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E Lele Ka ‘Uhane

Jessica Anuhea Carpenter

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

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When we think deeply about where we have come from, what we have done, and where we are going, a lot of reflection is required. Remembering and reflecting are fundamental to growth and paving the way for future prosperity. There are so many pieces of one's self that are easy to forget; culture and the environment may be two of those pieces for some of us. I have come to look at both of these in tandem: as one growing, breathing entity. I write poetry in response to the past, current status of, and future of my culture and the environment. As our care for Hawaiian land and resources declines, so does the prosperity of Hawaiian cultural practice. To prostitute the land is to prostitute the culture that nurtures it, and we are left with a painful lack of authenticity and a dry, silent, and abused Earth. My poetry confronts the issue of separating culture and ʻāina while urging readers to ponder their hand in the current condition of Hawaiʻi. I approach the matters in a personal way and share my perspective in hopes that it will start a conversation and lead to action.

A ruby heart  
Caged in frosty ribs of snow  
With each pluck of this soft thorny gem  
Falls a crackling flood  
A blessing, a cry, a breath of life to wash away drought

A pale opal pearl  
Encased in grey, brittle shell  
For every fall  
A feather dusts the pine below  
With the absence of a single pluck  
With the silence of a chant  
With the stifling of a breathe  
To put out every fiery cheek

I write poetry because it is how I heal. My writing is my way of contributing to the health of our ancestors. I do my best to remove as many filters between my eyes, my mind, my heart, and my hand in order for them to work as one.
Your crowns fall down
Constant as the rain it causes
And silent as a slap from an axe is brutal
Its quiet, roaring passionate fiery ʻeleu mana
Plummets to a flatline
What used to be a beautiful sunrise
To hōʻike the blossoms of life you laid to birth
Is now shameful exploitation
To the tune of excruciating silence

A dry dark congregation
As each bone laid to rest
After each bud has leaped
Lele nā ʻuhane

AN OPEN LETTER TO PAPAHĀNAUMOKU LĀUA ‘O WĀKEA

The epitome of selflessness and the embodiment of sacrifice
She breathes, he lives and pulses
Holding her breath to let us climb her ribs
Immersing herself in the silence of swallowing sea
To let us swim through her blood
Birthed a son
And wept to plunge him into the warm earth
To wait patiently in excruciating atmosphere
For us to feed and eat and nourish and live
He quivered in exhaustion to split the sky and open the heavens
Just to give us hope and show us more
He dedicated his only son
Exposed him to the suffocation of Earth
In hopes of birthing a populace of men women
Children
I chant to Papa and Wākea
Hānau moku
I will plunge the placenta of my child into mother Earth near the dwelling of my past
I traced my lineage back to Chief Keawe of the island of Hawai‘i
I will birth a prince
And keep his head below the clouds
Under the rule of Wākea
And above Papahānaumoku to care for her
I will teach him to churn the dirt beneath kalo
So he can see and feel and smell and taste
Reciprocity.