

For Kawainui and the descendants who care for her everyday

We Are Kawainui

By Beth Anderson

Kawainui, the piko of your ahupua‘a. Embryonic, life giving, hot magma entombed fathoms below her waters.

You, born of this place, ask permission, emanate respect, and exude honor. Hauwahine joyfully listens to your chant. Enter descendant.

Ha‘aha‘a.

The kalo grows tall, the ‘uki grass kisses your feet, ‘Alae ‘Ula, Ae‘o, Koloa, and Alae ke‘oke‘o call to you. Walk in the footsteps of your ancestors to the four corners— Wai‘auia, Kālaheo, Kapa‘a, Kahanaiki. A thousand five hundred years. You are still here where the two wai join. Kanaka Maoli. Remain.

Ho‘omau.

Hōkūle‘a, guided your returns to Ulupō, Holomakani, Pahukini, Nā Pōhaku O Hauwahine to recite mo‘olelo, oli, mele, dance, and imu here. Pound poi and kapa, slap the ipu here. Honor your ancestors here. Iwi kūpuna burial belongs here. Pamoā will flourish, kūpuna will enlighten here. Listen keiki.

Imi Na‘auao.

Wahi pana, lo‘i, fishpond and forest desecrated by invasives, aliens, non-natives. Fishpond, ‘ama ‘ama, o‘opu wai, āholehole bled by sugar cane, smothered by rice and cattle. Culture, voice, and soul buried in cement and oppression. Original environmentalists here. Rise up. Sustain.

Mālama Ho‘okuleana.

Two separate worlds, native and non-native. Who gave you authority? Asking permission, having to negotiate, compromise. Fenced off, made invisible in your eyes. Hauwahine recognizes who is healing here. Put down your weapons. Stop inflicting pain. It was stolen. It once was ours.

‘Ike Pono