then he smiles. "Don't worry. You only have to try it."

As his son stirs the ‘awa with a coconut shell, Francis points and says, “That’s the ‘apu.”

They watch the boy scoop the ‘awa with the ‘apu and then pour it into a second one. He fills this ‘apu until it is brimming, then carefully stands and steps away from the table. They all turn to watch the boy, who walks toward the stone and kneels at its side. He holds the ‘apu just above his head, and then he pours the ‘awa at the base of the stone. “First one always to da kūpuna,” Francis says. “The ancestors.” Then he smiles at the rock star. “Be sure you write that down.”

The four of them sit at the table, the boy serving them one at a time in the same way he served the stone. The rock star and Love ask questions, first about the stone. After some time, they start to ask questions about life in general. And Francis answers them.

Every now and then, the boy offers another round, and they drink.

* * *

There’s dirt all over their bodies and cramps in their arms, but they don’t quit. They can’t. In order to move it, they tear up the lawn. They uproot trees. The stone wants to move and they’re doing it. Just them. A family. For the stone. For the family.

* * *

Francis has brought out the rest of his family, and now they’re all in a circle around the stone. They’re holding hands. The rock star is between Francis and Love.

“We’re happy you’re here,” says Francis. “Rockstar and Love. The stone’s happy, too.”

Everyone smiles. Francis bows his head, and everyone does the same.

Mrs. Palikiko begins a prayer....

When the prayer is over, Francis is the first to lift his head. He gives a gentle squeeze to the rockstar’s hand before he lets go. Then he places one hand on the stone and gesture with his other for the rest of them to do the same. When they’ve all got their hands on the stone, he says, “Mahalo. Mahalo. Mahalo.”

* * *

The stone has brought them strength, power:

The father and mother—they never get weak, they never get tired.

The sons and daughters—they see the future in their dreams.

They know they have plenty to lose. They're willing to take that chance. The stone has decided. The father knows it. They all know. They just keep at it, preparing the stone for the long journey to its new home.

* * *

Mrs. Palikiko and the children are at one of the mango trees. Love is beside them with a plastic grocery bag. The rock star and Francis are standing together beside the stone. The rock star says, "I'm glad plans changed, Mr. Palikiko. This has been some experience. For Love, too, I think."

Francis smiles. "I knew you'd come. Her, too. When it comes to the stone, plans don't change." He lets the space between them be consumed by their surroundings. The warmth of the sun. The crisp wind. The sound of the children laughing. Birds singing in the trees. The stone.

"I'll stay in touch, Francis. I'll be back. And when you're ready, I'll fly you to L.A. for a weekend so you can see what I've done. Plan for that, too."

"Never been out of Hawai'i," says Francis.

"I've never had 'awa," says the rock star. "And now that I have, I'm sorry I hadn't." He looks over at the children placing mangos in the plastic bag. Love. "It'll be good for the family," he says.

But Francis doesn't hear him, anymore. He's looking at his wife and children. He's listening to the stone.

The Stone: 1999

On an overcast morning somewhere in Los Angeles, the multi-platinum, Grammy Award winning rock musician steps out onto the balcony of his palatial mansion. The gray clouds in the sky have already mixed with the haze drifting above the city, but he's not bothered by the fact that he cannot clearly see the ocean. There are still empty wine and champagne glasses standing on the marble tabletops around him—ugly reminders of what was supposed to be an intimate gathering in celebration of the release of his latest album, *Chronicles of the Stone*—but they don't bother him, either. He's found himself again. He's been inspired to write and to play and to sing. To create. He has reignited his popularity, his fame.

His music is not the same, anymore. The critics were quite resistant, at first. But in time, as the music started to sell, there was no denying the genius behind his new work. The critics retracted their earlier assessments of his music, or they simply acted as if they hadn't written anything negative in the first place. It was all enough to make the rock star laugh. He fell off his chair one morning while reading the paper and enjoying a cup of espresso at an 18th century table once owned by Henry VIII.

What causes the rock star some concern, even some panic, however, is the fact that as he stands there leaning on the cool aluminum railing at the edge the balcony, he immediately sees that there is something very wrong about the courtyard. He knows what is. He sees it. But he can't hardly believe it. It seems impossible. He begins to feel sweat forming in his palms.

The stone in his courtyard, the one after which his most recent album was named, has fallen from its place. The tall, smooth stone is now on its side, lying on the immaculate, soft lawn.

The rock star cannot determine what has happened. He is certain the stone was meticulously set. It was placed in position on a prominent spot in the courtyard specifically designed to prevent this. There was an architect. An engineer. They were

both paid extra to ensure that the stone was properly secured. He told them their job was to keep it safe.

He thinks for a second (and finds himself instantly enraged) that someone has pushed it over. But this, he knows, is also impossible. It's just way too heavy.

He re-enters the mansion and turns on the television, looking for the news. He sits at his iMac, gets online, and also searches there. He's thinking perhaps there was an earthquake in the night.

The stone has fallen and he's quite shaken up, but also incredibly fascinated by the whole ordeal. There's absolutely no mention of any earthquake, let alone tremor, anywhere in the vicinity of California in the last twenty-four hours. And when he finally gets to the stone, he sees that it is still in perfect condition, even after the fall.

He places his hand on the stone. Rubs his hand across its smooth surface.

He decides not to call the architect. Or the engineer.

He returns to the mansion. He makes an espresso.

He walks back out to the courtyard and sits near what was once the base of the stone. He examines it for evidence of the fall.

Before he can finish the espresso, he feels a swirling wind cutting over the lawn. It's persistent. Leaves and flowers begin to fall from the shrubs—and then the trees—in the courtyard. He sits in the wind until it eventually calms.

He spills the rest of the espresso on the grass. White flowers of an orchid tree have lined themselves up on the lawn at the other end of the stone.

He stands up, looks down at the stone. He contemplates these things: the way the stone might've fallen to land in its new position and the way the shape of the stone makes it appear that the white flowers have aligned themselves with the stone.

The rock star turns and makes his way to one of the studies in the mansion.

Soon, there are blueprints of the property and maps of Los Angeles covering the desk and the floor. He cannot move without touching some kind of paper. He's surrounded by drawings, plans, layouts, symbols. He's looking for anything in line with

the stone—something on his property, something underground, something in the city, a building, a home, a lot.

He finds nothing significant in any of the blueprints and maps. After nearly three hours, he's at a loss for what to do. There's someone he can call, but he doesn't want to do it. It might be his pride, but he also thinks the call would be premature. He's had the stone for years now, and this is not the first time something like this has happened. Only the first time the stone has moved.

There were times he's awoken to find it's raining everywhere in L.A. except for in the courtyard. And other times when the courtyard was the only place with rain.

There were times when the sky was dark for days, when the first rays of light came down to touch the stone.

He's chronicled these events.

He knows that he will figure it out in time. He pulls out a drawer in the desk and finds a pen and a pad. He begins to write, *It speaks again...*

That afternoon, he is out on the balcony. He looks up toward the horizon and sees a point where the clouds and the haze are parting, leaving a view of the blue sky behind them. He sees this point is perfectly in line with the stone. The tall stone, still on its side, is a line between him and the blue point in the sky.

The Wounded

Every war story I've ever heard on Moloka'i ends in death, even if the story ends long after the war.

In one of the oldest stories, for example, Kamehameha sends more than 400 koa canoes to invade the island. It's a massive fleet that reaches the fringing reef on the island's southern coast and turns the reef red. When the canoes land on the shoreline, the warriors are met without resistance. The people of Moloka'i, they come out to greet them. They welcome the warriors with open arms. Come, they say, hele mai, hele mai. There is food and drink. Lots of it. And they invite the warriors into their homes. There's a celebration. A pā'ina. Kamehameha is the conquerer. The party goes on all night.

But in the morning, all the warriors except one are dead. Poisoned. The lone warrior is told to return to Kamehameha to tell him what has happened, and the people never see the warrior again.

The Pearl Harbor story is my grandfather's. A soldier on the day Japan bombed Hawai'i. It's December 11th, four days after the attack, and he's sent in with two other Hawaiians to clean up the hull of a cargo ship. He's pissed because he won't see any action. He says that's why he doesn't remember the name of the ship. He's carrying a box in one hand. It's like a milk crate, he says. And in the other, he has a mop or a broom, he can't remember. Somewhere in the hull, cases of GI shaving kits have exploded. There are plastic combs and disposable razors everywhere. The place smells like toothpaste, Brylcreem, and Old Spice aftershave, so he drops the mop (or the broom) and covers his nose and his mouth with his hands.

The two other Hawaiians start moving the unblemished cases from the hull, up some steps, and onto the deck. And my grandfather follows behind them. They stack cases on cases for about twenty minutes and by the time he goes back into the hull of the ship, he's getting used to the smell. His eyes are so watery from the aftershave fumes,

they don't even sting anymore. He falls into a monotonous groove, working in the hull, taking turns carrying up cases and then mopping (or sweeping) the area. He's thinking about the action, he says—he's still pissed he's missing it—when from behind the last stack of cargo he sees a leg and a foot. It slides on the floor. He rushes over to help the soldier. He thinks he might save the guy. But when he leans over to offer his hand, there's a pistol in his face. It's Japanese.

My grandfather says he freezes. He thinks this is it. He's a casualty of the War. But before he can reach for the gun or jump out of the way, the Japanese soldier puts the pistol in his own mouth. Then he looks at my grandfather and pulls the trigger.

There's a Viet Nam story my best friend's dad tells us almost every time he gets drunk. He's sharing a foxhole somewhere in Saigon. He says he's crazy by then. He doesn't even feel human, anymore. M48 Pattons are running over women and children caught in the crossfire. He swears he sees them swerve to do it. He's in the foxhole and a grenade falls in. He doesn't even look at the other guy.

He just wrestles him over it.

There were 19 boys who left, he says. Eight came back. They're all still fighting a war.

After his tour in the Gulf, this vet moves to Moloka'i to get away from the city. He's looking for peace. But he finds there's a drug war going on. And after a year, he's caught up in it.

The police are involved, and before long, they're making good headway. Pretty soon, they make ten arrests.

But the dealer, the big guy, he's smart. He starts moving the operation, up into the valleys where there aren't any roads for cop cars. No spots for good surveillance. The drugs start showing up again. And pretty soon there's word the drugs are in the schools.

This vet owns a boat. It's a 26-foot Sea Ray. He finds out who the dealer is and makes him an offer. He tells the dealer all he wants to do is make some money. No one here knows him, and he's a vet, after all. He'll make a good mule.

He keeps his boat in a slip at the wharf in town. And he offers to take the dealer for a joyride, just to show him the boat is legit. They can get to O'ahu and back in less than half a day.

It's a weekend, and the dealer is impressed when he sees the boat. This'll make things much easier, he thinks. He's paying top dollar to bring the drugs in on planes.

They leave the wharf and head west, and the vet guns the boat in the following sea. They're hauling past Pālā'au in less than five minutes. And before long, they're past Lā'āu Point and in the Kaiwi Channel. The dealer is really enjoying himself. The sun's out and he's counting money in his head. He's thinking he doesn't even have to worry about weight in this thing. He taps the vet on the shoulder. He wants to see how the boat handles. And the vet's all for it. The vet even asks the dealer if he's up for a beer.

This gives the vet a chance to get behind the dealer, where he grabs a bat and just takes the dealer apart. The boat veers for a second, but the vet is unfazed. He puts the throttle in neutral and finishes the job.

The Fisherman

There's a community meeting at Kulana 'Ōiwi in Kalama'ula. It's a big one. There's going to be a presentation on what's going to happen to the vacant property makai of Kaunakakai Town. There's going to be development, and many people from across the island show up because they don't like the word. Development. There's a popular bumper sticker, in fact, that reads, "Don't change Moloka'i. Let Moloka'i change you." And local people take this to heart.

Aunty Girlie, a long time community leader and the facilitator of this meeting, starts the powerpoint/slideshow. The plans are to extend the cultural park right up to the highway, to improve access roads, and to repopulate the area with native trees and undergrowth. Hālau will be built for public gatherings, for storing canoes and paddleboards. There'll be a pā hula and field for the annual makahiki.

Some of the attendees stand up and quietly file out of the hālau. They've heard enough, and the fact that they're leaving means: 1) they support the project without having to hear any more; or 2) they've just realized they're in the wrong place—wrong meeting.

In the remaining crowd, there are still east enders and west enders, south siders and north siders. It's a community meeting, so it's a diverse bunch. Homegrowns and transplants. Hawaiians and haoles. Everything in between. Old timers. Teenagers. Mommas and poppas and infants. After the first wave of them leaves, there are still some forced to stand at the outer edges of the hālau. There just isn't enough room.

Aunty Girlie has some remarkable digitized black-and-white photos of Kaunakakai. Most are from State libraries and archives, but some, she says, are hers. There are photos of stoic kings and queens. Photos of children playing in the empty street. Young men and women leaning on cars. She has aerial photos, too. But the one I like the most—the one that stays with me long after I've left the hālau—is of a man standing on the Kaunakakai shoreline with his back to the camera, facing the ocean and a white sky.

It's an action photo. He's throwing net. His arms are out and his net is a faint web suspended like a gray cloud in the air. There's something about the photo that's incredibly striking, but as I sit there and listen to Auntie Girlie's rendition of Kaunakakai's past, I don't know what it is. Auntie Girlie says she took the picture with her first camera. An Argus, she says, in 1939.

* * *

The meeting lasts for nearly two hours and finally ends after most of the people have left for home. I'm the youngest one left. 22. And trying to find my place on the island now that I'm home from school. The last four months have been tough. Restless. My friends have moved away. And none of them seem to have come back yet. I'm an only child. And without them here, it's easy to see how much the island's changed since I left for O'ahu.

I have a bachelor degree in urban planning from U. H. Mānoa, but no practical experience, yet. I work for the county now, Parks and Recreation, a good job, but not something I want to do forever.

I'm not a blood-relative of Auntie Girlie's, but she's like an auntie to me. She's like an auntie to many of my generation. We remember her from elementary school and the Kūpuna in the Schools Project. Back then, she was only a little more than 40, but she was already a grandmother of two. She used to joke about that. The fact that her daughter having keiki at such a young age turned out to be a blessing in disguise. "Now they pay me to tell stories," she'd say. And all her students laughed.

After elementary school, Auntie Girlie followed us up to intermediate and high school, where we went by the busload on field tips to special sites across the island. Heiau. Fishponds. Sacred stones. She knew everything about them, enough to teach me more about Moloka'i than anyone else.

Auntie Girlie is a great storyteller. When we were kids, she captivated us when she told us about Moloka'i things. We sat still for nearly an hour on Kūpuna Day. And short of a fire drill, there was nothing, absolutely nothing, that distracted us when she spoke at

the front of the class. I know this is hard to believe. I was a T.A. in college, so I've seen what it's like when students—adults, even—have to sit for extended periods.

But it's true. Aunty Girlie can tell a great story.

I wait for her as the remaining attendees circle around to thank her. It's a quiet, calm night, and I hear them say how excited they are about the cultural park, how grateful they are to have seen her photos. There are cars and trucks pulling out of the parking lot. It's much later than we anticipated being here, but no one that's still at the hālau wants to let her go. And it seems, from where I'm standing and watching them, that Aunty Girlie is perfectly fine. She doesn't mind listening or sharing, even if it's clearly time for us to stack up the folding chairs and shut the lights in the hālau.

The time alone gives me the opportunity to think about the photograph. The man and his net. His 'upena kiloi. I've seen the picture before. I'm sure of it. It's a searing image, perfectly framed. He's standing just left of center and the net takes up the right side. Just thinking about it brings sweat to my palms. It's a moment of possibility. There's something important about to happen. And I begin to wish I was there, right beside him, when all of a sudden I know what it is.

I've stood in Aunty Girlie's place. I've taken this picture. Not in Kaunakakai, not a black-and-white, but everything else is exactly the same.

I need to get home and find it. I need to show it to Auntie Girlie.

All the chairs have been stacked and there are two people left, so I walk up behind them, shuffling my slippers on the concrete floor. I look down at my watch before they turn their attention from Aunty Girlie, and when they do, like clockwork, they turn back and say thanks again, but it's getting late, they should let her get home.

When they leave, Aunty Girlie gives me a smile. "Nice one, Boy," she says. "Not too subtle, but nice." Then she points to the box full of A.V. equipment and the laptop backpack. "Try grab Auntie's stuffs."

"I get 'em," I say. "The truck's by the preschool."

I follow her to the back of the hālau, where she turns off the lights. "Maika'i," she says.

I've got the backpack on. I'm carrying the box. But I manage to reach into my pocket and grab my keys. There's a little flashlight on the keychain, and although there's enough light to see the truck, I shine the flashlight on the ground in front of Auntie Girlie's feet.

"Whoa," she says. "*Some* service. How old you said you was?"

I'm a little embarrassed. I know that last part is just a joke—the flirty kupuna—but I don't have a comeback. Shucks, I don't even want to try. I've been pressed like this by kupuna in Nānākuli. I'm comfortable with it. Those Nānākuli kūpuna, they taught me. And now I think those urban planning fieldtrips we took on weekends for extra credit have led me here.

Aunty Girlie wants to see me laugh. It's important. And I do.

When we get to the truck, I place the box in the bed, right up against the back of the cab. "I get towel," I say. "I'll cover the box." And then I open her door, look at her again. "Bonus points," I say.

* * *

I got my first camera five years ago to photograph large buildings and freeways on O'ahu. Public infrastructure. But I wound up taking pictures of people at home, on Moloka'i. As I shut her door and begin to walk around the bed, I wonder about Aunty Girlie's picture. And then I wonder about my own.

When I get into the truck I tell her about what's happened. I'm looking for an answer.

"If you can't remember the photos," she says. "What about all the other moments in your life?"

In the true spirit of a wise woman, she's responded with a question. And it's enough to keep me silent as I roll down my window, flip on the ignition, and turn to look through the rear window of the cab.

I'm concentrating on trying to back up and get out of the parking lot when Aunty Girlie says, "You make them up. As best you can."

It's something I haven't anticipated. Something that, against my will, suddenly makes me question everything she's ever told me. All the great stories. All the mo'olelo about people and places on the island. About gods. Even the history of Kaunakakai. "What?" I ask. I know full well what she's said, but I don't want any silence now that she's said it.

"Auntie not being mean," she says. "The stories are true. Family stories. Our version. My grandmother started telling them to me when I was very young. I remember plenty. But get some I tell, I not so sure."

She must see the wheels spinning in my head.

She says, "But I remember *all* the pictures that I take."

Out the truck window, toward the mountains, I see cornfields and then the entrance to Manila Camp. And before I know it, we're in Kaunakakai Town, almost at the planned site for the cultural park. "Pull in," says Auntie Girlie. "You not in a rush, ah. Hiki nō."

I slow down and make the turn toward the ocean. I can't help but think that the last time I was here—in this truck, with a woman at this time of night—it was because we'd been pulled over by a cop. I slow it down to below 5 miles per hour. I want to ask her which of the stories she told tonight about Kaunakakai are true stories, but I know where my question will lead.

On our right is the vacant lot. It's covered in tall weeds and empty storage containers. There's a cinder pile and a dump truck. "Those things been there forever," I say. "Waste."

But Auntie Girlie doesn't respond. She looks out her window at the lot. She's thinking, and I know they're all good thoughts. The look on her face would make a wonderful picture, even though it's night. The vacant lot behind her would fill the frame. There'd be a little wind in her hair.

She's lost in the moment, completely exposed.

When we reach the stone platform remains of Mālama, a vacation home of King Kamehameha V, she suddenly snaps out of it. “Not for long,” she says. “You’ll see.” And then she says she always gets ‘ono for deer whenever she passes this spot.

The truck pulls up to the beginning of the pier and she asks to pull over. She sees something on the shoreline. And as soon as the truck stops, she’s out and walking after it. I rush out the truck and run over to help her. She’s got her hands on the two-foot stonewall that borders the edge of the road. She’s getting ready to climb right over it. She wants to get down to the beach. I step to the side and jump right over. “You should’ve told me,” I say. “I would’ve pulled in at the platform. We could’ve driven right up.”

“That’s no fun,” she says. “Be careful, ah.” She laughs.

From the shoreline, I offer up my arms and guide her toward me. There’s a nice breeze on the shoreline, but it’s still a calm night, so the smell of limu wafts in the air around us. At the end of the wharf, there are boats docked in stalls, The Princess, and a Matson barge. It looks like there’s been a full day of action.

When Auntie Girlie reaches the sand, she dusts herself off. She steps over some ‘ākulikuli, then begins heading west, down the beach. There’s a half moon above her that looks like a bowl. Later, on our way into Kapa‘akea to drop her off, she’ll tell me the phase is called, Kāloapau. She’ll say it’s a good night for torching because of the tide.

I watch her walk down the beach, between stones and coral. Over shadowy roots reaching toward the ocean. I walk behind her, but I give her space. She hasn’t told me what she’s doing, and I don’t want to interfere in it. A wave slides up the shoreline, right to our feet. And when it does, she finally stops. She turns to the ocean. To the pier. To the boats and the barge. Then up at the moon.

“Come boy,” she says. “Right here.” Then she reaches out with her hand.

I step forward until we’re close, side by side. I look at the moon and the then the moonlight on the surface of the ocean. It’s trailing right toward us. She holds my hand as we stand there on the sand, looking out at the shimmering ocean, right at the spot where her picture was taken.

The Stone: 2005

They think it's a simple two-man job so their plan is to the point: wait for Friday, down some beers, steal the stone, make the drop, done. By now, they really can't help themselves. It's not just the money. It's not just the drugs. They've driven past the old man's place since they were boys, thousands of times, and every time they have, they've found themselves—whether they've thought to or not—looking into his yard. They called the stone “more beautiful than any girl we know” long before the old man and his family packed it up and shipped it to the rockstar. They heard the story. You can't keep something like that a secret on Moloka'i.

Now the stone has a new price tag, forty grand to the wharf. That's a small fraction of what they've heard it's worth, but it's also so much money they don't complain. They worry more about keeping the cash a secret than they do about the drop. They decide to go fifty-fifty even though they'll use the small one's truck. The big one, the powerlifter, he's the muscle, so he gets paid to get the stone in the bed and to shut people up if needed, after that.

They're brothers. And they don't think anything about stealing the stone. As far as they're concerned, the old man is doing them a favor. He deserves it for moving the stone in the first place. Besides, he's already got his cut. More than three million is what they've heard. They can't believe it (the old man still lives the same way he did in '92), but if they're getting paid the way they are, it must be true.

The big one is not all muscle. He's got a heart. He doesn't tell the small one, but he plans to send most of his cut to their sister. She wants out of a bad marriage. He's told her just to come home, but she insists she'd sooner die than show up back on the island after all these years with nothing more than a suitcase full of designer clothes. He'll send her the money to get her started again, and he'll put the rest away. His girlfriend is having a baby. His brother doesn't know that either.

The small one is another story. If he had a good bone in his body, he'd probably sell it, too. Everything about him is make that money. And he's found over the years

there's no faster way than with drugs. He's had fistfights with the big one a dozen times to defend this idea. And the fact he got his ass kicked every single time only helped him prove how adamant he was about this point. He plans to take his twenty grand and flip it five times in the next year. That's not a hundred grand, he tells his brother, it's almost six and a half. He'll be moving across the state.

* * *

If there's one thing that really gets them, it's the fact that the old man has put the stone right at the start of his driveway, less than five feet from the road. They've heard it's because he wants to let people have a look without having to drive in. They've heard when the flatbed came to return the stone after the rock star had it, the rear tires went flat and the straps holding down the stone slipped off right at that spot. They've even heard the old man says it was up to the stone. They've heard it all, but what they think is the old man just wants to rub it in their faces.

They toss the empty beers into a chicken wire bin full of bottles in the garage. Then they roll out an old carpet in the bed of the Chevy, shut the hardtop, and jump in up front. It's a Friday night, but they don't expect any traffic on the road fronting the old man's house. It's 2:00 AM. And they know the old man and his wife have long since gone to sleep. They're children are all out of the house. The youngest is somewhere in California.

The small one starts the truck up and they each think for a second that they've overlooked the rumbling noise sputtering out of the muffler. But then the image of a fat stack of cash quickly erases their worries. The small one reaches for the door and rolls up the windows with his fingers. Then he slips a cd into the deck beneath the dashboard and the cab fills with what the big one can only describe as fusion rock. "What da hell," he says.

The small one is bobbing his head front and back, laughing. "Da chronicles," he says.

"What?"

“*Chronicles of da Stone*. Da music. Da rock stah’s music.” He raises a fist in the air.

The big one slaps at the deck until there is silence. The cab fills with swearwords and accusations smearing the small one’s intelligence. “I not playin’ tonight,” he says.

The small one wants to say he’s only adding to the mood, but he’s not looking for another fistfight. He’s got his mind on the money, and when it comes to money, he knows not to mess around.

The truck pulls out of the driveway and pretty soon it’s making its way down Farrington Avenue. There are streetlamps every now and then, but for the most part, it’s pitch black and they can’t see much beyond the headlights of the truck. There’s a silence between them, and they’re used to it, so they don’t search for words to occupy the time until they reach the old man’s home. They’re close, anyway. Instead, they keep a lookout through the windows and the rearview mirrors. They are pleased when they don’t see another vehicle on the road.

When they reach the old man’s house, the truck slows down and they look at the stone before passing by. They drive on for about another hundred yards and then make a u-turn right there on the two-lane street. When they approach the stone again, the small one cuts the lights and puts the truck in neutral. It rolls to the edge of the road until it reaches the old man’s driveway and the stone is within feet of the bed. The doors open up and the big one immediately goes for the stone. His brother rushes to the bed, pops up the hardtop and drops the tailgate. The big one struggles to get the stone off of the ground—he wraps his right arm around it until it’s up against his chest, then he pushes it over so he can get his left arm under it. He squats and lifts, and when he gets it off the ground, he easily lugs it over and rolls it onto the carpet in the bed.

They work together to shut the tailgate and the hardtop. The bed has dropped almost a foot, but within a matter of seconds, the truck is at 35 mph and heading east down Farrington Avenue.

“Dat was smood,” says the big one. He’s already thinking about his sister. He felt the wad of cash in his pocket as soon as he realized he could pick up the stone.

“Time to get paid,” says the small one. He’s smiling so hard he has to wipe his face.

They get to the intersection at the end of Farrington Avenue and make a right down Kalae Highway. There isn’t another vehicle in sight. It’s a beautiful, quiet night, they think.

The small one is about to joke that he’s leaving the drug scene for good. He’s thinking about the business of stones. He opens his mouth, but right as he does, the engine begins to knock and the truck begins to shudder. The brothers look at each other and the big one points to the side of the two-lane highway. He curses at the fact the truck should be able to handle the weight. It shouldn’t be overheating. But when they look at the temperature gauge, it’s perfectly fine, the dial exactly between the H and the C.

The truck veers off the highway and onto the grassy shoulder just off the pavement. The big one lets the back of his head fall against the headrest. “Yo’ truck,” he says, so his brother jumps out to check under the hood.

The big one sits there in disgust as he hears the hood snap open and then sees the beam of a flashlight moving over the engine. He lets out a loud sigh. He’s about to open his door and get out when he feels a rumbling behind him and then the bed of the truck spring up. The beam from the flashlight shoots through the cab and he squints for a moment before he opens his door. He goes to the back of the truck. He stops. He freezes.

The small one is standing beside him. He shuts off the flashlight. They stand there in the dark. The only thing they can do as they face the stone—now on the ground and upright, just as it was in the old man’s yard—is curse their fate. There’s a whole bunch of swearing.

“No can,” says the small one. “No way.”

“You put da latch, ah?”

“Yah.”

The big one can’t shake the eerie feeling running up his back, but he doesn’t want to let on that he’s scared. “Go staht da truck,” he says. “Now!” He can’t think of anything else to do but heave the stone back in the bed. He squats to wrap his arm around it and

push it over but the stone won't move. It's so heavy he thinks it's stuck to the ground. He wraps both arms around it and heaves with all his might, but he can't move it. He feels a warmth on his chest emanating from the stone, so he jumps back.

The ignition fires on and the hood slams shut.

They are standing side by side again. The big one points to the stone. "Not moving," he says. "Stuck."

But when the small one walks over and places his hand on the stone, it tilts over and falls to the ground. "Pick 'im up. C'mon. Stop messin' aroun'."

The big one leans over the stone, but he still can't move it, so the small one gets down to help him. The stone doesn't budge. They pull and push. They come at the stone from different angles, but after a couple of minutes, it begins to rain and they're forced to give up.

They decide the only thing to do is cover the stone with debris from the side of the highway. Go home, get a shovel, a dolly and some straps. It's their only hope. They haven't got much time. They jump in the truck and peel off back up the highway. The small one gets on his cell phone and makes a call to the wharf. It'll take them another hour, he says, no more. The big one lowers his window so he can get some fresh air. He hears a voice calling for him from the darkness. The stone's got in his head, he thinks, there's no one out there.

When they finally pull into the driveway, there's a small sense of relief. The big one thinks for a second that he just might call it a night, go back in the middle of the day. He doesn't feel right. He'll tell his brother to call right back and say they don't want to damage it. They'll go back the next day and just park the truck on the shoulder of the highway to block the stone. They'll wait out any passing cars. But when his brother puts the truck in park, the big one doesn't get the chance. He starts to feel dizzy, drunk. His brother's head tilts back and hits the headrest—his eyes and mouth are open. And suddenly, the big one is stuck to the seat, paralyzed.

The doors lock. His window crawls up the track until it is shut. Tiny red and yellow lights on the deck of the stereo begin to flicker on—blue letters scroll from left to

right across the faceplate: *E, N, O, T, S, E, H, T*—and before long, he hears the beginnings of an ethereal, unforgettable song.

He closes his eyes.

He knows now that this isn't a simple two-man job, and in the morning, he won't be surprised when he wakes in the truck to find a message from the wharf saying he wasn't supposed to just make the drop. He has until 8:00 AM to pick up the money.

Something in the Wind

The protest signs taped to the north wall inside the hall at Mitchell Pauole Center are handmade, done by students, kids from schools across the island of Moloka‘i. Some signs read, “‘Aha Moku—Hawaiian Leadership” or “Honor Our Kūpuna” or “Boycott State Process.”

There are people seated at cafeteria tables in the hall—older ones in aloha-print clothing, mothers and fathers, keiki. There are people of all ethnicities, including recent transplants who are here for the talk of the town. At the back of the hall, there are men in jeans and t-shirts. They are sitting on benches that have been brought inside for the night. It’s near sunset, and the last of daytime enters through large sliding doors on the west side.

Outside, there are families and groups of children, too. Some huddle at the edges of doorways, others are sitting at park tables in the evening shade of the building. The people outside are greeting each other, shaking hands, hugging, talking story, and laughing, until from the stage inside the hall a low, reverberating sound, a man’s breath, emanates from a pū.

Then there is near silence. Heads turn toward the stage.

There are oli kāhea and oli komo. And the near silence turns into a boisterous exchange that carries through the hall and spills out its doorways and into the streets of town.

* * *

Lydia Kamelemele is a beautiful French-Hawaiian woman who has lived all her life on the island. She has long, dark hair she pulls back and wraps tightly in a bun held together with a hairpick that looks like a miniature kāhili. She has little star tattoos on her hands. And a mo‘o tattoo at the back of her neck.

She is on the stage in Mitchell Pauole, sitting among a panel of four others: her youngest sister, Lynette Kamelemele; two employees of a national renewable energy

company, Likolani Johnson and Syd Kamahana; and one representative of the Hawaii State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, Rich Rhoady.

Lydia is excited by the large turnout of people. She can't help but be, so it's reflected in her smile. She's been to community meetings on Moloka'i all of her adult life, and she can't remember one where there were so many new faces. She sees the usual suspects, a handful of those who always attend these meetings. And she also sees faces she has not seen in a very long time. Kūpuna from many of the moku on the island. Young parents and their children. All these teenagers. Family members. Old friends.

The hall is filled with their mana, she thinks, and she lifts her pen off the table and begins to note their names.

* * *

There is a man facilitating the community meeting. He is standing on the stage beside the panel. He is short, but sturdy, muscular. The sound of his voice reminds Lydia why she is there, sitting beside her sister, the two young Hawaiian panelists, and Mr. Rhoady. "One's culture," the man says, "cannot survive without the resources of its land and sea."

The people in the crowd cheer in agreement. Some raise an arm in the air. They whistle. The man turns to look at the panel and then he begins to introduce them to the crowd.

* * *

Mr. Rhoady leans into the microphone on the lectern and says, "I am passionate about Hawaii's future. And I believe we can work together to help insure the health and prosperity of its people." He looks around, trying to make eye contact with those nearest the stage. The crowd is attentive, almost eager to hear what he has to say. "It's clear our dependency on oil has gone on for much too long. If we care about our environment, we must start looking at other means for generating our energy."

Lydia puts down her pen when she sees—at the edge of her vision—a kupuna stand up and raise his hand. He's from Ho'olehua, just outside Hawaiian homestead land. Her father's friend. Her best friend's father. She smiles at the old man and then points

him out to Mr. Rhoady. When the hall is quiet, the old man says, “I’ve lived Moloka‘i for over sixty years, moved here when I was still a boy. My father, he was a farmer, a good one, and he brought us here because he knew we’d always have enough. I don’t need windmills to be healthy.”

Mr. Rhoady looks down at his notes on the lectern. He’s prepared for a comment like this, but he fidgets with his papers for a few seconds before returning to the old man. He needs to be thoughtful. Sensitive, he reminds himself. He is glad to be on Moloka‘i again. The first and only other time he was here, he was told at a meeting very similar to this one, never to return unless he was invited back. “Yes,” he says. “Moloka‘i is a wonderful place. A beautiful island. In fact, it is one of the most abundant wind resources in the world.” He pauses. He wants that last part to resonate in the hall.

* * *

Likolani Johnson reminds Lydia of what she might’ve been like when she had been the young woman’s age. They met once before, when Likolani’s company flew Lydia, Lynette, and a few other Moloka‘i residents to O‘ahu for an informational meeting regarding the company and their plan to run energy from Maui, Lāna‘i, and Moloka‘i to O‘ahu. Likolani’s from a rural community in Hawai‘i, just like Lydia. She grew up wanting to help other Hawaiians, just like Lydia. She is headstrong, passionate, and apparently willing to face vehement opposition in pursuit of her beliefs. Just like Lydia. It’s too bad then, Lydia thinks, that Likolani seems to know so little about Moloka‘i. So it’s out of respect for those other things that Lydia remains seated and tries to quiet the crowd with her hands when they have risen from their own seats in the middle of Likolani’s self-proclaimed informal presentation.

It’s getting dark outside. And everyone in the hall, Lydia knows, has had a long day. They’ve driven in from all across the island. They don’t want to hear about Oahu’s energy crisis. They don’t want someone, anyone, telling them that it’s their kuleana to kōkua the other island, especially when all they see and hear on television is an endless list of Oahu’s planned development projects. Lydia shudders at the thought that Likolani doesn’t seem to understand this, too.

* * *

There are other signs taped to the wall behind the stage. They read, “Wind is our culture!” and “Honor Our Kuleana” and “KA MAKANI=OUR KULEANA.” Syd Kamahana knows what these signs mean. From behind the lectern, he takes a moment to point out the signs before he turns to the crowd. “Mahalo for the invitation to attend tonight’s meeting,” he says. “I’m not certain how, but I know I’m related to some of you here. I’m a Kamahana, and our ‘ohana on O‘ahu will be here this summer for a family reunion. I work with Likolani, she’s a good person. A very good person. And, like me, she wants what is best for all.”

There’s an air of cautious interest rising from the crowd. A desire by the people for some kind of connection with this visitor on the panel, but also a hesitancy. There are murmurs regarding the young man’s eloquent command of Hawaiian language when he first entered the hall. There are whispers about why he doesn’t know how he’s related to a few of the elders in the room.

“This is a tough thing,” he says. “But we need to have these talks. We need to make the right decisions for our future here in Hawai‘i. Mahalo again for having me here.”

* * *

Night has arrived and the people are growing restless. It’s a school night, so some of the parents begin to look for their children, who by now have left the hall and are playing outside. The parents, the people, everyone in the hall, they all understand that oil is not the final answer. But they are concerned that the panelists, all but the Kamelemele sisters, have not been candid. There’s been no mention of the scope of this proposed alternative energy project. No mention that the size of each windmill will be over 400 feet or that there may be more than 100 of them planted on the island’s west end. Nothing to address their serious concerns. Only that when the project is completed, residents on Moloka‘i will qualify for the same electricity rates as those on O‘ahu.

Finally, it's time for questions from the crowd. Those who've been listening outside begin to filter in. Men, women, and teenagers at the tables stand and raise their hands to secure a mic. There's plenty of movement. Things are stirring in the hall.

* * *

Lydia feels a wind enter through the east doors. She imagines the long route it has taken to get here, from beyond Kamakou, to reach sea-level and Kaunakakai. Then she imagines another wind that began alongside this one, a wind still outside, now moving west across Ho'olehua toward Kaluako'i, swirling over the many valleys and gulches toward Maunaloa, or sliding over the plains to reach 'Īlio Point. This wind builds in strength as it moves over the island, cutting over the dark landscape, splitting whenever it meets a hill. She is lost in thought.

She isn't able to hear the crowd anymore. She doesn't hear the young man who stands to ask what studies have revealed about the long-term detriments to people and the environment near or around large scale wind turbines. She doesn't hear the elderly woman who insists that an argument for renewable energy based on the dangers of oil is nothing more than capitalist scare tactics. She doesn't hear the old Hawaiian man who says he petitioned to keep the windmills off Hawaiian Homes Lands and that he'd sooner die than see them anywhere on Moloka'i. She doesn't hear the high school girl who asks the panel about research the company has done on Oahu's energy consumption.

* * *

The men at the back of the hall are seething. Some do all they can to control themselves. They yell in agreement at anti-windmill comments and when questions seem to confound the panelists. It's all they can do to keep from walking right up to the stage and ripping everything apart. They've seen development projects before. They've seen these projects cover religious and historic sites. Projects that have fallen by the wayside, leaving crumbling concrete and metal infrastructures where they once stood. There's no more buying in for the lure of benefits. Finally, one of the men finds a mic and addresses the panel of visitors. "I've listened to what you have to say. I listened because that's protocol. You came and you asked to enter." Then he points to one of the students still in

the hall, a girl who suddenly finds herself looking down, eyes to the floor. “That’s my daughter. Her and her friends, they oli komo so I can listen. Now I’ve heard enough. I can make this simple.” He turns to the crowd, asks, “Who in here wants to hear more about windmills?”

No one moves or says a word.

“Who is against windmills on Moloka‘i?”

Every single person in the crowd raises a hand.

“That’s your answer,” he says. “Simple.”

And the rest of the men yell in agreement.

* * *

Lydia sees the wind moving in the darkness. It is a big wind now.

Kumuma‘oma‘o. The easterly wind of Kaluako‘i. It spreads like electricity under the nighttime sky until it covers the western half of the island. She imagines her daughter as a speck somewhere on the Ho‘olehua Plains, playing in the wind. She is racing over homestead lands with a little flashlight and hiding in the tall, soft grass. And all at once, Lydia’s attention returns to the hall, then to the crowd, and finally to the panel and the facilitator still on the stage.

She stands up and asks for the microphone. “The ‘Aha Moku,” she says, “that’s why I’ve come. Not for the windmills. But I can see how these things are connected now—the ‘Aha will help us in times like these, allow us the opportunity to take legal, organized action. I am here tonight on behalf of those who’ve spent their own money and volunteered their time to tell you this.”

The crowd begins to take their seats again. It’s late, but Lydia is someone the people have come to trust. She’s worked in the community, with the community. She’s fought when they’ve needed her. A few of them have even found themselves at the front door of her Ho‘olehua home when it seemed there was nowhere else to go. And she listened.

* * *

Lydia holds stories of Moloka‘i close to her heart. Over the years, she’s sat beside elders in their homes as they’ve shared their knowledge of the island’s history. She’s spent countless hours over books in the library cross-referencing information. And she’s walked the land.

When she was a girl, she was her father’s child, always at his side taking note of what he did and how he did it. She followed him into the eastern valleys of the island when he hunted pig. She camped with him in the forest on nights when even her father’s friends stayed home. She jumped fences with him on the west end to hunt deer. She was good with a gun and a knife, even then.

Lydia has a daughter. Awali‘i. The one who followed Lydia when she was a child. Awali‘i will become the repository of all Lydia has learned in the course of her life. But Awali‘i isn’t here tonight. She’s not at home, either. She’s not running through the grass under the nighttime sky of the Ho‘olehua Plains. She’s on O‘ahu, probably doing homework, calculus or physics, alone in a dormitory room, studying.

* * *

Likolani Johnson remains seated when the facilitator hands her the microphone to address the questions and concerns posed by the crowd. She is an intelligent young woman, and surprisingly poised in light of the recent turmoil generated in the hall. She’s a country girl, college-educated, and she believes, no matter what others in the room might think, that the Moloka‘i community cannot simply denounce the idea of windmills on their island for the sake of keeping it’s rural community feel. The wind, she believes, like any other resource, cannot be disregarded.

* * *

Syd Kamahana is thinking about the life his path has taken so that he’s found himself here, tonight, in the meeting hall of Mitchell Pauole Center. He remembers more than anything these moments from his college education: the economics lecture on sustainability; the introductory music class where he was taught he could never sell out, only buy in; and the Hawaiian Studies discussion on the Hawaiian god of wind, La‘amaomao. He understands his mere attendance carries just as many contradictions as

the lessons he took from those classes, and suddenly he finds himself leaning over, looking at a little girl approaching the stage.

It's his turn now to be carried off by the wind, to think of his own daughter in their home on O'ahu, and to wonder whether if when she gets older she'll have a comfortable life in the place of her birth.

* * *

Rich Rhoady has mixed feelings about the way things are turning out. He's glad to be sitting here in the hall, listening to the concerns of the Moloka'i community. He does want to help them. But he's also worried that he hasn't come close to convincing anyone of the necessity of wind power on the island. The men at the back of the hall are angry, and he really can't blame them. He understands what it's like to feel threatened. He understands that people aren't just going to let the project happen if they don't embrace its complexity.

There's something unique about this community, and he sees it now. He sees it in the way the people get charged up, the way their energy moves throughout the room. He takes a moment to consider this, and then he pulls a pen from his pocket and begins noting some of their comments.

* * *

In this small island community, there are warriors and peacemakers, and Lynette Kamelemele would qualify herself as the former. She wouldn't think twice right now to stand up and smack a panelist for being disrespectful to her sister or to an elder in the crowd. She's come close to that before.

She'll sit beside her sister because her sister needs her there. They make a good pair. The older one, the wise one. The younger, the fighter. She's here to help explain the 'Aha concept to the community, but she's perfectly fine just sitting there. A presence. Helping take it all in. Her sister is good at what she does, anyway, so the meeting now is really about these windmills. She's been here before, just like her sister, so it's easy to see where this is going. The last time Rich Rhoady came to Moloka'i, Lynette was in the crowd that told him not to come back until he was invited. And she didn't invite him back

this time. Now, he's come with two young Hawaiians, good kids, no less, and she thinks he's up to something.

There are over 50 recorded wind names for the island of Moloka'i, and many years ago, Lynette memorized each of them—where they travel, their unique characteristics, when to find them during the year. As far as she's concerned, the wind is like the land. You just can't own it.

* * *

Rich Rhoady stands up and takes the mic again. He's feeling better now. The crowd's energy is bouncing off the wall behind him. It's almost chaotic, a good time to step in. "On the way here," he says. "I was thinking about an analogy I could use to help us in this process. And when we reached Kaunakakai, I was reminded that there are some great mango trees on the island." He points out the doorway, into town. "Let's imagine you have a tree that's produced an abundance of mango, and it just so happens that I'd like some. I'm coming here to ask you what it is that I can give you. I want to make a fair trade."

Suddenly, all the energy in the room seems to refocus itself around the stage, around Rich Rhoady, and onto the very words that have just come out of his mouth. A young Hawaiian man in the crowd at the back of the room stands up and begins to approach the stage, cutting between the tables at the center of the hall until he's met on his way there by the facilitator, who steps in front of him and hands the young man a mic. "You're all off!" says the young man. He's fired up, but somehow he maintains his composure. "That's not it. We don't expect anything in return. If you've come for something and you're pono about it, we let you take 'em. For nothing. But if your intentions are wrong, if all you want is to sell the damn mangos, then there's nothing you can give us." He drops the mic to his chest. "Can you understand that?"

There is a silence again. Some of the people in the crowd are standing up, and Mr. Rhoady doesn't know if he should answer the young man or just accept what's been said. Some of parents and children begin to file out of the hall, and when the young man sees this, he places the microphone on one of the cafeteria tables and walks out, too.

* * *

Lynette Kamelemele knows translations can be complicated. It's a lesson her grandmother taught her when she became the punahele. Her own name, Kamelemele, for example, which she had been taught in grade school meant 'yellow' really refers to 'a time of burden or sadness'. A name given to her family in commemoration of an event before the arrival of ali'i to the island of Moloka'i.

As she watches Mr. Rhoady return to his seat beside her, she thinks about the Kaunakakai wind, Hauialialia, a wind that whips, smiting fear. She thinks it's perfect, and she wonders if it could be translated in any other way.

* * *

Lydia Kamelemele places her hand on Lynette's. It's a sign that she feels it's time to step off the stage. Time to take their place among the people in the crowd. They've done their job tonight. It's not about windmills. It's about the 'Aha. She collects the papers and posters on the table in front of her, and then she pushes back her chair.

The people of Moloka'i have always come together in times like these. They find ways to put aside their own differences for the greater cause. But it's been a while since she's seen such a definitive stance against outside agencies like these, and she's glad she's been a part of it. There's something about a night like this, she thinks. And she feels a sudden burst of energy when she takes one last overview of the hall and finds a group of teenagers holding hands in a circle near one of the doorways.

In a while, she'll be the only person in the car when it makes its way out of town and up the dark, two-lane highway toward her Ho'olehua home. She'll pass Kalama'ula and Nā'iwa, where the winds there will funnel in through the windows of the car before they release her and send her on her way. When she pulls into her driveway, she'll hear gravel crumbling under the tires and see a little porch light behind ironwood trees. She'll step out of the car and into the wind, and it's then she will decide that the first thing she'll do when she gets inside is pick up the phone and call her daughter.

Changes in the Weather

When the rain had stopped and the southern Moloka‘i shoreline was a dark brown shadow stretching east, he saw beyond a wide, quiet channel, to Lāna‘i and Maui and between them the faint sliver of Kaho‘olawe.

The sun was rising from behind the West Maui Mountains. Its orange brilliance spread out from above Pu‘u Kukui, pushing away cloudbanks, opening up the sky. Inside the Kanoa fishpond, finger-sized mullet rippled beneath the smooth surface of the water, some jumping into the air when the dorsal fin of a pāpio or kākū cut through the surface and carved through the school. Henry Kaikilani stepped slowly through the shallow water toward the distant reef as sunrays spilled toward him in streams from Maui. He walked like a man with conviction, his back to his home, his eyes toward the reef and then into the Kalohi Channel and then beyond that to Lāna‘i. He had made up his mind. He was going to pull the giant he‘e from out of his winter home and finally bring him ashore, even if it killed him. The ocean was—he now believed—a perfect place to die.

Henry was old. He had outlived against all odds, his doctor had said, his wife and the friends he had made as a child growing up in Kawela. Those who still knew him said the ocean kept his body and his mind younger than they really were. They said that inside his old wiry frame rested a spirit so connected to the sea he could breathe in giant pulses like the shifting tides on the Kawela shoreline.

The children who spent afternoons looking for sand crabs or shrimp or baby mullet, or rummaging across sandbars at low tide, even believed Old Man Henry would remain a fixture of Kawela after they were gone. He was a man who so embodied the shoreline that the children began to suspect he was simply a permanent part of it, a piece of the shoreline’s living history. And now, more than ever before, since they knew his wife had died and that he was all that was left in his own home, the children were convinced he would simply become part of the place where the Kawela shoreline met the sea.

The children had come to call him Old Man Henry. And they knew he had seen the octopus many, many times. He watched it glide, he had told them, from the blue depths of the Kalohi Channel at the end of each summer for two years. He watched the he'e effortlessly spread its arms against the current before surging forward for nearly fifteen feet. He watched the octopus crawl across the seafloor until it fastened to the coral and braced itself against the current. It was as big as a man underwater, he had told them.

Although the people in Kawela recognized him as skilled fisherman, he was still scared the first time the he'e approached him from beyond the blue depths of the reef. Each of its arms might easily wrap themselves around his legs and his waist, his torso, and his throat. He could easily wrap around Henry's body and anchor them both underwater. He watched the octopus pull itself up and onto the ledge of the green reef, sprawl over a massive coral head and then turn to face him, its body shape-shifting like a piece of the sea and the earth, the pigment under its gray skin pulsing in brown and red waves.

Henry let his feet sink inches into the muddy shallows as he made his way past the school of mullet and toward the stone remnants that marked the deepest part of the fishpond. The school swarmed close behind him, and it was only when he turned around and waved his spear over the surface that the fish broke apart and disappeared into the calm brown water. Then, he rested his gear—a mask and snorkel, fins, a three-pronged spear, and a stainless-steel tee—upon the stones of the fishpond before he stopped to quietly pray for safe passage in and out of the ocean.

He was almost seventy, but because he still dove the reef outside Kawela, the people who now lived on the shoreline assumed Henry was younger, sometimes by more than ten years. No man near seventy, they said, could hold his breath underwater for three minutes. No man near seventy, they said, could see beyond the distant reef from the shoreline. But the children knew otherwise. They had often followed the old man in the afternoon, begging him for stories of the things he'd seen on the reef. Fishes. Turtles. Sharks. They followed him these days until he'd finally turn around and tell them the story of the octopus, which he knew was all they really wanted to hear. In the early

afternoons, he sat them on the sand at the shoreline and then stretched out his arms above them, describing the fluidity by which the octopus moved toward him underwater. He told them of the silent strength the octopus used as it built its home with large stones each winter under the massive coral head that became its home. He described the intense speed of the arms as they struck out from between the stones and wrapped around their prey. And this was the moment the children loved the most since it was then that he'd wrap one of them in his arms, pull one of them close, and imitate the sound of the octopus beak breaking shell or bone by popping out the top row of teeth in his mouth. The children were delighted when he did this, finally letting them into a part of his life that seemed so secret. After he placed the child in his arms back on the ground, he would expose the row of dentures on his tongue and the children would cringe and laugh and then turn and run down the shoreline towards their homes.

Once he was well beyond the broken wall of the fishpond, he cleaned out the lens of his mask using a mixture of mashed naupaka leaves and spit before wiping away the hair from his face with seawater. Then he pulled the mask over his face and slipped the snorkel inside the rubber strap of his mask near his ear. Slowly, he leaned forward into the water with his fins in one hand and his spear and the steel tee in the other until his head was immersed and the only sounds were his breath moving back and forth through the snorkel and the cool water rushing into his ears and over his back. He pushed off with his feet, sliding across the surface of the water, just a few feet from the sandy bottom and he drifted a bit until the depth of the water reached chest-high. Then he dropped his spear and the tee and put on his fins. He scanned the space around him for specific coral formations and for rock mounds he had set since the beginning of the winter season and then he began to follow them out to a depth where he knew the water visibility became perfectly clear.

Even though he didn't see much beyond fifteen feet, he knew exactly where he was heading, even imagined the island now behind him and the way its shallow southern valleys might appear to widen and then almost shut as he shifted directions making his way toward the reef and then over its ledge toward the open sea. He felt the water

temperature change from warm to cold and then back to warm again as he swam through small currents toward the reef. Small schools of weke and manini and kole began to appear—the weke skirting across the seafloor in search of tiny crustaceans, the manini and kole in cloud-like formations falling over coral with their tails toward the sky as they pecked at limu and sometimes at each other like birds underwater.

The he'e, Henry knew, would be waiting for him. And he knew to settle on a plan before he reached the reef and then its ledge and then the octopus. He had already given up on the idea of baiting it out from the hole with a lure or maybe some bait—like the weke or manini or kole. He was going to use his spear and the tee. That seemed right.

The reef and the ocean outside Kawela were sanctuary. And when there, he somehow felt at peace even amid the loss of his wife and the fact he was old and alone and the world outside Moloka'i was changing at a pace he didn't much care to follow. In the ocean, he forgot about things on the shoreline that did little good for a man of his age—that in his small part of Kawela he was of only a handful left that had lived there all their lives, that people now complained about how and where he chose to fish, that not long after the death of his wife he began to question the meaningfulness of his existence and his usefulness to anything related to Kawela. He had gone that far.

In the ocean, he felt in control and almost complete. There was a world now just outside the Kanoa fishpond where almost daily he watched the he'e devour lobsters and crabs and fully-grown fish, and as he swam past stone mounds he had built at the beginning of the winter season, Henry kept his focus beyond the tiny underwater particles shifting in the current and forgot all the troubles on the shoreline.

Winter in Kawela meant rain and storms. There were days when mud ran down the southern shoreline and made the ocean too murky for anyone to want to leave home. There were days when heavy winds howled from the east and white caps ripped across the blue depths of the Kalohi Channel toward O'ahu. And then there were days between the rain and the storms, when the weather completely turned. The last of the winds and currents passed though the island and sent the murky water away from the shoreline and beyond the reef, leaving Kawela almost in silence and the air with an eerie chill. This was

when the surface of the ocean was completely motionless and when, if he pleased, Henry Kaikilani would spend entire mornings presiding over the distant reef outside Kawela. He knew the ridges and crevices and the caves of this reef as one might know the rooms of a house well enough to walk through in darkness. He liked to think he knew the fish on this reef by their generation. He marked time by the ever-changing size of their schools.

Some of the children in Kawela found Old Man Henry's stories even more intriguing than the things they were learning in school. They'd hurry off the bus in the afternoon and make their way to the shoreline without saying a word to their parents or even changing out of their school clothes. They searched for him on the shoreline, and if they didn't see him, they wandered down the beach with their eyes fixed toward the ocean and out at the reef. At first, Old Man Henry had said little to them, even when they prompted him with questions. And because he had said nothing except for what he might teach them of the shoreline, to them he seemed like someone from a different world, an old man without a connection to anything outside the ocean at Kawela. But the children understood Old Man Henry this way: He brought them to the ocean as it brought life to him.

It took nearly ten minutes before Henry swam out far enough to reach the small waves breaking over the inside of the reef. He felt a surge of water move across his back and over his calves, then slip toward his feet. He held the spear in one hand and the steel tee in the other, keeping them both close to his body and from dragging over the coral and sand until he passed the breaking waves. Beyond the shallow inside section of the reef, where the depth fell enough so he could no longer stand and raise his head above the surface of the water, he paused to take a clear and panoramic view of the way the reef sloped away from him and the ocean water became an opaque blue. He hovered just beneath the surface of the water with his back to the shoreline as he watched a pair of blue and yellow uhu beneath him join a school of skittish palani, and then a three-foot kala gliding within one of the cracks of the reef.

This was a giant he'e by any standard, the largest he had ever seen in the water off Kawela, so as he steadied himself beneath the surface of the water just beyond the reef,

he made a vigilant inspection of both the coral formations and two smaller underwater stone structures on the ocean floor beneath him. He had stacked these stones himself into pyramid-like piles with rocks large enough so they withstood the shifting currents of the winter months, and so that together they marked two points that when aligned would lead him in the direction of the massive coral head where the octopus had made his home in winter. When he was over the first stone structure, he became more aware of his breath. He listened to the hollow sound of air slowly move in and out of his snorkel and he was instantly reminded of two things: the first, that he was the only person in the water for miles; and the second, that in his life he had only remembered holding one he'e that came close to the size of the one now somewhere in the labyrinth of seascape beneath him.

* * *

Henry was probably as old as the oldest of the children who had now taken to him on the Kawela shoreline. He was standing on a wooden crate one afternoon in the yard of his small childhood home. He had his arms raised in front of him with both his hands above his head and slipped into the gill slit and the mantle of a he'e.

He was there with his father and there were others from Kawela who had come to see the octopus, to watch as he held it up and tried to get the last few inches of its arms off of the ground. He was still wet and cold from the dive, but he was pumped after seeing his father wrestle the he'e out from its hole and then through the water and into the cooler on their flat-bottom boat. It had probably been adrenaline that had saved him when, after his father pulled up the anchor and the outboard engine started sputtering along toward the shore, the octopus, with Henry sitting on the cooler, snapped the cooler open and began to slip itself around his legs, attach itself to the floor of the boat, and then sprawl toward the gunnel. It had taken his father's help to keep the octopus from completely crawling out of the boat with him in its grasp. His father grabbed the ends of four of the arms and ripped them toward the sky while Henry pulled the arms stuck on his own legs away from his body. They stood there for an instant when he was finally free with the octopus squirming and spread out between them before his father pulled the head toward him and bit into an area beneath one of its eyes.

The struggle had left Henry with circular marks the size of coins around his thighs and arms even as he held the octopus up on the wooden crate in his yard over an hour later. It was an overcast day, just after a storm had passed, and every minute or so he heard the comments of the adults and children gathered in his yard intermingle with the dull thuds of small swells as they crashed upon shoreline. He was wet and cold and getting tired. And he knew that he could've died that day, that even though his father had speared and wrestled the he'e into the cooler, that without his father there in the boat, the he'e would've simply pulled him overboard, and if it desired, taken him back to its underwater home. The memory seared itself into his consciousness. He had stood there on the wooden crate in exhilaration.

He had grown up the youngest of five boys, so by the time he began to walk, he was already trying to prove himself. They were a tight-knit group, a real brotherhood, but if there was one of them who took most to their father as they got older, it was Henry. When the other boys were at baseball or basketball practice, Henry rode into town with Dad. After baseball or basketball games on the weekends, when the boys went to the beach with their teammates, Henry passed Dad tools as they worked on the car or on the house. Henry even followed Dad around the yard. So it seemed natural that Henry was the one Dad took to the ocean to teach about life underwater. By the time his four older brothers had graduated from high school and began moving away, Henry was already the fisherman in the family. He lay net. He threw net. He bottom fished. He trolled. There were days before his own graduation when he found he had fished all these ways in one single day. After his brothers had moved away from Moloka'i, Henry began taking fish to some of the old timers in Kawela. It was something he had done with his dad when he was younger, but something he did now just on his own.

He liked to see joy in the faces of the old timers. Smiling uncles and aunties, he called them, even though some were more like grandparents. He liked the way the old ones lit up when he arrived at their door with fish. They were always happy with whatever he brought them, but he made it a point to learn which fish they wanted most and then to try as best he could to deliver those fish to them. Some wanted fish they could

fry, like āholehole or manini or kole. Some liked to bake uhu or small mahimahi. Some mentioned poke or sahimī, so he'd bring them nenuē or ulua. And for this, the uncles and aunties would always later share what they made with him. In fact, although he had learned from his parents to prepare all the fishes he brought home from the ocean outside Kawela, it was the uncles and aunties who taught Henry to truly enjoy the ocean. It was as if in their faces he was always reminded not to take what he had or what he learned or what he could do in the ocean for granted. They gave him this aloha, and he kept it with him, even if he didn't always know it, long after they were gone.

After high school, he apprenticed as a roofer. He figured it was a trade that would keep him busy with work. People needed roofs over their heads, after all, even on Moloka'i. He had done well enough to leave for college like his brothers if he'd wanted, but in the end he decided because of the cost and because it meant leaving his parents and Kawela, he'd try to make it work at home. He had his eye on a girl, too. She was a local girl, a couple of years younger than he was, and still going to school. He figured, he'd get a job and hopefully get lucky. He could stay on Moloka'i and live his life on the ocean, just as he had when he was a boy. There was more than enough for him on the island, and in some sense, he felt committed there. He had kuleana, the right to enjoy life in a place where he had grown up witnessing so many wonders in the natural world and the responsibility to help maintain that lifestyle for those who would search for it in the future. Maybe he was going to have children one day. Maybe his brothers would return home with their own children. He saw enough of what he and his friends called "city life" when he had traveled to Honolulu and he knew that wasn't the life for him. And within years after graduating from high school, when some of his friends who had left were now returning with stories of unfulfilled dreams and disillusionment, he recognized that, even though his parents and some of the aunties and uncles in Kawela still disagreed with his decision, he had in fact made the right choice if only because he had continued in that time to perpetuate the wisdom and customs he found in Kawela as a child.

It was a blistering hot day when his father had died. He was on a roof of a house on the mountainside a few miles from home with a view that let him hear and then see the

ambulance and fire truck screaming down the Kamehameha V Highway. Henry knew before anyone told him that the medics were rushing to his father, so he calmly climbed down off the roof, packed up his tools, and drove home. He had mixed feelings about his father's death. After his mother had died, he was certain that a part of his father had died, too. They had both known her time was coming. They had taken turns at her bedside. Near her final days, they had even, against Henry's wishes, discussed the topic of her will. His father had seemed to perfectly rationalize what was about to happen until it did, and then Henry found his father was a completely different man. He stopped making trips into town and spent most of his time on the shoreline or in the yard at first. Then he began spending days in the house, watching television in the living room, getting up only to eat or to use the bathroom or to return to his bed. Henry tried to get him back on the flat bottom and into the ocean. At least back to the shore. He didn't bring home fish for a week. But his dad didn't seem to notice or to mind. He kept so quiet that he left a massive void in their small home. He would die of a broken heart. And so when it happened, Henry tried to convince himself that his father's death was meant to be, that there was no other way he was going to be happy again.

At the cemetery, after his brothers and all the uncles and aunties from Kawela had paid their final respects, Henry dropped a picture of himself onto the coffin. It was a black and white his father had taken of him in the yard on the day he had almost died in the ocean.

* * *

It was still morning, but there was already enough underwater current just off the reef's ledge so Henry had to keep a constant paddle with his fins to stay in one place. From the stone mounds beneath him, he slowly made his way toward the massive coral head where he expected to find the he'e. He was looking in the distance for a round formation that he had come to describe to the children as a giant head of purple cabbage, something a deep-ocean color and almost perfectly round except for its flattened, greenish top. He knew it reached over four-feet off the ocean floor, but was also a piece of the underwater landscape that might go completely unnoticed if he wasn't specifically

looking for it, and if he didn't approach it from the direction of his stone guides. He knew the reef outside his home well, probably better than anyone else in the world, but he still took time, even if he didn't really need it, to get an initial bearing during this transition to life underwater.

While he was sure he'd come across the coral head if he stayed on the line he had set with his stones, he also felt as though he was seeing the things before him for the first time. The sunrays were just beginning to reach the ocean floor, and the light piercing through the clear water split a school of ta'ape and to'au. Their yellow and red bodies burst outward the way water does when spilled on concrete, and then just as quickly, they re-converged into a swarming ball as if in a complex dance. The school of ta'ape and to'ao moved up and down in the water column like this until the school broke apart and Henry was finally left with a clear view of the greenish, round top of coral beneath them.

He took time to circle the area and to assess the rich seafloor before making his first dive. Between the green and blue coral formations, he looked for stones that seemed out of place, overturned stones. They would be whitish or gray. They would look like algae had been growing up around them. He kept his spear and the steel tee in his right hand and he used his left to gently pull himself through the water. When he saw upturned stones circling the base of the coral head, he drew in a little closer, to ten or twelve feet, and then he began to look through the spaces between the stones for the octopus itself. He tried to move as little and as calmly as possible, using the current for propulsion and his arms and the blades of his fins to steer himself into position.

Normally, when he came across an octopus hole on the shallow sections of the reef, he'd swim right up and begin moving away the stones with the tip of his spear until he saw the thin tips of arms. He would tickle the octopus with the tip of the spear and lure it out a little before thrusting the spear and then maybe the tee into the thicker flesh near its head. When the octopus began to fight, he would work around the hole with the spear and the tee until enough of its body revealed itself and he was able to secure it in his hands. He liked to pull the octopus from its hole with one hand and with his other, pierce the tee through the gill slit and out the mantle. Then he'd surface with his arms at his side,

his spear in one hand and the tee with the he'e at its end in the other. But he knew that with a larger he'e, like the one now beneath him, he'd have to make more than one dive. He would begin the same way, teasing the octopus from its hole with his spear until it wrapped its arms along the shaft and exposed the meatier flesh of its body. He would strike with the spear first, then the tee, trying to pin down the octopus so that he could calmly resurface for air. If he was lucky, the octopus would struggle with the spear and the tee until he was down again and could use his second dive to wrestle the he'e from the hole. This would be ideal.

The colorful school of to'au and ta'ape converged one last time over the coral head and then shot away down the reef. He took one last look around, slowly scanning the area for the best angle to approach the octopus. Then he set his breathing, three full inhalations and complete breaths, before he leaned forward and pushed himself to the seafloor.

He immediately sensed the he'e was there even though he didn't see him. The octopus had pinned stones from the seafloor to the bottom the coral head, making a wall around its base, so he carefully began removing the stones one at a time with the tip of his spear. As he removed a few of the stones, he was certain he saw arms slipping against the coral, so he stopped for a moment to determine the direction of their movement and to assess how the he'e might be positioned behind the wall. He felt the rays of the sun on his back and a cold emanating from beneath him. He had plenty of time left underwater, so he backed away just a bit and circled the coral head one more time. There were no other changes around the hole, so he rose to the surface and towards the warmth of the sun. Then, as if on cue, a tiny tip of an arm began waving at him just outside the little hole he had made in the wall.

He was taken by surprise at first because he had thought the octopus had retreated away from the opening. He had rarely seen a male he'e, once it had sensed a threat, return to a position in its hole as if it were waiting for prey. He thought perhaps he was lucky and that the octopus had mistaken the disturbance around the coral head as the result of shifting current, so he watched and waited, hoping the arm would slip out further from

the hole and begin to restore the stones that had fallen from the wall. He waited for a few minutes, hovered just beneath the surface of the water with the sun on his back, but nothing changed. The thin tip of the arm swayed in the current just outside the hole.

There was only one thought that crept into his mind as he readied himself to make a second dive, and that was of the children on the Kawela shoreline. He imagined them that afternoon and the way they'd circle around him with questions when he brought the he'e to the beach. Aside from what was about to take place in the next few moments, this was the only thing he could remember looking forward to. And he caught himself there, nearly a half-mile from the shoreline and alone in water twice as deep as he was tall, smiling just enough so that salt water seeped between the snorkel and his lips into his mouth.

He was ready now. He returned his full attention to the ocean floor and the coral head and the little hole with the arm still waving in the current. Then he calmed himself, filled his lungs with air, and dove head first with his spear and tee pointing toward the hole. He braced himself between the coral head in the oncoming current, using his left hand to attach himself there and the other to gently place the tips of the spear and the tee against the arm and into the hole. He was upside down, pushing with his fins, trying to get an angle with a view into the hole when the arm quickly swirled up and around both the spear and tee, just as he'd expected, but it took a tremendous amount of restraint to leave his hand there, holding on, when another shot arm out through the wall and began to wrap itself around the first one. He hadn't yet really seen the he'e. The spear and the tee banged against each other and made a sound like a long, thin metal strip that had fallen off a roof and was bouncing on a sidewalk. And it took just about all his might to keep the ends in his hand from cutting through the water like a blade.

When the third arm appeared, he took hold of the spear with both of his hands, moving his left onto an open spot on the shaft of the spear. He was floating now, fins just beneath the surface, his body inches away from the coral head. The end of the tee had immediately split away from the spear and disappeared behind the red, pulsing arms. He worked for leverage, trying to find a place on his body that he could press against the

coral head and use to help thrust the spear into where he expected to find the head. When the third arm suddenly wrapped around the spear and he was moved into a position where he had the back of left his shoulder there, against the coral head, he kicked with his fins and in one swift motion rolled his torso toward the ocean floor to drive his spear into the hole. There was a crunching he felt in his hands, and when there was no longer tension in the spear and he saw the arms expose the steel tee and sink to the ocean floor, he let go of the spear and took hold of the coral head again with his left hand. All that was left now was to retrieve the tee and secure it to the octopus before he surfaced for air.

At times like these, Henry didn't think much about life outside the ocean. But it was hard for him just then not to wonder about the he'e. Why the outer edge of the reef all these winters only to leave without finding a mate? He was certainly large enough, strong enough. Able. Henry wondered for a moment about the fact that somehow the octopus had lived more winters near the reef than all the others he had seen or caught, and then he wondered whether or not he had done the right thing. And just when he began to resent the thrill and the relief he had felt when there was no longer any tension in the spear, he felt a sudden surge of flesh wrap around his ankle and slide up his leg. He was shocked, but he knew instantly that what he felt was an arm coiling around him. Instinctively, he reached back to grab it, and he panicked just a bit when instead of freeing his leg, he found himself held by the wrist. The he'e had seized him. He turned around, his face to the shimmering surface of the water and then to something that made him panic just a little more.

The octopus had retreated to the opposite side of the coral head. With the tips of his three arms still connected to the spear, he had stretched the other half of his body and pulled his head out from behind the wall on the other side. He had wrapped himself around the coral head using six of his arms, three around the bottom of the coral head clutching the spear and three around the top. Now, Henry was anchored. And he began to pull Henry in. He watched as Henry writhed while trying to free himself on the flat green top of the coral head. He pulled another arm out of the hole and sent it up Henry's back

and around his neck. He slid an arm further up Henry's leg. He tightened his grip around Henry's wrist. He pulled himself back down the coral head toward the hole.

Henry violently ripped at the arms sliding up and around his body, but there were too many of them. He'd get away from one to have another take its place. The arm cinched at his right wrist was now pulling itself up his forearm, but he ignored it. The arm around his throat was now up the back of his neck and moving into his ear. There were flashes of memories. Days on the flat-bottom outside Kawela. Afternoons cleaning reef fish on the shoreline. He was sitting beside his mother at her bed. There was a black and white picture falling onto his father's coffin. He tried not to panic. He was on his back, at the top of the coral head. There was a blood red arm now moving itself across his mask, blocking out the light of the sun. An intense burning starting to move down his throat. He felt the tip of an arm twist into his eardrum, and then another arm shoot into an orifice of his body that nothing else had ever entered. He tensed up and squeezed himself shut. He closed his eyes.

The octopus was in complete control. He let go of the spear and began to slide out of his hole. He let his arms hook around Henry until Henry stopped fighting. He knew there was a moment like this one, when just before Henry died it would feel more like an embrace than a struggle. Perhaps Henry would feel it, too. This is the feeling he wanted now, and when he finally got it, he shifted himself over Henry and the coral head. Then he pushed Henry upward.

From the sky, it might've looked liked Henry was on a pedestal floating just above the surface of the ocean. He'd be more than half a mile from shore. He'd be the only man on the southern shoreline for miles. The sun would be warming his chest and his face. He'd be opening his eyes. He'd be thinking about his wife. He'd remember his father and his mother, the aunties and the uncles. And he'd long for the children on the Kawela shoreline.

Children of the Shoreline

The children of the shoreline were sometimes little rascals. They were raised on the shoreline, so they thought they knew their place. They knew the way the moon moved tides and waves and the shape of the shoreline. They knew the shoreline fish by name and the way sand crabs migrated up and down the beach at night. They knew the southern winds.

The children had names that might've suggested it was destiny they'd be this way. Ma'a had a way about him that made everything he said about the shoreline seem like the truth.

The sisters, Moana and Kai, they told the other boys it was the way Ma'a gazed out at the shoreline and the ocean and the world that made him so convincing. The boys told the girls it was more like because he was the biggest.

Moku knew every landmark in their view of Moloka'i, Maui and Lāna'i. He knew when the sun rose behind Pu'u Kukui and when it rose behind Hālawā. He was kolohe, heard-headed sometimes, short-tempered, but he was always the first to step if one of them was in trouble. Moana and Kai said Moku was grounded, rooted to the land.

They were children with fire, loud and energetic and bold. They came home after school and tore to the shoreline before homework or chores. There was an air about way they fanned out across the brown sand beach that let you know they had an unquestionable love for the shoreline.

Nalu knew the ocean and moon phases enough to predict swells. Sometimes, he surfed the spotty reef outside Kawela until the sun had set and little lights began to flicker between coconut trees on the beach. He had wavy ehu hair and light brown eyes and Moana wouldn't let anything or anyone do him harm. She said Nalu was beautiful because he was born in June like her and Kai.

They had all tasted the sand, literally had eaten it on more than one occasion, but Keone, the youngest and the smallest, seemed to crave it. Trails of sand fell from his pockets wherever he went. He left them in his bedroom, on the school bus, even at

church. He was the youngest and the smallest of the children on the shoreline, but he was fearless.

The children of the shoreline had digital music devices and smartphones, but here they carried spears and scoop nets. Here, they chased baby eagle rays and black-tip sharks. They raced milk carton boats in the trade winds.

They spent sunny afternoons running from the beach to the water and then to sandbars thirty yards off the shoreline. They spent cloudy afternoons watching river water from the uplands filter out onto the surface of the sea.

The children of the shoreline had genealogies that stretched back to Hawai'i before 1800, before 1778, but they were also from a medley of customs and traditions from around the world. They were Chinese and Japanese, Filipino and French, Puerto Rican and Portuguese, German.

* * *

There was an old man the children acknowledged as part of the shoreline. He was quiet, not like them at all, but he had told them that sometimes he liked their noise, their shrieking voices on the shoreline were like a sign of life. The children watched him walk between the shoreline and the reef with a throw net, and they mimicked what they saw, the old man's grace and patience in the water, his ocean-style, the girls called it. They watched him from afar on the shoreline as he hunkered with the throw net wrapped around his body and his gaze on the shimmering surface of the water until one day Keone found the old man standing on the outside of a fishpond, piling stones on the broken wall, and they all circled around him in silence before Keone asked what he was doing and if he had seen any eels, if the rocks of the fishpond were heavy and if he planned to rebuild the entire wall himself. It made the old man wonder at first about the whereabouts of Keone's parents.

But then the old man wondered about Keone, what he knew of the eels in the fishpond, what he knew of the fishpond itself.

He saw a little spark in Keone ignite the other children. The small one spoke and the others stood behind him, leaning over his shoulders, waiting for the old man's answers. In the silence that followed, they gave him their complete attention, or the best they could muster, their faces up at him and then away to the shoreline or out toward Lāna'i before returning to him again. He had wanted solidarity with the stones and the wall. He was hoping to free himself of his troubles on the shoreline. He looked toward the shoreline and then out to the sea before turning to the children and then pointing to a stone near Keone. There, he said. There's an eel.

* * *

The children whipped vines across the surface of the shallow water to drive mullet toward the shoreline. They scaled and gutted and ate the fish they had caught right there on the beach.

They used expressions like, *Eh?* and *Wot?* and *Garanz!*

Sometimes, they bathed in the ocean.

Ma'a was the children's gentle giant. He was so much bigger, they thought his dad might be supernatural. On the shoreline, Ma'a liked to break things with his bare hands as a demonstration of his power, but away from the shoreline, he was the most reserved of them all. He was so big his mother sometimes wore his tee-shirts, and after the children had seen her wear them, they began to call him Beast.

Moana and Kai were twins. And this made them twice as strong as any one of the boys except Ma'a. Kai was always running around the beach with a runny nose and Nalu, because he sometimes studied her like the waves, learned the allergies were always worst just before a storm.

Moku had the blood of chiefs and slaves running in his veins. His father had taught him to fish along the shoreline and he in turn had taught the children. He was nowhere near as big as Ma'a, but by fourth grade he already had the beginnings of a moustache and a beard.

They all knew, as if it had been determined before his birth, that when he grew older, Nalu was going to leave for far away places. He might even jump on his board and just swim off into the horizon one day. He'd be a swimming champion or a world-class surfer, and he'd spend just as much time in the water as he did on land.

Keone never knew his father. He lived with his mom and grandmother. They fed him herbs from the shoreline to make him big and strong, and when the river was high, he fed them 'ōpae and 'o'opu. The children looked after Keone like he was their youngest sibling, and the girls walked him home every day just before sunset.

* * *

When Keone jumped on Moku's back after seeing the eel, he wrapped his arms around the bigger boy like a lei. The old man was surprised when Moku let him hang there, but he was also comforted by the image of the two boys now beside him, one hanging from the other. The old man didn't tell the children, maybe because he didn't completely believe it yet, or maybe because he wasn't entirely sure it was right, but just then he imagined what it might be like to treat the children like they were his own, as if their parents would never take them back. On the shoreline, they might be his children. To raise in the sunlight. He might treat them like little chiefs. If they talked too much, he could feed them. He could send them out on tasks depending on the weather and the tide. The shoreline would be their home. He knew they were precocious, but also that they needed supervision to realize their potential. It would do them good to be looked after on the shoreline.

There was a spot on the reef outside Kawela where the man went when he was 'ono for kole. He called it Makamae, a play on the yellow eyes of the kole, which sparkled like treasure and distinguished the fish when they moved skittishly across the ocean floor. Makamae was in fact a crevice that led to a hole in the reef where the fish balled up and hid when threatened, and it was a fitting name, he thought, if only because

the little surgeonfish were—of everything in the ocean—one of his favorite things to eat. They were also becoming hard to find.

At home, the old man had taken to drinking in order to fall asleep at night. He ate his meals alone. And on very windy days, when the ocean was not an option, he hoped for the calm if only so he could hear the sound of birds in the trees.

* * *

The children had their share of arguments, like when Moana found out about the way Nalu studied Kai as he did the waves. She took to an older boy from town who was known to cause havoc in school, so the children of the shoreline constantly belittled her. She didn't care. It was the end of her secret dream—she had hoped for a long time her love for Nalu would bind their families along the shoreline. That his father and mother would walk down the beach one afternoon to visit her parents for a bottle of wine, or even better, if they all met right there on the shoreline.

Sometimes the arguments got physical, like when they lost Moku's net. Moku insisted it was Nalu's fault, and now that the net was gone and his father was going to punish him, punish him hard, he wanted to make Nalu pay. Moana jumped in because she still loved Nalu, and then Kai jumped in because Moku was outnumbered. The boys wrestled in the sand and the girls kept on their feet and railed at each other until Keone screamed for them to stop and Ma'a pulled apart the boys. Moku and Nalu were crying, but not the girls. When it was over, they went on as if the fight hadn't happened, and the only way anyone could tell something had gone wrong that day was when Kai walked Keone home without Moana.

Feuds like this happened all the time, they did, but they were temporary, just like the tides. They'd happen one day and the children would retreat to their homes before sunset. Then they'd return to the shoreline, and everything was new, just like the sand when they first arrived on the beach.

* * *

They were not gullible children. They were innocent. They believed they knew the shoreline like they knew themselves. They loved the shoreline, so it made good sense.

But when the old man began telling them stories of the shoreline they had not imagined, they began to see the possibility of something more. In the old man's stories, they learned about the ocean's interconnectivity with what he liked to call the big picture. They also learned the patience and persistence to lure the baby black tips into shallow water so that the sharks swam up and brushed against their fingertips. They learned to feed the eels with their hands. They learned to steer the baby rays in figure eights from the beach. With the old man, they found—among all the things on the shoreline—a great affection for one another. They learned to use ocean to bring health and happiness and even peace. They learned to use their knowledge of the Kawela shoreline to bring the shoreline to them even when they weren't there.

One day, the children came to the beach in the afternoon with a plain white envelope that they told the old man to open that night at home. He sat at a table and inspected the envelope before he opened it. He wasn't sure what to make of it. He wasn't expecting anything from them. He carefully slid out its contents until he saw the envelope had held six 2 x 2 ½ pictures. They were little school pictures of the children with notes on the back and a signature under each of them. He turned them over so the pictures faced up and then spread them out on the table. He looked at the pictures for some time. Now, they were bringing peace to him.

* * *

He might've been old, but they were never certain of his age. In fact, the only time they ever thought of it was when he told them the story of the octopus. When sat them on the sand and stretched out his arms, he told them of its silent strength. He described the intense speed of the arms as they struck out from between the stones and wrapped around their prey. Then he'd wrap one of them in his arms, pull one of them

close, and imitate the sound of the octopus beak breaking shell or bone by popping out the top row of teeth in his mouth. The children were delighted when he did this, finally letting them into a part of his life that seemed so secret. After he placed the child in his arms back on the ground, he would expose the row of dentures on his tongue and the children would cringe and laugh and then turn and run down the shoreline towards their homes.

The children loved the old man so much they began calling him Papa Henry. Keone had started it one day after finding the old man laying on the beach, and the name just stuck. Papa Henry. Their voices rang in his head even when he sat alone that night in his little home on the Kawela shoreline, and he thought of nothing more than taking them to the shallow reef outside Kawela on his flat-bottom boat.

In fact, he decided to do everything for the children. Groom them like little seeds in a garden. And the flat-bottom was ideal. On the beach, they were a copious bunch, and sometimes like driftwood on the shoreline, there one moment and then out of sight. He could at least contain them on the boat, ferry them along the shoreline and to the reef and then, if it was calm and clear enough and if he saw it fit, into the water with masks and snorkels and spears.

Stories were one thing, but to take them to the ocean and show them what was just beyond the murky water was another.

* * *

The flat-bottom was tucked under a small hale between his home and the shoreline. It was covered with frayed silver tarps, and surrounded by old paint cans, buckets, and a gas tank. There was an assortment of fishing gear and rusty hand tools. It had been there a long time.

He began to clear away the debris, placing the tools where he found space in the buckets, piling the paint cans against one of the posts of the hale. There were memories there, and he couldn't stop them from rolling through his mind, so he tried to work

quickly. After he had cleaned up around the boat, he slid the tarps to the ground and looked under the boat to inspect the trailer and its tires. Then he rested his hand on the bow of the boat.

There was nothing in the world that might've prepared him for this. And he began to cry.

He had a few hours before the children came home from school and then down to the shoreline, so he stopped. He thought about his wife and the way the boat had carried them back and forth along the reef for many years before she was too ill to leave their home. The way the boat had bridged their differences. The way it had fed them over the years. And then he smiled when he remembered the first time they had ever taken the boat out, and the first time he had ever kissed his wife on the ocean.

He lifted the front of the trailer and gently slid the boat out from under the hale and toward the shoreline. Then he walked back to the house for a hose and a can of starter fluid.

* * *

Keone was the first to find the boat in the Papa Henry's back yard. He circled it like a shark, running his hands along the gunnels until he reached the bow. He stopped there for just like the old man had, as if he felt something, too, and then when he heard the other children running down the shoreline, he climbed into the boat to mark his seat.

The children were giddy at the idea of taking the boat into the water. They had all been on boats before, but never together like this. Ma'a and Moku lifted the trailer frame near the winch and Nalu and the girls were at the back of the boat, guiding it as the two bigger boys pushed it backwards, toward the beach. Keone stood up in the boat and acted like the luna, pointing one way then another, reminding Nalu and the girls to watch their feet, and Ma'a and Moku to watch their backs.

Henry stood and watched the children, letting them negotiate the boat through the yard and over the soft sand on the beach. He was pleasantly surprised by the success of their cooperative work.

The ocean inside the reef sparkled in the sunlight. There were small pockets of wind here and there, but it was a beautiful day, just like the one when the children had approached him at the fishpond. He wasn't going to waste it. When they had gotten the boat in the water, he sent them home to get their diving gear.

* * *

Being together on the ocean had changed them, especially Henry. His commitment to the children blossomed so that soon they found themselves in or around his home on a daily basis. He asked them about their teachers and about how they were doing in school. He even cared for them when they were sick. And when they stayed for meals, he found he had his taste again.

On the boat, they stayed in the shallow areas of the reef, sometimes stepping off onto coral heads, sometimes anchoring the boat for hour-long dives that were followed by conversations in the boat about what they saw and heard and felt. They were riveted to their time on the ocean, Henry included, and there was always more than a bit of anguish when in the late afternoon Henry cut off the engine and the boat finally slid onto the sandy shoreline.

It was almost a year before they finally took the boat beyond the edge of the reef and Papa Henry took them to Makamae one Saturday morning. They had prepared weeks for the trip. Spent hours on the shoreline discussing the protocol for handling various situations that might arise once they entered the ocean and traversed as a group into the unknown.

Henry was as excited as the children. He went through his home looking for extra spears and stringers and mesh bags while they were in school. He double-checked and triple-checked the outboard engine.

* * *

They held hands in a circle on the shoreline while Kai took her turn to say the prayer. She was appreciative for the opportunity to enter the ocean with Papa Henry, her friends and her sister, especially her sister, and she asked that they be granted safe passage. She kept her head down, just as they all did, and when she was done, she squeezed the hands in her own.

Soon the boat was sputtering away from the shoreline, between colorful outcrops on the ocean floor and toward the reef. The children were silent, taking it all in, imagining the layout of the crevices and caves Papa Henry had drawn for them on the beach. Then Nalu leaned over the gunnel and looked overboard, letting his hand cut through the surface of the water. Moku turned back to look one last time at the land. Ma'a was examining the prongs on his spear. The girls had their arms around each other in the middle of the boat, and Keone, at the bow, began putting on his fins.

When the flat-bottom had reached the outermost edge of the reef, Moku stood up and let out the anchor while the other children rinsed out their masks and snorkels. They sat in the boat like a regiment with their diving gear until Papa Henry finally broke the silence to tell them that he hadn't felt so good in a long, long time.

* * *

Papa Henry died two months later. The children found him in his bed one Saturday morning surrounded by hundreds of photos from his life, some of them in frames on the dressers and tables, others simply out on the bed at his side. There were photos of his family, his mother and father, his brothers, old time photos of people on the shoreline. There were pictures of the children, the ones they had given him, and some they had never seen before. In the midst of his death, there was still an air of warmth, life emanating from the small room that had somehow been transformed since the arrival of the children years before.

They moved around the room like children underwater, poised and silent, every so often looking up at each other from the pictures to make eye contact with each other and to point out something they had found in the room. Then Keone began to cry and soon after the house filled with sobs and wails.

* * *

Life underwater was filled with complexities, most of them linked to communication with those around you, but by now the children had come to appreciate that it took more to communicate with each other in the ocean than it did on land. They were proud of their underwater language, a complex blend of gestures with their hands and eyes. The girls called it true evolution.

As soon as they were in the water, Nalu led the four older children away from the boat in a V-formation, but Keone kept in back with the clear plastic bag holding Papa Henry's ashes. The little boy felt something reassuring, something that made him think Henry would *always* be with him, even after the children had left Makamae and returned to the shoreline. Nalu turned around at the surface of the water and when Keone swam up to him with Papa Henry, Ma'a and Moana pulled in from one side and Moku and Kai pulled in from the other.

The children formed a circle around Papa Henry and placed their hands on him. There was a warmth in the moment, there underwater, just as there was when they had found him on the bed, and Keone let it move from his fingertips into his arms and then into his body.

He waited for the others to lower their hands to their sides, and when they did, he descended to the crevice and followed the school of kole until they were hidden in the cave and the five others above him had regrouped and formed a ring at the surface. Then he looked at Papa Henry in his hands one last time before releasing him from the plastic bag, letting the ashes move upward in the current.

He had learned from Papa Henry that life was full of signs, that all he had to do was look around, pay attention. So it didn't faze him the least bit—when as he rose through beams of sunlight and the floating ashes in the current—that the school of kole soon emerged from the edge of the reef. It rose and wrapped itself around him and Papa Henry, swirling enough to redirect the ashes, then diving back into the hole with a gray trail following it.

As he ascended toward the other children, the little boy felt a warm embrace as the last of the ashes wrapped around him. Cool seawater trickled in at the edge of his mouth.

He emerged at the center of the ring of children as the ashes disappeared hoping just then that he, too, remained forever in the currents off the Kawela shoreline.