

# A Prayer, Lifting

Ku‘ulani Muise

Hulihia is an integral energy in our cosmologies, a natural cycle in our land/sea/sky/dreamscapes, and manifests, again and again, in our histories. In looking at these cycles, there is always a reciprocal and inherent energy that works in consort with hulihia, which is the kūlia energy. So entwined are the two that we cannot speak to one without beginning to name the other. Implicit in every upheaval is the rising, is the flowering up of something new.

We began in a turning,  
over and over,  
in the night before night.  
A friction, enkindled.  
A heat.

*O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua.*

Turned out of this turning,  
out of the lipo-black, the lipo-blue,  
rolling, roiling—  
the shape of an island  
heaped and hissing  
from the sea.  
A steam rising.

A prayer, lifting—  
a prayer for rain.

A conjuring of cloud—  
of dog clouds, blue and red, running on the sea,  
of the short cloud, the tall cloud, the long,  
finding, finally, the face of the new mountain.  
A place to bring their carried waters.

*Ua ka ua, kahe ka wai.*

Then a torrent,  
a rending of squall across the ridge.  
Rivulets, streams, rivers.  
Water settling into courses.  
A weathering of rock.  
The long work of softening.  
The thick quiet of soil  
and up out of the new earth —  
an unfurling, green.

*Ōkupu.*

A promise of forest.

—

How many turnings went after?

The first sound of footfall under the trees.  
A flurry of wings.  
Millennia of hands turning soil, moving stones,  
invoking all the forms.

*Kini, lau, mano, lehu.*

Then big ships in the bay.  
Mouths, of men and of women, together eating.  
An un-naming of all the forms.  
A toppling of all the stones.  
Disease and a great dividing of ground.  
Overthrowing, overturning.  
A vast and devised forgetting  
of the stories and their words.

—

We began, again, in a turning,  
over and over,  
of bombs rupturing earth,  
of stone-dust and ash.

Turned out of this turning,  
out of the lipo-black, the lipo-blue  
their boats sliding on the dark water,  
reflecting the stars.

*O ke au o Makali'i i ka pō.*

And up onto the dark shape of the island,  
a procession of nine,  
the 'āina, Kanaloa, their ali'i nui.  
The coconut broken open,  
the stars fed.

A prayer, lifting—  
a prayer for rain.

A conjuring of cloud—  
of the Nāulu, flying furious across the water.  
Of thick clouds, of bomb-blocking clouds.  
And everywhere a new rain pouring down.

*Ua ka ua, kahe ka wai.*

A rain for remembering,  
for washing away the thick net of forgetting.  
Rain filling mouths  
turning them lush with 'ōlelo.  
An adze-head rain opening the earth  
finding generations of buried seeds.

*'O 'imi'imi o nalowale o loa'a ē.*

Up out of the newly turned ground,  
multitudes of fronds greenly lifting,  
together standing,  
growing, building.

*'Ōkupukupu.*

A promise of forest.

*Na ke aloha e kono akula.  
Hele maila,  
hele maila ē.*

**Ku'ulani Muise** is a mother, a writer, and an illustrator. Mauna a Wākea is her mauna, Mahakea her wai, and Kahua her 'āina where she resides with her husband, Jake, and their three children—Palikū, Lei'ohu, and Laniua.