



My Hawai'i Story Contest 2016

*A collection of stories and poems about Hawai'i's environment
written by the middle school students of Hawai'i*

Project Partners

The Pacific Writers' Connection

Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management Program

Hawai'i Conservation Alliance

Hawai'i Conservation Alliance Foundation

Hawai'i Department of Education

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

- Division of Forestry and Wildlife
- Division of Aquatic Resources

Hawai'i Environmental Education Alliance

National Park Service

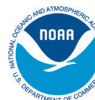
- Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument

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Foreword

Aloha, we are pleased to present the 2016 My Hawai'i Story Anthology! Now in its tenth year, the My Hawai'i project is an environmental writing contest for middle school students in the state of Hawai'i. Our goal is to foster and encourage stewardship of the environment and build a literary culture of conservation among Hawaii's youth through creative writing.

This year, we invited all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students from schools across the state to address the theme, "*Planet at the crossroads.*" The theme aligns with the 2016 International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress. The winning entries will be celebrated at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Mahalo to all participating students and teachers! We continue to be inspired by these talented students and give a special thanks to the teachers who encouraged them to write about the environment as part of their classwork. More than 500 students submitted a poem or story that represents their personal reflections on the environment, cultural values, kuleana, and stewardship. A panel of reviewers evaluated each anonymous entry according to the use of language, content, and creativity.

We are also very grateful for the dedicated reviewers, partners, and sponsors that contribute their valuable time and ongoing support to make the annual contest a success and publication of the Anthology possible. With the publication of this Anthology, 250 middle school students have had their stories and poems published. The My Hawai'i Anthology contributes to a collection of youth-authored literature that is unique to Hawai'i.

We hope that Hawaii's youth will continue to express concern for our island environment, not only through their writing, but also by encouraging their families and friends to care for and protect the land, sea, and sacred places for future generations. We look forward to the contest next year and encourage students and schools from all islands to participate.

June 2016

Mahalo nui loa

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~ and a special thank you to the State of Hawaii's Office of Planning, Coastal Zone Management Program for printing this Anthology

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Yearning to be with them again

by Kaila Apo

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

Head pounding, vision blurry

My tired heart is stretched and yearning

To go back to the natural paradise my kūpuna once lived in

To live by my kūpuna's ways

I want to feel the hot sand beneath my feet and the salty ocean breeze

The one that lifts my spirits up and sets it down with ease

I want to hear the 'elepaio sing as it calls out to its friends

And smell the fresh pikake as it starts a brand new day

I want to hear the lively waterfall that gushes down its cliff

And into the elegant kahawai

I want to feel the cool, slick mud between my toes

While my hands firmly grasp the shiny green kalo plant

I want to hear the powerful oli that my kūpuna once proudly sang

To a stunning sky that blankets the earth

I want to smell the damp grass, freshly glistened with dew
I want to feel the mana that my kūpuna left with me
From the crown of my head to the tips of my toes
And the deep respect within my na'au to respect mother earth
Instead my whole body is achy and hot from the tasks I battle day by day
My tired heart is stretched and yearning
To go back to the natural paradise my kūpuna once lived in
To live by my kūpuna's ways
Why is it that Hawai'i nei has changed so much
Enough to make our kūpuna suffer greatly
To see the memories of our culture float off into another world
Never to be seen again
To be with my kūpuna would be a truly treasured gift
Because I know in my heart that is where my Hawai'i lives

Kū'u Hawai'i Aloha

by Kalama Arquette

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

My Hawai'i aloha
Has come to an end
To even know that people must make a choice
It makes me think of who I am
What have I become?
What have we become?
Are we alone?
Alone in the world to understand the wrong marked in red
I remember the words my tutu would tell me
With the lingering scent of pua kenikeni
"Hamau ka leo and listen to the birds"
She would say these words
And I would return with a wondering eye
There were no birds to listen to
Where they'd go tutu?
Where they'd go?
From valley to valley
From mauka to the bones

My beautiful utopia of salt water
I call home
You say Hawai'i is a paradise
With coconut breezes and snow cones
But do you think that maybe the rail
Will hide them all?
My land of birth
My 'āina of pride
Is your 'āina too
I guess you must despise
The rising of your people
To realize the life
That is draining from the skies
To gray smoke and ash from polluting haze
My final realization
Our situation has come to two points
They meet
These words are my revolution
But it's up to you to realize the mistakes
You can't fake the truth
Unless you're a professional liar
Hanging loose

The Monster

In Humans

by Draelee Cabinatan

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

There was once a time when the Earth was happy
When the Earth was filled with joy and glory
When the Earth lived with the creations that she loved
Where she could be amazed by the pink cotton candy clouds
And the orange shades of the sunset
Where she could gaze at the twinkly stardust and dance with the mahina
Where she could swim in the depths of the ocean with the honu
And fall asleep to the sounds of the koholā
She could wake up to the beautiful melody of the manu kama'āina
And she could just enjoy every creation and living thing
But, this happiness only lasted for so long
One day, she longed for something that would keep her company
Something that would take care of her like a mother
But would need to be cared for as a child
Something that would help her see better and to make her love more
Then along came the human species
At first, we all followed her rules
We stayed sustainable, we kept her healthy so that we could stay healthy

Both man and nature were wealthy with health and love
But one day, we took advantage of our Mother Nature
We slaughtered her creations for decorations
Making almost every animal extinct
We damaged her body from the wars that we had
Making her beauty go to waste from our destruction
We destroyed the trees that give us oxygen to breathe
So we could make these horrifying buildings
We are suffocating her with cement on the ground
We covered her so she cannot breathe anymore
We choked her until it seemed she could not scream for help
But yet, she still provides for us
Because we are her companions
Because she's still trying to show us how much she cares for us
She's still trying to show us the love we used to give to her
But one day she'll give up
One day, the animals will all be extinct
The ocean will be filled with oil spills and marine debris
There will be no trees or plants to give us oxygen
We will all slowly see why she stopped trying
We will all slowly see why she kept on crying
We will all slowly see the monsters inside of us
I hope it won't be too late

by Alexis Cowan

Sacred Hearts School

The Legend of Kaimana

Once upon a time, a boy named Kepa Aloha lived in a tropical world that was perfect. The land had tall, beautiful palm trees and grass that was greener than a shimmery emerald. The fruit was sweet and juicy and the people were always so friendly. This land was called Maui.

Kepa was an intelligent boy. He knew how to survive off the land without taking more than he needed. Kepa's family on the other hand, took more than they needed and didn't take care of the land. Kepa tried to tell them to care for the land and to only take what they needed, but they wouldn't listen to him. Kepa prayed that someone or something would help him teach his family.

One stormy night when Kepa was out in the rain forest gathering wood for his family, lightning suddenly struck the ground right next to him. Kepa fell to the ground in shock of what just happened, but then he saw it. A small, round-bellied mongoose who stood tall and proud on its hind legs. Kepa stared at the creature for a few seconds then screamed. The mongoose ran over to Kepa and covered Kepa's mouth.

The mongoose spoke, "Aloha, my name is Kaimana and I am the protector of the Hawaiian land. I heard your prayer, so I came to help. Please don't be scared." Kaimana slowly took the palm of his hand off of Kepa's mouth and stepped back. Kepa took a deep breath, taking in what had just taken place. He lifted himself off the ground, looked at the odd mongoose, then ran away.

That whole night Kepa stayed awake thinking about the little, fat mongoose named "Kaimana" who said he "protects the land." Kepa thought, "Maybe he CAN help. What if he is lying? Should I give him a chance? He could make everything worse. Is this a good decision?"

Kepa continued to think about his decision and came to a final choice of what he should do.

The next morning Kepa went back into the rain forest frantically searching for Kaimana. Finally, Kepa found Kaimana sitting on a rock, singing one of Kepa's favorite songs, *"What a Wonderful World,"* as he played his small ukulele. Kepa felt at ease when he saw this peaceful little creature and thought, "How could this harmonious tiny creature do any harm?"

Kepa approached the creature apologetically and said, "I'm sorry that I screamed and ran away from you. Will you help me teach my family to care for our 'āina?"

Kaimana looked at Kepa with a large smile and said, "My dearest Kepa, I'm so glad you decided to let me help you. I shall meet your family tonight."

That night at the Aloha's family dinner, Kaimana joined them and met the family. Kaimana and the family talked for awhile before Kaimana brought up the topic of him being the protector of the Hawaiian land. When Kaimana brought it up the family paused then said, "Why care about the land when the land technically works for us? It supplies us, not the opposite!"

Kaimana was shocked at the carelessness the family showed for the land. Kaimana said, "If that's how you really feel, okay, but I'm going to tell you a story from the time I was a young human boy.

Long ago, when I was a young child, I didn't care about the land. I thought the land was nothing but something to live off. The land was always so green and

bright but one day I decided to dump all my trash and harmful belongings into the ocean thinking nothing of it, but I was so wrong. The next day, I found turtles on the beach dead because of soda can wrappers stuck on their heads, I found dumps of trash on land with brown grass because it wasn't getting the nutrition it needed. I felt a huge hole in my heart wondering how could I do this to such a beautiful world that God has created? I should treat it with respect. I prayed to God asking for forgiveness.

He yelled down from the heavens, 'Kaimana ko, young boy, you have let me down, You have destroyed the land! I forgive you, but you have created a hole in your heart by disowning the land. You have brought this darkness upon yourself so it's your duty to heal it. All you have to do is teach a family how to live on the land with care. You will be turned into a small, fat mongoose and when you heal your heart you will be turned back into a human, but you won't be just a regular human you will be a Hawaiian god.'

I was happy, but ashamed at the same time. I sat in the clouds waiting for a prayer to grant my freedom, so when I heard Kepa's prayer I thought, I am going to help this family understand the meaning of taking care of the land and share my story."

After hearing this inspirational story the Aloha family sat at the table in tears wondering why they were so careless. They were ashamed of themselves and apologized to Kaimana, Kepa, and even God. At that very moment Kaimana began to shine so brightly the Aloha family covered their eyes. FLASH! The Aloha family opened their eyes and out of the darkness Kaimana stood there, standing as a Hawaiian god, a human. Kepa thanked Kaimana and Kaimana thanked them.

To this day Maui is a beautiful place but could still use a Kaimana to teach everyone to care for the land.

The End

Following in the Footsteps of Our Kūpuna...

by Madison Enos

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

From mauka to makai, our 'āina is filled with beauty and wonder
Who can forget the soothing sounds of crashing waves?
Breathtaking sites of the luscious green mountains
Or enjoyable fragrances of pīkake lei all around
We must learn to mālama hōnua if we want to keep our beautiful land
I believe we can do it all together
When working hand-in-hand
Our kūpuna lived in oneness with the 'āina
So we must do the same
Tracing all the way back to the old Hawaiian traditions and ways
Hō'ihi is a word that comes to mind
Having respect for our 'āina and only taking what we need
This is something that should be important to you, just like it is to me
When we respect the land, the land will then be generous and kind in return
Overuse of natural resources is a big issue that harms our atmosphere
Instead, be bold! Stand tall like a koa tree and make a difference in the world!
What we do now will affect the future
We can go down the same path
Or learn from the mistakes we have made and mature
Our kūpuna navigated by using the sun, moon, tides, and stars
They were like compasses that always knew the way
Now we use technology and man-made items everyday
So, we should learn from our kūpuna and use our natural resources
Imagine what that might be like, only using what was created by nature
Our kūpuna helped our generation...
So let's do the same for future generations to come...

Kulāiwi

by Pono Estores

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

Where the waves never cease to kiss the shore
Always embracing, begging for more

Where the wind-blown sand stings and the thick rain pelts
Where the air is hot and the ice always melts

All those long-lasting, hot, and well-spent days
Memories of sunshine becoming a haze

Where the deep, glistening sea shimmers with fish
How I long for my tutu to cook me a dish

Ample food always, caught upstream
Made at home, fried, baked, or steamed

Where the wind comes in blows, gusts, and howls
Where the night is so still, quiet “hoos” of the owls

Where silence speaks, while small children listen
Where the sweet, fragrant dew of the morning glistens

Where beautiful stars, always twinkle at night
Those stars that hide darkness with the strength of their light

Oh my dear home, how long will you last
Will you become a memory of the past?

Will the wrong of today, effect your tomorrow
Will the wisps of your wind, carry breezes of sorrow?

I know that my fate is held in our hands
I know my identity is held in your lands

When you disappear, so will I
When you are dead, I too, will die

So today, I swear 'til I take my last breath
I will do what I can to prevent your death

Whoosh

by Levi Fisher

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

(whoosh)

the wind flies by
carrying birds through the air
and clouds through the skies

(whoosh)

an egg just laid
soon a new chick born
and a new family paid

(whoosh)

a gambler with a bet
the night will have fallen
and the day will be set

(whoosh)

in the morning light
there will be much to fright
when everything is lost
to diseases and blight

(whoosh)

but everything lost
can be brought back
if we change our ways
if we backtrack

(whoosh)

if we turn to the old ways
the way our kūpuna did
we can replenish the earth
and with these plastics rid

(whoosh)

we can't change the past
but new things are happening
we can easily change our ways
but why we don't is quite baffling

(whoosh)

it's simple, it really is
just change your ways
instead of dropping things
or letting go, try, just try
to be like the old kings

(whoosh)

we shall protect the land
and take only what is needed
nothing added, no more plastic
and maybe we will have succeeded

He Koho Ka Hawai'i

by Jordynn Haumea-Thronas

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

Hawai'i

E kau aku i ka no'ono'o 'ike loa no Hawai'i

Kōkua i ka 'āina

Onaona nā pua o ka 'āina ola pono

Hō'ike 'ia nā hō'ailona mai nā kupuna

Ola nā pua 'ōiwi i ka 'āina

Kanu 'ia ke kimeki ma kahi o nā meakanu

Ū ka ua i ku'u 'ili

Piholo nei ke kauno'o Hawai'i

Olapa ka uila, hā'ule nā kumulā'au

Nalowale ka 'ike o ka hō'ike honua Hawai'i

Pua nā pua i ka ua kilihune i pā i ka 'ili mae

Eia kākou nā pua o Hawai'i

O mākou nā pua e hō'ola ana ka 'āina

Lohe 'ia nā uē a nā pua lehua

Alaka'i i ka hanauna hou; Nā lākou e hō'ola i ka 'āina

Ke kai, ua malo'o i lepo

Aneane pau ka hōnua i ka 'ōpala

He koho, nāu e koho

Ō i nā leo i lohe 'ia e ka uka o ka moku 'o Keawe a i nā pūpū 'o Kahalelani

Na'aukā nā kanaka mālama 'ole i ka mākou 'āina

Ulu a kupu ka pae'āina 'o Hawai'i

Aloha 'Āina!

E koho kūpono,

E ola ka hōnua!

Put yourself in a positive mindset for Hawai'i
Help the land
The fragrant flowers of the healthy land
Signs are shown from the ancestors
The descendants of Hawai'i blossom through the land
Cement is planted instead of plants
Rain drizzles on my skin
The Hawaiian mindset is drowning
Lighting strikes the dying land, and the trees fall
Knowledge of the Hawaiian geography is being lost
The flowers blossom in the light rain that touches our withered skin

Here we are the flowers of Hawai'i
We are the flowers that will help the land thrive
Hear the cries of the lehua flowers
Be leaders for the new generations to come
For they are the caretakers of the land
In the future
The oceans dried up to dirt
Earth is becoming extinct by the covering of trash
We have a choice
Our voices shall endure
People who do not care for the land are unenlightened
The island chain of Hawai'i shall grow and thrive
Love the land!

Choose right!
Let the earth live!

The Spider's Web

by Sofia Howard

Hawai'i Preparatory Academy

What will it be like in 2050?

Will it be joy, love, and fun, or anger, fear, and disgust

We are at a crossroads

It is time to decide what path to enter

The one cutting through the lush green forests in Volcano

Or the one running through a smoke filled city?

What is pollution?

Do we have to face this choice now?

Why do we care?

We are the 'āina

We alone can save this beautiful place

We are at a crossroads

Do we follow the path of the land or of the city?

Have you seen all the beauty this island holds?

The beaches on the Kawaihae coast with sand soft as powdered sugar

The forest on the rim of Kilauea Iki

With bird songs running through them soft and clear

The beauty of the white mist engulfing you on the slope of Mauna Kea

Have you seen all the native plants and animals?

The pueo, circling the fields

The 'i'iwi, gathering nectar from lehua flowers

The beautiful hāpu'u fern, towering among its fellows

They are what created this beauty

They formed this ecosystem, not us, so why should we break it?

We should not pull apart the delicate strands of the spider's web

Is this earth truly ours to break?

Our ocean is full of plastic

Are we the spiders?

I think not

This is not our place to meddle

We should be placing the broken strands back together

We must be patient, but quick

We must love the spider and help her because she does not need us

We must protect her web and not let trash fly into it instead of flies

We have angered the spider

She has woven her web across the city path as a warning

If we do not heed it, she has a venomous bite

by Jason Huynh

Lao Intermediate School

Small Choices, Deadly Results

As if he didn't care

A man strolled into a rainforest

Lit a cigarette and let it drop

Right onto a koa tree it fell

Starting a combustion cycle

Beginning to burn and

Transform everything into black ash

Like a single procaine drop

Not only did miconia calvenscens

kyllinga brevifolia, and solandra

maxima (Miconia, Kili'o'opu grass

and Cup of Gold) get roasted

But also, as their wings caught ablaze

The noio, nēnē, and pueo

As they emitted gruesome caws of death

40 seconds - no, HOURS later
A sudden kind of peace emerged
As the fire dissipated forever
Irrevocably turning the landscape into
A kerosene wasteland
Just as firefighters showed up

One look at the cold, black morning
And they all began to cry
They were too late
The lesson? Always be careful
Around fragile items

Ulu Pono Alu Like

by Gabe Li

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

Our identity will never change

As we are Hawaiians

What it means to be Hawaiian is not just our blood

But also our feelings and actions

You need to show mālama 'āina in your life to be a true Hawaiian

Like our kūpuna

The wind, waves, animals, and plants all benefited our kūpuna

We are slowly losing everything Hawaiian

We are disgracing our culture and kūpuna

By abandoning their sustainable ways and ideas

Pūpūkahi i holomua

Unite to move forward

We need to come together to save not only our 'āina but our culture too

The only way we can save our homeland is to alu like

Oah'u is my homeland and it is slowly dissolving away because of our actions

Our island is like sweet sugar

Slowly dissolving into the big glass ocean

All that the precious ocean holds will die
Thanks to our overuse of resources and over-fishing
Hawai'i is like the mana that fills the ocean
A precious privilege that we need to respect
The rivers don't flow, our food and water is not local
And our people are unhealthy and unhappy

The special, diverse land is a prize that we need to care for
Like our ancestors have
That's what defines me as a Hawaiian
The responsibility and honor to care for the precious gift we have received
I have learned that your skin color doesn't matter
But your actions of mālama determine your cultural presence

The land fed the people
And in return we feed the land
I will always be thankful for the 'āina's helping hand

Kou Honua, Ko'u Honua

Your Earth, My Earth

by Pono Lupenui

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

If everyone knew that time was running out and everyone did their part

Maybe we could show this earth we have a heart

We are using the Earth's resources like we have another planet to go to

Our ancestors are probably thinking that our minds are giving in too

Not taking care of our 'āina and not being efficient

Last time I checked I think we were over-fishin'

This is the mindset we have and it's not right

We are always on social media, but don't go out to fly a kite

We're not aware of the news that's going on

Like global warming or pollution that our planet has going on

So no one knows about the land that is being taken away from us

And species are going extinct and so thus

We need to be aware of the organizations that care

And are trying to rebuild the legacy our kūpuna left here

So let's help them rebuild our past
As I believe we are the generation to last
And uphold our culture and rebuild fast
So we develop a trend that remains steadfast
If we do this and uphold our culture
Take care of the wai and take care of our agriculture
We can solve this problem of pollution and
We should know that if the land takes care of us, we take care of the land
If we take care and we all conserve
We can give this planet the life it deserves

How About Hawaii

by Shaylee Mahi

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

The Past-

How about the fresh sweet poi

Made from the kalo we raised

And nourished?

He ali'i ka 'āina, he kauā ke kanaka

The land is the chief

The people are the servants

Hāloa and the kalo are our ancestors

We mālama 'āina

And the 'āina will mālama us

How about our i'a

That were harvested from our fishponds?

We only took what we needed

Then left the rest to grow

Remember a time when we put mana into everything we did?

The Present-

The present is a gift

A gift that Ke Akua gives

But look at us now

We make our poi out of powder

We overfish knowing that our i'a are running out

We just look around hoping it's going to get better somehow

The Future-

Look to the left and you see a future

Filled with war over money, land, and power

Fighting to stay alive

Look to the right and you see a future

Our land being nourished and sustained

We're a planet at a crossroads

Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono

The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness

Will it always be that way?

Restoration of Our Island Nation

by Alex Melemai

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

We represent our ancestors before us
We are turning all they cared about into dust
We are taking more than we need, forgetting to plant another seed
This is wrong and most of us know it
It's our generation's turn to show it

We need to unite and fight the same fight
We are the endangered animal capital
We need to protect the animals we have left
And stop being deaf to the cries of our ancestors
We are the chefs cooking a hot pot of disaster

We need to look to our kūpuna for they were the masters
They knew what worked and what was important
If we listen to their teaching I think that it's certain
We can bring back all that we lost

Throughout history there was a line that was crossed
We forgot that humans are part of a chain

We have only ourselves to blame
We forgot to think about the land
And our hourglass is running out of sand

We are the problem we are trying to solve
However to find the answer our thinking needs to evolve
Only then will that land get what it deserves
The land is the one that we need to serve
All I wonder is when will we learn

Hope For Humanity

by Taylor Moniz

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

Once the land ruled the people
And the people were servants of the land
Now we think we rule the world and
So what we want without concern
Until one day we realize
We only have one planet

Businesses constantly expanding
When the world sits there suffering
Resources diminishing in a blink of an eye

When we look outside our window
And where there was once trees and lush forests
Lies skyscrapers and freeways

The water is filled with trash
Fish suffocating in our mistakes

The air is poison
People choking to death on the air around them
Landfills grow larger and larger
Piles of stuff we never needed

The land is the reason that we are still alive
Our world depends on the survival of our environment
But instead of cherishing it
We trash it

If we continue in this way
There is no hope to save the world we love so much
But we can change our ways
Rid the world of our mistakes
And preserve it for the future
We are the hope for humanity

Everything to its Proper Place

by Joseph Paci

Iao Intermediate School

A fine dust of guilt
Coats the history of Hawai'i
Like a strange snow

A simple ornamental idea
Feeds in silence
With an occasional sound of inner suffocation
And blind self-inflicted distress

Its tendrils cram full
With the over-rich nectar of Mother Earth
As it scars her with veins and blotches

With a brain of its own
Winding down into layer upon layer
Of the tropical forest
It does not cry at the death it causes

Swiftly on toward further darkness
Native plants choke on nothingness
Stuck in a catastrophic status quo

It didn't come from the government down
But from the simple routine of a backyard garden
The innocent Miconia going somewhere
Somewhere, somewhere, nowhere

Everything to its proper place
Where do we begin?
We begin by beginning
A little janitorial work
Before She takes back what She has given

LIFESTYLE

by Onipa'a Pung

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

I promise this 'āina
To keep it safe
To always give back
Whenever I take

I will take care of the fish
The plants and the air
And in return I gain
Food and clothes to wear

I love the wai
It replenishes my soul
Polluting the water
Would take a serious toll

I'll try to clean the air
That runs and flows within
If the 'āina is healthy
It's a win-win-win

For nature gives water
It gives food to eat

It gives shade from the summer
Like a hotel suite

It gives me limbs
To dance and have fun
A mouth to sing and chant
Under the bright sun

Wai is our blood
The sun is our light
Nature is what shines
Our way through the night

It teaches us how
To survive sustainable
It isn't that hard
Very much attainable

For that I love my land
And will always protect it
Because the 'āina and I
Will always be connected

Hokule'a

by Creighton Purdy

Kamehameha Schools Maui

Navigating by the stars

Navigating to islands afar

My kūpuna brave and strong

Hokule'a indestructible and long

Prevailing winds, moods of the sea

Learn from the past, do you agree?

Out in the ocean, no land in sight

Follow the stars, you'll know it's right

Songs of our ancestors ring in my head

Telling their stories to move on ahead

'Ōhi'a (Deep Roots)

by Aleina Reyes

Kamehameha Schools Maui

For thousands of years they've lived on this earth
Their roots growing longer as they've proved their worth
From the time when Hawaiians fished with a spear
The 'ōhi'a tree has always been here

Then an invading fungus is introduced
And the 'ōhi'a tree is fighting to reproduce
The flames on the tree, once lit up its leaves
But they're dying and falling, taken by thieves

A pretty décor for your neck?
You need some medicine, just write a check
The 'ōhi'a tree is more than a lei or a cure to make you well
It is a native plant of Hawai'i and here it shall always dwell

So fight for this flower as red as the sun
Keep it blooming and bright, don't let it be done
Its alluring aroma has enchanted people for years
Its decline would make our kūpuna have tears

There are choices in life that can be hard to make
But all you need to do is follow your heart and have a little faith
If you look around this world you can clearly see
That the ground, sky, and air, all beat for the 'ōhi'a tree
It's slowly dying and at this crossroad you have to choose
Keep it living and thriving? Or have it disappear from our view?

Kara's Lesson

by Sean Sakamoto

Kamehameha Schools Maui

I take off, the downdraft from my wings gently ruffling the emerald-green grass.

Today I will begin my long journey back to my homeland.

Leaving behind winter in the warm islands, I join my friends in the air. Cool, salted winds blow lightly, but not hard enough to knock us off course. Far below in the clear blue ocean, I spot colorful schools of fish. They dart and weave in between the branches of coral. A single turtle is floating just off of the shore. The water is teeming with life.

Kara, my sister did a delighted flip through the air and crashed into me.

"Hey!" I yell, turning my head towards her. "Watch where you're going! It won't be my fault if you use all of your energy and fall in the water. Knowing you, you might still have lots of energy left and still hit the ocean. You would probably fly straight into something." However, there was nothing to crash into, here in the empty cloudless sky.

She giggled, as if I were just kidding. Kara never really took anything seriously.

"He's right." Arai swooped over to us, flying just over the ocean's spray. "You probably should save your energy," he said, tilting his feathered head towards Kara.

So she slowed down, but just did one more loop. "Sorry... I'm just so excited to finally go back!" she exclaimed. "Only a few more hours until we're there!" Arai couldn't help but smile at her energy. The same was true for me and I found myself edging a little closer to the two.

Swooping through the cool morning air, Kara's excitement rubbed off on me and I found myself flying a little twirl. Her happiness was always infectious.

12 hours later... The sun glinted off of Arai and Kara's golden feathers. The glassy ocean glowed as if it was on fire and the sky was quickly becoming dark. We aimed towards the large landmass of our spring and summers. Bright lights glimmered in the distance and dark clouds hung in the air.

It must be about to rain, I thought. Flying faster, the three of us reached land quickly. We dropped to the ground on the dimming beach, just a few inches from the icy water.

I turned my head, and a strange plant lay on the sand. It was almost white, with a hint of a yellow tinge, and had stringy leaves everywhere. I hopped over to it and waved the others over.

"What plant is this? Is it edible?" I asked, being hungry after our long flight. I hadn't eaten for hours and my stomach hurt.

Kara cocked her head at it. "Well, I can think of one way to find out," she said, and ate it before either of us could stop her.

Kara began to choke on it. It was definitely not edible. Her wings shuddered and twitched and she fell into the water.

"Kara!" I yelled as Arai flew toward her waterlogged feathers.

However, it was too late. Kara was gone.

I... I'm never going to see her again... I thought. She looked so small and lifeless there, motionless on the sand. I never would have thought that she was the same bird as the one lying before me. All of her energy was gone.

I saw more strange plants on the shoreline, some blue and some silver. Each one reminded me of Kara. Each one taunted me with the fresh memory. Each one caused tears to stream from my eyes.

These can't be natural.

Today, our planet is at a crossroads between thriving and dying. We can't let it be overtaken by pollution, and we can't let others die, like Kara. This can't happen again.

It's up to you. Which way will we go?

Voices of Nature

by Emily Smith

Ho'ala School

From makai to mauka
Constantly changing
Leaving common sense far behind
No doubt, the destruction of men on nature's canvas
Silently creeping

The land loses its greenness
The sky ceases to be crystal blue
The moon and stars lose their voice
Low in the sky
The ocean and its mystery are sobbing as 'ōpae, i'a, he'e, and honu dying
A majestic nai'a is singing hopes and dreams
"Ko Mokupuni 'O Hawai'i U'i, 'Ano U'i"

Waikiki beach
He kahaki nani kēia
Rainbow colors on water gleamed
But behind the scene
Runoff from the Ala Wai canal makes Waikiki beach scream

On Magic Island
Picking charred pieces of glass and broken bottles up
Mahalo nui loa

Kumu nui
Commanding and brave
Like a sailor who can deal with the huge rough waves
But crying and dying
Because of man's crime

Global warming is just like war and terrorism
Rise in sea levels
Erosion of our 'āina
Threats to coral reefs, white sandy beaches, and honeycreepers
Killing the island's treasures

Broken papa
Let's repair it
Put it back together like making a puzzle
Piece by piece

Beauty of nature is just like a tiger
Graceful but trapped in a huge cage
A sweet smell of nature whispers to me
"Aloha Aku No, Aloha Mai No"

Our gift is simple
Lend a hand
Protect our 'āina, water, sky, wildlife, and trees
For our future
Listen to voices of nature
Lend a hand
You'll be a shining star

Mau Loa

Mālama i ka 'āina

by Justice-lee Vannatta-Kapoi

Kamehameha Schools Maui

Hahai no ka ua i ka ulula'au

The rain follows after the forest

Destroy the forest, the rain will cease to fall

What seems little means a lot to all

Contamination of the soil can lead to poor growth

Continue this path and nothing will grow

We take water for granted

With all it gives

Without water, nobody, nothing lives

Next time you use your hose

I'll come rushing out

Remember to use less of me

There will not be enough of me to go all around

Mālama i ka 'āina

Take care of the land

Destroy the land and we will go too

Next time you do something that destroys the land

Think twice before you do

The Point of No Return

by William Wanner

Hawai'i Preparatory Academy

We could go any way
Whether left, right, or back the way we came
There are choices to be made
Things to go wrong, things to go right
Whichever way we choose
We can only go one way
Left, right, or back the way we came

Left takes us to another world
With no way of turning back
The place of hoverboards, robots, and flying cars
A place where everything is gray and white and we're carrying metal briefcases
Plastic is uncontrollable
No more sea turtles, albatrosses, and marine life
One hundred thousand marine animals die each year from plastic debris
Say hello to styrofoam, ocean debris, and useless plastic

Say goodbye to the beautiful Hawai'i as we know it
A land where we know where our food comes from

Say hello to rubbish island

Where instead of a plastic bottle in the ocean, it's a mound of bottles

To the right is the right way to go

Revisit reduce, reuse, recycle

Rehash clean up the place

Make everything the way its supposed to be

To loop around to the past

Where there was no landfill and everything is compostable

Say hello to the best the earth was while living a sustainable life

The island lush, green, and plentiful

Waipio, Volcano, and Pu'ukohola

Already there are news writings that say

The point of no return

To the place of our dreams

I dream of a place where I can say

I want my kid to go there

A place where there is no trash

There is no such word as debris, rubbish, or pollution

A place that's indescribable

Whatever path we may choose, let it be the right choice

He moku he wa'a he wa'a he moku

The island the canoe, the canoe the island

Aloha 'Āina

by Kanani Wong

Kamehameha Schools Maui

Prosperous creatures live at Hana Bay
Some flow away, but most stay
Invading our superb land, few know
Slithering around to find a place to grow
No one asked for them to come
But they stay here like an old wad of gum
Us humans not aware of these dangers
All thinking that they're not strangers
We wake up every morning feeling ever so fine
Not knowing that these "aliens" have long vines
Australian Tree Ferns conquering the shore
Along with Barbados Gooseberry, Plume Poppy, and yes, there are way more
The aggressive mongoose eating up our birds
And all the noise from the frogs is so absurd
The slimy Apple snails
When we try to remove them we all fail
Whose kuleana is it to mālama the 'āina with these native features
It is us, the people of Hawai'i, to help remove the invasive creatures
Now it is our time to step up to the plate
And make a difference before it is too late

Guardians of the Moku

by Jonah Keolu Yuen

Kamehameha Schools Kapālama Middle School

Our planet is slowly dying
We must protect our land
It's time to show aloha
And give a helping hand
We must care for the 'āina
From the mountains to the sea
For we the keiki of Hawai'i
Are the future and the key

It's our kuleana as kānaka of this place
To mālama 'āina
And protect the native race
Indigenous species
No longer roam our lands
Exploited, killed, and hunted
By many traveller's hands

Deeply rooted in ha'aha'a
We stand tall like a koa tree
Together we are stronger
Me supporting you and you supporting me
By making pono choices
The light shall lead the way
A path we walk together
Toward building a better day

If we don't mālama 'āina
Traditions and culture will die
It is our kuleana to make sure
A future of kānaka survive
From mauka to makai
Our moku has always provided
It's our turn to protect it
And together stand united

GLOSSARY

- ‘āina – land, earth
aloha – love, affection, hello (greeting), goodbye (farewell)
alu like – work together
‘elepaio – species of flycatcher bird, believed to be goddess of canoe-makers
ha‘aha‘a – humility
hāloa – variety of taro; far-reaching, long; type of prayer
hamau ka leo – utter no sound
hāpu‘u – endemic tree fern (*Cibotium splendens*) with large triangular fronds
Hawai‘i nei – our [beloved] Hawai‘i; the Hawaiian Islands
he‘e – octopus
hō‘ihi – respect
honu – native Hawaiian green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)
honua – earth
i‘a – fish
‘i‘iwi – scarlet Hawaiian honeycreeper bird (*Vestiaria coccinea*)
kahawai – stream, creek, river; valley, ravine, gulch
kalo – taro plant (*Colocasia esculenta*), often cultivated for its corm and leaves
kānaka – person, individual, or population of Hawaiian ancestry
Ke Akua – God
keiki – child, children
koa – the largest native or endemic Hawaiian forest trees (*Acacia koa*)
koho – guess, choice, selection
koholā – humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)
kulāiwi – native land, homeland; native
kuleana – right, privilege, concern, responsibility
kupuna (kūpuna plural) – elder, ancestor, grandparent, a term of endearment

kumu – bottom, base, foundation, tree trunk; teacher; model, pattern
ku'u – to release, let go, abandon, free, dismiss
lehua – 'ōhi'a tree or flower of the 'ōhi'a tree
lei – flower garland, flower necklace
like – alike, similar, resembling, equal, same, uniform, mutual
mahina – moon, month; moonlight
makai – ocean, near the ocean, seaward
mālama – to care for
mana – spiritual or divine power, spirit, energy, life force
manu kama'āina – native Hawaiian birds
mauka – mountains, inland toward the mountains
moku – island, district; to be cut, severed, broken in two
na'au – gut, stomach
nai'a – dolphin, porpoise
nēnē – native or endemic Hawaiian goose
noio – black noddy bird, Hawaiian noddy tern (*Anous minutus*)
nui – big, large, great, greatest, grand, important
'ōhi'a – endemic Hawaiian tree (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) in the Myrtle family
oli – chant
'ōpae – shrimp
pikake – jasmine flower
poi – taro that has been pounded and thinned
pono – goodness, right, righteous, morality, correct or proper procedure
pua kenikeni – small tree with orange, fragrant flowers (*Fagraea berteriana*)
pueo – Hawaiian owl, often considered sacred
tutu – grandmother
ulu – to grow, increase, spread; growth; increase or rising wind; to protect
wai – water, liquid

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Planet at the crossroads

