



My Hawai'i

STORY PROJECT 2008

An Anthology

A collection of stories and poems
about Hawai'i's environment

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2008

An Anthology

A collection of 25 stories and poems
about Hawai'i's environment written by
Middle School students of Hawai'i

Hawai'i Conservation Alliance and The Pacific Writers' Connection
Honolulu, Hawai'i
2008

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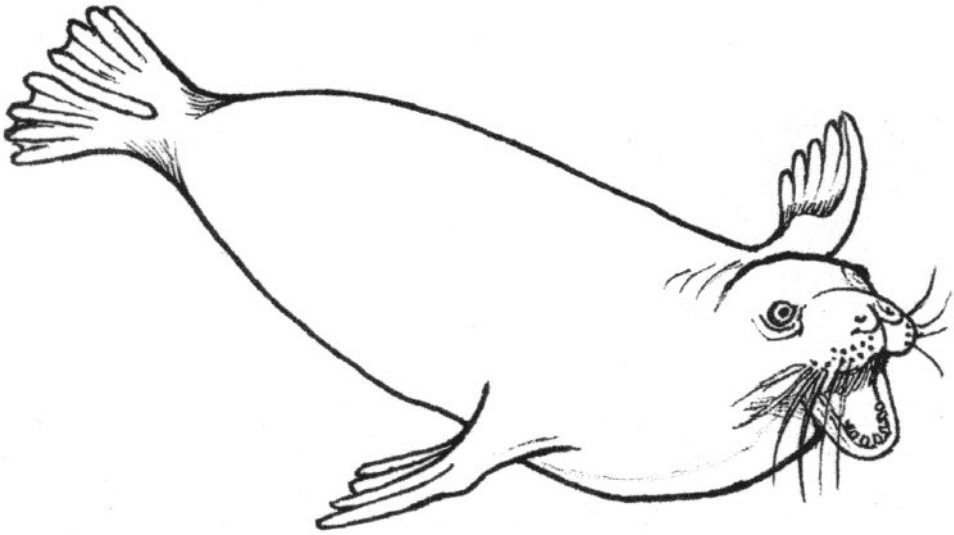
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FOREWORD

This anthology is the compilation of the 25 best literary works from the 2008 “My Hawai‘i” environmental writing contest for young people. As was true last year, we found some really talented students with the winners from this second annual competition. Though their styles range the spectrum from comical to poignant, all of these young authors have eloquently written about their personal commitment to Hawai‘i’s environment.

The “My Hawai‘i” project is an education outreach endeavor for Middle and Intermediate schools statewide. The Hawai‘i Conservation Alliance Foundation and The Pacific Writers’ Connection invited all sixth through eighth grade students from all public and private schools across the State to express in either an essay or poem their thoughts and feelings about Hawai‘i’s natural environment.

The contest again was very successful, with a total of 461 entries this year. We thank all the students for their submissions. Also a special thanks to the teachers who encouraged students to write as part of their class work. The “My Hawai‘i” stories and poems were assessed by a panel of reviewers against predetermined selection criteria. The reviewers had no access to the names of students, nor the schools they attended. Exceptional stories were then re-assessed to find the best 25.

Congratulations to all our young writers. Of the winners this year, twenty-two are from schools on O‘ahu, two from Kaua‘i, one from Hawai‘i. The “My Hawai‘i” 2008 anthology again has been arranged in two themes: firstly, stories and poems about our marine environment, and secondly, stories and poems about our ‘āina, special places, and our endangered plants and birds.

We hope that you all will continue to express your concern for our environment not only through your writings, but also by encouraging your peers, families and friends to care for and protect our land and sea for future generations. We plan to run another writing contest next year and encourage more young people and schools to participate.

Takiora Ingram

The Pacific Writers’ Connection

Deanna Spooner

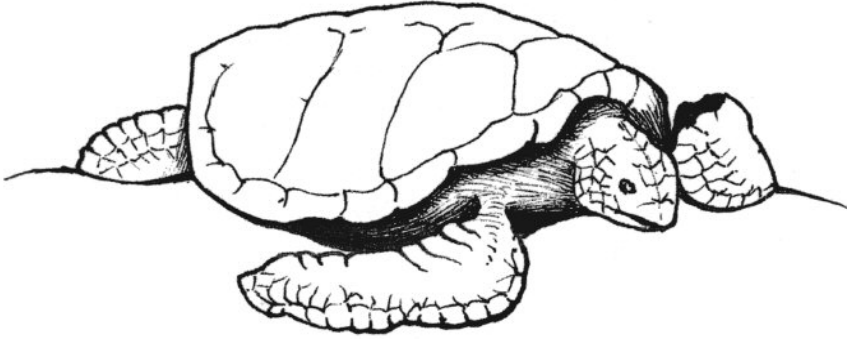
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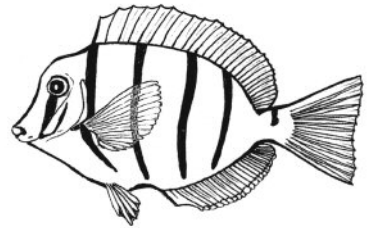
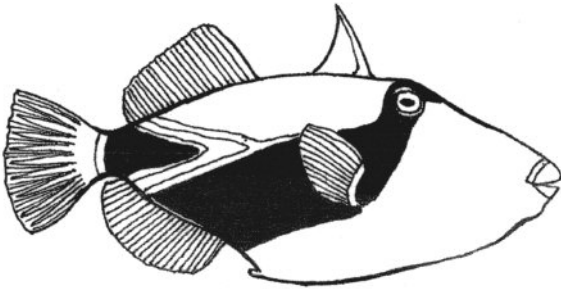
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Mahalo nui loa:

- All 461 young people who submitted their creative writing expressing their issues and concerns about our environment;
- All home-schooling parents and teachers from the 25 schools that participated: Aiea Intermediate School, Christian Liberty Academy, Enchanted Lake Elementary, Ewa Elementary School, Gus Webling Elementary, Hawai'i Preparatory Academy, Hoala School, 'Iolani School, Island Pacific Academy, Kailua Intermediate School, Kaimuki Christian School, Kamehameha Schools, Kapolei Middle School, Ka'u High & Pahala Elementary School, Keaau Middle School, Keonepoko Elementary, Kihei Charter School, Kona Christian Academy, Kula High & Intermediate School, Le Jardin Academy, Moloka'i Middle School, Na'au, Stem Academy KCS, Waimea Canyon Middle School, Webling Elementary;
- Mariza Silva, for coordinating the "My Hawai'i" story project;
- The panel of 38 reviewers: Lisa Baxa, Maile Bottorf-Wilkinson, Norma Bustos, Casey Carmichael, Kathy Cassity, Colette Coleman, Lillian Coltin, Janice Crawl, Craig DeSilva, Heather Eijzenga, Michelle Gorham, Phyllis Ha, Wendy Havlik, Jessica Hawkins, Beleza Higa, Ray Khalatbari, Dana Kokubun, Tom LaBelle, Gayle Lau, Stri Longanecker, Betsy McCreary, Jennifer Metz, Lydi Morgan, Colleen Moriarty, Katie O'Neil, Ashvina Patel, Maureen Pescaia, Madeleine Portuondo, Christopher Puttock, Deanna Spooner, Jacquelyn Sturdivant, Kathy Sullivan, Richard Sullivan, Jan TenBruggencate, Ruth Ann Thayer, Pat Tsuji, Mike Weidenbach, William Wilkinson;
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 - The Pacific Writers' Connection,
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OUR MARINE ENVIRONMENT



An Underwater World

*By Camille Larkins
Island Pacific Academy*

I dive down, taking a big breath before I cross the border into a watery wonderland. I look beneath me – it seems that the sand goes on forever. I plunge down more. The water is deep here, maybe 20 feet. Finally, I touch the bottom. I flip onto my back. I stare up. The water is crystal clear, and the way the sun rays beat onto the surface is amazing. This is my Hawai'i.

The cold water down here sends chills through my spine. I wish I could stay here forever. Maybe if I keep dreaming, I will sprout fins and become one of the 'a'awa or a hilu. Or I could be a nai'a, a spinner dolphin. The sea creatures seem so perfectly happy. I want to live in a world like the one underwater.

Here, nothing exists. My math homework isn't on my mind. Neither is the big test tomorrow or the soccer match on Saturday. No, nothing exists here. It is silent and still. All I think of is the beautiful world under the water. If I am on the surface, my life returns. I will realize that I do have homework. But for now I am in a peaceful world and I don't have to do anything.

I see little manini on the floor of the wide ocean. There are many manini crowding in the school. I see that they are picking at a piece of rubbish. I look around. This is not the only piece of litter in the water nearby. There are fishing lines, cans, plastic, and styrofoam scattered in the water. Other animals will come like the manini have. What if a honu or a monk seal comes next? I know that if this goes on, I will have no underwater world to retreat to. I must stop the littering.

Finally, I am out of breath. I must return to the world I came from. The ideas for helping the environment start popping into my mind. Maybe I could organize a trash pickup day, or I could go to a hearing and give testimony about conserving the 'āina. There are so many ways to help, even little ones.

After coming into shore and walking home, I think about what I should do. I daydream about starting a petition. I could get all of the people in Hawai'i to sign it. They would agree with me – there must be a better way of catching and prosecuting people who litter.

I have the power of helping the environment. So do you. We have the right to have this beautiful Hawai'i to live in and enjoy. We have the responsibility to take care of the environment – from the tips of the mountains to the bottom of the ocean. If we can do that, my Hawai'i, and yours too, will be sustained forever.



The Remarkable Seal

*By Lance Chee
Na'au, A Place for Learning*

The endangered monk seal
glistens on the citron shores
where the lustrous sun
paints his slick bronze back.

The languid monk seal drifts
through the thick forest of seaweed
while looking for a delectable treat.

Two young monk seals with their silver fur
play in the chilling waters of Kure Atoll
as the amber sun descends into the drowsy sea.

A extravagant monk seal
with its colorful copper coat
and its golden belly
darts to eat some savory lobster delicacy.

A precious monk seal
zooms through the dark silent water
when it sees a ferocious tiger shark.

The endangered monk seal
escapes from the deadly tiger shark
its numbers dwindling –
another monk seal saved,
another hope to protect
this extravagant species from extinction.

The Ocean's Cry for HELP

*By Hillary Oki
Kapolei Middle School*

I opened my eyes, caught sight of the bright, blazing sun shining over and through the clear, blue water of Hanalei Beach in Kaua'i. Struggling to hold my breath, I swam to the surface above. Once I surfaced, I caught my breath, but found myself admiring the smell of wet sand and the cool, constant sprays of the waves, once they crash.

"HO! Dis' is da winna'. Just me and da beach," I said with relief, floating on my back, chilling.

"LILINOE! TIME FO' GET OUT!" called my dad.

"FINE!" I replied, with both disappointment and irritation.

Dragging my body out of the water, I looked back at the horizon, and said with a whisper, "Perfect."

The next morning, the first thing that I did was put on my bathing-suit and head out the door towards the beach. Once I reached the water, I dived in. When I started to struggle, I surfaced. But, when I surfaced, I found a sheet of "SARAN™" wrap on my head, STILL GREASY!

"EWWWW!!!" I screamed, grossed out.

And right then, and there, I found several types of trash floating on the surface of the water. Sick to my stomach, I swam to shore, and stayed out of the water. Then, there in the distance, I saw a figure, swimming toward shore; it was my friend, the honu, Alaka'i.

"Eh, Lilinoe. Howzzit?" Alaka'i asked.

"Not too good. LOOK!" I said pointing to the trash.

"I KNOW! It's been occurring for a long time, now, and this is not the only place. Pollution."

“What?”

“Yah!”

Suddenly, I heard a distant cry, “Can someone show some aloha and help my friend?! Anyone? PLEASE!” It was Ikaika, the shark.

“What’s wrong Ikaika?” asked Alaka’i.

“It’s Pua! She went for a swim and came back looking and feeling sick!”

“Kay! Show me where she stay, me and Lilinoe might be able to help,” replied Alaka’i, and away we went.

Pua was another friend of mine, she’s a Hawaiian Monk Seal, one of the sweetest. When we found Pua, she was coughing in her sleep.

“Is she going to be alright?” Ikaeka asked, worried.

“I can’t tell,” I replied.

“She’s sick, from the pollution,” Alaka’i explained. “We have to take her to the hospital, or the vet, or SOMETHING!”

But suddenly, Pua stopped coughing, and slowly, woke up.

“Howzzit?” she whispered.

“We’re fine! What about you? You’re the one sick!” I asked concerned.

“Oh, fine. I just went out for a swim, but felt sick when I got back. But, now I feel fine.”

Relieved, Alaka’i, and Ikaika, and I made a goal for ourselves -- to try and keep as many beaches clean as possible. To at least keep a piece of our beautiful place that I call ku’u home, Hawai’i, still beautiful.

Flame Angelfish

(Centropyge loriculus)

*By Kellie Yamada
Na'au, A Place for Learning*

Angelfish flies in the luminous sea
with bright velvety
crimson and citron colors
that shine for miles
in the gentle tides.

The colorful angelfish lights
up even the darkest waters,
the ocean, a calming mix
of azure and emerald waves that burst
upon the Hawaiian cliffs.

The sharp rocks fall
into the cerulean horizon.

Suddenly a new predator appears —
a scuba diver seeking
a nice aquarium fish
to brighten up the office
flutters into a safe cave
along the coast of Hilo,
where dark imperial jade
algae flows around.

The radiant angelfish
is covered in a slippery
soft chartreuse camouflage,
no longer an appealing showpiece
for the inconsiderate collector:
in the beautiful lilac coral reefs,
the scuba diver lurks in the hidden
depths where the distant sun
struggles to shine.

A Change For Good

*By Andrew Okimura
'Iolani School*

I flopped ashore a nice white sandy beach on the great island of O'ahu. It was a clear sunny day and the water couldn't have been better for swimming. But I had been swimming since the early morning and now it was time to sunbathe on the beautiful beach. When I got up there I saw my brother Neeko already on the shore. He was lying and basking in the sun with his shell green and covered with slimy seaweed.

As I made my way up the hill I saw why he was lying unusually still. There were several human beings that were stalking him and standing over him. I was in complete shock but I did not want to leave my only living brother. He was all the family I had. But, what could I do? All I could do was wait for them to pass.

Eventually those kids passed but not before seriously harassing my brother. They threw sand at his face and poked his shell with sticks. I asked him, "Are you ok, bro?"

"No! No!" he said fiercely. "I hate those people who do that to us. But it's so hard to just leave because I love the beaches here so much and I could not imagine myself living anywhere else."

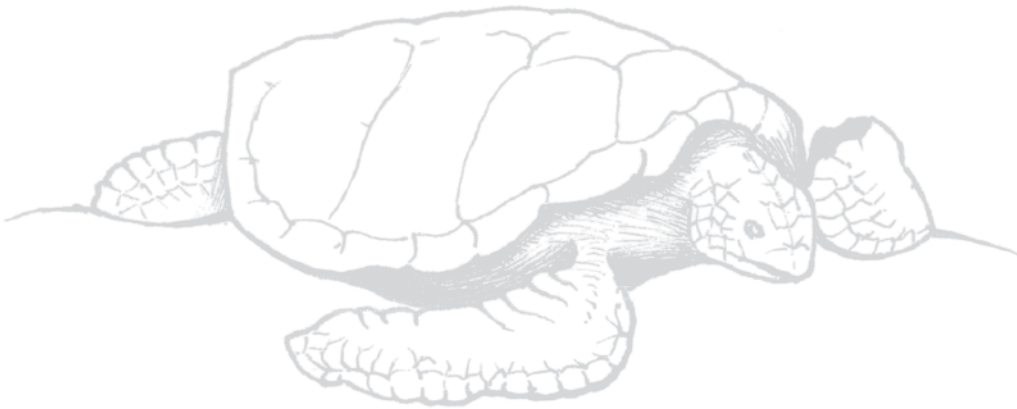
"I know what you mean Neeko, some people really respect us here and others are just so irritating!" I shouted.

"Hopefully things here will change because I just can't live like this," Neeko stated.

Several years passed by and we both stayed together roaming around the clear waters of Hawai'i. Again, on another very cool breezy day, I had to come onto the beach to sunbathe again. This time, I saw a bunch of signs saying "No Coming Within 50 ft of Turtles, \$500 FINE." Neeko and I were very pleased by this effort to

save us because in the past few years many of my close cousins have gone because of humans. We saw some little boys walking with their parents and when the boy approached us, his parents read the sign and quickly pulled them back.

Our lives are much safer now because of the new changes that the people here are making. But only slowly are my cousins coming back, but I'm glad we get to stay in these beautiful Hawaiian waters for our lives.



My Hawai'i

*By Paris Marie Bell
Kailua Intermediate School*

Ko'olau mountains grace our sky,
Golden Plovers glide on by,
Fresh air dances in my face,
Hawai'i is a very special place!

Baby whales breach in the ocean,
Canoes dock on the beach,
I float on my back
While honu swim within my reach.

Blue ocean surrounds me,
Sunshine sparkles on its waves,
Palm trees rustle in the breeze,
Surfers enjoy their lazy days.

Majestic Mokulua,
Powdery sand between my toes,
Can life get any better?
Heaven only knows!

We snowboard at Mauna Kea,
Snorkel in Kona Bay,
Where else can one enjoy these treats
Within the very same day?

We must take care of our environment,
Don't let it fade away,
If we want our children to enjoy
What we enjoy today.

There's no place like my island home,
With beauty far as I can see,
It's no wonder we always laugh and say:
"Lucky we live in Hawai'i!"

Dangers by Waikīkī

*By Jason Loui
'Iolani School*

"Grandpa, tell me a story."

"Okay, I have a story. It takes place forty years ago in the year 2008..."

"Off the shores of O'ahu there was once a Hawaiian monk seal named Alika. Alika was a very courageous monk seal who would help any sea creature in need. One beautiful Hawaiian summer day, he was swimming with his friend Kawika, a loyal humuhumunukunukuapua'a, off of Waikīkī.

'Hey, Kawika! Did you notice the strange new sea animals around here? Some kind of look like weird jellyfish and others look like they are made of rings.'

'Yeah, I've seen a lot of them lately. They don't swim but just float around with the waves,' said Kawika.

The two friends began to swim to the reef when they heard something groan, 'Help!'

'What was that!' exclaimed Alika. 'Wait, I think it's coming from down there. Let's go check it out.' As they got closer to the noise, they saw a little honu with the new ring animal around his neck.

'Help me!' the honu exclaimed. 'This is choking me!'

Alika and Kawika tried tirelessly to slip the ring creature off the honu's neck. After a few minutes with no success, Kawika exclaimed, 'This is no sea animal. It must be something from the humans.

'Kawika, I'm going to get help. You stay with the honu,' said Alika. As he swam away a crab came out from under a rock.

'Crab, can you help me cut this thing off?' said Kawika. The crab agreed and with his pincers carefully clipped the ring off.

'Mr. Crab, thank you!' exclaimed the honu.

'No problem, kid,' the crab said as he shuffled away.

With the honu freed, Kawika went to look for Alika to tell him the good news.

As he passed by Waikīkī boat harbor he saw a plume of red liquid by the sea floor. He looked at where it was coming from. It was Alika! 'Are you okay?' he exclaimed

'Is that you Kawika?' Alika groaned.

'Yeah! What happened? You have deep cuts all over your body!'

'I was looking for help when I saw something coming quickly towards me,' Alika moaned, 'I slowed down to see what it was, thinking maybe it could help us. As it came closer it didn't look like a normal sea creature. Then it hit me. That was no animal; it was a monster! By the time I figured that out, it rammed me. The spinning blades on the back gave me all these cuts.'

'I hate those humans,' Kawika exclaimed, 'They don't care about the ocean or the creatures who live in it. They're hurting and killing all of us.'

'Ouch! I don't think I can hold on much longer.'

'Don't say that! I'll get help for you, just wait here,' exclaimed Kawika as he swam off into the reef.

"That's the end of my story."

"Grandpa, what happened to Alika?"

"Kawika got him help, but it was too late."

"Are there any monk seals or humuhumunukunukuapua'a left in Hawai'i?"

"No, they are extinct. By the time everyone took action, it was already too late. If we had just acted sooner they might still be here today."

"I didn't really like that story Grandpa."

"Well, I have another story. It's about how humans changed to renewable energies like wind, wave, and solar power, and how people stopped polluting the oceans and the air. But, that's for another day."

"I think I'll like that story better."

Something Out of the Blue

*By Alexandra Masaquel
'Iolani School*

Oh, what a warm bed. The brush of a sheet of sand shifts onto my glossy, grey back as the steady wind blows calmly. I shyly turn my head to the left, looking at the elder seal tanning right next to me. I peer towards the hazy horizon to catch the glimpse of a swarm of tender fish. I squirm out into the crashing waves and dive into the ocean. I open my mighty jaws like a net and catch the little critters one by one, filling my belly up 'til I can't handle any more. When I notice I have floated down, I burst through seaweed to the surface. I jump into the air, flipping slimy, green seaweed like hair. Then with the strength I have, I lumber upon a rock, dozing into sleep mode as my tail flipper drifts back and forth in the water.

I wake up to rolling waves slapping me with great intensity. I watch a ship sail into the harbor. The sun is beginning to set under the water so I quickly knock out of my day dream and set out for one last meal. Twirling through the water, I get to my favorite place with majestic coral reefs and tropical fish for dinner. Something interesting floats in front me. I look from the top to the bottom of it with curiosity. I swim around these ropes with holes in them and surprisingly see a honu's head caught in the odd object.

"What is this contraption you are stuck in?" I gently ask the honu.

"Don't get near me. This is a net, one thing you don't want to get captured in! Just back away for your own sake," the honu said.

I heard humans shouting above me and the net was jerked upwards. I watched as the honu was dragged up into the shadow abyss.

Hanauma Bay

*By Danielle Huang
'Iolani School*

Sandals from an ABC store protect the feet of tourists as they scuffle down the steep, winding asphalt road that leads to Hanauma Bay. They grind the sands around me, in familiar and rhythmic crunches. Edging my way through tourists, I finally reach the sand. Fine particles of sun-warmed sand brush through my Roxy slippers as I run through to my favorite spot, a little caved-in seat right in the middle of the beach. The waves are inviting, quickly receding, expecting me to follow. I wade into clear, green waters; while the rest of my family finally reaches my blanket.

In the deep I gaze at the rocky terrain of the ocean below. Nimble bantam fish shift through porous rocks. Suddenly two black circles stare at me, making me jolt in surprise. The two black circles soon become eyes with a head connected to a semi-circular body, a honu! As I near the shore I reach my younger sister, with her bright yellow swimsuit, and clear snorkel she is camouflaged near the shallows, playing with the many fish. Her black hair throws off her disguise.

Later, the sky shines vibrantly red and orange from the sunset. I ponder at the dark waves, before starting my climb. With the rest of my family ahead of me, I stroll silently. In my mind I wish for everything to stay the same, the waters to stay clear, and the many creatures in the ocean to be safe, but I know that nothing will ever be the same.

Time for bed, now children," I whisper calmly.

"Tell us another story, Grammy," two voices whine,

"It's getting late," I reply, looking out the circular window. Through the window I see the planet I once knew. The once-living Earth stood there, now a crinkled black, burnt ball. We are in space shuttles, searching for a new Earth. This time we will lavish it with care, lamenting the Earth we left unprotected and destroyed.

My Hawai'i

*By Kiana Ringuette
Kailua Intermediate School*

The sun shone steadily up ahead as I waded into Hanauma Bay's crystal clear waters. My partner, a few feet behind me, followed. I pushed my goggles into place, took a deep breath and fit the snorkel piece into my mouth. Then I dove.

Instantly my world changed. From sandy beaches filled with tourists and locals, to a watery blue paradise. The water enveloped me like a cool, comforting blanket. A rainbow wrasse swam beneath me and a rock crab scuttled away. A school of minuscule fish gracefully twisted and turned like a never ending wave.

I skirted around a large, rugged rock and swam out a few more yards. An alarmed butterflyfish zigzagged around me as I silently glided above a pair of yellow tangs. Seaweed was clustered on a rock, waving like limp hands.

I turned where the reef dropped off, not wanting to run into any of the bigger fish. As I swam away, I noticed a single tentacle protruding from a small crevice. Drawing closer, I watched in fascination as a brown octopus slowly inched out of its hiding place. Then, catching sight of me, it let out a small cloud of black ink and retreated.

Continuing on my way, I began to notice other creatures hiding in the reef. A few tiny gobies, camouflaged by the coral, stood as still as stone. A bold moray eel poked its head out and snarled defiance at a passing fish, revealing its cotton white mouth. A scorpionfish, as algae-covered as the rocks, lay waiting for an unsuspecting victim to snatch.

A movement in the sand between two rocks caught my eye. Barely distinguishable from its surroundings, a sand puffer pretended to be invisible. Then a larger shape caught my attention.

A green sea turtle glided by gracefully, slowly propelling itself with its flippers. I kept my distance, not wanting to disturb the peaceful creature. Surgeonfish

kept pace with it, delicately nibbling the algae growing on its back, and weaving around the giant. Without pausing to look at me, the honu continued on its way, into the blue.

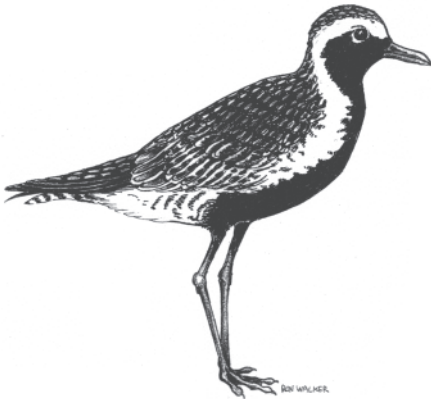
As I continued on my way, a small school of yellow snappers frantically swam past me. Wondering why they were alarmed, I slowly turned around and saw the unmistakable shape of a reef shark. Though the predator was only four or five feet long, I knew it could inflict a nasty bite. Slowly, I moved out of its way. This beautiful creature deserved awe and respect, not panic. Like turtle, the shark ignored me. I watched it move like an ingenious, smoothly flowing machine, perfectly suited to survival. Cutting through the water like a knife, it pursued its prey over the reef. I watched it leave with amazement, wishing the moment could have lasted a little longer, but glad the predator didn't pay much attention to me.

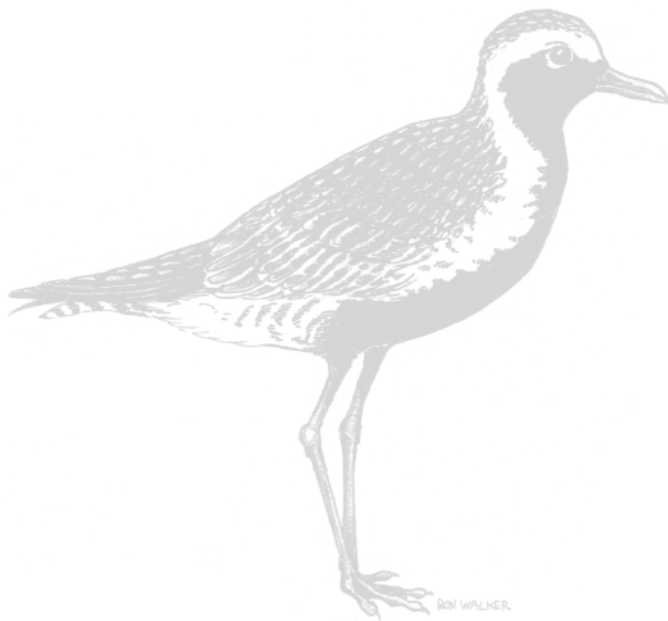
A hand on my elbow pulled me back into reality. I broke the surface and saw the sun was setting, sending scarlet and orange streaks through the sky. After making sure I saw her, my partner headed back toward the beach. I followed her with regret, remembering how beautiful and amazing my Hawai'i was.





'ĀINA, SPECIAL PLACES, FLORA AND BIRDS OF HAWAI'I





The Only Place for Me

*By Tanya Haverly
Kailua Intermediate School*

The echo of the ancients whispering their chants in the wind
while the grass dances to the sound of their voices can still be heard

In my Hawaiian Land

The pearl-like beauty of the Islands radiates over the sapphire waters
a jewel of a treasure from Heaven that has fallen

In my Hawaiian Land

The extraordinary colors pay glory and homage
to the lowly foliage of the Earth

In my Hawaiian Land

The beaches, volcanoes, trees, plants, flowers, animals
are for all to experience and wonder at

In my Hawaiian Land

The beautiful sunshine that comes all year long,
brightens even the grayest of days

In my Hawaiian Land

The golden fruits fit only for the richest of kings
are grown in abundance, for all to enjoy
In my Hawaiian Land

The clean air pure with light, fragrances, and energy
swirls from the top of the volcanoes to the edge of the shore
In my Hawaiian Land

The strongest of people working to keep this world
are made weak with their love for their home
In my Hawaiian Land

The ancient land of pride and freedom
points the way to the future
In my Hawaiian Land.

The Old Man from Mānoa

*By Zeke Kearns
'Iolani School*

Mr. Yamada is one of the oldest men in Mānoa who have lived in Hawai'i all their lives. He lives alone in a small house in Mānoa; his only company his dog, Keo. His wife has long since passed away, and his children live on the mainland. He lives a solitary life, having retired after working for the post office for 40 years. He's used to hard work, and the benefits you reap because of it. He was aware of the environment long before most other people, thanks to a relative in the Department of Land and Natural Resources. He always did his part to help conserve nature. He likes to think he could pass with no regrets. He has done his part. But his idle days are soon to end ... when a realization comes.

Mr. Yamada awoke with the sun, its rays falling upon his pillow and waking him as gently. He takes a shower, but ...does the water seem just a little browner now than it did when he was a boy? He makes breakfast. Cereal. He pours himself a glass of tap water, as he has done for the past 70 years. Seems to him the water just doesn't taste as clean as it used to. Now, to the morning paper. More stories about tourism and the environment. More stories about how Hawai'i's natural beauty is being depleted.

This depresses Mr. Yamada, and he decides to take his dog for a walk. This will cheer him up. As he's leaving his house he notices a man washing his car over a storm drain. Mr. Yamada's heart falls as he sees the toxic bubbles disappear into the drain, on their way to the ocean. Long ago, people didn't clean their cars with toxic chemicals; water and hard work did the job. On his walk he notices that the air doesn't taste as clean as it used to. Come to think of it, almost nothing seems like it used to anymore. The water seems polluted, the air seems dirty, and everywhere people seem to have less regard for the land.

When Mr. Yamada gets home he looks back on his life... and he cries. What has he done to deserve this? He has always lived with regard for the land simply

because he has to live on it. He realizes that tourists don't take care of the land because to them it's just a moment in time, just a brief stop in their lives. They can litter and waste all they want because they don't have to live here! And Mr. Yamada realizes that he is dying. Not because he's old, and not because it's his time. He's dying because the land is dying. And it's not the realization that he's dying that makes him weep. It's the fear that the land will be dead before he is that really makes him despair in life, despair in the world, despair in people. How could people allow this paradise become a floating junkyard? How could people allow this place to become less than it was merely because they're too lazy to pick up their own trash? How could people allow paradise to become a floating hell just because they don't live here?

Later that year Mr. Yamada died. His children returned from the mainland to attend his service. In his will he spoke from the grave, telling the people at his funeral what killed him. He revealed that his death was murder. Murder most foul.

As the executor took to the podium his sweat dripped onto the will. It was his first day in this new job. He hoped this will would be easy to read.

"I will now read the will of Mr. Edward Yamada:" said the executor "'To my children I leave my entire fortune, of \$176,473.00. To each one, \$58,824.33.'" This was going well. "'To my lovely wife Helen I leave my eternal love and care. To Keo I leave the words 'good boy!' and a milk bone.'" The executor was starting to get the hang of this.

"'And to the people of Hawai'i, I leave.....'" the executor's voice faltered. This was different. This went outside the norm. Mr. Yamada's children started to give the executor strange looks. This embarrassed him, so he continued. "'To the people of Hawai'i, I leave ... a warning. Don't kill the island like you killed me. Pick up your trash. Don't dump it somewhere, like you have some right to destroy this land, our home. You people. I know you. You're my neighbors, and my friends and my family. You are people of Hawai'i. And you are killing your home.'" "

There was stunned silence. Tears replaced the sweat that had dripped off the executors face and onto the will. That someone could use his dying breath to warn the people of Hawai'i against their own actions was touching to him.

His brutal admonition shook the island, eventually making the national news. As his story is told, bitter realization spreads over the state; if we want to keep living here

we have to be active in our protection of the island. If a tourist leaves trash on the ground, don't just look at it ... call him over and educate him about protecting the land. State laws were passed to give money to programs trying to educate students about the environment, and what we can do to protect it.

And finally, years after Mr. Yamada's death, it looked like the island was making a comeback. The water table was fuller than it had been in 50 years. The numbers of most of the endangered species in Hawai'i were "in the black." The beaches were clean and the air tasted fresh. The island was alive and it had a good chance of staying that way. All because of one old man from Mānoa, who realized that the island wasn't quite what it used to be ... and did something about it.

Mililani 'Ike

*By Allie Kim
'Iolani School*

Streams of cars trample over tender wounds incised upon your sides. Away from the ostentatious SUVs, I move myself closer to you.

As I jog full-speed up your side, my insides sting as though they've been pan-seared in Habanero sauce. Brittle eucalyptus branches snap beneath my feet as I patter up your slopes. An iridescent sunset serves as a backdrop to your broad, hazy figure.

I drop in a patch of your chartreuse grass blades, look ahead, and gasp for breath. In the distance, the land scoops and rises sharply to your neighbor, the Wai'anae Mountains. Their features arrange themselves in a rainbow of purples. Squinting through tears, I can make out blurred figures of trees on the steep mountains. I stare down from the top of the world which is your peak. As the 'āina is slowly illuminated by a scintillating full moon, I bound down your steep slope and return home.

I sleep at night because you block the sun from my droopy eyelids, and I wake in the morning because you remind the sun that it's time to rise.

Once again, I lace up my running shoes to pay a visit to you, my friend. The nippy morning air of central O'ahu leaves my ears and nose tingling. I race up your side, again careful to avoid your permanent gashes. A few cars beat their engines down you on this Sunday morning.

While I jog, the smells of your eucalyptus gently permeate the crisp air. Greeting me are tree branches of all kinds that sway in your winds. Just beneath my striding feet crawl your tiny keiki. A nearby ditch utters a monotone buzz as I make my way upward. At your top, hand-crafted by roping vines and large trees, is an arch that makes way for a dense forest from which a harmony of buzzes can be heard. Beneath your arch, I lie, my hair sprawled upon a thin blanket of your grass. Your pikake-scented winds evaporate the sweat that shines on my face. Once I have caught my breath, I glide down your side, my ponytail fluttering behind.

Looking up at you from a crosswalk at your base, I notice a layer of periwinkle haze. And somewhere on this island, a realtor in shined shoes and a Gucci suit is calling a meeting in which they will decide to tear your skin apart and then mask the deep wound with a house. Cars too-large-for-use and unnecessary air conditioning units will cause that beautiful green skin of yours to suffocate and eventually fall off.

You, my running partner, my friend, my haven, shiver on your deathbed in central O'ahu. While someone on this island calls 911 for help as they cannot breathe, you are buried in the same situation, helpless. Police, firemen, and EMT workers don't hear your desperate pleas for help. Your winds howl, knocking over large trees and tearing off roofs of homes, but still, your cries cannot be heard. I hear them loud and clear because on one stormy day, while jogging, two blue patches of sky cleared overhead. These were your eyes and they told me, told me to be your EMT, your savior.

Suffocating gasses can be reduced by just a little. And those pieces of trash itching on your sides can be picked up, even if it is just some of it. I will take those small steps for you, and sooner or later, others will join my effort, turning those steps into strides. In the year 2013, at the end of my time in grade school, I will lie upon you, my hands folded behind my head, and I will see your eyes again. They will sparkle and thank me for being that doctor with the miracle cure. You will wonder who I am and I will tell you that I am one of your keiki.

Nani's Adventure

By Toni Beck

Ka'ū High and Pāhala Elementary School

Aloha, my name is Nani. I am a Nēnē goose and I live in Volcano National Park. I love living here because it is peaceful and I have many friends that live near me. My home is filled with hāpu'u in which we play hide-n-seek. The cool rains ensure us we have good, healthy vegetation so we can eat. My friend Aka the 'Apapane lives in the park too. We love to play around the 'ōhi'a trees because of the bright 'ōhi'a lehua flower. We also love the lava rocks because they're fun to play tag on. The lava at night is cool because it is kind of like a night-light.

One day my friend Kea and I wanted to finally fly out of the park for the first time. Once we reached the fence we stopped.

"Ready?" Kea asked me.

"Yeah, lets go" I replied. Then we took off. While I was in the air looking for 'ohelo berries a big, shiny, moving thing was going really fast and almost hit us.

"What was that?" Kea asked.

"I don't know but it was sure scary" I answered. "Let's get out of here". So, we took off again toward a grassy area.

While I was catching my breath Kea asked, "What is that noise?"

I stopped and listened. As I stood quietly I heard a really loud squeaky noise. I answered, "Kea, I don't know. We should go take a look." We carefully flew around to find what was making that awful sound. While we were in the air we looked down and saw a big, ugly, yellow, metal machine moving through the forest.

"What is that thing and why is it tearing down all the trees?"

"I don't know," I replied. "It doesn't look friendly, we better get out of here."

As we were flying away we flew into another forest to find something to eat and to rest. While I was looking I found a perfect 'ohelo berry bush for us to share.

Right when I was going to tell Kea about the berries, I looked up and saw a mean, growling face of a dog. "Kea," I whispered.

"What?" she replied.

"FLY!" I yelled as the dog was lunging for me.

We flew and flew. Finally, we looked down and noticed he wasn't chasing us. We landed in an area with a bunch of unordinary weeds. As we looked at the mysterious plant a happy face spider crawled down the branch of this weird plant.

"ALOHA," the cheerful spider said. "What are you guys doing here, shouldn't you guys be in the park?" he inquired.

"Well we were curious and wanted to fly out here for the first time" I explained.

The happy spider all of a sudden became very serious, "This place is not safe for you, and it is better for you guys to be in the park where you are protected."

"We can see that" Kea answered.

My stomach began to make a grumbling noise. "Where is all the food?" I asked hungrily. The spider explained that an invasive plant is taking over the other plants.

"That's sad, how are the other animals outside the park going to eat?" The spider could not answer.

It started to get dark and my stomach was still growling. "Let's get back to the park," I said eagerly.

We thanked the spider and started to head back. As we were rushing back to meet the sun, we heard loud squawking. Kea and I decided to go and take a look. Kea was ahead of me and she then turned around and yelled "HURRY UP! We have to help. It looks like another Nēnē is in trouble". We flew down and saw a long, brown, ugly mongoose trying to take an egg from the Nēnē's nest. On the count of three both Kea and I squawked our loudest and startled the mongoose which ran into the bushes.

One Step Towards the Heart of Hawai'i

*By Minjeong Kim
Kula High and Intermediate School*

Beneath the sky and between the mountains and the ocean lie the most beautiful children of Hawai'i. The wondrous plants in my garden teach me that Hawai'i is not only made up of the unpredictable ocean and crowded beaches, but of many calm green living plants as well. As a girl freshly from the mainland, everything on Hawai'i was so strange and unfamiliar to me, but my garden welcomes me with open leaves like an old friend.

The agriculture class in my school helped first introduced me to the idea of gardening. I was actually not quite excited for the class since I had never gardened before and the idea seemed like a tedious job that I would not enjoy doing. However, everything changed for me as I stepped into the breathtaking world of gardening.

It all started one day when I buried my hand under the ground to transplant a baby plant in my small garden. As soon as the wet soil reached the tips of my fingers, I heard the soft whispers of the earth and felt my heart flutter. It was like nothing I had ever experienced before, but I absolutely loved it.

Since then, I take extra care of my baby herbs, wishing them to grow into brilliant green plants. My garden is full of different varieties of herbs, and all of my herbs contain at least one of the many characteristics of Hawai'i. When I brush my hand across the stiff leaves of basil, I envision a quiet, still water in front of me. The ocean has seeped into the red soil of Hawai'i, and then into the basil. The swaying cilantro reminds me of the sugarcane plants in the west of Kaua'i, and the red beet roots uncover the passionate and loving heart of Hawai'i that had been buried away from me.

One step after another, I am moving closer to Hawai'i every day as I spend more time with the maturing plants. Some die away, but I do not despair since my other plants encourage me to take better care next time. Then I realize that my

friends on Hawai'i would do the same for me, encourage me through my hardest times. I grasp the fact that it was me who had not been opening up to the people of Hawai'i and Hawai'i itself and decided to open my heart as much as I can.

Soon the herbs are ready to be harvested, ready to be given out to many students in my school and their families. It greatly pleases me to think that something I put all my heart into will be enjoyed by a group of people who understand Hawai'i better than I do. Maybe they feel a little Hawai'i growing inside of them when they eat my plants. Giving out the basil, cilantro, green onions and more, I learn that one of the main characteristics of Hawai'i was sharing.

My time with gardening soon ends as the semester flies by. However, I have learned so many things about Hawai'i through my garden that I will never be able to forget gardening. I can still hear the whispering of the earth, taste the fresh and sweet leaves, see rows of brilliant green herbs, and feel them against my hand. That garden is my first Hawai'i, but not the last. I believe that soon the whole Hawai'i will accept me just like my garden, and that will be the day where I understand the true heart of Hawai'i.

Rest Upon Me

*By Zachary Pang
Na'au, A Place for Learning*

If you are a happy-faced spider,
I am the emerald leaf you rest upon.

If you are the vulnerable spider,
I am the hāpu'u trees protecting you from kōlea.

If you are falling from your tree,
I am the leaves who will brace your fall.

If you are lonely,
I am another being keeping you company.

If you are lost and cannot be found,
I am the ecologist looking for you.

If you are getting rained upon and drenched,
I am the canopy catching the drops.

If you are hunted by hungry rodents,
I am the roots you can weave through and hide.

Now you are almost extinct,
I will be a conservationist,
so you can multiply in numbers.

The Smell of Paradise

*By Mikeala Owen
Kula High and Intermediate School*

I wake up in the morning to the sound of rain pounding on my roof and take a deep breath and inhale the fresh air. I think to myself, I'm so lucky to live in such a beautiful place. Hearing the rain comforts me rather than getting me down. This is because I know that by ten o'clock the sun will probably be shining and the air will be fresh and clean. The dew on the grass will be the only reminder that it was raining this morning, because there won't be a cloud in the sky.

One of my favorite things in the world is the smell of the air on Kaua'i after it rains. If you could smell paradise, that would be the smell, that and the smell of the ocean. The smell of the beaches on Kaua'i isn't a gross dead fish smell of polluted harbors; it's a softer salty sea breeze smell that makes you smile. There's also the sweet smell of all of the tropical flowers like the plumeria or white ginger. Then of course there is the sound of paradise. The quiet sounds of nature. On Kaua'i you don't wake up to car engines or honking horns, but a softer and soothing sound.

It's the sound of the wind in the trees and the waves on the beach. The ocean breeze moving the palms, nature's wind chimes, and the waves that crash against the sand are nature's drums. Then the Myna birds start to chirp and before you know it there's a whole orchestra playing music for you. If you lie down in the sand or on the grass by the beach, close your eyes, and listen carefully, you will hear it, the most beautiful symphony ever to be performed on this earth. Then you open your eyes and see the most gorgeous work of art.

What you see is the beach, the ocean and the mountains in the background. I see white sand that massages my feet as I run across it to jump in the cool, gorgeous blue water. The sun reflects off of it making it sparkle more than the prettiest diamond. I dip my head underwater and I am refreshed and invigorated then I come up for air and turn around to look at the beach. What I see takes my breath away, it's Kaua'i's beautiful mountains, with waterfalls gushing down the

faces of the mountains, it's the coconut trees swaying with the breeze and all of the beautiful flower trees. Then I turn to look out at the setting sun and that is a sight to see. The sunset over Hanalei Bay should be one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The bright yellow ball and its fiery orange rays light up the sky and turn the clouds a soft fluffy pink like cotton candy. It's stunning.



Trail of Paradise

*By Amane Morigami
'Iolani School*

I have two homes; one in urban Japan that I visit during breaks and one in Hawai'i. Every day when I wake up here in Hawai'i, I see the majestic emerald-green mountains in front of our house, the lightly swaying niu that grows all over, the distant peak of Diamond Head, and the shimmering, vast moana Hawai'i is so famous for. Since I grew up here, I ended up taking it for granted. However, what do I see when I go back to my house in the city? I see a black asphalt road with a gray concrete house beside it. That is when I remember the treasure of Hawai'i I always took for granted.

On Sundays, my father, aunt, and I like to go hiking since I usually do not have much to do, and it would be such a waste to not appreciate the beauty of the 'āina. We go to different trails, such as the Mānoa Falls Trail, and the Mariner's Ridge Trail. Also, I joined the Hiking Club for the feeling you can only appreciate by taking a tropical hike as well. On these hikes, I get to really be in contact with the island, since I don't have many other chances to interact with the land.

My family and I start walking from the paved road to the ground path, grass covering either side. Trees stand mightily; trees with thick, strong roots confidently reap the benefits of good soil. Then there are the vines. As my gaze steadily travels up the vines to the distant treetops, a thought bugs me: how many of those vines were brought from other parts of the world? Are they killing the native growth? There are deep dents etched into where the vines hold onto the trees like scars.

We walk further. Other than the well-trodden trail, now there is the dark green undergrowth, and the trees grow nearer. As I cross over a thin stream, I see a sign saying WARNING. Under it is an explanation that says that "the stream is contaminated". I always stop to look at this sign, as it always strikes me that this stream couldn't have been this contaminated a few decades ago. Still, we trek forward.

We reach Mānoa Falls. What a spectacular sight it is! A thin stream of water sparkles, trickling down the rocks look almost like diamonds flowing through my outstretched hand. My gaze follows the waterfall to the top, where the sunlight reflects and scatters on the water, radiating in many colors.

I continue on the trail, up, up, crunching down on the Hawaiian soil, step by step. Suddenly my foot sloshes through a mud puddle.

“Augh!” I shout in dismay.

My father says, “Didn’t that sign back there say there are boars here and people sometimes hunt them? These mud holes are probably dug by them... as well as made by the Mānoa rains.”

“My foot, now caked in dirty, slimy mud is one thing, but those... darn... mosquitoes!” I cry.

My father replies, “The puddle water breeds them. You should know that by now.”

With my foot now dripping with grimy mud, I slosh along. As I pass a tree, I see it: a juicy guava bright as a ruby hanging from a tree branch. I pluck it and toss it into my mouth. A sour flavor interlaced with sweetness fills me. Contentedly, I trek the final stretch that brings me to the peak.

What a majestic sight from the summit! Dense, lush green growth, obscures the peaks; the earth and trees of every shape and size carpets the mountains. In the distance, I see the blue ocean glitter like a sea of sapphires. As I stand, a cool breeze passes me. I raise my eyes to the heavens and see the sunlight shining through a gap in the Mānoa skies, almost like God. I sigh contentedly. This is Paradise.

Regarding the Puaiohi

*By Amber Sam Fong
Kailua intermediate School*

When I close my languid eyes,
my hands feeling the breaths of air,
an olive-brown, light gray-bellied, coral pink-legged bird
known as the small Kaua'i thrush or Puaiohi
stumbles into my thoughts.

She is a little known feathered being.

Before I saw her
Puaiohi's name was never even muttered
in the confinements of a silent day.

Her bill is like staring at the color
of warm day and cold night bound together,
with a long, slender perspective.

An ivory halo circles
her tiny, round bead of an eye.
I heard the sound of waters, clear and volatile,
rushing down a stream.

It was her sibilant burst of vocals
running down my spine.

The Puaiohi stares back at me
with a demure gaze.

Modesty is her first nature.
A rarity compared to the rarest jewels,
that air of introversion and mystery she holds
cannot be topped
by lavish brightness.
The quiet pride and hope
of our islands is
personified in this humble breed of feathers.
Although the rest of her kind
is miniscule in numbers,
the true range of their understated spirit
cannot be measured.
Let us allow her,
along with the rest of her species,
to maintain the solitude and strength
which defines our own ways.
Hawai'i exists in her blood.
They should both thrive and live on.

'Āwikiwiki

*By Tori Lyn Loo
Na'au, A Place for Learning*

'Āwikiwiki, endangered
plant species, only 1,000
of your kind survive
on the island of Moloka'i.

'Āwikiwiki, also called puakauhi,
you can be found
in dry steep slopes of Pelekunu Valley,
in shrub lands and forests
of 'ākala, kauila, and 'ōhi'a lehua.

'Āwikiwiki, you do not reproduce
and many introduced mammal species
love to eat your tasty shoots-
goats, pigs, cattle, sheep, and deer.

Pure 'āwikiwiki, the Hawaiians
eat your delicious shoots.
You look like a climbing herb.

Exquisite 'āwikiwiki, with five
small rose-petaled blossoms,
you are a part of the pea family.

Divine 'āwikiwiki, I can help
save your loveliness
by fencing off predators
protecting you from human disturbance,
and defending you from insects and diseases.
I wish I could teach everyone
about you and your plight.

Into the Ko'olau Wilderness

*By Lewe Stanaland
'Iolani School*

As I drove up Pacific Palisades with my grandson, Lewe, it occurred to me that it has been forty-seven years since I last hiked the Manana trail. I noticed that the houses had all been rebuilt but the trailhead looked the same. Yes, forty-seven years!

Lewe and I started the hike at the end of Komo Mai Drive. "Watch out, Grandpa. There are dog droppings all over the place," Lewe exclaimed as he climbed through the rusty gate. I thought to myself and smiled, Hmmm, some things do not change.

My thoughts traveled back to 2007, when my friends and I hiked the trail on a hot November weekend. We made fun of the dog dirt at the same spot. Unfortunately for me, I had stepped in it! My father and Mr. Robinson were with us too. The march started on a nicely paved road surrounded by trees, a utility road for the electric company. The further we went, the bumpier and steeper the road became. Eventually, the road became a dirt trail. It was still wide enough for a truck, but I wouldn't have wanted to drive on it.

Back to the present, I told Lewe, "Okay, let's go." Up the road we went in silence, each of us lost in our own thoughts. About an hour into our trek, the trail became a very narrow path running along a ridge. There were still very large brushbox and eucalyptus trees, so the shade kept us cool. The ridge was like a roller-coaster. We would climb up a steep section only to find ourselves cautiously descending a muddy slope. I had to watch myself since this fifty-nine year old body was not as limber as it was in 2007. Fortunately, a full baseball career had kept my body in great shape. I thought about my own father. He was fifty when we hiked the Manana trail the last time.

Even with all the ups and downs, it was clearly evident we were climbing in elevation. We reached a level area of the trail along a shaded ridge section. This was the location I wanted to stop at with Lewe.

“Let’s have lunch here, buddy.”

He replied, “Great, cause I am famished!” We sat on a large root from a brushback tree that was on the edge of the trail. As we ate our sandwiches, I pulled out a photograph from my front pocket.

“Here, look at this,” I said as I handed it to my grandson. “Your great-grandfather took this picture.” His eyes grew big as he realized that the photo was of my friends and me eating lunch in the exact same spot.

“Awesome! It looks exactly the same,” he shouted. We finished our lunch quietly and then moved on. The vegetation along the trail started to change. We started to see koa, ‘ōhi’a and kōpiko throughout the ridgeline. There was also more grass and weeds. A look down the side of the ridge was inspiring. The foliage there was more lush and green. The canopies of the large trees in Waimano Valley looked as if you could jump out and land safely on them and then climb down.

A check of our map showed that we moved deeper into the Keāiwa Heiau State Recreation Area. We were still about three and a half miles from the main ridge of the Ko’olau range. At one point, we crossed a narrow and treacherous bridge. Once across the bridge, we were rewarded with a picture-perfect view of the mountain ridges, the ‘Ewa Plain and the Wai’anae Mountains. It was quiet here, except for an occasional gust of wind rustling the grass and trees. Along the way, we also noticed evidence of animal life in the area. The wild pigs had dug up a lot of the vegetation along the trail. Their hoof prints were evident. There were plenty of birds in the area too. I was grateful that even after almost half a century, the area was still thriving.

Our most valuable commodity was water. It was hot in the open sun, but the clouds over the Ko’olau kept promising rain with the dark textures looming in front of us. The rain didn’t come though and as I looked at my GPS/phone/watch, I realized it was time to head back. As we started back down the trail, I told my grandson about the camping spot we picked. We passed it and I told him about the rainstorm and the lightning that greeted us that night long ago. The lightning had been off in the distance, but it was a fantastic show. We could see the Ko’olau and the shapes of the clouds with each flash of light.

“Gee, Grandpa, I wish we could camp here, too,” Lewe stated.

But I was actually looking forward to a hot soak and a nap when I got back. “Not this time,” I told him. When we reached the car, I said, “I am happy we could make this trek together. By preserving this land way back, even before I was born, someone made sure it would be here for generations to enjoy. As a scout, I also learned to respect the ‘āina. We made sure nothing was dropped or discarded – not even a crumb. Our motto was to ‘leave no trace.’ Everything was carried back out. Most hikers follow that principle and it helps preserve the land.”

Lewe walked over to the gate and picked up some rubbish and put it in a bag. He said, “I want to do my share too, Grandpa, so that I can hike here with my own grandson.”

I smiled and replied, “You do not have to wait so long; you can hike it before then with your own son or daughter, you know.”

We both smiled and drove off for dinner (and a nap).

Hawai'i

*By Emma Drake
Kailua Intermediate School*

Hawai'i, my walled garden, paradise
luxuriant, rich and dense
a simple mountain range reaching to the sky
rushing water cascading from the Ko'olau

my Hawai'i
ancient burial grounds, hidden tombs of great warriors

my Hawai'i
seasons
always the same
never changing beauty
winter, spring, summer and fall
sun shining even in the rain
friendly people
beautiful environment

my Hawai'i
eight islands are one
big island, maui, lāna'i, o'ahu
kua'i, kaho'olawe, ni'ihau and moloka'i

Hawai'i, my Hawai'i
isolated endangered
unique in every way

Vulnerable Ma'ō Hau Hele

*By Erin Ichinotsubo
Na'au, A Place of Learning*

I mourn with a pure voice
for the native hibiscus, dying
to tell the world,
"Save me! What did I ever do to you?"

I mourn for the vulnerable
ma'ō hau hele, hopeless
from overgrazing by hungry wild cows
and introduced mouflon sheep
chewing away their shoots,
or invasive plant species blocking
the sunlight from blessing their tender leaves.

Yet, I sing about the luminous
yellow petals with maroon
in the center dreaming
in the wind of the dry forests
of the Wai'anae Mountains.
I sing of the fuzzy
maple-shaped leaves blessing
the koa trees and bluestripe butterflyfish
in the ahupua'a.

I sing of the shrublands
in the islands enchanting
the sacred 'āina of the ancient Hawaiians.

I sing of my sister, Kalyn,
picking the most beautiful native hibiscus
from a nearby shrub
to go in her hair
for the hula festival.

Take Care of Our Hawai'i

*By Quinn Cowan
'Iolani School*

I felt a cool, light breeze as I exited the lava tube. The forest was lush, though it had grown over many years of lava flows. My fourth grade friends and teachers all stopped and found places to sit on the grass to eat lunch. After I ate my ham and cheese sandwich, I decided to take a little stroll with my friends. Jacob, Chase, and I ambled along with my dad. We went up a path lined with tall deep green trees. I looked up and something caught my eye. It was bright and contrasted the green. Whatever it was, it was moving fast. It fluttered from tree branch to tree branch. Then, it sat still, and our little group had all its attention on the creature. We leaned over a rail to see what it was. Through the foliage I could make out a small bird sucking nectar from a flower. As I looked closer I could tell it was the 'I'iwi bird. This scarlet red bird has a long slender beak that is able to take nectar out of a tiny flower. The 'I'iwi has a thin strip of white coloring separating the scarlet from jet-black wings. It was the most fantastic and stunning bird I had ever seen. I called my dad over and also pointed the honeycreeper out to Jacob and Chase. Soon the entire class had surged over to the rail near where the bird was perched. Someone yelled, jumped and startled the 'I'iwi and it flew away.

I sit up in my bed and breathe heavily. Soon, I realize it was just a dream of my fourth grade Big Island Trip. I stretch and yawn as the first rays of sunlight shine into my apartment. I get out of my bed and get ready for work. Something bothers me, though; it's about my dream. I suddenly feel a longing to see those sights, hear those sounds, and experience it all over again. It is a huge shock to me to realize that I can no longer do these things. I take a stroll before work in the neighborhood I grew up in. I see my school, but it is now bigger and has more buildings. As I look up at the valley I do not see the fantastic green shimmering in the sunlight, instead the mountains are a dull greenish brown. I long to look at the beautiful Ko'olau again, a sight I once took for granted. I begin to go further into the valley to hike the Mānoa Falls Trail. I hear a weak stream, different from the roar of the river before. Something

catches my eye off in the bushes and I turn thinking it is a bird. Instead I watch and hear a rat rustling dead leaves, not the calming call of a honeycreeper. Also, many warning signs for bacteria and boars are posted. I remember when my grandparents told me of a time when you could swim in the stream on a hot afternoon. I think to myself, "This couldn't have just happened over night."

I know humans have done this to our world. The amazing and stunning Hawai'i I used to call home is no longer being taken care of. We can't just sit here and wish we could take back all of the bad things; we need to do something about it. To me there are two very major issues that the people of my generation need to fix. The first is to stop bringing in non-native creatures that kill indigenous ones. Boars and rats, both non-native pests, produce harmful bacteria that can hurt people and other creatures. Also, some climber plants kill their host plant that they live on. The second issue is human pollution and development. More of the land in Hawai'i is being developed, which is cutting down on the habitats for animals. Pollution from humans may include discarded fishing nets, harmful chemicals put into storm drains that travel to streams, and global warming. For people who want to keep Hawai'i the way it is today, like me, we need to do it ourselves. Taking care of Hawai'i is our problem, not the government's problem. If you want Hawai'i to be a paradise of tropical beaches and vibrant rain forests, then take care of Hawai'i!



Morning 'Alalā

*By Gabriel Iwamoto
Na'au, A Place for Learning*

You are a rare jewel found only
in the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center
on the Big Island of Hawai'i
and Maui Bird Conservation Center.

I am a worried keiki hoping
for you to return.
You are the last
of the: 'alalā in the entire world.

I am the keiki o ka 'āina
who wants you to live,
so that my keiki
and their keiki
and even their keiki
can enjoy your presence
in the cerulean skies
all over the islands.

You are the morning call
when the sun awakes.
I am the door that opens
to a new chance for life.
Closing the door
will lead to your extinction.

I will be awaiting
your return to these islands.
You are coming home slowly.
I will be the one
who will be listening
for your call—
our native Hawaiian crow.

GLOSSARY OF HAWAIIAN WORDS

'a'awa – name for a Hawaiian wrasse (*Bodianus bilunulatus*)

'āina – land, earth

'alalā – the endangered endemic Hawaiian crow (*Corvus hawaiiensis*)

'āwikiwiki – a native vine in the pea family (*Canavalia hawaiiensis*, *C. galeata*, *C. kauaiensis*, *C. molokaiensis*, *C. napaliensis*, *C. pubescens*)

hilu – yellowstripe wrasse (*Coris flavovittata*)

honu – the native green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

humuhumunukunukuapua'a – a native reef triggerfish (*Rhinecanthus spp.*)

keiki – child, offspring

koa – a large endemic forest tree (*Acacia koa*) in the Pea family

Ko'olau – name of the windward mountain range on O'ahu

manini – a native reef surgeonfish (*Acanthurus lineatus*)

Mānoa – name of a large O'ahu valley

ma'o hau hele – rare yellow-flowered hibiscus, state flower of Hawai'i (*Hibiscus brackenridgei*)

Mililani – a town in central O'ahu

nai'a – porpoise

'ōhi'a – an endemic tree (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) in the Myrtle family

pikake – a naturalized jasmine

puaiohi – small thrush found on Kaua'i (*Myadestes palmeri*)

pueo – Hawaiian short-eared owl (*Asio flammeus sandwichensis*) an endemic subspecies

Wai'anae – name of the leeward mountain range of O'ahu

