

2.

Eia Hawai'i, he pae 'āina, he mau
moku, he mau kānaka, he mau
kānaka nui Hawai'i ē. He mau
Hawai'i kākou mau a mau.

Like you, these islands were born.
They came from Kāne, from Kū,
from Hina, from Lono, from Kanaloa,
from Haumea, from Papa, from Wākea,
from Ho'ohōkūkalani, from Kāulawahine,
from Lua, from Māui, from Pele, from
the deep darkness of Pō: Hawai'i,
Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, O'ahu,
Kaua'i, Ni'ihau, Kaho'olawe.
They fed on water, salt, and heat,
crawled and then stood up in the light.
They grew tall and wide and turned
and slept and laughed and ate and
fought and shared in black and brown
and green and red. They inhaled earth
and exhaled mountains, beaches, pali,
and pōhaku. They inhaled sky, exhaled
the rains, winds, clouds, and stars.

Like you, these islands were born,
and every part of them born. Coral
children, worm children, shell, fish,
limu, grass, gourd, ocean, and forest
children. Children of rock and vine
and shrub and tree, fruit and fur.
Water children of salt and spring.
Insect children. Seeded, propagated,
corm children. Children who slither,
crawl, cling, and creep, who curl and unfurl,
who hatch, peck, bite, glide, and fly.

Rooting, digging, hill-building
children. Hiding, peeping, nesting
children. Brindled, speckled, tentacled
shape-shifters. Those with eight legs,
with eight eyes, those with four
and two. Those with fins, with iwi
and without. Tasters who sing
their names, and hearers who
answer or retreat. Children of howl
and screech, of paw and claw,
blind and sighted, tail and tendril,
skin and scale, web and wing,
stemmed, veined, and rooted.
Children o ke au iki a ke au nui.
'O nā mea 'ike maka 'ia,
'o nā mea 'ike maka 'ole.

Older, wiser children born
breathing long before us. Born
like you. Like these islands.

Born are mo'olelo, seeds
 strewn, the finest seeds
 of stars in the heavens,
 the seeds of gods. Born
 from ocean, from spring,
 from mountain, from pebble
 and shell becoming sand.
 Born from storm, from tide,
 from crash and foam bubble.
 Born from shoot, from leaf,
 branch, from every body part,
 from beyond the body, from
 piko, from 'aumākua,
 from the darkness—born
 from huli, from lewa, like you.

E ho'olohe pono: every
 mo'olelo is huli, every one
 lewa between pō and ao,
 lani and honua, mauka
 and makai in the starred
 salivary space, teeth
 and tongue unleashed, pressed
 through the pulse of clenched
 jaw, quivering cheek, they
 part pursed lips, voveling every
 vestige of throat muscle, of larynx,
 of diaphragmed breath, of na'au—

puka mai ka mo'olelo,
 hānau ka mo'olelo,
 ua mo'olelo nō.

4.

As it is with mo'olelo,
there are always
many versions.

As it is told, Haumea
gives birth to mākua
from every part
of her body.

Papahānaumoku
gives birth to islands.

Hina gives birth to kapa,
to Māuiakamalo,
and to the reef and fish.

Ho'ohōkūkalanī
gives birth to kalo
and the stars in his body.

Pele gives birth to fire,
smoke, and steam, then
to new black land.

Hi'iaka gives birth to green,
to kupukupu, hāpu'u, pālai,
'ama'u, 'ēkaha, kīlau, ni'ani'au,
pohole, pepe'e, palaho'a.

And there are more
mothers giving birth
to everything you see
and don't see. More
mothers giving birth
to bodies of water, of

words, of darkness, of
movement, of light. More
mothers feeding us safety,
shelter, love, beauty.

More mothers who have
always been from more
mothers. You should know
you have many mothers,
and you will be mothers
to many more.