

Na‘u Mo‘opuna

For My Grandchildren

CIERA LASCONIA

Creative Work

Mentor: Dr. No‘ukahau‘oli Revilla



In the poem “Sons” by Haunani-Kay Trask, kumu Haunani gives birth to the concept of being “slyly reproductive”. Within Trask’s poem, diction reflects seductive solutions to break free from heteronormative and patriarchal molds in order to give ea that transcends generations. The sixth and seventh stanzas, for example, tell of how Trask brings life into this world:

*I am slyly
Reproductive, ideas
Books, history
Politics, reproducing
The rope of resistance
For unborn generations. (56)*

From these two stanzas, one can see that Trask has successfully found a way to reproduce on her own terms. What Trask offers to the world is independent consent that is not gendered. How she brings life into the world is done so in a way that is completely on her own terms. Not only has Trask conceived multiple paths towards humble immortality, but radicalized an entire nation on this journey.

In honor of Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask and in the spirit of being “slyly reproductive,” “Na‘u Mo‘opuna” is an epistolary style poem that is a love letter to the next generation of Kanaka Maoli and Aloha ‘Āina. This poem would not have been possible without the inspiration from kumu Haunani’s art and activism. As a queer Kanaka wahine I do not know if I will ever have biological children. But through my academic genealogy, having been mentored by Dr. No‘ukahau‘oli Revilla who was mentored by Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask, I know that it is my kuleana to continue their legacy through my work and to continue to reproduce their ropes of resistance in my own life.



'Ihilani Lasconia is from Waimānalo, O‘ahu, and recently graduated in the spring of 2021 from the Department of Ethnic Studies. 'Ihilani’s poem was produced under the mentorship of Dr. No‘ukahau‘oli Revilla as part of the Native Hawaiian Student Services, “‘Ōiwi Undergraduate Research Fellowship” in ‘Ōiwi Poetics. 'Ihilani’s creative work is heavily influenced by her community work and identity as a queer Native Hawaiian. 'Ihilani believes that poetry is essential to the expression of ea and a powerful tool for decolonization.

Dedicated to the mo'opuna of
kumu Haunani-Kay Trask and all the ways
she has taught us to be slyly reproductive

To my mo'opuna,

I am writing to you from a world that does not look like your own. But nevertheless, take comfort in these words because they are yours. They have grown in my bosom so that your mākua could be fed with a love so many had to fight to bring back into this world. And even though you may not know me in this life, you will be nourished by me and our kūpuna. Hold these words on the bows of your lips so when you kiss your mother's they are reminded of the forty generations before them and the forty generations they will leave the world for.

The life that I imagine for you is one that I will give mine to create. There is no greater desire I have than for you to dream in our language. Though you are young, e kūkulu 'oe ka hale no kau mau keiki o maopopo 'ole auane'i iā lākou ka mea nui o kō kākou mo'o'ōlelo.

My greatest dream will never be for you to only go to college, or earn a degree. You are much more than that. Although that is the path that I have taken, I hope that in doing so I have created more ala for you to traverse. 'Oi aku ka mea nui o ka 'ike kūpuna ma mua o ka 'ike mai ka 'āine 'ē.

Remember, you are of me and your mothers but you are your own. Stand firm on the kahua you were given but do not be afraid to add to this foundation. You will see further into the future than anyone who has come before you ever could. E ho'omākaukau iho 'oe i kou kahua no kau mau keiki.

There are no gates for us to meet again; you come from a people who are boundless.

There is no place on this earth that my love could not surround you.

You live in a world I may never touch, but I will never be out of reach.

May my back be a bridge that connects you to the mākua who have grown me, grown us.

He 'ano'ano 'oe, he koa 'oe, he māmakakaua 'oe
Mai maka'u, kūlia wale nō, no ka mea pili mau me 'oe

Me ke aloha mai ka lani,
'Ihi

Works Cited

Trask, Haunani-Kay. "Sons." *Night is a Sharkskin Drum*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2002, pp. 55-56.