

Na Wai Eā, The Freed Waters

*A Story of the People
of Ko`olau Moku, Maui Hikina*

1. Mahi`ai Kalo, Taro Farmer

All his life loving earth
 a living harrow waist deep in mud
planting tilling trenching shoveling plowing
 mud to field, gravel to path, stones to bank
yoked no less than animal to plow
 a year of this then *huki`ai*, harvest
shouldering the heavy bags
 heaving lifting hauling slogging
through acres of taro fields
 ancient footpaths fragile *`auwai* wetlands
swollen feet hands torqued elbows knees
 pestilences infestations droughts
year after year, year after year
 for love of family love of ancestors
love of the Elder Brother
 for love of *Hāloa*.

2. Lo`i Kalo, Taro Fields

As far as eye could see their green hearts
 were laid bare under rains
that never ceased falling a much aggrieved sun
 the dim glint of it through upstart clouds
but always the rains and he was glad for the gods'
 beneficence and the harbingers who coaxed
sunlight's bright threads the *`auku`u* herons hovering
 then ensconced in pools
of watery green expanse their emanations of light
 vectoring the same paths trod
the same earth the same ancient waterways
 the ancestors walked he regarded the plants
hungrily the same green ones whose presentiments
 were his Elder Brother *Hāloanakalaukapalili*
vivified who was born of the gods
 Wākea and *Ho`ohōkūokalani* their union
a conflagration of heaven and brightening stars
 their firstborn, the Elder Brother
stillborn buried *Ho`ohōkūokalani's* tears unceasing
 until the quickening
shimmer of green in graven earth
 the unfurling leaves
and the risen *Hāloanakalaukapalili*
 progenitor

his offspring the stalwart green-hearted ones
 who followed growing up
 out of the same earth again and again
 he called them *koa*, warriors
 as they hoisted their green banners
 forming leaf arbors under sun's radiance
 their stems rooted deep their arbors
 protecting parents, grandparents, the corm, *mākua*
 protecting children grandchildren, *ohā*, the offshoots
 succouring cradling them
 millennia of generations turning returning
 e huli, e huli, e huli ho`i, the ancestors called
 their names auspicious names naming
 their offspring in dreams
 through keen observations
 ho`ailona, signs
 close attentions to minutiae of corm
 stem petiole rhizome
 shimmering sun wind
 sea clouds and earth
 cradle of the hallowed ancestors
 and the risen Hāloa
 give us the right names the *mākua* prayed
 dispatched their entreaties released them
mana ulu, mana`ōpelu, mana weo,
 mana uliuli, mana`ula`ula, moi, piko,
lehua, ha`akea, hapa hapapū
 were names given
 and many more all his life
 he knew and never forgot
 their names
 sacred from the first
 they were the names of the generations
 of his Elder Brother
 they were the names of his family
 they were the names of kalo.

3. Maka`ala, Be Vigilant

Elena his grandmother James and Samson
 the grandfathers who brought him to the gods
 he followed along the ancient paths
 of well-tended fields
 the rows of plants who were offshoots
 of his Elder Brother green sentinels
 as far as eye could see
 he sloshed through the maze of waterways
 the irreproachable fretwork of ancestors
 arrayed he heard

their songs prayers incantations
 traceries of winds waters ocean
 he heard *Pahulena* the grandmother's birthplace
 she said her birthplace name
 and motioned toward a dense growth
 of *`ōlena* and the tall stand of *niu*
 where *`ehukai* breezes warmed
 the wide river mouth churning
 above reddish brown sheen of seaweed *limu kohu*
 spawning place of *āholehole, moi, `anae,*
pāpio, `o`opu, hīhīwai, po`opa`a
 `opihi, wana, hā`uke`uke, `a`ama
 he remembered stories fishing canoes divers their nets
 the surround of *akule, halalū,* mishaps at sea
 the *kilo i`a,* fish spotter's lair high above the *kāheka*
 the first catch offered there at the *ahu*
 he remembered his grandmother's warning
 maka`ala and that after the bosses came
aia nō iā ha`i nā `āina o mākou she said
 other men have our lands
 then her words went dry
 and *Pahulena* was no more.

4. *Waimaka, Tears*

There are hidden places
 where the high waters fall
 in rainbowed silence
 sucked in through igneous stone
 pulsing the columnar dikes
 of earth's vast waterworks
 spilling over soul's sacred edge
 Elena's tears Elena's tears.

5. *Na`aupō, Ones Devoid of Light*

From sea dregs the onslaught winds
 its shifting stars, the detritus tides
 carry dark strangers
 under cover of night
 stealthy ones of fervent prayers
 and exhortations Holy Father
 bring us safely to the village
 Pahulena in the distance
 grant us safe conduct
 in our sacred mission
 to save the unbelievers
 for Your greater glory
 Amen.

he malihini lākou no ka `āina ē
ka `āina huna wai no Kāne
strangers they come
to this land of hidden waters
belonging to Kāne
ghosts grey as gunmetal
intractable as cannons
sulphurous gunpowder flashes
their lodestars
at artillery's first report
the stalwart sons and daughters of Hāloa
rout the shadowy ones
but from dregs of darkness
there is no surcease
wave upon unending wave
commend ravening spirits
to the tasks set before them
conversions appropriations
decimations subjugations
as has been foretold
in their writs
they look upon Hāloa's people
as pitiable idolaters unclean ones
who must be brought to the One God
and called to atone
from the lost souls' darkness withal
a Savior shall lead them
their dark paths made light
the Savior's blood sacrifice
upon Golgotha's mouldering cross
their lamp of redemption
na`aupō look with dismay
upon the god *Lono's* handiwork
his raft of green mountains
his canopies of forest
they judge these iniquity
evil fruit of indolence
an affront and mortification
to industry
they are disdainful
of Kāne, his Living Waters
flowering to sea
abased are the natives
of this extravagant land
upon their stolid ramparts
na`aupō recite oaths
their kingdom come
their will be done
they issue the edicts

dispatch the cadres
 to bulldoze the lands
build fantastic scaffolding
 engineering marvels, masterworks
for excavation of the high mountains
 extraction of waters
to bring the vile gods low
 to siphon off the lifeblood
from the green realms
 of the Elder Brother
the brooding altars are abandoned
 the disconsolate moon holds no sway
as the waters are wastreled
 the fate of an unrighteous people
turned in dark hands
 through a marvel of gravity flow
the waters are extricated
 ho`ohemahema, i`ō i`ane`i
dug here, trenched there
 tunneled here, siphoned there
the uplands turned into wallows
 `inu ihu pua`a
for dirty snouted pigs
 loosed upon the land
rooting here looting there
 through gross machinations
the sacred is harried in ungodly ways
 ditches pipes channels
tunnels siphons flumes
 aqueducts intakes funnels
dark grasping hands
 leering lewd imaginings
broad hillsides of waving cane
 the far distant and arid plains
prolific with cane tassels under brightening sun
 all of this has been foretold
all has been readied, all paths cleared
 the export tariffs have been lifted
foreign labor contracts signed
 the people's protestations --
the devil take them!
 the necessary approvals have been given
government officials are aboard
 the false idols *Kū, Kāne, Lono,*
Kānaloa a me mau
 banished to the greater glory
of Almighty God!

6. *The Fisher of Men*

From high promontories
 elevated stations of the cross
the bosses offer prayers
 for the blessing of verdant lands
mahī`ai in the fields
 lawai`a at the nets
and there are remembrances
 vague recollections
of One Other
 a Fisher of Men who once led them
who fed multitudes
 with few fish and loaves
the bosses remonstrate with themselves
 as the tableau of *kua`āina*
unfolds in the lowlands
 a childlike people easily duped
to be cajoled lured away
 or forcibly removed
from the greening hills
 what do they know these unwitting
of the true faith, divine purpose
 the higher reckonings
of true believers
 little do they know
of theft treachery genocide
 deception stealth coercion
the idolators must be readied
 for the benefactions of civilization
na`aupō are filled with saccharine thoughts
 of panoramic cane
the lands' expeditious acquisition
 a foregone conclusion
the unrighteous ones' swift conversion
 to a penitent upright people
the gift of civilization
 a bargain more than fair
promised by the One God
 who from the time of Adam
conferred to His true believers
 dominion over the world
these truths being self-evident
 the bosses are feverish
with thoughts of unholy war
 upon *nā kua`āina* the people, their gods.

7. Naming the Waters

I ka wao nahele
in the god-realms of *Ko`olau*
ka`Āina i ka Wai a Kāne
the lands of the waters of Kāne
the sons and daughters of Hāloa
named the waters:
where the long waters fell seaward
ravishing black stones
where the eyes smarted from backspray
and in dark depths like stars
the seed pearl oysters
their faint songs could be heard
the name *Makapipi* was given;
where *wī*, *hīhīwai* shells
migrated upstream and down;
where *wī* groves
grew as thickets
seeding the lands
where *wī* wind sounds were heard
the name *Hanawī* was given;
where the waters scudded cloud-like
as though firmament
where a red sheen was seen above
signifying the presence of Sacred Ones
the name *Ka`a`ula* was given;
where the *mo`o* goddess
was well-pleased
and smiled at her own reflection
in the shadow waters
the name *Waia`aka* was given;
where limestone beds
of *`āko`ako`a* formed
and the *ulu maika* stones were shaped
the name *Pa`akea* was given;
the narrow-necked gourds
for water-carrying
gave *Waiohue* its name;
ravaneous Kamapua`a
the pig god
his stampeding hordes
gave *Pua`aka`a* its name;
where *wauke* was kneaded
to kapa of fine transparency
stained with `akala berries
for a red birth gift
Kōpili`ula was the name given;
where two waters converged

and `o`opu scaled waterfalls
where Pele's sister the sorceress
 Kapōma`ilele removed her genitals
sent them flying to thwart
 the rutting pig god Kamapua`a
his lust for Pele
 Wailua-Iki was the name given;
where *Kane-i-ka-Pahu-Wai*
 Kane of the Great Water Source
where he was seen in the heavenly clouds
 in the verdant mountainward ridges
where he was seen in the red-tinged rainbow
 where he was rain, lightning flashes
where he slept in the glowing light
 where his great heart was heard
in the thundering waterfalls
 cascading stones quaking corals
where kalo was planted along the high ridges
 where it was planted in the wide valleys
where it was planted inland of the teeming shores
 kaulana nā`āina kalo
a na hoa`āina
 where famous were the kalo lands
and the people who cultivated them
 Wailua-Nui was the name given;
where the gods *Kāne* and *Kanaloa*
 refreshed themselves in springs
near groves of red and yellow lehua
 `Ōhi`a was the name given;
where the stout-stemmed *olonā* grew
 where in frigid waters the strands
were immersed cured
 braided into fine white cordage
for canoe lashings, fishing lines, nets
 where it was plaited
for chiefly raiment `ahu`ula,
 kahili, lei, mahi`ole
where the stout-stemmed *ōlona* grew
 Wai`anu was the name given;
where fine-grained *milo*
 were shade trees for the old chiefs
where windstorms incised the heartwood
 the omens carved into god likenesses
made into canoe paddles, serving bowls,
 implements for planting
where prolific headwaters
 were called *moana*
the name *Waiokamilo* was given;
 where *mai`a* was food curative unguent

where its broad-leaf canopies
 were rain-coverings, enclosures
where spring waters bubbled up
 through igneous cinder, *`ākeke*
the name *Palauhulu* was given;
 sentience along the high ridges
an exhilaration of climbing, of mounting
 gave *Pi`ina`au* its name;
where thundering rains
 poured down hollows caves ravines
where the tumult echoed down ridges
 sidewise along boulder-strewn sea cliffs
where earth shuddered and heaved
 with *nū* sounds
where great schools of fish hearkened
 where the torrents narrowed
Nū`āilua was the name given;
 where the torrents were made wide
Honomanū was the name given;
 where *hāpu`u, `āmau`u, hala, `ōhe,*
niu, loulu, kī, halapepe, ulu
 where *mamaki, `ili`ahi, wiliwili,*
koa, palapalai, pala`a
 where *kukui, hau, milo, kamani, awa*
where cherished forest plants grew
 the name *Punalau* was given;
where *tapa*-beating logs were harvested
 the black and red berries
stained for dyes
 the name *Kōlea* was given;
where a glowing light appeared
 above the ridgeline
signifying the presence of *Kāne*
 the name *Ha`ipua`ena* was given;
where in cold springs
 ali`i wāhine bathed
the name *Waiakamō`ī* was given;
 where the *ali`i wāhine* ran
to the flat hiding stone
 where she found refuge
from the pig god *Kamapua`a*
 the name *Wahinepe`e* was given;
no ka mea, he mau inoa akua lākou
 e ola nō lākou a pau.
in the god-inspired naming
 the people remembered
because they remembered
 the waters lived.

8. *Ko`olau, The Windward Cliffs*

All night
and for endless days like ghost canoes
at full sail under brightening moon
the billowing `I`ale`ale winds sweep across
Ko`olau mountain seacliffs
over razor edged ridges valleys
with thunderous bursts exhalations
obscurations of light
the spectral crew worrying each blade leaf
branch with roaring cascades waterfalls
avalanches rockslides incessant rains
it is the season of *ho`oilo*
ho`iloli ke kai, the sea rages
the god Kanaloa furious his seamounts shaking
he hurls himself against seacliffs
sending `a`ama scuttling over the reefs
shoals corals the staid seaweed
limu wawai`iole, limu manauaea, limu`ele`ele,
limu kohu, limu huluhuluwaena
their swaying frondescences under frothy waves
in the uplands kalo
revel in watery pools
rainbows bead on the leaf-green
arbors of scintillate light
refractions mirrored prisms riven
by Kane-i-ka-Wai-Ola
Kāne takes the form of a night owl
he thrusts his wings and talons
disarming his enemies
Kāne god of the living waters
walks abroad with Lono
scion of water, scion of land together
summoning forth the sacred springs *Oiana!*
waters gush forth out of earth
the living waters of Kāne coursing to sea.

—Mahealani Perez-Wendt