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Aina: A modern-day history chant of a Hawaiian place

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*'Aina:
A modern-day history chant
of a Hawaiian place
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Prologue

Maybe I'm just asking you to pay attention to the land.
—Maya Lin, *Boundaries*

Waipahu

On this land, this *'aina*,
in this place, *Waipahu*,

If we wait on late afternoons,
 when the winds take up the red dust,
we come to know the dryness of this place,
 we are seized by its heat, held by its ire. We want for rain.

We do not see the *wai*, waters underfoot, nor
 sense the subterranean sleep of a spring once
bounding, escaping its geology,
 confessing to the outside earth

of its aqueous zeal that dared deafen
 the Ancients' booming *pahu*, drums,
making them envious of its bold roar
 before man bridled its strong song.

Not breathing the language that birthed its gods,
 we did not seek its history;
others could not teach us of one.
 We say its name, *Waipahu*, but it's worth has been long lost to us.

‘Aina 1.1

*'Ekahi ~1.
of recent times, within its boundaries*

In order to get where you're going, you must first travel backwards.
-- Niall Williams, *History of the Rain*

I~

On this land, this 'aina,
in this place, *Waipahu*,

the sanguine sun blazes down on a small band of boys,
their camcorders in hand,
chronicling on the Internet, their ingenuous expedition
they have entitled "*lost in Waipahu*,"

their circumnavigation of one of this town's
last undeveloped tracts of land,
they pass scrub of the *hoale koa* weed
and a couple of gangly trees with branches no

thicker than their pubescent arms;
neither their arboreal height nor breadth giving substantial shade;
the boys weave through tall thickets of dry grass
not indigenous to *Hawai'i*, they

ask each other if this is sugarcane,
and no one knows;
they ponder over a lone boulder's presence embedded
in the well-worn path: they chuckle,

circle the mound a few times, pound on it,
some of its dirt
rubs off and stains their palms
a warm, parched, worn earth-red color,

and while their recorders catch sight
of a nearby townhouse subdivision,
something insensible is felt:
they look around, up at the sky,

then, at each other, laugh
in awkward notes,
a double-ring rainbow appears in the distance

--no rain falls here--

Aina 1.2

they tread on; they are truly lost, not knowing it,
as their steps are steered by the same hot gust
that teases the land, then
quickly runs off.

~~~~

On this same capacious broad terrain, where *'Ewa* ancient armies  
once trained their might for their long history of warring,  
and in peaceful times, of the celebratory *Makahiki*, honed and exhibited their  
brilliant athletic prowess before their generous *Lono* god

here, teens, today, on a suburban street empty  
of mid-day passersby,  
recording on their Smartphones for release on social media, their peers  
engaging in their own modern-day sport: an insentient combat,

their energies busting onto heads with thick, long black hair,  
their abrasive pull-down-slug-shove movements beating  
on faded-black T-shirted arms, pallid, lacking of the prized,  
pervasive deep Hawaiian tan

as their sallow, acne-dotted faces,  
slimed with sweat and slighted with blood,  
are spotlighted by a sun that seems stuck  
in a bright, whitewashed, noontime sky.

~~~~

That steady sun hovers over six hundred acres of athletic grounds,*
none no more than two miles from the harbor, yet, all seem so
distant from its shores, having no sight or just a slight view of it
on the peninsula where the soccer fields are laid; not even so much

as a glimpse of those waters' edges (or intimation of what was here before),
nor at the largest park on the island, up on the town's northern fringe,
on the long hill *Pu'uloa*, its slope sliced by interstate highways

barely discerned, declined gently towards the harbor;

‘Aina 1.3

broad Monkeypod and Poinciana trees encircle these manicured fields,
their English-umbrella-shaped canopies spread open wide,
as if expecting rain that rarely comes; and it's not as though these
gargantuan, non-native trees give prolonged shade;

that Hawaiian sun has a way of angling its long rays,
reaching into the recesses of those foliated
limbs: through the leafy covers shimmering
into the livelong days;

the panoramas of the mountains *Wai'anae* and *Ko'olau*
and the harbor are obscured by these trees,
these voluptuous specimens keeping the views
to themselves, as if these were their own dear secret,

as if these scenic spectacles were deemed
excuses too distracting to the devoted, modern athlete
on whom, after the sun has begrudgingly left the sky,
high-intensity lights of artificial moons beam down.

* one-third of the entire Waipahu lands of 2.8 square miles

‘Aina 1.4

2~

On this land, this *'aina*,
in this place *Waipahu*,

the windless, sultry days landscape the long,
smooth plains still yearning for cool shade;
when winds do blow, the red dirt's whipped
into the warm dry air and when it settles, anything

that can be, is stained in dull shades of rust;
despite the many rainless days, *noni* bushes
luxuriate in the worn, parched dirt, bear
large-sized, waxy, thick black-green leaves;

the stately breadfruit trees are rare
and unexpected figures here,
with even fewer patrons, their fruit lay
drying on the hot ground;

ribbons of car lights tailgate the dawn, relegate the dusk
to traffic jams on "interstate" highways (tarred down
over ancient footpaths), which bifurcate the town, bypass
boulders whose bellies were etched long ago with faded

petroglyphs, and skirt past the site of the forgotten, once
voluminous spring, *Waipahu* (concealed behind no signs
or directions, gated behind a wire fence and its overgrowth);
these major highways propel the tourists and the *kama'aina*, locals

on their pilgrimage toward their mecca:
an upscale shopping outlet across the street from a K-Mart on a hill,
their giant parking lots secrete panoramic views
of Honolulu and its Diamond Head on the eastern horizon,

its urban sprawl scrawls on the southern flanks of the *Ko'olau*,
of the sun, reluctant, setting over the long sweep of the *Wai'anae* ridges,
of the somber southern expanse of the Pearl Harbor lochs.
On these disciples of consumerism, the vistas here, lost.

'Aina 1.5

~ 3

On this land, this *'aina*,
in this place *Waipahu*,

here, at harbor's end, in two preserves,
where ancient chants have long rescinded,

third graders are bussed in (no general public at this time, please) during
the fall, once the *Ae'o*, Hawaiian stilt's nesting season safe;

these urbanized youth are taught how to catch tadpoles and toads,
tilapia, crayfish, and snails, then, are instructed to release them

back into the harbor waters that appear clear,
where signs declare: DO NOT EAT THE WILDLIFE,

there, where corroding, leaded vestiges of the last World War squat
near deteriorating residuals of a century's sugar production and

refining waste and the inevitable oil spills and treated sewage effluence,
and the red silt run-off from the uplands conveyed by tired streams,

and, according to the Environmental Protection Agency reports citing the need
for cleanup of shuttered superfund municipal land fills, here,

once of dry land forests extending along still shores of the harbor, Pearl
rising on its long hill, *Pu'uloa*; this hill where blossoms once blushed,

of the red and gold endemic *ohi'a lehua* and *haha*; the *o'o* black birds,*
so now long extinct, sustained on their nectar; these avian treasures hunted

for their paired yellow feathers under wing, there prized tufts
woven into capes, helmets, and *kahili* for only the island's royalty;

here, the winds no longer murmur the Ancients' prayers,
whispers of man's reverent connection to his nature are not heard,

there are no prayers to *Kane* and *Kanaloa* for sweet waters,
or from these benevolent *akua*, gods: their chants in response

*Some 80,000 O'o birds plucked for their few yellow feathers; 450,000 feathers woven in to a cape for Kamehameha I.

It hangs in the Bishop Museum. More than 160 Hawaiian capes hang in museums around the world, including New England, U.S., England, Edinburgh, and New Zealand.

‘Aina 1.6

for the delivery of copious springs (including the *Waipahu*),
born from the swollen aquifers resting profoundly in the *‘Ewa* ground;

these numerous springs: tears from the earth, their coolness spilling,
awaiting forgotten myths to tell their secrets,

here, high school teams and grownups come to rid the *Kapakahi* Stream
and the *Pouhala* Marsh of thick weeds and illegally dumped garbage muck:

of old tires and rusting car chassis, stained mattresses and refrigerators,
obsolete televisions, plastic bottles and too many cans, broken toilets,

in these marshlands where only a few mortals have ventured
(drug dealers hiding, and homeless stashed in their hovels built from scrap);

and leaching from underground origins into the harbor: diminished courses
of subterranean streams, their geology commingling with

the tidal brine washing primordial coral rock
of underwater limestone caves;

here, the harbor's brackish waters, are now barren of the once abundant
i'a hAmau leo pipi, oyster, with its *momi*, pearly shells, and

exhausted: the recorded fertile presence of one hundred and twenty-nine
species of clams, oysters, sea horses, and other mollusks, and fish;

the enormous populations of the coot, moorhen, stilt, and the Hawaiian duck;
the flora and fauna they favored: diminished and endangered;

and here, signs of the Anthozoa coral animal --thought gone
forever from these waters—returning.

‘Aina 1.7

4~

On this land, this *'aina*,
in this place *Waipahu*,

the peninsula juts out three miles into Pearl Harbor,
primordial streams reach for a sea; their remote past rimmed by
picklegrass and mangrove and other weeds
that choke and conceal its story unearthed only long enough for urban planners

to discover and chart into their documents, what is needed to satisfy legalities;
with these conclusions underscored: that “what is here, at present,
has removed any of its past”;
that declared, with a smattering of myths and legends mentioned: report shelved.

And the land is reconfigured, as it is on the old hill where the street
Auali'i was pulled up, taken off the map, any semblance of its name removed,
and, into its venerable red dirt urged: the veins of
the developers' thoroughfares dotted with 239 new houses modeled

as "a modern interpretation of the 'plantation house'" and
the "light" industrial zone's boxed, blanched-white concrete brick-walled buildings reflect
into the atmosphere the omnipresent heat,
suppressing any breath that an ancient might have breathed, or any vestige

of the plantation camps' termite-eaten, aged houses, sagging in tidy rows,
or the tired cane haul roads pasted with a century of sucrose mud,
or any path that leads to the once wild spring, *Waipahu*,
on the southwestern frame of land the ancients named *Au'ali'i*;

the cane with its mill and totemic smokestacks on this smooth long hill, *Pu'uloa*,
for nearly one hundred years, delineated the "country" from the expanding
Honolulu in the east, tantalizing it: come closer;
this mill, reconfigured today, just as with the remnants of an ancient coconut grove

among a dense stand of these palms, gone the ancient ritual:
into their dry, red ground a hollow dug
for each child born,
and the *ewe*, the life cord of the newly-born, set into it,

‘Aina 1.8

and on this, a young palm planted so that
the *mana*, spirit of this newborn child
could soar the skies and there
be acknowledged by its *aumakua*, ancestral gods.

‘Aina 1.9

5~

On this land, this *'aina*,
in this place *Waipahu*,

there are people who have never ventured far from this town, unlike me, never questioned, had no second thoughts, not one regret of calling this place "home." Rosie Perreira Bacjar, an Altar Society member, was born in *Waipahu*. Here, she lived, and died, at age eighty-four. Morinobu Kiyabu, a mechanic by

trade, born in 1917, in *Waipahu*, lived in *Honolulu*, was ninety-four when he passed eleven years after Rosie. Consora Basan came to *Waipahu* from *Kauai*, a baby, in 1924; she remembers that doors were never locked, "no one would steal . . ." Ernest Malterre, Jr. was born on *Hawai'i* island at *Onomea* and came

to work for, and retired from the Oahu Sugar Company, the first company to administer *bangos*. He administered them; he told a reporter of a local paper that these metal tags, named after the Japanese word for "number," were abbreviated stories of those who had to hang them from cords around their

necks or pinned to the front of their heavy shirts while they labored in the cane. The newspaper story did not mention the resentment the laborers had for those tags that identified them as statistics and workers, not as mothers and fathers, and toilers of long hours in the cane. Ernest died at age eighty-five, in *Waipahu*, on

this *O'ahu* island. And there was Gregoria Batis Aranita (86), Sara K. Sugiyama (66), Clyde Andrew Kwong Won Wong (82), Leonora Pizzaro Guerrero (90), all lived in *Waipahu*, mainly of Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Puerto Rican, and/or Portuguese descent. None worked the cane that this town

was created for, but most likely some family member of theirs who came before them did. And there was Michael Tatsuo Yamamoto, who was born in *Honolulu*, not *Waipahu*, never lived in this town as did his father, Tatsuo ("Jack"), and his grandfather Tatsuchi Ota, who owned the lands of Ota camp, on the south

‘Aina 1.10

shore of this town. Michael had planned on writing a biography about his grandfather, but found so many people who wanted to “talk story,” not just about Ota Camp and Ota-san, but about this place, *Waipahu*, about living with the sugarcane, about fishing and clamming in Pearl Harbor when it was

pristine, and hiking up into the *Ko’olau* hills, or swimming in the once deep pool of the spring *Waipahu*. Michael and his wife Karen wrote their book *Recollections from a Sugar Plantation in Hawaii* after returning to where they resided in New Mexico. Five years after writing the book, Michael had passed away.

I had thought about writing to thank them for this book on my hometown, but I never did. (One day, five years after his passing, while I was surfing the Web for more stories about *Waipahu*, that is when I found out that he was gone. There had been a memorial for him in a church near the west edge of *Honolulu*, in *Kalihi*, a subdivision

my family lived in before we moved to *Waipahu*). When they were in *Waipahu*, on these hot, sparsely-treed plains, Michael and Karen had to have sighed the same long sigh that I and others have, and then wished, too, for a pleasant breeze to bluster, and an arch of rainbow to glimmer, and some cool rains to come,

like on those days past autumn doldrums, not too long before a World War would unfurl near where Ernest had come to live, where Rosie and Morinobu, Gregoria, Clyde, Leonora, Sara, and a few hundred others had looked out toward the harbor waters, Pearl, from where they had lived as best they could here, in *Waipahu*.

‘Aina 1.11

6~

On this land, this ‘*aina*,
in this place *Waipahu*,

It is festival time at the plantation museum.
Under the slight shadow of the old mill’s smokestack,
a merciless *Kona* heat weighs down on the crowd.
The *Waikele* Stream meanders alongside the grounds, gives little reprieve.

(In several rainy seasons, its torrents have drowned this small flood plain despite
attempts to control it), carrying waters of the diminished forgotten spring, *Waipahu*;
and on these grounds, the *Kapakahi* Stream (so small and short:
can it be a stream, at all?) is born of a sweet spring;

it feeds the museum’s exhibition taro bed briefly and then continues its passage
under a parking lot; resurfaces: roadside litter
greeted this unsullied waterway before it empties
its spoils of its one-mile course into the harbor.

It is festival time, and the descendants come dance the *Bon Odori*
to celebrate their ancestors, and the tourists come, too,
observe and attempt the steps as well; and the youth look on,
wonder: what is the significance of this alien gambol to their lives.

My grandfather, the patriarch, the first generation
of his kin in *Hawai’i*, arrives at the gate with his extended family;
in his mid-eighties, the frail elder’s steps are tenuous,
his breath is labored, his brow wet, yet, unwavering is his tone:

“I must get back . . .” he says, and his children and their children
think that he is mistaking this first, and what will be his only visit here,
for his own long life and try to correct his orientation.
His stance is firm.

‘Aina 1.12

7~

On this land, this ‘*aina*,
in this place *Waipahu*,

the *pahu*, drums are calling now,
their notes resounding near the quieted
waters of the spring, *Waipahu*,
summoning a *halau*, school and its audience:

Come:

gather for your *hula*, dances of homage to your ancestors,
they, who sculpted their history into this ‘*aina*.

Come:

the *pahu* calls to the progeny of those peoples who, generations
long ago, had departed from their motherlands along and within
the Pacific rim, of those recruited from Puerto Rican islands
in the Caribbean, and that of the Portuguese Madeira and Azores
off the northern Atlantic coast of Africa, of those
who were recruited from as far away as the cold stretches
of Scandinavia and Russia, and found themselves
here, where they sought their small fortune in its cane.

Come:

the north *makani*, wind
stirs the early evening,
settles and liberates the still air
for our stories.

Come:

as the *aouli*, sky drapes an aureate glow over dusk
before its infinity beckons night.

‘Aina 1.13

8~

On this land, this *'aina*,
in this place, *Waipahu*,

where, distant mountain ridges slope urgently down
toward the *pu'uloa*, long hill and this island's wide *'Ewa* plains,
old red dirt veiled its form, revealed to sky,
encountering emerged ancient limestone coastline

that joins the silent harbor. Here is my family's land,
which I left long ago. I ran from its silence idled
by relentless heat and infrequent rains. I ran with the dreams
they stirred, and from what I did not understand.

But sages declare we are bonded to that place
we've called home. I have found this to be true.
Here now, I have returned with stories found.
I stand under an unhurried Hawaiian sun.

'Aina 2.1

*'Elua~ 2.
my mother's land*

It is not down in any map; true places never are.
--Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

between the mid-1960s and 2000

On this land, this *'aina*,
In this place, *Waipahu*,

Before my mother's land, encyclopedic in its many plants,
with her backyard looking out to an abandoned, old cane haul road,
the sun's calm shimmer on the harbor just beyond the H-2 not far
from here reflecting the heat of the day;

the north side yard hill outlined by the drought-resistant *malunggay* trees,
their sprays of dark green, lace-like compound leaves and their foot-long,
ribbed *marautong*/beanpods; and the papaya trees, their irregular, small-sized fruit
affected by the thick chalk rock hiding under a shallow layer of topsoil,

before her vegetable garden on the south side yard:
the bushes of *suluyot*, tomatoes, okra, eggplant in their weeded rows,
the neat, squared plots of sweet potato, squash, and scallions,
the three kinds of beans coiled tenderly around bamboo poles,

the trellised bittermelon vines in the early evening breezes, dancing,
the dinner hours' odors of fermented Filipino *buggoong*/fish paste boiling
in its water base, churning with fresh tomatoes, onions, and tiny, dried,
orange-colored *llonng*/shrimp, awaiting her daily garden pick of vegetables;

before the four *loulou* palms in the front yard,
these slim sentinels straddled in a straightline, guarding her front door
(its endangered species extinct in the wild, grown from seeds my mother picked up off
the Foster Botanical Garden grounds in town); their fronds failing to shade

the immense living room plate glass window from the long afternoons' frenzied heat;
the beetle nut palm; the mango tree with its dense fruits ripening
on their paniculate stems, the star apple tree that never bore fruit; the pots filled
with her large, old sago palm, the four noni bushes (she planted to remind her of me)

‘Aina 2.2

before the stunted coconut tree –its roots clinging to thick limestone
rock,
the guava tree she cut down, new growth shooting from the stump defying the action;
and the tangled, thorned, magenta-stained bougainvillea,
and a cactus from a cutting I gave her decades ago;

none tall enough to own a breeze;
she abandoned attempts to garden bonsai trees and the orchids,
the peony (she fell in love with the peony while on her
first Mainland trip to visit me);

before her pride: her much-admired roses,
and the Christmas mail-order red amaryllis
I had sent to her, an inadequate
substitute for my presence:

"You know you'll never get home,"
she once to me, when nearly forty years had passed
since I flew away from Hawai'i, only meaning to go visiting.
And for over forty years, including the year of her passing, she'd been right.

The year before she died, she told me she wanted
to send me the amaryllis so that I could see "how pretty."
I wished that I had asked her then if she knew that I never saw
a real amaryllis. I never did get to ask her.

"Oh, my!" she exclaimed several times of the amaryllis, back then,
"Oh, my!" In a birthday card she sent to me, she wrote, "I have so much
more to say to you, daughter, but I don't know where to start."
And she never did.

The last week in a July, she died.
Her three daughters together for the first time since our youth.
This Christmas amaryllis was in bloom.
Four blossoms.

Before my mother's two kinds of English inflections, cultivated
(as is typical of those who live in Hawai'i): the informal, the pidgin;
this one for her family and friends, this, a shorthand language
laced with Ilocano, this one less self-conscious;

‘Aina 2.3

the other: her business English for the lawyers and realtors,
for when her assets were worth more than people expected of her;
this one used when around *haole*,
like when she came to visit me on the Mainland.

Before those taking leave of this place: town's children,
grown, from families we knew: Kunishige, Gionson,
Keopuhiwa, Magdaloyo, Sugimoto, Kimura;
those of her close friends and two of her own:

moving somewhere far from the blistering sun, and further away
from the recessing cane and the sugar mill closing on this *'Ewa* plain; and
the old Depot Rd., once vital, now, waning, truncated by Farrington Hwy.
with its many mini-shopping malls and one too many used-car lots,

lined up one next to the other, the town center forlorn, identity mislaid,
Big Way, Arakawa's, Kawano's shuttered, the mom-and-pop
plantation days' wooden shops. the saimin stands along *Waipahu* Street,
dilapidated, closed, eventually torn down; their names now long forgotten;

some years back, not far from what would become my mother's yard,
this hill, tilled tidily with pineapple fields, played movie extra in *Blue Hawaii*,
as Elvis, "the King" (second, to the Sugarcane: THE King in these islands),
cruised up Kam. Hwy., Diamond Head in the upper far right frame of the film;

this same hill, where the new subdivisions, *Waikele* and *Waipio* were laid down,
scored away from the older parts of *Waipahu* by the H-1,
the residents petitioning a preference for a zip code of their own
rather than remain part of the old town of, *Waipahu*.

Before backyard fences of concrete bricks blocked sight and noise
of the new highway "interstate" that steered city to the country,
carved suburbia into these carmine-colored plains; to the east,
streetlights twinkled in their encroaching distances

like icy jewels strung up, replacing cane:
reeling through wide valleys,
disappearing deep into the gulches,

cresting the low ridges.

‘Aina 2.4

Before clear creeks and their seeping springs annoyed the suburban grid
and cement slabs pasted over these stubborn waterways,
these manmade channels built to discourage
the mosquito breed (but did not),

and to avert the seasonal, treacherous floods that could damage
these new residential tracts sleeping on the old floors of rice fields
and ancient Hawaiian fishponds and primordial wetlands;
despite this concrete ground of the canal next to the parking lot

of the Wai Lani Inn across Farrington Hwy. from Cornet Store,
where generations of the big-eyed silvery-sheathed *aholehole*, flagtail fish
teemed and spawned, their numbers swelling in the brackish waters
melded of fresh water springs running to the briny tides of Pearl Harbor,

where military barbed-wire fences,
with their "DO NOT TRESPASS!" signs,
and the government chain-link fences
with their "*KAPU!* KEEP OUT!" signs

sever this town from the harbor that defines its southern border
--this near ten square miles of waterway, with its marshlands and coves;
dare hint that a world war could have been birthed here, or
that even rice fields once proliferated here, or

to even fathom there was a history of ancient fishponds, or
secrets of primeval underwater coral caves; or
that this land could convey myths and traditions; or
that it had much of any history to tell.

before that which will pass away forever,
those that will endure,
and the keepers of the memories,
and those who live to forget,

before the red dirt, ubiquitous, flies, becomes red dust,

This land, this *‘aina*, belonged to my grandfather.

'Aina 3.1

'Ekolu ~ 3.
grandfather's land

... stay together
learn the flowers
go light ...
--Gary Snyder, "from "For the Children"

mid-1950's to 1960's

On this land, this *'aina*,
In this place *Waipahu*,

Before grandfather's property surrounded by the sugarcane,
its sun-green hills, its coral plains
cleared of its dry mesic flora,
smoothed of its rocky ground,

its eastern slopes of the leeward mountains *Wai'anae* and
its south slopes of the *Ko'olau*
--only glimpses of their ridges seen
when the tall cane bowed;

before grandfather's yard with its tidy rows of eggplant,
tomatoes, papayas, and bittermelon vines,
the *katuday*, star apple, the mango, his pride:
the old soursop tree bent with its heavy, spiny-skinned fruit,

"Take some," he'd say, proud, when his visitors
were about to leave, opening the large, used brown
super-market paper sacks he had meticulously folded away;
loading the fruit in, starting another of his stories;

before the neighbors' seasonal appearance of asparagus stalks mysteriously
sprouting (their origin unknown), in manicured garden plots:
the profound cabbage patches, all kinds of beans,
the yellow *pakalana*, the tuberous waxy white stephanotis,

their tendrils entwining on chain-link fences and climbing string
lattices strung on garage walls warmed by the long days' sun,
the earthy-sweet fragrance filling languorous afternoons;
the voluptuous pomelos perfuming cloudless, heated days;

‘Aina 3.2

in one front yard: an old *ohi'a 'ai*, a mountain apple tree
extending its boughs towards its neighbors,
its favored fruit scented of early-season roses,
its crisp white flesh full of summer's sweet,

shared with kin and friends, a bounty as plentiful as
grandfather's soursop,
and the avocados on trees growing old in *Kalihi* backyards,
and the papaya in the cool *Kahuku* fields,

and the *lilikoi* from hikes into the lower trails of the *Ko'olau*,
and the strawberry guava growing wild on the Tantalus slopes,
and the *lychee* from their graceful, shady trees in *Nu'uanu*,
and mangoes from *'Ewa*, there, a tree in almost every yard;

before the worth of love and sorrow grandfather expressed in his ways:
the weekend gatherings of family and neighbors, their baptisms, births,
the engagements, marriages, the birthdays and anniversaries,
communions and confirmations, graduations,

those leaving, those new to the neighborhood, and the passings;
he showing his own that this is what one does (this
having been learned well, would be done, one day, for him):
the long fold-out tables laid out with brown paper for

the generous potluck spread: fried butterfish, *laulau*, *poi*, *lechon*,
the fresh-caught grilled mullet, *ulua*, *manini*, the fresh *limu*,
boxes of *manapua*, *gau yuk*, *lumpia*, *pancit*,
half moons, *pork hash*, *char siu*, the spam *masubi*,

tempura, *takuwan*, *tako poke*, *balatong*,
kimchi, *bulgogi*, *chap chae* and the *namul*, *gochujang*, *gisantes*,
the *chicharrones*, *pasteles*, *mandu*, *kalbi*, *bacalao*, *serenata*,
the iced fruit punch from bottled syrup, sodas,

Primo beer bottles buried in tubs of ice, the rice pans, full.
the Dee-lite Bakery chiffon cakes of dobash and guava buttercream,
the bags of Leonard's *malassadas*, the homemade Okinawan donuts,
chilled peeled mango slices, *manju*, *kankanin*, *hibinka*, Grandfather's soursop;

‘Aina 3.3

before the dancers, the women in their *balintawak*, the dresses
the puffed sleeves arched, the men dancing in their crisp white
barong tagalog shirts and red trousers,
their Visayan *Tinikling* dance, an homage to their native homeland,

their quick, light steps like those of the Philippine tikling rails flitting
between grass stems, and tree branches, and in the rice paddies;
the dancers' concentrated, rhythmic movements clip-clapping,
clip-clapping between two parallel bamboo poles flushed to the ground.

~ ~ ~ ~

before the trip to grandfather's house began at
the western edge of *Kalihi*, meaning: border, (from our old house):
first, south on School St., next, on to Middle, and then,
the descent onto the old *Moanalua* Road;

this is where "country" began, before there was an H-1,
past the gates of Fort Shafter, going by the gardens of *Moanalua*
and the steep gulch just below the hidden Damon Estate
and cane meeting you at the base of the long road winding up to Tripler;

leaving the jeweled-green valleys of *Kalihi*, traveling towards more
miles of unwieldy heights of cane owned by the sun,
coming upon Red Hill
where the old *Moanalua* Road would bolt up to meet the firmaments,

send its travelers' sights high into the oblivion-
blue of the cloudless domed sky, these heavens of the lees, full,
in view, then, all at once before us seen:
the splendid expanse of the broad spine of *Wai'anae*,

its rife of foothills, its sweep of slopes, its cascade of ridges,
--no matter how many times coming upon them in these travels west,
feeling as if it were always a discovery:
stealing one's vision, taking breath away, spread like an exalting revelation;

this country road would then reel back onto itself,
transmuting the spectacle of broad sky and the splendor
of leeward mountain to a shimmering span of still harbor, and
then: just as quickly. swift. gone. visions screened

‘Aina 3.4

between thickets of sugarcane distances and the long-standing
military signs and their barbed-wire fences restricting the views
and civilian access to any stretch of shore of Pearl Harbor;
country road passing through the provincial towns

of *Aiea*, *Waimalu*, Pearl City, and coming to the bridge
at *Waiawa*, at its stream crossing where
banana groves grow on the shady banks below,
young shoots bunched up close, like children, best at their play;

before the turn onto *Waipahu* Street, signaling "deep country,"
cane flushed to both sides of this rural road,
--its utter quiet like the pews in the sanctuary of St. Joseph
on a stifling Saturday afternoon awaiting its penitents--

passing the shack-size shops, their tired, old bones showing,
rounding the bends of caked, dirt paths, skirting past the busy baseball field
shaded by wide-waisted Monkeypod trees catching
the infrequent breezes deluding this street of its dusty-red heat;

before land on the peninsula (near exposed beds of fossilized oysters), where
two ancient fishponds, more than a hundred acres each, were long ago drained
of their purpose and names, replaced by rice paddies; then, serviced as
landfills for the wastes of a war, then, for the refuse of an expanding *Honolulu*;

before seasonal heavy rains thinned the topsoil layer of the backyards
of grandfather and his neighbors, exposing an inexplicable bed
of thick limestone rock; these cyclic rains rendering reason
for physical diversion of the intermittent waters of the *Waikele*,

concreting its flash flood volume, and its vigorous history
of muddy stream waters drowning vast fields of rice and taro,
its audacious currents carrying away livelihoods,
--even daring to steal our kin and friend;

before diminutive creeks from untethered springs, coursing between
advancing wide grids of suburbia and grandfather's land
--there, crayfish, *o'opu*, and *'opae* maneuvered the aqueous shade
of the tuberous Chinese *kang kong*, wild taro, and watercress;

‘Aina 3.5

before the roosters in their pre-dawn strut,
their fleshy-red cockscombs twitching time to their insistent
shrill, "g'morning to you!" -- their heads tilted towards
the rising sun and Honolulu, thirteen miles away;

before the trips to grandfather's, as this family that we were, and on the way to becoming,
a fervency of memory weaving through our days,
moments that passed over us, that we took for granted and forgot,
and those that endured; in time; counting them forever as our own;

before my grandfather, who had left for Hawaii in his twenties, as a *sakada*,
from Ilocos Norte, Nueva Viscaya on Luzon Island in the Philippines,
to labor his contract with the Hawaiian sugarcane; like the surrounding dirt,
his skin leathered brown-red, first tempered by the cane and then by his

carpenter trade; his pride: as the foreman of a church-building on Waipahu Street,
the building more like a wood-framed house than a House of God;
my grandfather who taught me how to trim a pineapple right:
always, use a sharp knife, careful! cut out all the spiky eyes and prickly peel;

he built inlaid furniture from pine planks, cheap; told stories at length,
dispensed unwanted advice (his kin never thought to be based on his
unexpressed woes); grandfather traded in his Catholic religion
for Protestantism after his first wife packed their four children,

upped and went back home to the Philippines, (hoping he would follow),
leaving him in Hawaii with the violin that he won in a gambling match,
taught himself to play it, but packed it away;
never did play it for his future second wife and the four children by her.

On this land, this *'aina*, in this place *Waipahu*, once, all part of the O'ahu Sugar Company,
miles of sugarcane swayed
in an idyllic swoon
to the rush of the occasional passing car.

‘Aina 4.1

'Elima ~ 4.
the last fifty years with the sugarcane

All the poems of our lives are not yet made.
Muriel Rukeyser, *The Life of poetry*

between the post-war years and the closing of the Oahu Sugar Company, 1945-1997

On this land, this 'aina,
In this place, *Waipahu*,

Before the sugarcane,
 before its fields of verdant miles rustled silence's hymn,
 its cane stalks soaring atmosphere, reaching twenty feet, more,
 hiding landscape, obscuring sky, denying shade,

before the harvests' burn of cane leaves, the charred fields' flecks swirling thick
 in the sweltering autumnal *Kona* winds, their fiery horizons
 and burnt-sweet embers blistering the nights into the days,
 smoking singed vapors into freshly hung laundry,

 and the boiling redolence of dark amber molasses
 evaporating into the ether from the mill's two smokestacks
 and the sour reek of fermenting bagasse stifling predilection,
 the dense, sucrose air intruding into classrooms and plantation houses,

 permeating through the smallest spaces between uneven
 floor planks and the fine cracks in thin wallboards, stealing
 through screened windows and doors flung open to the harvest heat,
 disturbing sleep;

before the seasonal groans of heavy-chained trucks and railcars dragging heaps
 of seared cut cane stalks across the cane haul roads leading
 up to the mill, the asphalt etched with the sweet red mud falling
 from the weighted load;

before labor from protracted days, and the brown-red dirt,
 and the clear cool waters pumped from subterranean streams
 produced a sugar more brilliant
 than that from sugar beets or corn;

before the harvests' offering to the gods from spent cane:
the spared feathery tassels, sacrosanct,
in the balmy breezes,
waving;

before the Sugar's intensive demands and hardships on its laborers
tendered leisure, cast friendships into precious
moments and memories, (their stories slighted by their children
and their children, those generations who would not know the toils of cane:

their gaze toward the modern, fixed on the east;
who, when they were old, when cane no longer grew,
would wish they asked for these stories they did not ask about in their youth,
of a time their days could not fathom of this town):

of the deep swimming hole of the *Waipahu* spring
shaded by starfruit, mango, avocado and mountain apple trees;
the ten-mile train trips west to *Kahe* Point, called *Waipahu* Beach,
the beachland OSC purchased for its laborers' weekend pleasure,

of the fishing, crabbing, swimming in the harbor Pearl,
catching the fresh water goby and crayfish in the Waikele and cane dikes,
the harvesting of oysters in the clear, sweet waters of *HO'ae'ae*;
(a land division one day coated under an industrial zone),

the hikes into the *Ko'olau* hills just outside the town,
ripe wild guavas and *ohi'a`ai* growing on well-worn paths;
the Ishiharaya's creation: the ice cream encased in syrupped shave ice,
and the 5 a.m. lines on old Depot Road for their 5-cent azuki bean donuts;

the "*M-A-N-A-P-U-A!*" Man, calling through the camps' lanes,
his two metal cans tied to a bamboo pole straddled across his skinny,
muscled shoulders, his long treks in the hot sun keeping warm
the *manapua*, *pork hash*, *pak tong koh*, *nian gao*, the moon cakes, *hongdow gao* kept warm by the long treks
in the hot sun,

the *saimin* stands, one in almost every camp, and there,
a slurping sounds' cacophony and earnest English-making
and the slow mixing of the different ethnicities
and the clacking chopsticks;

one day, their stands and the places would be forgotten:
Shiroma's in the **Higashi** (east) camp,
Miyamura's and **Shintaku's** in the **Nishi** (west) camp,
Tawata's and **Afuso's** in the **Machi** camp,
Okada's in the Spanish camp,
Miyamoto's to the south of **Arakawa** store,
Horinchi's on *Waipahu* Street, just below the mill,
Shiro's on Depot Road;

and the baseball games at Hans L'Orange field; the running
and bicycle races, the amateur boxing matches; the **sumo** wrestling,
bon-odori, the folk songs and the Okinawan **shamisen**, the songs
played on the Portuguese **braguinha**; the weekend dances,

the Filipino **tula** (poetry) and **kundiman** (love songs) accompanied
by mandolins, violins, guitars; the Puerto Rican **cuatro**;
the exotic elegance of the *Waipahu* Theater, the Marigold Bar,
the cockfights (and the gambling) in the Filipino camp,

before the high school graduating class of 1954,
almost ten years after the last world war,
this the year immigrants again were allowed to take U.S. citizenship,
more than a century after the first wave arrived;

before a sugar laborer's garden defined his identity:
the **Hawaiian's** *kalo, uala, ti, maio, 'awapuhi,*
noni, ilima, the plumeria;
the **Chinese's** *ma-tai, dong quai, pak choi*, the lychee tree, fig,
soybean, bamboo, the fragrant *pakalana* vines, *ping tung long*;
the **Portuguese's** *pimpinella, plumbago, jacaranda tree, pohu,*
tomatoes, chili peppers, the *stephanotis* vine, garbanzo beans,
the **Japanese's** *shiso, daikon, nesu, kabocha,*
edamame, the croton, the many orchids, borders of *mondo*;
the **Puerto Rican's** *achiote, gandule, caballero, coffee, cilantro,*
avocado, the yautio taro, the red roses;
the **Okinawan's** *fukugi* tree, mugwort, lime, *mamina*, papaya,
the purple sweet potato, the sago palm, the red hibiscus;

‘Aina 4.4

the **Korean's** *mugunghwa/hibiscus, pa, baechu, gaji,*

gamja, the many gochu, chrysanthemum, won bok;
the **Filipino's** kutuday marrunguay, calamondin, baguio,
melon, cassava, betal nut palm, the bougainvillea;

bitter

before a chicken coop and at least one avocado
or mango tree and a family for every neat,
tended yard that replaced barracks
and the earliest history of only single male laborers,

before Japanese extension schools taught the Hawaii-born child the mother language
in the afternoons, (the mornings were filled with English in American schools);
stitching old customs into a **kimono** gown, and to reverently prepare and pour tea
so that one remembers who they are, where their heritage started out;

Of this land, this *'aina*,
in this place *Waipahu*,

a third of the OSC's 1941 ten thousand cane acres would be
relinquished to the military, after a massive air
attack by the Japan country would bring the United States of America
into the second of World Wars.

'Aina 5.1

*'Elima ~ 5.
of military farms*

If this war is to be forgotten, I ask in the name of all things sacred what shall men remember?

in the 1940s

~1~ *in the aftermath*

On this land, this *'aina*,
In this place, *Waipahu*,

before the military farms, and ground cultivated with only cane,
and more than ten million pounds of white potatoes tilled,
the victory gardens propaganda: being attentive to their war cause
flourishing in the yards of plantation camps

and in farm plots along the newly-constructed stretch of Farrington Hwy,
skirting ground wet from natural artesian springs planted in watercress:
high yields of asparagus and beans, squashes and lettuces, cabbages, and corn,
tomatoes, bitter melon and pumpkins, rows of bok choy, tended;

joining the armed forces from this plantation town: six hundred men
to serve their adopted country--these kin, and these friends and neighbors,
dispatched to distant battleground; in their absence, the town's older children
enlisted to weed the cane fields, man produce plots, gather the potatoes;

the guerilla-green camouflage painted on the cane mill's smokestack,
the bomb shelters built, the curfews, the blackouts, gas rationing,
barbed wire coiled over white sand beaches, raised coral rock,
the serrated lava and over miles of shoreline,;

before a state-of-alert:
students sharing their school days with a War,
on a high school campus built just three years before,
these grounds of the west loch bluff overlooking Pearl Harbor:

now, the land garrisoned,
fortified with cannons and guns,
and stock-piled with bullets and bombs,
the school borders thoroughly trenched,

‘Aina 5.2

this base of *Pu'uloa*, long hill, nearing water's edge, in the barely
audible breeze, where the wildlife sang freely in the sedges and reeds,

here, the Ancients called *Hanohano*, magnificent, for standing here
at this threshold of *honua*, earth, at any time and moment,

the panorama was of startling breadth,
it struck the emotions, it awed the breath,
to be able to gaze so far north to the stately *Ka'ala*
and the *Ko'olau* in its rain-verdant hues,

and the distant eastern skygreen hills of *Honolulu*
a mirage glistening in the mesmerizing air
and the western profile of the *Wai'anae* ridges and *'Ewa* Plains
and to the south, the harbor's steeled waters and its quagmire of possibilities;

before a World War swallowed up the island in the harbor
and the peninsula *Waipio*, it jutting out into its quiet waters,
and the draining and filling of former Chinese rice paddies
(that had succeeded ancient Hawaiian fishponds)

--the one hundred and thirty-five acres of *Loko Eo* and
the one hundred and ninety-seven acres of *Loko Hanaloa*--
for the essential need as storage space and as contaminant disposal sites,
whose spoils would outlive the war more than ten-fold.

‘Aina 5.3

~2~. *of those suspected in Hawaii*

before martial law with the declaration of war; fierce suspicion of any Japanese (150,000 in Hawaii = 35% of the islands' population, these people sought to labor the cane of U.S. interests since 1885); 10,000 investigated; no crime charged, nonetheless, 1,800 Japanese sent to one of five internment camps in Hawaii including *Honouliuli*, the interred called *jigoku*/

Hell Valley--bounded by miles of *Waipahu* canefields, and weeded hot hills, (120,000 Japanese incarcerated on the U.S. mainland; 62% American citizens; fathers, mothers, children for the duration of World War) isolated on harsh, hot terrain of a deep gulch cut off from trade winds, not shaded from the dawdling sun, and knowing only rain with winters' flash floods; closed in by

barbed wire fences, armed guards, guard towers, high beam lights; and after years of mess hall/canned foods, permission given to internees to grow their ethnic vegetables, that would struggle in friable soil: *shogo, kabocha, satoimo, daikon, satsumaimo, negi, komatsuna, tamanegi, nasu*); in a plot along barracks built of thin walls and corrugated-iron sheet roofs

absorbing the days' heat, no indoor bathing, toilet, or cooking facilities (for POWs: tents in adjacent areas), these constructions fabricated for the suspicions and detention of *issei*, the first generation immigrants, Japanese-born, and *nisei*, American-born- American-citizens and those of German, Austrian and Korean descent, these language and music teachers, poets, community and

business leaders, Buddhist priests and Christian ministers, shopkeepers; parents, spouses, young people removed from their homes, families, and friends; these "**Japs!**" dispossessed of property, deprived of their civil rights, identity marred, dignity stripped by a stultifying imposed fear, cried into their hearts and on their store fronts they put up signs: "I am an American."

‘Aina 5.4

~3~ *on that bucolic morning*

On this bright and sunny Sunday morning,

like almost all other tropical winter days
—its air crisp, cool and cloudless—
you wake up in it and for a fleeting
moment, you ask yourself, can anyone be as lucky,
—while still snug in your bed, master of your morning—
dawdling over the dilemma of whether to get up
and dress for church or lounge at home,
now in the backyard looking out over the still harbor,
you think you chose,
—but others in a foreign land—
four thousand miles away,
have already decided for you how you will spend
the rest of the day and
—the ensuing four years—
dropping their projectiles
from the sky onto anathematized vessels in Pearl Harbor,
metal skins tearing, releasing colossal spills and slicks
of oil, and smoke and fire blazing water;
the many sailors and soldiers,
many of them, barely out of childhood,
their Christian names incised into metal dog tags
worn on long chains about their necks
. . . Laverne Alious, Alwyn Berry, Orris Nate,
Clifford Leroy, Hancel Grant, John *Kalauwae*, Joseph *Kanehoa*,
Thell, Salvatore J., Hal Jake, Zoila, Claude Duran,
Casbie, Virgil Cornelius, Buford Earl, Burdette Charles,
Creighton Hale, Thell, Eldon Casper, Milo Elah,
Amos Paul, Joseph Adjutor, Daryl Henry, Bibian Bernard . . .
with thousands of their peers,
waking on this ill-fated Sunday in this anchorage
where you once freely swam and fished.

‘Aina 5.5

~ 4~ **first, destroy the air defense**

before the portentous drones of four hundred planes
of a not yet acknowledged enemy, that morning, mistook for

our own, their *hinomaru* glistening on the tails and flanks
of polished bombers and fighters: daring red sun rising

in a bleak white sky stunning the early morning horizon of
country roads tangled between the over-growths
of cane and clearings of harvested fields
a few miles from their primary target in the harbor,

kamikaze pilots, waving to those below
on remote *Waipahu* country roads,
their bullets pelting lone cars,
randomly aiming at civilians,

gunning down Tomoso Kimura, age nineteen, ammo strafing
mill's smokestack and other town structures
(a perfunctory exercise, on their way
to their actual mission?),

in the ears of the pilots soaring towards Pearl Harbor,
the radioed command: "To! To! To!" "Attack! Attack! Attack!"
deployed at twilight
from 6 air carriers anchored 230 miles northwest of *O'ahu*;

their drills and dreams finally delivered them here:
their first sighting of the island at its most northern tip,
a long white line of coast, at *Kahuku*, their point
of reference towards ignominy and destruction;

‘Aina 5.6

--the first wave of 183 Japanese aircraft, divided into two bands--

49 high-altitude bombers,
51 dive-bombers,
40 torpedo bombers,
43 fighters
of the first band:
the calculated approach from the northwest,
around the arid southwestern expanse of *Wai'anae*, zeroing in
on their primary target: the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor

on December 7, 1941
Sunday
at 0755 hour
the first bomb dropped,

of the second band:
within the next hour, their stealth above the fields of *Leilehua*,
between the mountains *Wai'anae* and *Ko'olau*,
which merge with the wide *'Ewa* coral plains,

sweeps of cane and pineapple fields guiding these aliens
to their first assignment: incapacitate the U.S. air defenses
at Wheeler and the adjoining army post of Schofield on this central plateau
of *'Ewa*, and on the island's southwestern edge

at Barber's Point and *'Ewa* field before veering
towards their principal mission in Pearl Harbor
(where, dropping their technologically- advanced torpedoes
the American fleet would be "neutralized"),

an hour later, the second wave, of 171 aircraft--
36 fighters,
81 dive bombers,
54 torpedo planes,

‘Aina 5.7

having firstly enervated

the island's airfields of Bellows
in the northeast; Hickam to the southeast;
and Ford Island in the center of Pearl Harbor;

the hostile planes then converging over the harbor,
completing their execution of this Sunday-morning attack
on the most extensive war armada in the Pacific, the bane
which could interfere with Japan's plans of massive conquest.

Of the American aircraft --four hundred and three stationed
on *Oahu* that morning, one hundred and eighty-eight: destroyed,
another one hundred and fifty-nine: damaged, while aligned
in neat, orderly Sunday-weekend, unmanned rows.

Only eight U.S. planes got airborne that day --and only after
the gruesome damage was done-- their position: futile,
as declared enemy, their mission successful
beyond expectations: leaving.

‘Aina 5.8

~5~ *and of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and its prestigious ships*
Before the dark, a foreboding. On *Pu'uloa*, the long hill,
where *Waipahu*, four miles due west,

just awakening, looked out to all the bedlam
inflamed in the harbor.

Before the dark, a foreboding. On the eastern periphery of Pearl Harbor,
the futile expanse of one hundred and forty-five military vessels;
in moments, more than half that number, mainly the large ships,
would be destroyed or severely damaged;

their men in the water:
the ferryboats, barges, lighters, the tugs,
the hospital boat, cargo, issue and repair ships, the oilers,
the cruising cutters, gunboats, the torpedo boats (PTs),

the target/AA training ship (Utah, ex-battleship),
frigates, corvettes, the submarines, mine sweepers/layers,
destroyer/net tenders, the ammunition ships,
(the aircraft carriers, far at sea, undetected, spared).

Before the dark, a foreboding. An ominous hush hovering
above the stalwart queue of Battleship Row;
in that early Sunday morning those eight war boats, the Navy's pride,
aligned like a strung Hawaiian *lei*, torn,

and the young men,
so many young men,
these men like flower petals scattered onto the waters,
soldered up with the burning air.

Before the dark. The exodus of planes of this now defined adversary, and
the sound of the triumphant in their radioed communiqué:

"Tora! Tora! Tora!" "Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!"

Japanese code: "Surprise Attack Success!"

'Aina 5.9

Before the dark. Within two hours of the surprise attack:
a morning's mayhem, an enemy's mission completed,

the fuming aura of sulfur and petroleum, and
melting metal, of death and brine,

shrapnel covering ground and fields,
anti-aircraft fires scalding the landscape,
water burning black,
in its first two hours, the inexorability of war.

Before the dark. And of our own:

the injured: twelve hundred and forty-seven, military,
thirty-five, civilians, (counting young ones),
the dead: twenty-four hundred and three, military,
sixty-eight, civilians, (counting babies).

Before the dark. Of its 2-hour
bombardment of America's Pacific Defense:
the Japanese tally of their 353 planes:

29 lost,
74 damaged,
55 airmen killed;
midget submarines, 5 lost,
9 submariners killed, 1 captured.

~6~ that of a surprise

Woe! to their own!
Woe to the farmer, the tiller, the fisherman.
War not being their business:
Woe to the mother, child, the old proud father.

In time, their own Pacific Fleet would be annihilated.
Did they factor that in as well while surreptitiously
advancing their hegemony, could they have ever
planned for their great cities to be

obliterated, when they taunted "the sleeping giant": Wake!
3 million, 1/6th of their own citizens, would die;
And of that attack, history books would debate as a "surprise."
Surely it was not as such as it was an inevitability.

‘Aina 5.11

~7~ in memoriam,

*of the U.S. Pacific Fleet on “Battleship Row”
Pearl Harbor, O’ahu, Hawai’i,
December 7, 1941, Sunday*

*Of that wake left that early morning,
with memory of it washed into waters, blown into dust, floated on air,
I name these that our poetry will not let us forget their significance and sacrifice;
from them, the liberties we count as ours:*

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>USS Arizona</i> | 1,177 dead, took four bombs, one torpedo, exploded, submerged within seconds, its dead entombed in its sunk shell |
| <i>USS West Virginia</i> | 106 dead, took two bombs, seven torpedoes, sunk, returned to service July 1944 |
| <i>USS Oklahoma</i> | 429 dead, took four torpedoes, capsized, sunk, refloated November 1943, capsized a second time, lost to sea May 1947 |
| <i>USS California</i> | 100 dead, took two bombs, two torpedoes, sunk, returned to service 1944, January |
| <i>USS Nevada</i> | 60 dead, took six bombs, one torpedo, beached, returned to service 1942, October |
| <i>USS Tennessee</i> | 5 dead, took two bombs, returned to service February 1942 |
| <i>USS Maryland</i> | 4 dead, took two bombs, returned to service February 1942 |
| <i>USS Pennsylvania</i> | 9 dead, took one bomb while in dry dock, returned to service August 1942 |

‘Aina 5.12

~8~ *another kind of expansionism and imperialism*

On this land, this *'aina*, on the “date which will live in infamy,”
on a cold dawn, the cocks were crowing, the work horns quieted,
the children and their parents were sleeping in on a tropical Hawaiian
winter Sunday

as the *Oahu* Sugar Company was planning
its expansion of production and output,
on a day no one would expect
a World War to be declared.

‘Aina 6.1

'ehiku ~ 6.

of the early plantation days

We do the weeding *Ho hana men no you*
The sweat we pour into the field *Nagaseru ase wa*
Turns into the sweet juices of *Kibi no amami no*
The sugar cane *Shiru to naru*
--a Japanese-Hawaiian holehole folksong, late 1800s-early 1900s

the first fifty years of Oahu Sugar Plantation, established 1897, ceased operations 1995

Before "*Waipahu*," this plantation town,
its name and water taken from the strong spring flowing,
bursting out from the base of the knoll
where the sugar mill was built,

before the *wai hu*, the surging spring,
the overflowing, urgent spring, *Waipahu*
its daily thirty million gallons of cool fresh water
leaving the red terrain with an explosive strength,

its sonorous sound was likened
to the ancient *pahu*, *hula* drums,
these bounding waters of *Waipahu*
falling onto itself in an insistent *wailele*, cascade

tumbling into the stream *Waikele*, no longer intermittent there,
Waikele: born of the *Waikakalaua* and *Kipapa*
upstream in the hills of *Waipio* and the *Wai'anae*,
Waikele: persistence reaching the tidal waters,

these *wai*, waters of the deep earth marrying
the *kai*, waters of the sea,
their marriage: the *waikai*, brackish fertile waters
of the *Keawalauopu'uloa*,

before Pump No. 8, capping, interrupting, taming earth
of the once indomitable spring, *Waipahu*:
taking its waters to nurture the cane,
arresting its vigor; the gods would have cried out,

(their tears would not be sufficient to replace this geologic output);
but this place was long estranged from them
as men maintained that the deities be gone, tore down their holy places,
and made themselves the new gods, alienating divinity from land;

for the designated cane:

the original ten thousand acres of the *O'ahu* Sugar Company,
(giving purpose to a railway vision and prosperity),
these grounds of the estates of Robinson, Bishop, and *I'i*,
in the old land divisions of the *auhupua'a Hoae'ae*, *Waikele*, and *Waipio*,

cane growing from coastline to flood plains,
out on the long, smooth hill, *Pu'uloa*, into profound valleys,
and up in the ridges and crests of the green *Ko'olau*,
and the golden foothills of the *Wai'anae*,

cane growing in the harbor, on *Moku 'Ume'ume Island*,
on the coastal lands and the peninsulas, on the wide plains
of *'Ewa*, in the gulches and the gorges,
in valleys and nearing mountain ridges;

for the demanding cane:

this land smoothed of its rocks and boulders
(some, it's been written, as large as houses) and the *pohaku*, stones
of *heiau*, temples, including *Hapupu*, disassembled;

for the profitable cane: cleared off the land,
the introduced invasive lantana and guava,
dryland forest stripped, from the foothills
of the mountains *Wai'anae* to *Ko'olau*,

to the banks along the harbor waters, *Wai Momi*,
uprooted was the *pili*, *kawelu*, *'aki'aki*, *makaloa*, *makui kui* grasses
and the bush and prostrate *ilima*, the *'Ewa hinahina*,
and the deep pink *ko'oloalua* and the *kanaloa*,

the *ie'ie*, *kalia*, the wild unusable cotton *ma'o*, the *kamani*
whose blossoms scented the Ancients' kapa, wood turned into bowls,
cut down: the splendid *wiliwili* and *ohi'a* and *koaia* trees
(the birds and insects, their habitat, disappearing; they, too);

‘Aina 6.3

for the burgeoning cane:

when fifty pumps drawing waters

from the island's largest aquifer
proved far less than sufficient for the thirsty cane
more waters were sought from far away sources an

the *Wai'ahole* Water Tunnel built into the *Ko'olau*
in the wet dark of the basalt,
the laborers blasting a three-mile tunnel
to siphon one hundred million gallons of water

to quench the thirsty *'Ewa* fields inclined toward sky:
(one ton of water/one hundred gallons for every one pound
of white sugar refined; one hundred forty million gallons daily
to water the original ten thousand acres of plantation cane);

while the misted rains drenched the *pali*, cliffs the winds shored up,
daily (if need be; thirty million was the average take),
fed to an eager conduit of nearly thirty weaving man-made miles
of tunnels and ditches threading through thirsty leeward lands,

reaching for the western limits beyond the road *Kunia*;
this tapping the sweet, east windward waters from the tangled valleys
of *Waiahole*, *Waikane*, *Waianu* and *Kahana*,
depriving the thirty-seven *Ko'olau* surface springs and streams

of their natural drive down to the sea,
and altering the blessings to the windward *Ko'olau* taro yields
and the dependent runs of the *o'pae* and *o'puu*, stream shrimps and fish,
and forever changing the dynamics of the bay *Kaneohe*);

before the many isolated barracks

first housed only immigrant men, who signed
contracts in their native lands, promising
their labors to the Hawaiian cane,

and then the arrival of the women:
the wives, daughters, mothers,
the twenty thousand picture-brides,
the spouses-to-be,

'Aina 6.4

servicing
the laundry and sewing,

the cooking,
the bread-making,
the camp gardening,
the tailoring and shirt-making,
the cutting of hair,
and, ultimately,

they, too, those fair in skin, petite, from cities,

they, too, from their motherlands' countryside,
their broad feet already used to laboring fields
of barley and rice and harvests
now they would work the cane;

before the *bangos*,* thin i.d. discs of aluminum and brass,
hung on chains about the neck,
etched number and plantation's name replacing the laborer's own,
shape of the disc in place of face and ethnicity,

before the 4 a.m. rising
and the 5 a.m. horn call
for the 6 a.m. start of the workday,
break: 15 minutes for breakfast,

30 minutes at noon for lunch,
the 4:30 p.m. horn call ending the workday,
the 8 p.m. horn call:
lights out.

before the immigrant groups segregated at night into their ethnic camps,
at *kaukau* time out in the fields their racial boundaries
and language lines commodiously spread like their communal lunches
generously shared (the makings of the famed "Hawaiian mixed lunch plate"),

from the meager offerings of rice and the *musubi*, fish caught from the harbor, bread
baked in their clay ovens and ethnic beans from their gardens,
and pidgin English to maneuver through the meals and inter-racial friendships,
("bom-bye you come my house; eh, you noh foh-ghet, aeh?).

‘Aina 6.5

before the strong Japanese *issei* women
intoning the *horehore bushi*
onto the scorching fields, the shadeless cane,
pining their lyrics of their fate to kept homeland tunes

shrouded in long sleeves and skirts of thick *ahina* cotton, bulky arm pads,
tabi, cloth-soled boots, hatted with woven leaves and straw and faded cloth,
that shielded from the intense sun, the stinging wasps, the serrated
harvest cane leaves their sweating labors stripped from soaring stalks,

these indomitable women,
necessity bringing their young into the fields,
tied tight their babies to their backs
and wailed

*Hawaii, Hawaii to yo** Hawaii, Hawaii
Yume mite kita ga I came chasing a dream
Nagasu namida wa Now my tears flow
Kibi no naka In the canefields

*Kane wa kachiken yo** My husband cuts the canestalks
Wash'ya horehore yo I do the *holehole* (strip leaves)
Asa to namida no With sweat and tears
*Tomo kasogi** We get by

. . . and under the miserly shade of thorned *kiawe* trees
in the plantation cemetery, lay the *akachan*
who were not strong like their mothers,
not strong like the hot days;

*the holehole lyrics by Japanese issei women working the fields

before the trains on small-gauged tracks crisscrossed the town
--before daybreak:
transported laborers to the cane fields
on high mountain terraces and the outer reaches of the 'Ewa Plain,

--then at midday:
delivered the cut cane loads to the sugar mill
built on this ochre-flushed hill,
the thunderous roar of the spring, *Waipahu*, in earshot,

'Aina 6.6

--and at day's end:
returned its tired, sun-stained workers
to their isolated ethnic camps, their well-tilled gardens,
to their resolute dreams,

before "STRIKE!"

would be uttered eventually by every ethnic group
that found this plantation "opportunity" was not much better
than they had known

--nor what they had envisioned to be fair,
where crowded barracks and single-framed houses
hoarded dreams of a better life
that \$12 a month's pay --or less-- could not buy,

those who were so busy, beyond tired, almost oblivious
from working the cane, those too hot and frustrated
over the lack of tropical breeze, those who could only wish for
other places where, one day, their labors could take them,

before the indigenous Hawaiian cane was tamed for industry: made taller,
yield hybridized, endeavored to make it resistant to disease and vermin;
introducing the mongoose and toad, (unknowingly
contributed to the extinct
ion of endemic birds and insects),

this unwieldy cane adoring sun and for its master grew
prolifically sweet in this near-forsaken place, *Waipahu*,
thriving despite the thin red topsoil immediately
meeting the massive buried coral rock,

This land, this *'aina*

its many boulders cleared, its mesic forests erased,
edged by newly laid tracks of the "Dillingham's Folly,"
one man's railroad scheme on an island in the middle of the Pacific;

this hill, its past lost
to the foreign-man's entrepreneurial ventures,
looking out to rice paddies,
looking out over agrarian dreams.

'Aina 11.1

'Umikumakahi~11.

Ka pukana wai o kahuku

... following the wrong god home we may miss our star.
William Stafford, from "A Ritual to Read to Each Other"

Of oral traditions, *na hana a ka wa kahiko*, a me *huika* 'i *'Olelo*, a combination of stories

Before the *Ka pukana wai o kahuku*

the myth revealing a *pukana*, an outlet
of the *wai hu*, the spirited spring *Waipahu*
this *mano wai*, waters' source originating in *Kahuku*

this *wahi pana*, legendary place
its waters tearing out onto the arid *kula 'Ewa* plains
its cool bounding volume resonating
like the deep vibrant song of *pahu* drums

--*Eia ke mo'olelo*, here is the story
of the *Ka pukana wai o Kahuku*
of a *kua kapa*, anvil lost then found
by its *kahu*, keeper matron

beloved *kua kapa*, anvil stored on the fringe
of the *loko wai*, freshwater pond, *Waikalai*
fed by the *puna wai*, spring, *Ho'olapa*
refreshed by the underground *kahawai* stream, *Poniohua*

in the *ahupua'a*, land division *Kahuku*
in the *moku*, district *Ko'olaupoko*
the most northern division of *O'ahu* island
meeting the *kaiuli*, ocean

the *kua kapa* lost earthy warm in color and in timbre
employed in the pounding of the inner bark
of the *wauke mamaki ma'aloa Akala ulu*
the white malleable fibers stretched into fine cloth

'Aina 11.2

beloved instrument tumbled
into and was carried away
by the strong current of these clear waters
its owner refusing to mourn her loss

as if her child had only wondered off
refused to mourn determined
she was to search all
of *O'ahu* for her pride

she set out along the generous embankment
of the *Ponihua* into the legendary cavern *Pohukaina*
fabled for a subterranean labyrinthine network of streams
with entrances and outlets that led in all directions on

this *O'ahu* island long believed to be a floating island
our matron followed the stream *Ponihua*
first traversing the eastern edge
of the windward mountains *Ko'olau* facing sea

hurrying past underground waterfalls
trekking through numerous chambers
those with extraordinarily high ceilings and
those so low almost impeding passage

all the while listening carefully for
the inimitable *mele* of her *kua kapa*

she surfaced with the *wai puna*,
fresh spring waters at *Kaahuula*
which fed the *loko wai*, freshwater ponds
and the *loko kuapa*, walled seaponds

in the sacred *ahupua'a Kualoa*
in the *moku Ko'olaupoko* south of *Ko'olauloa*
matron pausing to gather her bearings
looked out to the *hikina*, to the east at the calm sea and beheld the islet

created when Hi'iaka, sister of Pele slew
a *mo'o*, lizard-like monster creature
and hurled the carcass into the sea
it breaking into pieces upon impact

‘Aina 11.3

the tail's toothed tip coming to rest
as the small island *Mokoli'i* in the calm
of the northern bay waters of *Kane'ohe*
its gentle waves barely aroused by the *Holopali* winds

with her longing for her *kua kapa*

with her body not conceding fatigue

she continued on her journey
along the *Ki'owao pali*, cliffs its beauty immeasurable
there where the wind that shares its name drifts
down through the stone-green rain misted knife-edged ridges

matron resumed her trek into
the underground rooms of the *Pohukaina*
reaching its tallest chamber *Konahuanui*
in the *Ko'olau* mountains

a place that the volcano goddess of fire, *Pele*
considered while in her search for a permanent home
having arrived from the aged *Kaua'i* in the north
and once on *O'ahu* at *Kaena* ascended

the southwest *Wai'anae* ridge rising
to *Ka'ala* the pinnacle of this island but *Pele*
with her fiery inclination found this high point too wet
so she set her sights *ma ka hikini*, to the east

and continued entering *Konahuanui* summit
the highest chamber of the *Pohukaina* in the *Ko'olau*
but it was too cold for the ardent temperament
of *Pele* and she left *O'ahu* island continued her search

ma ka hema, south stopping briefly at *Moloka'i* island
then moved on to *Mau'i* island
at last on to the *Hawai'i* island
and its fire and heat and virile rock

its molten *'ula'ula*, red
was to her liking in all its ways
so there *Pele* chose to reside
on this the largest of the island forms

‘Aina 11.4

our *Kahuku* matron traveled *ma ka hema*, to the south
into the *moku Kona* turning back two ridges *ma ka kau*, to the north
and rose up in the valley of *Kalihi*
with the spring *puna wai o Kalihi*

the deep greens of these sheer serrated valley walls
stained by the black basalt rock wetted by
the near constant vaporous *Po'olipilipi* rains
and the lively *Haupe'epe'e* winds mesmerized

but she resumed her mission back into the *Pohukaina* cavern
where she could have turned with the streams
towards the southeast shores of *Kou*
she inclined instead *ma ka komohana*, to the west and emerged briefly with

the spring flowing into the *kahawai*, stream *Moanalua*
its broad sunlit valley floor near flush
with the distance deceptively tempting
of an easy return back to her *Kahuku*

with her longing for her *kua kapa*
with her body not conceding fatigue

she persevered
continued on
with the district *moku Kona* behind her
with the district *moku 'Ewa* before her

she mounted the red hill *Kapukaki*, at *Halawa*
where she meant only to tarry briefly
to gather her bearings
but the panorama was of startling brilliance

its beauty of staggering proportion it stunned her from stirring
it gave deep pause to breath
for here the domed sky with its azure-white intensity
where *ha ke akua i ka lewa*, god breathing into the heavens

was reflected on the magnanimous summits

Kapolei Makakilo Manawahua Kapu
Palikea Kaua Kanehoa Hapapa
Kailio Kumakaali'i Kalena Ka'ala

'Aina 11.5

of the *Wai'anae* ridge facing the rising sun laid out
from *hema a 'Akau*, south to north like brilliant strung *pohaku*, stones
of a necklace intended for a beneficent god
whose mountain slopes lay profoundly forested with

Aulu hame hao heau
iliahi kamanamana ka'wa'u koa mamaki
lama lapalapa loulu 'ohi'a
olana olapa naio na'u wauke

and embraced by massive rounded foothills
 painted in the warm verdancy of its flora, counting

a'ali'i a'e here, aiakeakua aiea
'akoko alaa alahe'e `anaunau `anunu
'aweoweo aupaka one day, `Awikiwiki `awiwi
hala pepe 'hapuu hauhele hau kuahiwi
holei ihi`ihi iliau these species ilie'e
kamakahala kauila kio`ele koi'a would be
koali koki'o kolomona rare, ko'oko'olau
ko'oloa'ula kulu'i lama lau`ehu
laukahi kuahiwi makou ma'o hau hele ma'oli`oli
naupaka nehe `ohai endangered, `oha wai
`ohe'ohe ohe mauka or 'Ohi'a lehua opuhe
pamakani papa kepau po`e pilo
popolo uhaloa extinct uhiuhi

here, where rests the ancient hills of *Lihue*
 the warm late afternoon *Waikoloa* breeze is born
 drifting delicately down over the *kula*, grasslands of *'Ewa*
 on its way to the *Keawalauopu'uloa*

the soils of these broad plains resting on the remains
 of primordial coral reefs risings from the south shores
 this arm of land braced wide and long between
 the southwestern *Ko'olau* ridges and the upcountry of the *Wai'anae*

‘Aina 11.6

the afternoon winds shimmering patterns through the grasses
pili aki'aki kawelu 'emoloa 'uki'uki
 and through the aged dwarfed *lehua* and the gnarled *wiliwili* trees
 brazenly blooming in their golds pinks and *'ula'ula*, intense reds

on this formidable *kula* merging with the flatlands of the 'Ewa
flood plains meeting the southern astoundingly grand waters
of *Ke awa lau o Pu'uloa*, the many harbors of *Pu'uloa*
with its numerous fishponds built out into the deep lagoons

and the many inlets and their marshes and the channeled shores
of the *huku*, peninsulas of *Waipio* and *Waiawa*
and the islets *Mokuumeume Moku Iki Moku Niu Kuahua Lauaunui*
and the even tinier islets, whose names disappeared with time

this *Keawalauopu'uloa*, this still region
of *uliuli*, its deep dark blue-grey waters
the *kai*, these salted waters absorbing the intense heat of the day
the *kai*, these waters from the ocean reflecting the heaven's sweep,

this leeward landscape enthralling our matriarch
but a dread moved through her for *auwe!* standing there
on the slight hill at *Kapukaki* the red hill at *Halawa*
looking *ma ka komohana*, to the west

for where was the *ua*, rain, the waters more than familiar
in its embrace of the *Ko'olau* slopes
in its reluctance to leave the *Ko'olau* ridges
in its journeys across the 'Ewa plains

ua kili, fine light rain
ua ko'iawe, light moving rain
ua nA'ulu, showery rain
ua koko, rainbow-hued rain

ua ho'e'ele, drenching rain
ua ililani, unexpected rain
ua lani pili, a sudden downpour
ua hekili, rain with large drops

‘Aina 11.7

any of these outpourings
she thought would hint of
na pukana wai, the fresh water sources
and any sign of this *wai* she thought

could lead her to her *kua kapa*
standing long under the hot leeward sun
standing long not used to an island heat that had
no *ua*, rain no *makani*, wind no shading *la'au*, tree no *oma'oma'o*, deep *green*

to remind her of her *Kahuku* home that she now ached for
to have come this far and there be no sign
and under this long heat no sound of her *kua kapa*
she now began to doubt this wanting of her pride

but it was too late to turn back
too far along to retrace her steps home

to the *Pohukaina* our matron returned and found its ceiling
to be much too low to maneuver in
she would have to stay above ground and so
followed the rim of the *Keawalauopu'uloa*

this shoreline level with the sea niu groves holding majesty
but now revealed to her was what she could not see
while standing there at the red hill *KapUkaki*
one spring and then another and then another

some leeching out of the ground at her feet
others pouring gently into *loko* ponds
others joining *kahawai*, streams
these *wai puna* born in the *Ko'olau* and a few others of the *Wai'anae*

all created by the *akua*, gods *Kane* and *Kanaloa* in the *ahu'pua'a*. districts

Halawa Aiea Kalauao Waimalu
Waiau Waimano Manana Waiawa
Waipio Waikele Ho'ae'ae Honouliuli

those *wai*, waters on the flatlands
of the *'Ewa* flood plains
on their way to meet *Keawalauopu'uloa*,
the numerous harbors of the long hill

‘Aina 11.8

with her longing for her *kua kapa*
with her body not conceding fatigue

at none she stopped for now she thought

she heard the distinct *mele* of her *kua kapa*
faint notes at best or was it a trick of fatigue and loss
and heat and sun and red dust being blown by the leeward gusts

and then on the west edge of a small bluff in the *ahupua'a Waikele*
she fell into a long weary sleep drawn as a sultry 'Ewa day
having not stopped for drink nor rest nor shade of tree
eventually she was roused

perhaps by the *Ahamanu* breeze
conceived far away in the north of this *O'ahu* island
in her home in *Kahuku* this wind rising into the *Ko'olau* ridges
these cool tradewinds riding billowy clouds

gathering strength in their late day descent down
over the southern *kula*, plains of 'Ewa
on their way west towards the *Wai'anae*
briefly refreshing all that is fortunate to be in their path

so then was it the *Ahamanu* breeze from her *Kahuku* home
its sweep bringing the stirring strands
of her *kua kapa* to her so that when she awoke
she saw nearby she heard nearby

the ejection of *puna wai*, spring waters leaving the earth
seemingly familiar to her in its
resonance coolness fragrance sight
this *wai*, fresh waters spilling onto the hot plains

with a *pahu*, such strong forces
more ample than any spring she had come upon
and where its water pooled in a *wai ahu* there
her *kua kapa* was being worked by another woman

who upon seeing the *Kahuku* matron wake
rested the *i'e kuku*, *kapa* beater she had been employing
on the *kua*, anvil she had found
and she went to her

‘Aina 11.9

cupped cool *wai*, spring water
for her and helped her drink
and laid out for her choice
a most handsome *kapa*

for which this *'Ewa* was renown
cloth made from the *wauke* scented
with the citrus-fragranced *alani* gathered from
the forests of the *Ko'olau* its fifty species flourishing

in the mountains above *Kahuku* and
along the mountain range to *Konahuanui* and beyond
and she helped her bathe and be refreshed by
the *wai puna*, waters of the spring *Waipahu*

and where the cool waters of the *wai ahu*, the deep pool
flowed southward meeting the *kahawai*, stream *Waikele*
a *wailele*, a waterfall waist-high in height
coursed the entire breadth of the strong stream

and it is here she told the story of how she came upon
the *Kahuku* matron's *kua kapa* found on the warm banks
of the unbridled *wai hU*, the forceful waters of the gushing
spring *Waipahu* its rush stirring a breeze of its own

and this is the *mo'olelo*, story of how the *kua kapa* was found
and this is how it is understood that in this otherwise arid land
that beneath the extensive *kula*, plains of *'Ewa*
lay the source of bounteous *wai*, fresh waters

from underground effluences feeding
the largest aquifer on this island *O'ahu*
producing its most powerful *wai hu*, spring *Waipahu*
its outlet of waters from the source of the *Ka pukana wai o Kahuku*

~~~~

‘Aina 11.10

Before the legends and the myths  
of this place surrounding the *puna wai* spring *Waipahu*  
here where ancients sang their traditions  
silenced by those who did not understand



that greatness cannot be subsumed forever  
not by wars and diseases delivering  
to them famine and barrenness,  
mudding fishponds with foreign dreams

draining *the ka nui manu*, people of their histories  
draining their *'aina* of their legacy  
a great stillness befalling it  
depriving modern man his rightful inheritance

‘Aina 12.1

*'Umikumalua ~ 12.*  
*of myths & legends of this 'aina*

---

Certainly they looked upon these dwellers in the spirit world as capable of manifesting themselves  
not only in material forms and forces of nature but also in the bodies  
of human beings living on earth among men . . .

--Mary Beckwith, *Kumulipo*

from 600A.D to 1600s

Before this land, this *'aina*,  
of this place *Waipahu*,

before there would be a silencing of this ground  
before there would be the denial of a history of this place  
before a lineage broken of chiefs that kept reverence  
for their subjects and for their gods

there was the *mea hula*, dancer the *mea oli*, chanter  
the *kahuna*, wise men and the *kahu*, keepers  
who retained form and voice of the stories of this *'aina*  
who kept the legends and the myths safe

~ ~ ~ ~

before a *mele pana*, a song  
of the expansive plains of this *'Ewa* district  
its name sung in two versions of the beauty of the language  
“*Ke one kui lima laula o 'Ewa*”  
“The-holding-of-hands-over-the-breadth-of-*'Ewa*”

We have heard the gentle version of the *Kapukanawaiokahuku*  
of a beloved *kua*, anvil

lost to one hand and found by another  
sought by its owner handed back by its finder  
at *Waipahu* cordial these two women  
together hand-in-hand proceeding over the breadth of this land

‘Aina 12.2

cordial at *Waipahu* these two women  
together, hand-in-hand walking this land's breadth  
back to the water source where the *kua kapa*  
began its aqueous journey

*at Kahuku and its upcountry*  
*verging on the red dirt of the 'Ewa kula, plains shielding the magnanimous aquifer of the island O'ahu*

*from where the voluminous spring Waipahu vaulted into the Waikele on its way  
to meet the still harbor Keawalauopu'uloa*

Here is the violent version of the *KapukanawaioKahuku*

two chiefs brothers    only by blood

*Kaihikapuamanuia*    *Ha`o*

elder jealous            of the younger

for the 'aina districts *na moku 'Ewa a me Wai'anae*

bequeathed by their mother

high chiefess of *O'ahu*,

*Naluehiloikeahomakalii*

land coveted by

*Kaihikapuamanuia*    this 'aina rich in measure

deep ocean grounds

fishponds and salt beds

expansive shorelines

mesic and wet forests

a manifold of fields

along the abundant springs

the venerated *kula*, plains

for the training of war

and a *maka'ainana*, commoners

devoted to their *ali'i*, chief *Hao*

this younger brother

of what was appointed

to him rather than be

sovereign over what

was not

'Aina 12.3

why would one kill    this younger sibling *Ha'o*

who was benign in character

devoted to the defense

of this elder brother *Kaihikapuamanuia*

content to be guardian of what was  
appointed to him than  
to be sovereign  
over what was not

*Auwe! Kaihikapuamanuia* had his lowly logic  
*Auwe! Kaihikapuamanuia* had his rotted reason as he stood at *Waikele*  
on the jurisdiction of his brother *Ha'o*  
elder brother came to deliver devastation

in the guise of a gift  
*Kaihikapuamanuia* hiding deep within  
the cavity of a large shark  
and there revealed himself to slay

the young *'Ewa* chief as he worshipped his gods  
near the foot of the bluffs  
of the spring *Waipahu* at *Waikele*  
on the *kula* cradled in the distant ridges

of the *Wai'anae* and *Ko'olau*  
out on the *'anemoku*, peninsula of *Waipio*  
that projects into the harbor *Keawalauopu'uloa*  
leading to the *kaiuli*, deep ocean

to *komohana*, west  
to the ridge of *Wai'anae* that encompasses  
*Pu'ukapolei* to the *hema*, south  
and the *Ka'ala* mount to the *'Akau*, north in its full splendor

'Aina 12.4

and  
turning turning turning  
you have not seen  
all the lands of your brother  
you cannot see  
all the lands of your brother

from where you  
are

facing the *hikina*, east where the province of your kin *Ha'o*  
merges with your own *moku Kona*  
which recedes  
into the hazy cool horizon of a late afternoon

and  
turning turning turning  
you have not seen  
all the lands of your brother  
you cannot see  
all the lands of your brother  
from where you  
are

standing on this bluff of *Au'ali'i at Waikele*  
while your brother worships his gods  
at his well-maintained *heiau*, temples and thanking them  
for this *momona*, fruitful land

and  
turning turning turning  
you have not seen all  
the lands of your brother  
you cannot see  
all  
the lands of your brother  
from where you  
are  
'Aina 12.5

here you do not doubt the blessings of your *akua*  
here where your spirit is joined to the rich *honua*,  
god chief priest commoner  
*akua ali'i kahuna maka'ainana*

Auwe! *Kaihikapuamanuia*, *mo'i o O'ahu*, high chief ruminated  
Auwe! *Kaihikapuamanuia* reasoned twisted in mind a maniacal terror  
which frustrates bile and destroys within

staining all reasoning

you know you belong to this land  
this truth is your daily foundation  
and because of it you are at peace in your sleep  
and how much more

you man of this geography could want  
how empowered you must believe yourself deserving to be  
you who have all this would want

for far more

that which is and belongs to your sovereign king --that I am-- I am your sovereign king  
I begrudge even your goodness *ali'I*, chief  
you my dedicated brother *Hao*

raised close to our own mother's bosom  
you must want for more of this grandness  
you would deny more want  
of this *momona*, rich land

for this good ali'I chief  
oh dedicated brother  
of 'Ewa  
and *Wai'anae*

he who could not want for more  
for he had all that was considered  
by count generous  
of the gods gift to mortals

but oh you brother, woe *auwe!*  
you count your own avarice  
as your dear possession  
so for your brother *Hao*

'Aina 12.6

you *Kaihikapuamanuia* reasoned death  
and a senseless tragedy for this prize land  
“*Ke one kui lima laula o 'Ewa*”  
“The-holding-of-hands-over-the-breadth-of-`Ewa”

~~~~~

before a *mo'o akua*, an account of the gods

*Kane, akua o wai, of earth waters and
Kanaloa, akua o kai, of ocean waters*

Eia ke mo'o akua la, here is the tale
one day walking these shadeless 'Ewa plains
these gods together in search of
a potable water source to temper

their awa libation
and forever testing humans
disguised themselves as mere mortals
these deities surprised to be guided

to a source where fresh waters amply flowed
thus man was found worthy by these cynical gods
and this dry shadeless land was blessed
when these gods drove their spears

into the ground as they had done
at numerous places throughout the Hawaiian islands
these gods generous these gods benevolent
delivering the many springs of 'Ewa

including the sweet bursting waters *Waipahu*
granting *waiwai*, prosperity to these humans
fresh *wai*, waters to *inu*, drink
clean *wai*, waters to 'au, 'au, bathe

abundant *wai*, waters to nurture *loki 'ia* and
loko wai, fresh water fishponds
and taro patches irrigated by *auwai*, ditches
pure *wai*, waters to bless *mana*, spirit

~~~~~

'Aina 12.7

before a ***ka'ao, a myth***  
of the 'aumakua, the shark goddess *Ka'ahupahau*  
guardian of *Keawalauopu'uloa*, the many harbors of *Pu'uloa*  
vigilant she was against the man-eating sharks

***Eia ke mo'olelo la,*** here is the story  
of her outings up the *Waikele* Stream

where she would bathe and be refreshed  
in the *wai ahu*, pool  
of the *puna wai Waipahu*

invigorated by these waters she would return  
to the sanctuary of her limestone cave in  
the underwater primordial cliffs of *Honouliuli*  
where *wai*, waters filtered through briney floors

in the west loch of *Kaihuopala'ai* in the *Keawalauopu'uloa*,  
the many harbors of the great long hill *Pu'uloa*  
proud she was of this *puna Waipahu*  
she would entertain her visitors upstream

to partake of its cool waters  
these shark deities proven harmless to humans  
who traveled far from the islands  
*Hawai'i Mau'i Kaua'i Moloka'i*

who were skeptical of the enthusiasm this *aumakua*  
had for her *'Ewa* country  
for on their approach of the *'Ewa* lands  
from *ka moana lewa loa*, the very deep ocean

they shared not her passion for the *Pu'uloa*  
it failed to impress it being near smooth with the horizon  
it being distant from the deep green forests of the *Ko'olau*  
it being distant from the mesic forests of the *Wai'anae*

but as they neared the land and caught sight of the handsome people  
of the region their skin blushed by the sun these *nA kanaka*, the men  
journeying out to fish the sea these *nA wahine a me keiki*,  
the women and children gathering *limu* along the shores

#### 'Aina 12.8

as these *manO* gods maneuvered  
along the extensive shorelines  
of the many inland coves and lagoons  
fronting the deep waters of *Keawalauopu'uloa*

passing the many *loko 'ai*, fishponds  
passing the *loko kuapa*, walled fishtraps  
passing the *loko pa'akai*, salt ponds



passing the inland *loko i'a kalo*, ponds for small fish and taro

when they set into the stream *Waikele*  
on the way to the deep *wai ahu*, pool  
of the cool *puna wai*, spring *Waipahu*  
they took stock of the numerous varieties of

*kalo ma'i uala uhi* thriving along the stream banks  
and adjacent to these raised were extensive cultivations of  
*niu ko olona wauke mamaki noni ohia 'a*  
even a grove of *ulu* in dry ground was tended to

and beyond the lands of the agriculture  
a dry forest of *lehua* and *wiliwili* thrived  
and a *kula* plain for the training of war lay generously  
under hot sun

the surprise of this *waiwai* astonished these *manO*, gods  
and in their *makaleha*, looking around in admiration  
their veneration was thusly elevated for this  
*O'ahu aumakua Ka'ahupahau*

~~~~~

before ***ke mo'o akua***, a legend of *MauI-kupua*,
the demi-god from *Wai'anae*

--*Eia ke mo'olelo*, here is the chronicle
of *Mau'I* one day at the home of his grandfather, *Kuolokele*,
while awaiting the return of the senior to seek his advice
looking eastward from the grasslands of *Keahumoa*

on the *kula*, plains in the *auhupua'a Honouliuli* of 'Ewa
located north, above the *puna wai*, spring *Waipahu*
scrutinizing moving form journeying westward
over the distant foothills and ridges

'Aina 12.9

disappearing into profound gulches
criss-crossing rain-blessed valleys of the *Ko'olau*
walking the flood plains along the harbor's coastal rim
along the way *uala*, sweet potato shoots falling

from his shouldered heavy load
and took root where these slips landed

despite the dry red dirt
farmer exhausted rested his bundles

upon reaching the cool *wai hu*, spring *Waipahu*
and entering its invigorating waters he bathed
Maul recognizing this aged form
as his grandfather *Kuolokele*

god wept for the patriarch's back was humped
god empathized and hoisting a *pohaku*, stone
hurled it at the elder's form and the hump
was made as smooth as the gentle sloping

long hill of *Pu'uloa* from which sprung the *Waipahu*
and *Kuolekele* in a youthful fit of exuberance
picked up the *pohaku* and flung it forth
and where it landed amongst the boulders

and an infinitude of basalt rock
and rust-colored coral rubble resting
on this near shadeless red dirt plain
a reminder would always be

of this mighty and altruistic Polynesian god
this *Maul kupua* and his famed deed
of slowing down the sun of lengthening the day
and with this *Maul* at his kinsman's side

a double-ringed *anuenue*, rainbow loomed
a vestige that gods are upon the land
that deities' works are linked to the *honua*, earth
that *akua*, spirit bridges to the *papa lani*, heavens

~~~~

‘Aina 12.10

before the ***mo'o ali'i***, oral histories of the many *'Ewa ali'i*, chiefs  
who established their compound on the *huku*, peninsula, *Waipio*  
this headland shared by the *auhupua'a Waipio* and *Waikele*  
as that point of land that reaches

into the estuary whose *wai momi*, pearled waters  
mingle with the ocean waters  
the *kuamo'o 'olelo*, a genealogical narrative

crediting the benevolent *ali'i*, chief *Keaunui*

for widening the three-mile estuary at *'Ewa*  
which bonds the numerous lagoons and bays  
of *Keawalauopu'uloa* to the *moana*, sea  
perhaps this feat was to accommodate the large canoes

with their greater fish loads to feed  
an expanding *'Ewa* population  
perhaps he anticipated the need for the storage  
of more and larger boats for future wars

~~~~

before the ***mo'olelo***, a legend of *Kahai*
a son of *Ho'okamali'i*, a chief of *'Ewa* grandson of *Moikehe*
Kahai returned from his journey to *Kahiki*
and brought back with him the *ulu*, breadfruit

and introduced it to *Hawai'i* at *Pu'uloa*
where despite hot near rainless days
and a thin layer of poor soil set on old coral rock
an *ulu* grove would come to thrive

and *Kahai* traveled on to visit the revered *ali'i*, chief of *Kualoa*
and brought to him a gift of the *ulu*
and the progeny of this resilient tree that does not in the wild do well
flourished also along the rain-kissed *Ko'olau* coastline

~~~~

before ***na ku auhau***, the traditions  
citing *Hawaii-loa* as the first discoverer  
of these Hawaiian islands, and as that, its first progenitor  
his wife and daughters and his men

‘Aina 12.11

accompanying him on that maiden journey  
and coming upon the island  
named it after his cherished daughter,  
*O'ahu*

~~~~

before *he mo'olelo o ka wa kahiko*, a myth of Man's creation
Kane, god of all, rendered the first man in his likeness
ke ha, life's breath of this consummate god inspired form
man's head sculpted of *palolo* the white clay brought

by the god *Lono* from the four ends of the earth
man's form born of *wai no 'a*,
the breath-giving spittle of *Kane*
mixed with *'alaea*, the mineral-rich dirt

stained *'ula'ula*, intense red
the favorite color of *Kapo*, goddess and patron
of the *hula*, dances
she a sister of *Pele*, goddess of the volcano

~~~~

before *he mele pana*, "*He 'aina lewa o O'ahu*"  
a love song of *O'ahu* as a floating island  
anchored atop a permeable volcano  
where once a fiery magma history oozed

through a maze of volcanic tubes then cooled  
voids left where liquid earth  
hurled out to its exterior geology  
and there *ua*, rains fell and was made purer

by their subterranean descents through  
the porous aged lava matrix  
these filtered *wai*, waters joining the accumulated  
volume of an aquifer's untapped elixir afloat

a permeation of saline diluents cradled  
within the caprock of the island's womb  
its layers of ancient limestone reefs and  
thick sediment of basalt slopes

'Aina 12.12

could the fresh *wai*, waters be persuaded stay  
and do not stir with the *kaiuli*, ocean but  
where the ebullient water's internal strain  
could not be contained there

tears in the earth  
and from them,

the pure, cold *wai*, waters  
of springs flowing out onto

the island's dry red coastal plains  
*wai*, waters drawn to the many *kahawai*, streams  
including the *Waikele conduit*  
of the forceful waters of the *wai hu*, spring *Waipahu*

these waters of superlative yield  
in a steadfast aqueous movement towards  
the waiting seabeds of the *momi*, oyster  
where the gentle currents hold each other

the *wai*, fresh waters with the *kai*, ocean waters  
where the *limu*, seaweeds swelled and glistened  
where the *'anae* and *ahole* fishes  
the *opae*, shrimps the *olepe*, bivalves spawned and thrived

in their required rejuvenated *waikai*, brackish waters  
of the *Kaihuopala 'ai*, the west lagoon  
of the resplendent haven of  
the many harbors and inlets of *Keawalauopu'uloa*

~ ~ ~ ~

before ***he mo'olelo o ka wA kahiko, a myth*** of *Maul*  
as creator of the Hawaiian isles  
with his fish hook snagged on the ocean floor  
thinking he had caught a large fish

reeled in the big island of *Hawai'i*  
from out of the *ka moana lewa loa*,  
the deep ocean beyond the sight of land  
with the assistance of his four brothers

‘Aina 12.13

all too named *Maul* they  
hauled out of the briny depths one island  
after another and thereby  
procured the archipelago *Hawai'i*

~ ~ ~ ~

before ***ka mo'olelo***, the tale that asserts *akua Kane*  
 as creator of *ka lani*, the sky  
 and of *ka honua*, earth

taking an *ipu*, gourd  
 heaving it upward where it shattered from the force  
 the bowled bottom became *ka lani*, the sky  
 the remaining pieces became *ka honua*, the earth  
 the seeds became *ne la hOkU*, stars  
*ke hina*, moon  
*ke la*, sun

the gourd's liquid *ke kai*, the ocean waters and  
*ka wai*, the fresh waters

*Kane* was pleased at the partnered work  
 designated the wedded gods

|                                 |                                             |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| the <i>akua Wakea</i> , husband | the guardian of <i>ka lani</i> , the sky    |
| the <i>akua Papa</i> , wife     | the guardian of <i>ka honua</i> , the earth |

~ ~ ~ ~

before ***he mele kahea***,\* a summons of chanter to the hula dancer

|                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>E ui aku ana au ia 'oe,</i> | I ask this of you                    |
| <i>Aia i hea ka wai a Kane</i> | Where is the waters of <i>Kane</i> ? |

and ***ke hua A pane***, the reply of the dancers

|                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Eia i lalo i ka honua</i> | There deep in the earth    |
| <i>I ka wai hu</i>           | In the gushing waters      |
| <i>I ka wai kau</i>          | In the conduits            |
| <i>a Kane me Kanaloa</i>     | Of Kane and Kanaloa        |
| <i>He wai puna</i>           | A spring of freshwater     |
| <i>He wai e inu</i>          | A source of drinking water |
| <i>He wai e mana</i>         | A mystical force           |
| <i>He wai e ola</i>          | A water of life            |

‘Aina 12.14

~ ~ ~ ~

before ***he pule kuahu***,\* an alter-prayer of thanksgiving  
 to the gods *Kane* and *Kapo*  
 its closing praise chanting

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Eia ka wai la,</i> | Here is the water   |
| <i>He wai e ola</i>   | A life-giving water |

*E ola nou*

That there be life for you

\* words from an ancient Hawaiian chant, to be found in Nathaniel B. Emerson's book, *Unwritten Literature of Hawai'i*

~~~~

before the gods demi-gods spirits ancestral deities
ne akua kupua uhane aumakua

and for each god in the Hawaiian arithmetic
the *ka'au*, forty
the *lau*, four hundred
the *mano*, four thousand
the *kini*, forty thousand and
the *lehu*, four hundred thousand

the gods of skies lands winds waters
ne akua o lani 'aina makani wai me a kai

the gods of mountains plains shorelines oceans
ne akua o mauna kula kahakai moana

the gods of astronomy geology flora fauna
ne akua o ke a'o hOkU huli honua la'au holoholona

the gods of house-building fishing canoe-making farming
ne akua o kUkulu lawai'a ho'owa'a mahi 'ai 'ana

the gods of the outdoors home harvest warfare
ne akua o waho kauhale ka 'ohi kaua

the gods of storytelling song dance drums
ne akua o mo'olelo mele hula pahu

‘Aina 12.15

and the gods who accompanied these people here
from southern Polynesia Hawaiki, the *kuakahi*, the ancient homeland
and protected them nourished them guided them
to their migrations and settling of these exquisite pearls of islands

and the gods who were waiting for them here
in this good land
the many gods whose names and purposes

would be silenced in due course erased from mind

before the four principle gods

Kane, god of procreation

Lono, god of the sun of medicine of the *makahiki*

Ku, god of war woodlands crops

Kanaloa, the deep sea and of the dead

before *ke akua Kane nui*, the god supreme

This land, this *'aina* was old, drowned river valleys

bathed by channels of stunning springs

including one powerfully voluminous

the Hawaiians would call it *Waipahu*

its *lau wai*, abundant waters joining the volume of the converged streams

the ancients named the *Waikele*, muddy waters,

and *Kipapa*, where the roots of the *ki*, the Cordyline

thrived along the liquescent-infused banks

these married conduits carrying in their cool

wai, water courses rich red sediments tempted away from

the mountains *Wai'anae* and *Ko'olau*

by these currents running off to meet

the beautiful *Keawalaupou'uloa*, the many harbors of the long hill

'Aina 13.1

'umikumamakolu ~13.

of a drowned river valley, the Holocene

The endless voice of birds. I have never lived in such a heaven.

—Jorge Louis Borge, *Labyrinths*

11,000 thousand years ago (at the end of the Ice Age)

Before the drowned river valleys

of the Holocene Epoch's seas receding

and eroding eleven thousand years,
 revealing warm lagoons,

then valleys flooding again,
as one glacial age melted its phase into another
and the grand east, middle, and west lochs
 were created, their waters ebbing and flowing

into and out of pristine green estuary
channeling the ocean waters
to commingle with the fresh waters of the land:
 the tidal currents conjoining with the recurrent springs,

before virile, fresh water streams
 redefining aging mountain slopes,
 slicing deep gulches into the vulnerable highlands
 and tearing downstream,

depositing five million year-old *waimake*, Pele's tears,
smooth, shiny black-red basalt glass pellets, along stream banks,
and then running on to unload their sediments
 into the still inlets of the dark harbor;

before the skies of generous rain and long days of sun
 and the waters' borders brimming with sedge and grass,
 and the coastline full in the mesic forests of the
 (*Chamaesyce celastroides*), '*akoko*

and the (*Heliotropium anomalum*), *ewa hina hina*,
and the fragrant night blooming (*Capparis sandwichiana*), *maiapilo*
and the false sandalwood, (*Myoporum sandwicense*), *naio*,
and the trees and scrubs of the myrtle, (*Metrosideros polymorpha*), '*Ohi'a lehua*,

‘Aina 13.2

all plentiful air with the bird song of
 stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*), *ae'o*,
 coot, (*Fulica alai*), *alae ke'oke'o*,
 moorhen, (*Gallinula chloropus sandwicensis*), '*alae 'ula*,
 duck, (*Anas wyvilliana*), *koloa maoli*,

 the scarlet honeycreepers, (*Vestiaria coccine*)

and (*Hemignathus obscurus ellisianus*), *i'iwi*,
black honey eater, (*Moho apicalis*), *o'o*
hawk, (*Buteo solitarius*), *i'o*
owl, (*Asio flammeus sandwichensis*), *pueo*

before the silvery sea mullet, (*Mugil cephalus*), *'anae halo*,
spawning, hatching in the brackish waters of their southern
summer home near the mouths of these fresh watercourses,
there, growing, maturing in a placid time before

their annual migration around the island's rim,
following morning sun
along the fair, clear southern shores
that give way to the raw, black basaltic edges of the island

meeting the ocean depths' blue rages,
color purer than any gods' eyes;
having endured this southern tempestuous ocean,
these intrepid troupes driving into

the island's stillness of the eastern coastline
before arriving at their destination:
the turbulent, cold frothy waters
of the extreme northern foreland,

this the winter maturing ground for the *i'a*, fish form
of the young (*Mugil cephalus*) *amaama*
and the (*Kuhlia sandvicensis*) *aholehole*; returning eventually
in the warm season to the waters of their birth to spawn

in the west lagoon of that southern haven of the numerous inlets
where the bivalve pearl oyster, (*Pinctada radiata*), *momii pipi*, multiplying,
their numbers unimpeded, in *wai*, waters made cool and sweet
by the subterranean springs seeking harbor,

'Aina 13.3

before the red sea weed (*Gracilaria parvispora*), *limu manauea*
thriving in these *waikai*, brackish waters, the mingling
of the *wai*, waters of the many fresh springs
with the *kai*, waters of an incoming briny sea,

This land, this *'aina* was of a tidal basin.

‘Aina 14.1

*' umikumamakolu~ 14.
of a tidal basin*

25,000 years ago
Before the tidal basin,
its brilliant blue, Pleistocene waters

The true paradises, are the paradises we have lost.
— Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*

meeting cool rivers' end,
where the pearl oyster and its relations teeming

in temperatures of the glacial years abetting these watercourses,
carving deep ravines into geologic history,
these glacial ages consuming ocean fluids,
revealing primordial shorelines;

the terrain reflecting the sustained sultry days,
a thin layer of alluvial ferrous-red dirt tenuously bedding juvenile land,
its secret geology floating on a buried coral shelf
exposed by intermittent early evening eons' hot winds;

before the interglacial epochs with their tepid waters drowning
deep valleys and mouths of rivers
the ancient Hawaiians would one day name
Waikakalaua, (Waikele, near its origins), Waipio, Waiawa;

before the aged coral reefs their limestone
layered and amalgamated with the breakdown
of tens of thousands of years of basalt rock from old volcanic flows, yields
of the oxidized red dirt secreting shoreline between two island kin;

before the drowning of these lands again in warm seas rising
as the ending of one glacial age joining
an interglacial period, this process of the Pleistocene Epoch
in reprise through two million years;

where, once fiery magma oozed through a maze of volcanic tubes,
ua, rain seeped through the porous black aggregate;
these unadulterated waters, their worth joining the accumulated
aquifer's elixir afloat the saline diluents trapped deep under the island's plains;
'Aina 14.2

and cradled in the hard rock of the island's womb,
pursed in a peripheral limestone seal
of aged coral reefs encircling the emergent island,
this calcareous geological form attempting

to convince the sweet waters stay:
do not mingle with the salted waters of the ocean;
where the ebullient water's internal strain could not be contained:
tears of the earth, from them hurls of liquid: the many springs and streams.

before the earth's atmosphere sprung cool,
leaving its warm Pliocene shields,
drawn into undulating cyclic Pleistocene eras;
where volcanic flows of the young mountain range banking against edges

of the older island form to the south,
submerging the shallow, pacific channel between them
with voluminous rich basalt rock, asphyxiating the coral reefs,
delineating a long smooth hill that seen from the ocean, it could not be discerned.

This land, this 'aina was of pristine coral colonies in shallow submersions
of clear, temperate, sea waters, basking,
their calciferous forms once encircling the gently-sloped
submarine volcanic inclines of two aligned islands.

'Aina 15.1

'umikumamalima ~ 15.
of coral reefs, of the Pliocene

Geography is fate.
Heraclitus (535-475), of Ephesus, pre-Socratic Greek philosopher

approximately two million years ago

Before the stony, porous madreporae and caryophyllae,
the coral reefs on gentle Pliocene submarine volcanic inclines
bathing in tropical hyaline waters,
rimming the island,

their crusts of varying breadths and age,
their homes immersed at two and three feet at ebb tide,
their limestone layers advanced into crushed
coral beds and fossilized bryozoan marine decay

buried beneath a striated silted history,
their branched calcified limestone
sleeping under burgeoning highlands
under hot sun;

before the uplands' numerous cascades
flung themselves madly out to sea,
their demarcated freshwater courses casting
silt robbed from the infant islands' brows;

before heavy rain clouds captured by young mountain summits
showering their wares down steep, sylvan slopes, etching
plenteous waterfalls, streams, and valleys
into these vulnerable stones' matrix,

and the hot winds of protracted days
and the cyclic storms' torrential rains
raging on the prominence and the vernal plains
leading tortuously towards the azure seas,

‘Aina 15.2

deteriorating the basalt rock
into a fine ochereous-colored dirt,
staining the ground a virginal *akoko*, blood-red,
a color pleasing to the future gods,

before the weight of the island's geology
depressed its depth to six thousand feet below briny waters;
submerging existing coastlines and the determined streams
(one day to be given the names *Waikele* and *Waiawa*),

these waterways conjoined in the drowned valley of a long hill
the ancients would name *Pu'uloa*,
in its deep: the amnion sac of the island's springs,
in its deep: the kept fresh *wai*, waters.

Where this land, this *'aina*
would one day be,
lay an aggregation of volcanic rocks and their minerals,
stewed from out of the ocean waters by violent, terrestrial eruptions.

'Aina 16.1

'umikumamaono ~16.
of beginnings, island-building, Pliocene - late Miocene

“Every natural fact is some symbol of a spiritual fact.”
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

of Ko'olau 1.8-2.6 million years old; of Waianae 2.2.-3.8 million years old*

Before two basalt volcanoes in their youth,
 the elder island lying to the lee of the younger,
 their genesis: of magma thrusting out of Earth's deep inferno,
 mantle pressure throbbing, island-building:
 vermillion mass compelled towards sky, into *ea*, air,
 liquescence displacing unyielding subterranean rock, frac-
 turing solid stratum,
 cooling in columnar dikes, escaping
 the vulnerable aggregate,
 and that, verged on heaven's glimmer:
 detained
 in lava lakes,
 these purgatorial vortexes of
 violent volcanic spatterings and
 implosive gases colliding against
 the craters' stone confines,
 heaving and ebbing in
 its miserable noise
 --intoning wailing waves of a frustrated sea--
 until the ferrous-magnesium molten fury's inexorable destiny erupts atmosphere, spewing
 onto the crusted black-red floors of gargantuan calderas
 blanketed by steamy sulfuric plumes and smoky rain,
 the crimson ooze, in its fuming drive, violating geology:
 incinerating susceptible mountain walls,
 subsiding tenuous summits,
 deforming newborn flanks,
 scarring terra firma,
 quaking assaulted earth,
 denying gods;

*And now, in the twenty-first century, scientists indicate the probability of a third much older sibling, born another two million years earlier (returned, most likely, to earth's mantle by some earth-shattering force).

‘Aina 16.2

before lava,
 liquid rock, ferocious
 raging fountains, vaulting
 flaming torment into the

firmament;

before lava,

magnificent

fiery rivers,

their crimson swells,

surgingly

onto

nascent

terrain,

branching,

quickly

cooling

into

the sinewy

vitreous-black

smooth slopes

of *pahoehoe*;

‘Aina 16.3

before lava,
of a
slower

impulse,
pocked by
an in-
fini-
tude of
dimin-
utive
gas bub-
bles im-
peding
tellu-
ric runs
congeal-
ing un-
der dis-
tant sun
and re-
mote moon,
meta-
morphos-
ing into flows
and gra-
dients
of clink-
ery,
jagged
a'a
weighted
lik *ea*,

air

‘Aina 16.4

before lava,
igneous insistence
emboldened by its resplendent heat and
massive
measure
burning through vents,

demarcating rift zones,
forced out through friable cracks and fissures,
scorching
newly made ground,
stealing speed: earth swallowing it back (no measure to cut divinity's form),
searing
cavernous volcanic tubes into the underground, where
its unyielding torrents
coursed, and
gravitated,
there, plummeted,
toward
the puerperal shores,
new-formed rock pillared on fragile beaches of black
sands the shattered infinity
of red-hot basalt streams
scalding
pacific seawaters;

before lava,
the rushed, sky-flung hurls of
hot pumice, ash,
burning cinders,
blocks, glass
splinters,
pellets,
and threads,
basaltic bombs
in their
careening forms:
ribbons,
spheroids,
bread-crust,
splatters,
and fusiforms,
these ejecta,
glittered with green olivine crystals, dark augite, feldspar silicates, fine
magnetite grains, and
inspired by

‘Aina 16.5

n o x i o u s v a p o r s

s t r e a k i n g

the steel-blue colored sky
and while still air-born: chilled,
their rough forms, firmed,
gravity screaming them
back to the vestal land,
 where no winds dared
 breathe atmosphere
 into consciousness.

Before the lay of these two sibling isles,
separated by a shadow of space,
 to the northwest: born of the late Pliocene and
 to the southeast, born in the Pleistocene,

before any semblance
 of their nature
 confessed by deep seas,
no land existed here.

 But there, on the basalt-laden ocean floor,
encrusted under the tectonics of a sixteen-hundred-mile, seventy-million-year
 archipelago:
 a rich,
 red fissure birthed
 a chasm, deep,
releasing red-hot magma, fierce, into the edges of
 a blue-black aqueous
 space

afterword

... you have only to look upward to see in the plainest cloud the clearest lines
and in the flattest field your green instructions.

--Marvin Bell, "Instructions to be Left Behind"

Now, as the night attempts to conceal the day and
the torrid distant winds retrieve their ancient chants,
I listen with found awe and reverence,
standing here on this *pu'uloa*, this long, gently-inclined hill.

For you, dear reader, and for this *'aina*,
these earnest wishes:

E pulama i ka 'aina. Cherish the land.
E ike mai o Waipahu! Behold this *Waipahu!*

It is finished.

Pau.