

Anchoring the Cry Within

We are visiting
Kūkaniloko
Me, my mother, Mehana,
My boys asleep in the car.
We walk down the red earth road
I am barefoot
soaking up everything I can.
We approach the two
upstanding ancestors
in the form of rocks
swathed in light.
We stop talking.
We feel that thickness appear
in the air
particles
getting glutinous
something else is there
remembering,
breathing, being,
belonging, in a way
that you might interrupt
whatever it is, whoever they are,
that which cannot easily
be known.
Kapu.
You can feel it.
Mehana stands
at the feet of the two
her face towards the light.
We wait for the tourists
to walk past.
She begins,
teacher of chants,
chanting,
enchanted
the ancestors
awakening them
intentionally

to our presence.
We dare to be here.
We acknowledge you.
Mehana turns her
genealogy into
the shape of words
spoken,
name
after name,
so they know
who and how
and why.
I am grateful to be safe
under her mantle.
We approach
what Martha has already
dreamed out loud for me
stones arranged
already in my imagination
a poem already birthed
out of wonder.
Here we are
Mehana ushers the bottoms
of Japanese girls
off the rocks.
“Sorry”
Later we gather the
fruit, the leis, the money,
the offerings,
we strip the boulders clean.
“It’s not our way,”
Mehana explains.
“They are just showing their love”
wanting to be part
of the mystery
that is us,
and not us.
Poem in hand,
I wonder if my words

are worthy.

We sit under a tree,
watch tourists
come and go.

Mehana has a knack
of repelling them.

They just knew.

We spend a long time
looking at the deep dip
in the mountain range,
where the sun sets,
in “v-necked” glory
golden citrine
at the throat
of that mauka
Stunning.

Mehana speaks
about how the military
are only ones
allowed over
triangular dip
the one way
through
the mountains.

As if on cue
helicopters buzz
like black mosquitoes
overhead.

She tells me
Maui was born in Waianae.
I believe her.

Where else
would he be from?

A woman walks up
with her boys,
“Mehana.

It is me, Emma.”

They begin to
Olelo Hawaii.

It is beautiful.
I stand
catch fragments
of its fluent echo.
Nod my head
at the pieces
I can piece
together.
I read them the poem.
It does not feel bad.
It is a remembering.
It is a ritual.
It is an offering
that does not need
to be cleaned
off the rocks.
They continue to
Olelo Hawaii.
This then,
perhaps
is the
revolution.
To keep on
being ourselves
in a world
that is doing
everything it can
to change us.