

Māhealani Perez Wendt

Nā Wai Ea, The Freed Waters

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

**Windward District, East Maui*

1. Mahi'ai Kalo, Taro Farmer

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

2. Lo'i Kalo, Taro Fields

As far as eye could see their green hearts
 were laid bare under rains
that never ceased falling a much-aggrieved sun
 the dim glint of it through upstart clouds
but always the rains and he was glad for the gods'
 beneficence and the harbingers who coaxed
sunlight's bright threads the '*auku 'u* herons hovering
 then ensconced in pools
of watery-green expanse their emanations of light
 vectoring the same paths trod

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the same earth the same ancient waterways
the ancestors walked he regarded the plants
hungrily the same green ones whose presentiments
were his Elder Brother *Hāloanakalaukapalili*
vivified who was born of the gods
Wākea and *Ho‘ohōkūkalani* their union
a conflagration of heaven and brightening stars
their firstborn, the Elder Brother
stillborn buried *Ho‘ohōkūkalani*’s tears unceasing
until the quickening
shimmer of green in graven earth
the unfurling leaves
and the risen *Hāloanakalaukapalili*
progenitor
his offspring the stalwart green-hearted ones
who followed growing up
out of the same earth again and again
he called them *koa*, warriors
as they hoisted their green banners
forming leaf arbors under sun’s radiance
their stems rooted deep their arbors
protecting parents, grandparents, the corm, *mākua*
protecting children grandchildren, *‘ohā*, the offshoots
succoring cradling them
millennia of generations turning returning
e huli, e huli, e huli ho‘i, the ancestors called **turn, turn, turn again*
their names auspicious names naming
their offspring in dreams
through keen observations
hō‘ailona, signs
close attentions to minutiae of corm
stem petiole rhizome
shimmering sun wind
sea clouds and earth
cradle of the hallowed ancestors
and the risen *Hāloa*
give us the right names the *mākua* prayed
dispatched their entreaties released them

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mana ulu, mana 'ōpelu, mana weo,
mana uliuli, mana 'ula'ula, moi, piko,
lehua, ha 'akea, hapapū
were names given
and many more all his life
he knew and never forgot
their names
sacred from the first
they were the names of the generations
of his Elder Brother
they were the names of his family
they were the names of kalo.

**varieties of taro (kalo)*

3. Maka'ala, Be Vigilant

Elena his grandmother James and Samson
the grandfathers who brought him to the gods
he followed along the ancient paths
of well-tended fields
the rows of plants who were offshoots
of his Elder Brother green sentinels
as far as eye could see
he sloshed through the maze of waterways
the irreproachable fretwork of ancestors
arrayed he heard
their songs prayers incantations
traceries of winds waters ocean
he heard *Pahulena* the grandmother's birthplace
she said her birthplace name
and motioned toward a dense growth
of *'ōlena* and the tall stand of *niu*
where *'ehukai* breezes warmed
the wide river mouth churning
above reddish-brown sheen of seaweed *limu kohu*
spawning place of *āholehole, moi, 'anae,*
pāpio, 'o 'opu, hīhīwai, po 'opa 'a
'opihi, wana, hā 'uke 'uke, 'a 'ama
he remembered stories fishing canoes divers their nets

**tumeric, coconut*

**various species of reef fish,
mollusks, crabs*

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the surround of *akule, halalū*, mishaps at sea
the *kilo i 'a*, fish-spotter's lair high above the *kāheka*
the first catch offered there at the *ahu*
he remembered his grandmother's warning
maka 'ala and that after the bosses came
aia nō iā ha 'i nā 'āina o mākou, she said
other men have our lands
then her words went dry
and Pahulena was no more.

**fish species*
**rock basin at seashore*

**altar*

4. Waimaka, Tears

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

5. Na 'aupō, Ones Devoid of Light

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

he malihini lākou no ka 'āina 'ē
ka 'āina hūnā wai no Kāne

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

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of Kāne, his Living Waters
flowering to sea
abased are the Natives
of this extravagant land
upon their stolid ramparts
na‘aupō recite oaths
their kingdom come
their will be done
they issue the edicts
dispatch the cadres
to bulldoze the lands
build fantastic scaffolding
engineering marvels, masterworks
for excavation of the high mountains
extraction of waters
to bring the vile gods low
to siphon off the lifeblood
from the green realms
of the Elder Brother
the brooding altars are abandoned
the disconsolate moon holds no sway
as the waters are wastreled
the fate of an unrighteous people
turned in dark hands
through a marvel of gravity flow
the waters are extricated
ho ‘ohemahema, i ‘ō i ‘ane ‘i
dug here, trenched there
tunneled here, siphoned there
the uplands turned into wallows
inu ihu pua ‘a
for dirty-snouted pigs
loosed upon the land
rooting here looting there
through gross machinations
the sacred is harried in ungodly ways
ditches pipes channels
tunnels siphons flumes

**neglectful; negligent*

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6. The Fisher of Men

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as the tableau of *kua 'āina*
unfolds in the lowlands
a childlike people easily duped
to be cajoled lured away
or forcibly removed
from the greening hills
what do they know these unwitting
of the true faith, divine purpose
the higher reckonings
of true believers
little do they know
of theft treachery genocide
deception stealth coercion
the idolators must be readied
for the benefactions of civilization
na'aupō are filled with saccharine thoughts
of panoramic cane
the lands' expeditious acquisition
a foregone conclusion
the unrighteous ones' swift conversion
to a penitent upright people
the gift of civilization
a bargain more than fair
promised by the One God
who from the time of Adam
conferred to His true believers
dominion over the world
these truths being self-evident
the bosses are feverish
with thoughts of unholy war
upon *nā kua 'āina*, the people, their gods.

**people of the land*

7. Naming the Waters

I ka wao nahele
in the god-realms of *Ko 'olau*
ka 'āina i ka wai a Kāne
the land of the waters of Kāne

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the sons and daughters of Hāloa
 named the waters:
where the long waters fell seaward
 ravishing black stones
where the eyes smarted from backspray
 and in dark depths like stars
the seed pearl oysters
 their faint songs could be heard
the name *Makapipi* was given;
 where *wī*, *hīhīwai* shells
migrated upstream and down;
 where *wī* groves
grew as thickets
 seeding the lands
where *wī* wind sounds were heard
 the name *Hanawī* was given;
where the waters scudded cloud-like
 as though firmament
where a red sheen was seen above
 signifying the presence of Sacred Ones
the name *Ka'a'ula* was given;
 where the *mo'o* goddess
was well-pleased
 and smiled back at her own reflection
in the shadow waters
 the name *Waia'aka* was given;
where limestone beds
 of *'āko'ako'a* formed
and the *ulumaika* stones were shaped
 the name *Pa'akea* was given;
the narrow-necked gourds
 for water-carrying
gave *Waiohue* its name;
 ravaneous Kamapua'a
the pig god
 his stampeding hordes
gave *Pua'aka'a* its name;
 where *wauke* was kneaded

**lizard guardian of waters*

**ancient game rolling shaped stones*

**mulberry*

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to *kapa* of fine transparency
"tapa")

**mulberry textile (also,*

stained with *ākala* berries
for a red birth gift

Kōpili ʻula was the name given;
where two waters converged

and *ʻo ʻopu* scaled waterfalls
where Pele's sister the sorceress

**goby fish*
**Pele, volcano fire goddess*

Kapōma ʻilele removed her genitals
sent them flying to thwart
the rutting pig god Kamapuaʻa
his lust for Pele

Wailua-Iki was the name given;
where *Kāne-i-ka-Pahu-Wai*

Kāne of the Great Water Source
where he was seen in the heavenly clouds
in the verdant mountainward ridges
where he was seen in the red-tinged rainbow
where there was rain, lightning flashes
where he slept in the glowing light
where his great heart was heard

in the thundering waterfalls
cascading stones quaking corals
where *kalo* was planted along the high ridges
where it was planted in the wide valleys
where it was planted inland of the teeming shores
kaulana nā ʻāina kalo

a nā hoa ʻāina

where famous were the *kalo* lands
and the people who cultivated them

Wailua-Nui was the name given;
where the gods *Kāne* and *Kanaloa*
refreshed themselves in springs
near groves of red and yellow *lehua*

Ōhiʻa was the name given;
where the stout-stemmed *olonā* grew
where in frigid waters the strands
were immersed cured

**shrub used for textiles*

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braided into fine white cordage
 for canoe lashings, fishing lines, netting
 where they were plaited
 for chiefly raiment *'ahu 'ula*,
kāhili, lei, mahiole
 where the stout-stemmed *olonā* grew
Waianu was the name given;
 where fine-grained *milo*
 were shade trees for the old chiefs
 where windstorms incised the heartwood
 the omens carved into god likenesses
 made into canoe paddles, serving bowls,
 implements for planting
 where prolific headwaters
 were called *moana*
 the name *Waiokamilo* was given;
 where *mai'a* was food curative unguent
 where its broad-leaf canopies
 were rain-coverings, enclosures
 where spring waters bubbled up
 through igneous cinder, *'ākeke*
 where fish were reserved for the chief alone
 where tributaries were named
Wahinehau 'oli, for the laughing woman,
Kano, for the hard-stemmed *mai'a* and
Waia`olohe, for resounding waters;
 where edible trees were felled
 beside the great waterfalls, *Ke'akū*,
 and *Keahu*, offering places also,
 the name *Pālahuhulu* was given;
 sentience along the high ridges
 an exhilaration of climbing, of mounting
 gave *Pi'ina'au* its name;
 where the god Lono's thundering rains
 poured down hollows caves ravines
 where the tumult echoed down ridges
 sidewise along boulder-strewn seacliffs
 where earth shuddered and heaved

**feather cape*
**royal standard attached to*
staff; garland; helmet

**banana*

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with *nū* sounds
 where great schools of fish hearkened
 where the torrents narrowed
Nua 'ailua was the name given;
 where white tropic seabirds hovered above
 where they plunged ocean depths
 for he`e, `ōpelu, weke
 where their fledglings waited
 nestled among cave-pocketed seacliffs
 where the torrents were wide
Honomanū was the name given;
 where *hāpu 'u*, *'amau 'u*, *hala*, *'ohe*,
niu, *loulou*, *kī*, *halapepe*, *'awa* *various forest plants
 where *mamaki*, *'iliahi*, *wiliwili*,
koa, *palapalai*, *pala 'ā*
 where *kukui*, *'ōhi 'a*, *hau*, *milo*, *kamani*, *`ulu*
 where cherished forest plants grew
 the name *Punalau* was given;
 where *tapa*-beating logs were harvested
 the black and red berries
 strained for dyes
 where the shorebirds returned
 the name *Kōlea* was given;
 where a glowing light appeared
 above the ridgeline
 signifying the presence of *Kāne*
 the name *Ha 'ipua 'ena* was given;
 where the glowing light was
 lightning, star trails
 where it glittered along forest paths
 eddies, rivulets, the great river stones
 where the god *Kāne* was wayfinder
 the name *Puohoakamoa* was given;
 where *moi* was reserved for chiefs
 where the white-fleshed silver threadfin
 spawned at the muliwai and scoured ocean depths
 where in the uplands
 white-fleshed *kalo* was also named *moi*

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for the silver threadfin
 Waikamoi was the name given;
 where the *ali 'i wahine* ran
 to the flat hiding stone
 where she found refuge
 from the pig god Kamapua'a
 the name *Wahinepe'e* was given;
no ka mea, he mau inoa akua lākou
e ola nō lākou a pau.
 in the god-inspired naming
 the people remembered
 because they remembered
 the waters lived.

**chiefly woman*

8. *Ko'olau, The Windward Cliffs*

All night
 and for endless days like ghost canoes
 at full sail under brightening moon
 the billowing *'Ī'ale'ale* winds sweep across
 Ko'olau mountain sea cliffs
 over razor-edged ridges valleys
 with thunderous bursts exhalations
 obscurations of light
 the spectral crew worrying each blade leaf
 branch with roaring cascades waterfalls
 avalanches rockslides incessant rains
 it is the season of *ho 'oilo*
ho 'iloli ke kai, the sea rages
 the god Kanaloa furious
 his tentacled seamounts shaking
 he hurls himself against seacliffs
 sending 'a'ama scuttling over the reefs
 shoals corals the staid seaweed
limu wāwae 'iole, limu manaua, limu 'ele'ele,
limu kohu, limu huluhuluwaena
 their swaying frondescences under frothy waves
 in the uplands kalo

**restless; tossing*

**cold, stormy*

**varieties of seaweed*

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revel in watery pools
 rainbows bead on the leaf-green
arbors of scintillate light
 refractions mirrored prisms riven
by Kāne-i-ka-Wai-Ola
 Kāne takes the form of an owl
he thrusts his wings and talons
 disarming his enemies
Kāne, god of the living waters
 walks abroad with Kanaloa
scion of water, scion of sea together
 summoning forth the sacred springs. *Oiana!* **Behold!*
waters gush forth out of earth
 the living waters of Kāne coursing to sea.

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