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Kohala last:  
 lesser Kohala, greater Kohala  
 inner Kohala, outer Kohala  
 and then Pili and Ka-lā-hiki-ola  
 companion hills traveling as a twain

## Son of the Shark-God (A Mythological Legend of Hawai'i)

Suggested by Emma M. Nakuina's  
 "The Legend of the Shark-Man, Nanaue" (1896),  
 retold by Alfons L. Korn (1968)

### Note

The legend index at the main branch of the Library of Hawai'i contains a hoard of titles listing stories about Hawaiian sharks, shark-gods, king-sharks, shark-warriors, boy-sharks, blond sharks, and their various habitats, customs, favorite foods, adventures, love-affairs, triumphs, and defeats. Some of these tales have been collected (and occasionally retold) by well-known figures in the history of Hawaiian folk-lore, including Thomas G. Thrum, W. D. Westervelt, Eric Knudsen, and Mary Kawena Pukui and Caroline Curtis. Padraic Colum included a skillful rendering of one of the shark-boy stories in his *Bright Islands*, "When the Little Blond Shark Went Visiting."

My source for the following re-telling of the Tale of Nanaue, shark-boy of Waipi'o Valley, Island of Hawai'i, is a version originally collected by Mrs. Emma Metcalf Nakuina (1847-1929) during the 1890s and first published in the *Fourth Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society*, Honolulu, 1896, pp. 10-19. Mrs. Nakuina had a scholarly interest in the traditions of her Hawaiian ancestors. At the end of her version of "The Legend of the Shark-Man, Nanaue," she provided an informative note as to the source of the story in the form she published it. One of her informants was a ninety-year old woman of Waipi'o Valley and the other was a *kama'āina* of Moloka'i, David Napela.

This story was obtained from Kamakau. She was born at the time of the building of Kiholo. Details of the latter part of the story on Moloka'i were obtained from D. Napela, who was born and lived all his lifetime in the vicinity of the scene of the story. He was quite an intelligent old man, and had been the government school teacher at Waialua, Moloka'i.

The D. Napela mentioned by Mrs. Nakuina was probably David Napela, a relative (possibly son) of Jonathan Napela, who was one of the first Hawaiians to become a Mormon convert and one of several Hawaiians who helped to translate the Book of Mormon into Hawaiian. Jonathan Napela was assistant supervisor of the Kalaupapa settlement in 1873 at the time of Father Damien's arrival. He was of chiefly ancestry, as was his wife Kiti Richardson Napela, and both husband and wife must have had an extensive knowledge of old Hawai'i. Little is known about David Napela, but the family tradition and the Moloka'i setting, steeped in folklore, are enough to account for David Napela's interest in the story of how Nanaue finally met his death on Moloka'i.

In my re-telling of Mrs. Nakuina's version of the story of Nanaue, I have freely expanded the bare outline of the 1896 text, in an attempt to make the setting (Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i) more vivid, the action more exciting and sensational, the character of Nanaue more memorable, and the mixture of horror and humor in the tale somewhat more highly seasoned. The only important episode I have invented out of whole cloth is my account of Nanaue's unfortunate domestic adventures on Maui and his ordeal of having to live with his brother-in-law, Pu'upu'u, the *kōnane* (checkers) champion of Maui. Even this episode, however, has traditional roots, one of them being a famous scene in the life of

the hero Lono-i-ka-makahiki, when he "broke the *kōnane* board after an argument with Ka-iki-lani, a woman." (See "The Story of Lono-i-ka-makahiki," in Samuel M. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawai'i*, Honolulu, 1961.)

My re-telling of the story is intended not for small children but for teen-agers and grown-ups. My use of a rather more extensive and sometimes "literary" vocabulary than is usually encountered in this type of Hawaiian folk-tale is deliberate. Hence I have not necessarily deleted the first word that occurred to me to suggest an important idea or distinction or to convey a certain tone that, for me at least, seemed natural and effective in the context: "marina," "stipulation," "configuration," "superficial," "mandible," "par excellence," "dietary," "proclivity," etc.

Alfons Korn  
May 1968  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

In the reign of King Umi, there lived in Waipi'o Valley on the Island of Hawai'i a handsome girl called Kalei, who was very fond of eating shellfish. She regularly went to find them at a spot called Kuiopihi, at the mouth of the Waipi'o River, where the freshwater stream flows out of the valley by several descending marina-like terraces down into the sea. Kalei usually joined a party of other women for these fishing excursions, but if the sea was a little too rough, or if the weather was unfavorable and her companions too afraid to venture out on the wild dangerous beach, Kalei would often go by herself, rather than do without her favorite sea-food.

In those days the Waipi'o River emptied over a low fall into a basin, partly open to the sea, which is now completely filled up with rocks from some later volcanic event, or perhaps as a result of an earthquake. The ancient basin, a deep mirror to the sky above and the surrounding cliffs, was an ideal place for all the bathers of the valley to congregate and swim, dive, indulge in water sports, or simply enjoy themselves.

The King-Shark-God, none other than Kamohoali'i himself, used to visit this pool very often to disport himself in the fresh waters of the Waipi'o. Of course he had his other favorite habitats stretching all along the bottom of the pali-sades that extend from Waipi'o towards Kohala, on the Island of Hawai'i. A favorite haunt was an islet called Maiaukiu in the sea just opposite and abreast of serene Waipi'o Valley. It is not surprising that from this vantage point, Kamohoali'i was sometimes tempted to investigate more closely, for the purpose of sheer amusement, the beach on the mainland itself, just at the point where the river's mouth opens out upon the surf. It should be remembered that Kamohoali'i had a deep appreciation not only of scenic charm, but also of the human variety, particularly as found in young women.

Kalei, as was to be expected, since she had been born and brought up in Waipi'o Valley, was an expert swimmer, a champion diver, in fact a girl who was noted especially for

the neatness and grace with which she could *lelekawa* — jump from the rocks into deep water without producing the slightest sign of a splash. This is a most difficult feat for unskilled and clumsy swimmers and divers, but it was not for Kalei. It seems that Kamohoali'i, the King-Shark, had made due note of Kalei's expert jump-diving, which he admired as an example of the girl's technique as an athlete, but also because this display of physical prowess was accompanied by the loveliness of her bodily presence, her unaffected air of calm, unhurried delight. Assuming the shape of a very good-looking man, Kamohoali'i walked on the beach one rather rough morning in mid-May, waiting for Kalei to put in her appearance.

Now the very enchantment of the scene—the wildness of the surrounding elements, surf and shore, terraced ledge, gleaming basin and pool, and perhaps above all the noble background of the towering cliffs surrounding the valley on three sides—provided a matchless setting for one of Kamohoali'i's most picturesque love-adventures.

On one morning in particular, when the surf was unusually rough, Kalei arrived on the beach alone. She was unaccompanied by any of her usual friends, because these had all been discouraged by the stiff winds and the rising waves. Even Kalei, one of the most agile and quick of rock-fishers, man or woman, who had ever lived in the valley during all its centuries, made several well-executed but unsuccessful springs to escape a high threatening wave raised by the Shark-God himself. This monster wave almost engulfed her. If it had not been for the prompt and effective assistance of the thoughtful stranger, Kalei would certainly have been swept out to sea and probably would never have been heard from again.

Thus an acquaintanceship was established. The casual meeting at a moment of crisis led naturally enough to a warm comradeship, and this phase ripened into deeper love.

There was soon no lack (for a time at least) of perfect tenderness on each side. In any event, Kalei continued to meet the stranger from time to time. After a period of some months, she consented very willingly to become his bride.

Some little while before she expected to become a mother, her husband, who all this time would only come home at night, told her of his true nature. He told her gravely, with a note of sadness in his revelations, that he would have to leave her soon. With a most gentle admonition he gave Kalei orders about the regimen he recommended for bringing up his future child. He especially cautioned the mother never to let her baby, whether boy or girl, be fed on animal flesh of any kind. This rather harsh rule was the result of the dual nature of the anticipated infant. There was no doubt about it. The child would be a sort of demi-god. Or if not a regular demi-god, at least he would participate in the nature of both his father and mother. He would undergo the kind of life and the experiences appropriate to both sharks and human beings—though not usually, as in this case, fused together. One of his most marvelous and disturbing powers, perhaps to himself as well as to others, would be the ability of his dual nature to change his bodily form at will. In the twinkling of an eye he would be able to assume the shape and appearance and behavior of a human being. And vice versa, of course, if he so desired and if the occasion seemed to call for such a metamorphosis.

In time Kalei gave birth to a fine-looking healthy boy, apparently the same as any other child. He had, however, besides the normal mouth of a human being, a shark's mouth on his back, a little to one side of his right shoulder-blade. Kalei, not utterly surprised or disappointed by this singular feature of her baby, had fortunately told her family earlier about what kind of a man her husband was. They all agreed to keep the matter of the shark-mouth a dark family secret, for there was no knowing what fears and superstitions might

be aroused in the minds of the King and high chiefs by such an abnormal creature. Indeed, the child would run some danger of being killed for his innocent oddity. He was named Nanaue.

The old grandfather, far from heeding the warning given by Kamohoali'i as to diet and nutrition, did exactly what he was supposed not to do. He let himself spoil the child irreparably, as soon as the boy was old enough to come under the *kapu* regulating the segregated eating customs of the two sexes. The boy thus had to take his meals at the *mua* house with the men-folks of the family. It was by his grandfather's wicked or wickedly foolish disregard of Kamohoali'i's prohibition against his son's eating meat that the small boy was started on the long tortuous journey that was to end in his destruction. The grandfather went to special pains to stuff the little fellow with both dog meat and pork. Possibly the grandfather meant well. He had visions of his grandson growing up to be a famous warrior. There was no knowing what opportunities lay before a skillful warrior in the promising days of King Umi. So the grandfather fed the boy on meat, whenever it was obtainable. The boy thrived, grew sturdy, big-shouldered, a handsome fellow like his father (in his human form), and with something of his mother's poised grace. People often remarked that even as a six-year-old Nanaue was as glorious to look at as the *lama* tree, sacred tree-of-life, celebrated by lovers of the old Hawaiian hula and of its mistress, the demi-goddess Laka, who presides over song, dance, and the chanting of poetry.

Beside the pool at the mouth of the Waipi'o, there was another pool nearer Kalei's house, at the bottom of the last cascade in upper Waipi'o. There the boy went regularly to swim, where his mother could easily keep an eye on him as she sat watching from the bank. Just before the youngster shot—presto!—into the stream, he would change automatically in mid-air, as it seemed, into a shark. After racing back

and forth a moment or two, plunging, rising, rolling his merry eyes about to make his mother laugh, he would often turn over on his belly, as if searching for something on the stream-bed. For a little while he would seem to be resting. Then, suddenly, he would dart about chasing the small fish that abound in the fresh-water pool, eating as many as he liked, until he had had his fill of them. When he became old enough to understand such matters, his mother impressed upon Nanaue the importance of concealing his shark identity from other people, especially from those his own age and their families and friends. He was very good about accepting the fact of his difference from other children. Nor did he seem to be in the least disturbed about some of his mother's important detailed instructions, such as always keeping his back covered with his *kapa kihei*, his shoulder mantle.

Although the pool at the falls was a favorite bathing place for the entire village, Nanaue never accompanied other village children when they went there to bathe. Always he went his own way alone. On those early occasions while his mother watched over him, she would sit on the bank holding tight in her arms the boy's folded *kapa* scarf. She always chose the same place to sit, a certain rock well-shaded from the sun's glare, but a spot where she could easily spy out the approach of anyone else and yet keep Nanaue well in view. By no fault of Kalei would her son's secret ever become known.

As the days passed, she learned to read the rippling shadows and glints in the water as signals of a shark's movements. She proudly realized that she was mother of a champion boy-swimmer. She was always happy, as well as much relieved, when at last her gleaming ten- or eleven-year-old son was covered and clothed again in his human form, especially from left hip to right shoulder-blade.

When Nanaue was about fifteen, his appetite for fish and flesh, indulged regularly since childhood, had grown so strong that a human being's ordinary allowance was no



longer sufficient to satisfy Nanaue's capacity. By that time his old grandfather had died, and the family had to depend on what food was supplied by Nanaue's step-father and by his two slow-witted uncles. First, of course, all the relatives teased him, but finally they began scolding him for what they called his greedy habits. In the end, by unanimous agreement reached after a full family conclave, he was dubbed with the nickname of *manōhae*—meaning "ravenous shark," or a man who is extremely gluttonous and voracious, especially in his desire for raw meat.

During these years of his very young manhood, Nanaue roamed a good deal about his own neighborhood alone. He liked especially to spend hour after hour at one or the other of his two favorite pools, the one inland along the upper stretch of the river, or the other down at the lower channel, where the Waipi'o pours into the awaiting sea.

In the course of time, as was to be expected, there was increasing gossip in the valley about Nanaue and his singular ways. Great was the speculation about why he always kept his *kapa* mantle fastidiously draped over his right shoulder. For such a well-shaped, athletic youth, his invariable attire naturally aroused curiosity, for it was not at all exceptional for even a very modest young man in those days to appear naked from the waist upward. But not only did Nanaue avoid the two pools, which other persons and especially those his age habitually used for bathing and swimming, he also held himself aloof from all games and pastimes of the young people, for fear that a gust of wind or some sudden unexpected or perhaps awkward movement of someone else or of his own might dislodge the *kapa* shoulder-scarf and reveal his secret.

Yet Nanaue's apparent unsociability, as he reached his eighteenth year, was balanced by several redeeming features. When not fishing by himself or bathing in invisible solitude and bliss, he was almost always to be found working away in

his mother's two potato patches. When many of the neighbors would pass Nanaue, while he was busy pulling taro or digging up potatoes, he liked to hail them with a jaunty greeting and inquiry about where they were going. If they answered "To bathe in the pool," or "Fishing," Nanaue would answer, "Watch out, or you may disappear head and tail!"

More and more people began to notice that whenever Nanaue addressed them in this neighborly manner, sooner or later some member of the fishing-party would be bitten savagely by a shark. Indeed, for several years certain children of the valley began to disappear mysteriously, leaving behind them not the slightest trace. In fact, even grownups began disappearing. None of these vanished persons provided any clue about what might have happened to them, not so much as an anklet or earring or any other article of use or adornment.

Nanaue was a full-grown man, just turned twenty-one, when Umi, King of Hawai'i, issued a royal command that every man dwelling in Waipi'o should go to work on the royal plantation, the *kōele*, tilling the soil of the King. Certain days during a ten-day period, an *anahulu*, were to be set aside for such feudal obligation. On the allotted days every man, woman, and child had to render service, except the very old, the decrepit, the sick, and infants in arms.

On the first day under the new work-schedule, everybody went to the fields except Nanaue. To the astonishment of all persons who had occasion to greet him, he simply continued as usual planting, weeding, irrigating, pulling and digging in his mother's patches. Nanaue's behavior was speedily reported to King Umi, and several of the King's stalwart lesser chieftains were dispatched to fetch Nanaue and bring him at once before the King. Nanaue of course approached the King in the correct manner, crawling along on his knees, still wearing his *kapa kihei*, his invariable shoulder mantle.

"They tell me, Nanaue," said King Umi, "that you do not labor on the *Ko'ele* along with everybody else. Why don't you?"

"Sire," said Nanaue, "I was not aware that such labor had been demanded of me."

King Umi could not help admiring the bold, forthright, free bearing of the young man, scarcely more than a sturdy adolescent boy. The King carefully took stock of Nanaue's broad shoulders and glistening biceps. He decided then and there that this was a young man who ought to make excellent material for a superb warrior. King Umi's reign, as it happened, was a time when notable careers at court could sometimes be carved out of a very humble calabash, and when young men of promise of all classes, but especially first-rate athletes and potential warriors, could quite easily find a speedy avenue of advancement. Nevertheless King Umi, having made his mental observation, merely dismissed his handsome young subject, ordering him to report forthwith in the fields and patches, exactly like everyone else, at least among his loyal commoners.

Nanaue obeyed. He appeared without delay, but still wearing his *kapa kihei*. He immediately identified a particular headman, a *luna* who looked intelligent, and fell into place beside him in the field. Nanaue did not, however, lay aside his *kapa* mantle from his shoulders, though it would have been far more practical to remove so useless and uncomfortable an encumbrance before settling down to such punishing labor in the field. The sight of the independent and aloof Nanaue, lifting heavy stones and, as he sweated at every pore, dragging great gnarled *'ohi'a* tree-roots to a spot where other men were chopping them to pieces with their stone adzes, made a most satisfying picture in the eyes of the other workmen who had known Nanaue since his boyhood. They found it pleasant to hear him grunt and heave. They grinned when they saw the sweat trickle down his forehead,

fall in heavy drops from his dirty ear-lobes. One man in particular, a close friend of Nanaue's lazy uncles, envied the easy way Nanaue without even lunging could toss a huge root backward over his shoulder. To a sullen-faced comrade the man whispered a certain insulting expression. The second man allowed a smile to creep over his own sullen face. Then looking round at his nearest neighbors he repeated the same rude expression. The joke caught on like wildfire. Soon all dusty faces were baring upper and lower molars, heads were nodding, elbows nudging, lips whispering the same insulting password: "*Manōhae*"—"Greedy shark."

But it was a mere nine-year-old youngster, one who in years almost could have been Nanaue's own son, who brushed past his uplifted arm in such a way as to tear off, as if by accident, the *kapa kihei*. At that instant almost everyone in the field beheld for the first time a sight all had heard about since childhood, but which none had ever encountered before with his own eyes. It was quite obvious that Nanaue had two mouths.

One mouth, which he spoke with, was entirely normal and located in the usual part of his anatomy. The other, which had begun at birth simply as a slight swelling or healed-over scar, had developed and flowered finally into a second muscular mouth or slot, with a throat-like opening, situated on his back a little to one side under his right shoulder-blade. When closed, its powerful lips resembled something that was not quite a seam nor exactly a gash. Although none of the teeth at the moment were visible, slight indentations on the superficial skin revealed the underlying bony mandible-like structure. While human lips are normally darker than their surrounding area, Nanaue's shark-mouth lips were lighter than the rest of his skin, resembling the dead white of fish-belly, or the slightly yellow-white of fine old ivory jewelry. Because the protective shield of the *kihei* covered a portion of Nanaue's back, now there appeared a



slash of almost ghostly pale skin where no sunburn had ever before directly penetrated. The slash reached from Nanaue's right shoulder down to his left hip. The strong mouth-slit lay entirely in the concealed strip of snowy pigmentation.

All the crowd instantly comprehended Nanaue's secret. Those who had started lifting stones let them drop to the ground. Even the small children carrying their little lauhala play-baskets of waste and rubble gazed in the direction where uniformly all their parents' eyes were riveted as if hypnotized.

Nanaue's response to his new situation was no less spontaneous. In his sudden predicament he now for the first time in his life, certainly in public, lost all his capacity (thus far well-controlled and trained) for rigorous will-power and self-discipline. His shark's nature had almost automatically become predominant even though he remained in his human form.

As when a flung switch-blade whisks through the air, or when some razor-sharp bird-beak or spur falls suddenly upon its helpless prey, Nanaue swiftly pivoted and turned round. Then in a flash of blinding motion he bit several of the nearest bystanders. His dorsal shark-mouth snapped open and shut, shut and open, making at the same time an odd clicking sound such as sharks notoriously are known to make when balked of a victim.

The news of Shark-Mouth Nanaue and his carnivorous predatory behavior was quickly carried by special runner to King Umi, who was deeply concerned. Now all of a sudden everyone was full of old tales about bathers who had disappeared in the surf, but more especially about the decidedly mysterious disappearance of bathers who had gone for a swim in the pools frequented by young Nanaue. Some professed to remember that Nanaue, as they passed by his mother's potato patches, had given them pretended warnings, and that only their own skill as swimmers had later enabled them to escape

with merely a flesh-wound or a slight but painful graze. Many knew of a certain cousin or brother-in-law, or somebody's foster-mother's sister, who had disappeared from the community and had never been heard of again. Surely these lost individuals must have been devoured by the shark-man.

King Umi had not the slightest doubt that these surmises and charges were true. He accordingly ordered all field-work to cease instantly. When basket and sledge and adze had been laid aside, all hands were instructed to prepare at once a great bonfire. As soon as proper arrangements could be completed, Nanaue was to be thrown upon the punitive funeral pyre and burned to death alive.

Now as everyone knows, a shark's muscles and brain can on occasion function almost with the speed of angelic light. When wretched Nanaue realized what he had done, and at the same time clearly took in what fate lay before him, he called out by name to the Shark-God, his father: "Kamohoali'i! Kamohoali'i!" Bursting the ropes he had been bound with for his cremation, he dashed with almost invisible speed into the ranks of the assembled warriors. Though the entire throng of strapping men attempted to detain him, he easily slipped through the *malo*-clad human barrier and raced with incredible swiftness in the direction of the ocean. No man in Waipi'o had ever been known to cover the distance with such superhuman speed.

Nanaue did not slacken his pace until he had reached the very brink of the lower pool, the paradisiacal palm-fringed basin that drained into the last stretch of the river before descending into the sea. Pausing for a moment on a ledge of rocks bordering the pool, favorite taking-off place for divers, Nanaue waited nonchalantly until the foremost of his pursuers were almost within an arm's reach. Then, at that precise instant, he leaped upward and next shot downward into the pool, having changed in mid-air into a giant silver shark. He was as fierce in appearance as he was beautiful.

Sometimes he swam on the surface of the water and sometimes several feet beneath, but always in full view of the Waipi'o multitude. These people could only stand cemented in their places by fright, their gaze transfixed by the antics of the son of the Shark-God. The number of watchers was being constantly increased by new arrivals, ranging from the very old to mere toddlers, and including one or two persons who were actually blind but did not want to miss this historic occasion.

From their stations on each side of the river the crowd could frequently catch lightning glimpses of Nanaue in his new shark form. He would sometimes lie brazenly on his back on the surface of the water, then flip himself over on his belly, exposing to his audience the dark silver shaft of his unblemished back. Next he would raise his head partly above the water, snort once or twice, spurt and spray jets of fresh water in five directions, and finally snap his teeth at the stupefied spectators. They gazed at him with eyes agog like an audience in an obscene circus.

By this time the swarming valley-folk had completely lined both banks of the Waipi'o River for many yards, like an overflow crowd at an open-air boxing match. Finally, as if in derision of his onlookers, Nanaue swung himself swiftly about, making a kind of gleaming arc as he pivoted, flirted his tail at the rapt gazers, and swam away to the lower end of the pool, where in a single splendid dive he entered the last stretch of the river and headed out toward the open sea.

After this last gesture of defiance, most of the excited watchers could hardly do more than catch their breath. However, not a few hotheads, with several women among them, and even including a number of hysterical children, wanted to kill Nanaue's mother and all her bad-blooded relatives at once. What else could such a monstrous woman deserve for having given birth to such a monstrous son? The leaders of the mob even went so far as to seize Kalei and her brothers, bind them with strong *olonā* fiber, and drag the

whole lot of them off to where King Umi was holding court in special session. The outcry and clamor of the community was loud and virtually unanimous—death to all. Among the more practical suggestions was a proposal that Kalei and the uncles should be thrown into the bonfire being kindled for the escaped Nanaue.

But Umi was a wise king and could not consent to any such summary proceedings. King Umi ordered that Kalei be permitted to crawl on her knees, still bound hand and foot, and approach him so that he might ask a few questions about her terrible offspring. The aggrieved mother told King Umi everything, the whole story in many ways so wonderful concerning the boy's uncommon paternity and his careful upbringing. And she also told Umi about the warning given him by Nanaue's sea-father.

After meticulous weighing of the evidence, King Umi came to the conclusion that the great King-Shark Kamohoali'i was on the whole a beneficent as well as a powerful deity. Indeed, if the relatives, especially the mother, of his princely son should be killed, there would then be no possible means of checking the ravages of Nanaue, now apparently committed without reservation to satisfying his predatory appetites. For in all probability Nanaue would take to lurking about the coasts, creeks, caves, inlets, and deltas of Hawai'i, assuming a human shape at will. Through his mysterious power of self-generated metamorphosis, he was quite capable of traveling inland on foot, in fact to any place he might fancy, even to the most remote homesteads and out-of-the-way *ahupua'a* and *kuleana* of an island where he would then reassume his fish form and lie in wait in hundreds of deep pools, in the most secluded forests inland or in the more popular marine waters and beaches, with their alluring coral-gardens. Certainly he would have no reason to lack victims.

With all these considerations in mind, King Umi wisely ordered Kalei and her relations to be set at liberty. This decision was put into the form of a royal proclamation announced by runners in all localities where the information was likely to prove useful. The King further commanded that various priests and shark-*kahuna* should make appropriate invocations, prayers, and sacrificial offerings to Kamohoali'i. Through their prayers and devotions the priests were to make the Shark-God's wishes known.

How this intercommunication with the god might be conducted was well understood during the reign of King Umi. In those times every coastal village of any pretensions was always provided with at least three or four disciples of the Shark-God, experts who were adept as spirit-mediums. If only Kamohoali'i would allow his spirit to take possession of one of the *haka*—a trance-medium—in that way the god could express to humanity his desires regarding the fate of his problem-son. Everyone agreed that Nanaue's cannibalism, his shark's taste for human flesh, was a practice completely at variance with Kamohoali'i's own benign tastes and designs.

Kamohoali'i made his policy known through the mediumship of a certain *haka*, a rather masculine-looking elderly widow named Paniku Hua, who was a descendant of a once-famous chieftain who was himself a remote relation of the Shark-God. Kamohoali'i thus spoke eloquently of his grief over the actions of his wayward son. Those who heard Kamohoali'i's elegiac address, much of it in poetry, said that it was as if the Shark-God's voice sometimes seemed to be speaking—or emanating—through the *haka*'s rumbling belly. At other moments, however, the impression given was that Kamohoali'i's voice was uttering his thoughts just above the left shoulder of Paniku Hua, as if the god had perched himself there in the atmosphere, at about the level of the medium's head. The voice, for it did not sound quite human, resembled that of some talking-bird, heard speaking sharply but very wisely from the branches of an invisible tree.

Kamohoali'i told his listeners that the old grandfather was the one rightly to be blamed for the troubles of Nanaue by catering to little Nanaue's lust for animal flesh, thus going flatly contrary to the clear and firm orders of his divine shark-father. Indeed, if it had not been for this extenuating circumstance—namely, that Nanaue could hardly be held accountable for the gross dietary neglect of his elders—Kamohoali'i announced that he would happily have ordered his son to be executed at once.

In view of Nanaue's original innocence, Kamohoali'i concluded, he had decided to send the young man into banishment. From this day forth his son should live as an exile on some other island, less populated preferably, and less well supplied with seductive bathing facilities, than windward Hawai'i. But if Nanaue should be so foolhardy or depraved as to ignore his father's ban upon his movements, and certainly if the son were ever discovered by any of his father's shark-soldiers on the Island of Hawai'i, Nanaue would then be destroyed.

The last words heard to issue from somewhere in the region of the slightly moving lips of the *haka* sounded as if they had been actually uttered from a spot about two feet above the old woman's wild grey head.

"I bid you lastly," said Kamohoali'i, who seems to have preserved a certain affection for his human wife, "to promise me faithfully that Kalei, her relations, and all their descendants, are to be forever free from all persecution either by the malice of individuals or by the exercise of historical but now obsolete rules and taboos. Only in this way," continued the Shark-God kindly, "can the evil deeply rooted in my own son's nature be purged—that is, by banning and expelling him from these your lovely shores and valleys, basins, rivers, and pools."

At this point in Kamohoali'i's heavenly discourse he launched off on a flight of poetry, selected very appropriately for the unusual occasion.

On all sides of Waipi'o the cliffs face each other,  
 Enfold Waipi'o with their whole beauty  
 Even on that one side of Waipi'o where  
 Green tumbling water in cliff upon cliff  
 Rolls in from a foam-crested sea!

"But if you should disobey me in this my wish," added Kamohoali'i, "and violate my command and persecute the kin of Nanaue, then you must forfeit because of your cruelty to others who are innocent your own wretched freedom—you will not be worthy of it, nor of my own just prerequisites and taboos. In that event I shall free my son from his present taboo and he will thereupon again assuredly return to your beautiful island and its precious but dangerous waters. Thereafter he will bring upon you unending pangs and sorrows!"

When the *haka* gradually came out of her trance, the large audience of listeners looked at one another with expressions in which consternation was mixed with relieved willingness and resolve. They needed no further persuasion to carry out Kamohoali'i's command and stipulation to the very letter.

## II

Within less than an hour while Kamohoali'i was addressing the valley-folk through the *haka*, Nanaue in solitude bade farewell to the Island of Hawai'i and to the scenes of his happy childhood. It was thus a direct consequence of his father the Shark-God's wishes that the son and demi-shark crossed over the channel between Hawai'i and Maui. On landing at Kipahulu on the latter island, Nanaue immediately adopted his human shape. Clad once more in a *kapa kihei*, brand new, and displaying this time an intricate saw-tooth pattern, he at once set forth on a sight-seeing tour of his new

domain. Many *kama'āina* old-timers noticed the arrival of a strikingly good-looking malahini stranger with the clear bronze-copper complexion and gracefully athletic bearing, his dancer's movements and his animated actor's eyes. As he was a most approachable fellow, many of the Maui folk soon found themselves engaged in social chit-chat with the newcomer. He told them, truthfully, that he was a traveler from Hawai'i. He also remarked that he had landed at Hāna planning to spend an extended holiday, if he cared for the place. Could anyone recommend to him some of the items of chief scenic interest on the island, especially in the form of places for swimming and bathing? Nanaue was so good-looking and engaging that he had no trouble attracting a circle of new friends.

One of the petty chiefs, Kipu'upu'u, known as Pu'upu'u for short, took to Nanaue so completely that soon this person was announcing to everyone that Nanaue was Kipu'upu'u's *aikāne*, his special guest, comrade, dining-partner, and *kōnane* companion par excellence. Kipu'upu'u, it so happened, was the *kōnane* champion of Maui. The chief not only invited Nanaue to become a permanent non-paying member of his household. He even went so far as to offer Nanaue his younger sister, Lanihuli, as a bride. Pu'upu'u did not merely offer the girl—he implored, he insisted.

This domestic arrangement pleased Nanaue quite well. He did, however, demur a little at first on the grounds that, after all, he was still much of a stranger and hardly deserved such a prompt demonstration of Maui hospitality. Without further discussions, Nanaue agreed to take Lanihuli as his wife, although he would be obliged to set up one important stipulation. His sleeping quarters, he said, should be entirely separate from Lanihuli's.

"I am a rather restless sleeper, you see," explained Nanaue, "and unfortunately I am also a very loud snorer—have been since childhood. Naturally I dislike torturing other

persons," he went on in his winning way, "with my unfortunate unsocial nasal proclivity. Also, I have made a vow to Lono that I must henceforth sleep in perfect solitude. Besides, I have to admit I can't bear it when other persons are snoring around me."

Since the petty chieftain knew that Lanihuli had also been a chronic snorer from childhood, he readily agreed to the terms of the match, knowing that Lanihuli would fully understand. This she did, and for a while her sweet accommodating disposition and gentle childlike ways quite captivated Nanaue's heart, curbing and channeling the darker subterranean currents of his shark-personality. He seemed in many ways an altered, in fact a reformed, character, who kept close to home and, like the rest of the family, preferred to keep to a very sedate routine for meals, in-between refreshments, and sonorous sleeping. He largely confined his outdoor activities to strolling in the forest uplands with his girl-bride in search of wild herbs and berries, confiding to her romantic memories of his boyhood on Hawai'i—his family, he said, enjoyed the protection of the High Chief—and in playing games, outdoor sports in particular. But on Maui the only game Nanaue played was indoor *kōnane*—a form of checkers—endless games of *kōnane*.

The setting for these contests was the spacious lanai of Pu'upu'u's long-house. There gradually came a time, unfortunately, when the novelty of his new way of life wore off for Nanaue. During his strolls with his wife, his own silences grew long and then longer as he listened—or rather ceased to listen—to her idle prattle. And in truth Lanihuli was not distinguished for intelligence or humor, however much she was admirable for the evenness of her temperament and her adorable unassuming ways. Beauty and charm, of course, were not what Nanaue hungered for. Never before had he found his life so burdensome, disturbing, and empty.

Sometimes while playing *kōnane* with Pu'upu'u, especially when the game became unendurably sluggish, Nanaue himself would almost fall asleep. If an observant onlooker from outside had been present he would certainly have concluded that Nanaue had fallen into some sort of trance or trance-like stupor. This, of course, was a most unnatural state of mind for someone of Nanaue's disposition and background—his complex, energetic, occasionally wild sportive nature, in which his shark's attributes were so precariously balanced with his mother's heredity.

But what might have appeared as stupor to others was actually a state of dreaming. Nanaue never confided the content of any of these dreams to Lanihuli. Certainly not to Pu'upu'u. Yet if the stupor were really a reverie, a state of suspended but inspired animation, it is not difficult to surmise the direction whither Nanaue's day-dreaming was tending. It is easy in the mind's eye to imagine those panoramic visions in which there flashed and glowed in front of Nanaue's sightless eyes all the streams, pools, brooks, basins, grottoes, sea-caverns and sunken coral-gardens he had known at first hand at least since adolescence, if not much earlier. It all began perhaps when his pretty mother had supervised his first swimming exercises.

There came a time, inevitably, when the mirror of Nanaue's imagination could no longer contain itself, and he would willingly—more than half-willingly, at least—have smashed the submarine looking-glass and its reeling and writhing phantasms into a thousand flying fragments. Nanaue could not bear his condition any longer. Without excusing himself, in the midst of an unusually drawn-out game of *kōnane*, he rose from the floor to his feet, pushed away the draft-board and the *kōnane* pebbles, so that they rolled in nineteen directions around the floor. Then, stumbling across the lauhala mats he at last reached the side door

and hurled himself out into the bright moonlight in the direction of the sea.

Though it was a night of unusual beauty, with the assembled stars congregated across the black heavens, Nanaue began running at maximum speed, comparable to that of the wild north wind in a tornado-storm. Never had he run so fast before, not since that day when the valley-people had pursued him into the pounding surf at Waipi'o. Where it exactly was that Nanaue ran this time, after the upsetting of the *kōnane* board, is not known; but it is reasonable to assume that he was seeking, and found, some pool or stretch of rippling surf where he could slake his need: the need that tingled in his limbs, spoke mysterious signals in the lobes of his brain, stirred at the roots of his spine and in his loins, and made the very jaws of his two mouths—especially the covered-up dorsal mouth—ache with what seemed to him to be an entirely normal and natural longing.

Nanaue was gone from his home on Maui shared with Lanihuli and Pu'upu'u exactly one month and five days. Where he spent that month is not known, although certain mysterious disappearances of fisherwomen from O'ahu, and also the successive vanishing of six children from Lāna'i, bear out the theory that Nanaue may have paid several, or more than several, calls at those islands. How many other unreported missing persons he made away with will never be known.

That Nanaue did return to Maui, to the arms of Lanihuli, and to the company of Pu'upu'u and the ever-ready *kōnane*-board, is certain. However, his relations with wife and brother-in-law became progressively less and less cozy. Nanaue no longer took the slightest interest in the affairs of the petty chief's uneventful household. He hardly spared a word to his wife, but confined his use of the place almost entirely to his own private sleeping-quarters. He totally ignored the kindly invitation of Pu'upu'u to join him in an evening game.

So it is not at all surprising that rumors began to be heard on Maui, many of them encouraged by his host's servants, that Nanaue had taken to spending his nights on the beaches, roaming the inlets of streams, lurking about irrigation canals and places in general where there was flowing water and where young lovers could be counted on to meet for their flirtations or more serious romantic endeavors. In fact, though Nanaue grew quite careless about keeping up appearances, he was eventually detected in the very act—not after dusk but in glaring daylight—of shoving a young girl from a ledge into the sea. His leap in after her was virtually simultaneous with the girl's tumbling fall. In midair, like some aerial-trapeze artist shedding one disguise after another, Nanaue metamorphosed himself into a shark.

The hypnotized crowd stood on the broad ledge with mouths agape as Nanaue began to their horror to rip open the girl's belly, slash at her thighs, mangle her bloody ribs and buttocks, and finally impale her throat between his open jaws.

When the crowd of sickened fisherfolk raised an alarm, Nanaue instantly abandoned the remains of his prey in the contaminated water and prudently turned round, heading at great speed for Moloka'i. And again, as he pivoted about, making several intricate circles like a revolving sea-dervish whirling in the ecstasy of his dream, the shark-man flirted his tail two or three times in the faces of his audience. Then he disappeared from view beneath the surface of his waters, leaving no trace of his presence except a few gobbets of the girl's hair and shreds of her *kapa*-skirt, bobbing about in what looked like the red sediment that forms a kind of bloody dye in many Hawaiian streams in flood-time.

## III

On Moloka'i, Nanaue made his next home in a comfortable grass house at Oniohua, adjoining the ancient *ahupua'a* of Kainalu. This pleasant pastoral spot was part of a prosperous homestead, owned and maintained by a high-born widow, extending from the beach into the valley, and then reaching upward and beyond into the remoter bird-forests and stream-fed uplands. After his sophisticated stay on Maui, Nanaue had decided to settle on an island where he could live the life of a simple farmer and fisherman, in a manner similar to that of his own earliest Waipi'o ancestors. But Nanaue was certainly no farmer. Neither was he, except in a rather special sense, a fisherman, not honestly. It was not long before he had reverted to his practice of observing with a peculiar glint in the corner of his eyes the old inhabitants of the place, especially their sons and daughters. Sometimes Nanaue would accost passing travelers, giving them one of his genial warnings. Then, after following them to the seashore in his human shape, he would seize the prey of his choice, whether boy or girl, and in his shark manifestation carry the victim out to the ocean, to devour his trophy there on its briny floor.

In the excitement of these lurid occurrences, potential victims were likely to become confused. They would be thrown off the track by Nanaue's sudden disappearances from the scene, then by his equally abrupt reappearance at some other spot distant from the throng of fisher folk. It was hard to figure out how he ever got there. Usually, when glimpsed from afar, he was simply taken for somebody else engaging in the useful, entertaining arts of shrimping or crabbing.

This disturbing pattern of events continued for many months. It went on and on until the harassed and by now terrified people of the district became determined to consult a shark-*kahuna* to look into the whole dreadful affair.

Indeed, by now morale in this region on Moloka'i had deteriorated so much that the local chief felt impelled to declare a taboo on all kinds of fishing. People began to say that it was no longer safe to venture anywhere near the sea, even in the shallowest water. After questioning his clients, the *kahuna* told everyone to take courage and lie in wait for Nanaue. "When Nanaue predicts that such-and-such a person will be eaten, head and tail," said the *kahuna*, "have your strongest men instantly seize him. Then, remove his *kapa kihei*—don't hesitate a second. Simply strip it off. You will certainly find a shark's mouth," concluded the *kahuna* sagely, "or at least the next thing to it."

With their hopes greatly raised by the *kahuna*'s optimistic instructions, the worried volunteers and Nanaue's fanatic enemies did exactly as they were told. Without need of rehearsal, they seized Nanaue, stripped away the modest *kapa kihei*, beheld the now opening and closing shark lips with a shudder—all to the disquieting accompaniment of the famous clicking sound. Nevertheless the shark-man was so strong that whenever they did their best to bind him with *olona*-cord, he easily broke loose from their grip each time.

He was at last overpowered, but only after harrowing efforts, on the slopes of the hillside just where the lowest incline approaches the vacant beach. He was seized at almost the very moment he was about to race his last 100 yards before plunging into the sea. By this time his body bore numerous bruises and even several very deep wounds in the breast and groin.

This time his captors were able to bind Nanaue tightly, his knees propped under his chin, his hands tied behind his back, his bound ankles fettered. It was a most uncomfortable position for Nanaue, but obviously a very effective solution to the problem of keeping him a captive. By common consent the inhabitants of the district then turned their earnest attention to finding a permanent remedy. All present

joined hands in gathering dry weeds, brush, and firewood to burn Nanaue, for it was well known that only by being totally consumed by fire can a man-shark be thoroughly destroyed. Otherwise, if he is merely partly eliminated, the monster may take possession of the body of some fish-shark who might then be incited to perform all the agile, purposeful, and vicious acts of a human shark.

As Nanaue, bound but not gagged, lay on his back on the sandy beach with the sun beating down into his staring eyes, he tried to wriggle his neck. After several jerking efforts he was able to turn his head just enough to determine the fact (which he had been anxiously anticipating) that at last the tide was beginning to turn—now it was moving into shore. With his two dry gullets Nanaue swallowed once or twice, clenched his double shark-power mandible teeth, and by thrusting with every muscle of his shoulders, thighs, and buttocks, he somehow managed to roll himself over. He was able to perform this act of tremendous exertion unnoticed because the Moloka'i folk were all busy with their task of gathering firewood.

Nanaue's wrestler's body-thrust was completely successful, as he could tell by the feeling of the cool water on his flanks and cheeks. For all practical purposes he had already cleared the way for returning to his ocean-home, his briny currents, the palisaded depths where green waters were traversed by shafts of shadow and dim light and spoke a language he could understand. Here the pull and flow of the tide could rock him in its familiar embrace, a state resembling sleep, or trance, or unbroken dream. As there were no witnesses around at the moment, it is uncertain when Nanaue changed himself for the last time into a shark. But it was in the form of a giant shark, trussed and bound in a mass of fishnet, that he now lay breathing heavily in the still listless incoming tide.

Two women standing about fifty feet up the bank, firewood-gatherers, decided to take a rest. They straightened up, the bundles of firewood at their feet. One of them happened to glance down to the beach. No sooner had she noticed what Nanaue had been able to achieve than she began signalling and shouting to all her relations and friends. Certainly none of the Moloka'i people were willing to let the shark-man elude them so easily. In answer to the shrieking, two younger men came running down and quickly installed several rows of strong fish-net *ma kai* and counterwise to the languid but strengthening thrust and release of the tide. For a fair distance out, the water was still shallow.

Of course Nanaue's flippers were still shackled by the ropes with which the man Nanaue had been bound. This circumstance, combined with the shallowness of the water, prevented Nanaue from exerting his full strength to advantage. He did, however, by agonizing lurches and other spasmodic movements of the appropriate muscles, manage to reach the area of the ever-stronger incoming breakers. It was unfortunate, as he lay amid the familiar spume and debris of the now eager surf, that momentarily he should be growing weaker from his steady loss of blood. As he continued to dash and fling himself with as much force as he could muster always in the direction of the open sea, he began finally to feel recurrent waves of rhythmic pain such as he had never known before. The prison of the net prevented any further true progress. As he lay prone and bound in the churned-up water, now discolored by the mixture of Nanaue's dark red blood and the boiling black sand, everyone within striking distance smote him with whatever weapon or instrument came to hand—clubs, stone adzes, bamboo knives with razor-fine edges, jagged rocks, fragments of leaden driftwood—in other words, with anything that could be employed to hurt, maim, or kill the shark-man. Only in this way could the people prevent the shark-man's escape. One



Amazonian wife of a leading chief was even seen to rip from her neck a splendid whale's tooth *palaoa* necklace, which she proceeded to wield as an aristocratic weapon of battle. Using the central tusk as a gouge, the chiefess succeeded in blinding Nanaue in one of his eyes.

Despite such ferocious measures, Nanaue would undoubtedly have won his way clear, if only his opponents had not called to their aid their local demi-god, Unauna, who lived in the mountains of Upper Kainalu. The struggle by then was a contest of *Akua* vs. *Akua*, or demi-god vs. demi-god. Unauna was merely a young and relatively inexperienced demi-god, and therefore could not yet be expected to demonstrate his full supernatural authority. Nanaue's vigor was not to be scorned. Both as full-grown man and as shark, he was a creature of formidable self-discipline as well as of tormenting—and self-tormenting—powers. If Nanaue had not been under so severe a physical handicap, because of the net and the binding cords and the loss of blood, he might still have got the better of the presiding local deity. But his bodily prison held him and there was no watery tunnel of escape. The contest was agonizing on both sides, and Nanaue's recurrent death throes were great, losing force little by little with each repetition. They continued for well over two hours, before the shark-man at last lay absolutely motionless, to all appearances dead.

During this interval the Moloka'i people made elaborate preparations for hauling Nanaue's great body up the slopes to Kainalu Hill, the place selected for his funeral pyre and final sacrifice. Travelers and tourists who have visited Moloka'i insist that the shallow ravine, caused in the hillside by the passage of Nanaue's immense body over the light black sand soil of Kainalu Hill, can be seen on the island to this day. Also to be seen is a ring or deep groove completely encircling the top of the tall mutilated rock very near the

summit of Kainalu Hill. It was around this rock that Unauna drew the stout rope by means of which the giant shark was hauled up the hillside. The place has ever since been known as Pu'u-manō Hill, Shark Hill.

Because Nanaue was so huge in the final form he took as a gigantic shark, the attempt at first to incinerate him was not at all successful. Great jets of spurting blood and sprayclouds of oozing water or steam poured and simmered out of his burning body. These liquid explosions put out the fire several times. But Unauna the demi-god had no intention of letting himself be outwitted by the vital juices working and flowing in and through the shark-son of Kamohoali'i. The young Unauna acted decisively. He ordered a throng of the local inhabitants to fetch a vast number of bamboo trunks from the sacred upland grove of Kainalu. Then the laborers were commanded to split the magic bamboo staves into sharp knives, suitable for use as two-handed bayonet swords, or, in the case of the smaller boys, wooden cutlasses. By this means the shark-flesh of Nanaue was cut into strips, sliced rather thin, partly dried, and finally burnt to light grey ashes, though it took the entire bamboo grove to provide enough weaponry for carving up and dissecting so monumental a demi-god fish.

Nanaue's father, Kamohoali'i, though he conceded the justice of his son's annihilation, was so angered at the desecration of the fine bamboo grove, and more probably by the repulsive use to which it had been put, that he took away all edge and sharpness from the bamboo trees of this grove forever after. To this day the bamboo of Kainalu differs from that of any other forest on Moloka'i or on any other island. In fact, it is of such poor quality that it even has less use than the most miserable species of common wood, which can at least serve as kindling to start a fire.

The life story of Nanaue, shark-boy and shark-man, ends with the ceremonial episode of his piecemeal extinction by fire. After Unauna's gruesome triumph and Kamohoali'i's

somewhat petulant revenge upon the bamboo stand of Kainalu, nothing further has been heard or seen of Nanaue in Hawai'i, either in his shape as shark or in his role of man. His name and his deeds pass, if not quite into oblivion, definitely into legend. Possibly future watchers of the island skies will occasionally notice certain meteors that appear to flash across the Hawaiian firmament like celestial skin-divers, silver-glinting flares in the night sky, torn away from some parent star-galaxy. It is easy to conceive of these sky divers as shark-sons, supernatural creatures fashioned of earth, air, water, and fire, but with the elements of water and fire predominant in their highly combustible natures. They may be thought of as lost fish-divers, perennially seeking to return to their true homes, the submarine caverns and grottoes and weird cathedral chapels in the depths of the Hawaiian seas.

When one of these starry acrobats is noticed performing his exploits in regions of mountain and cliff, like Diamond Head, it is appropriate to imagine him as still another embodiment of Kamohoali'i, the Shark-God of King Umi's time, father of Nanaue, the ill-fated boy and man who became a swimming demi-god of grievous fame. Likewise when Hawaiian boys disport themselves today, swimming, bathing, and surfing in safety along the beaches and streams of their ancient shores, it is pleasing and poetic to picture in these bronzed youngsters the boy Nanaue, son of mortal Kalei and of the Shark-God Kamohoali'i, freed at last from his tormenting self-division of part human being and part fish. No longer is the Nanaue of today doomed to endure more than the usual measure of loneliness found in human experience. No longer need he live an exile from his island home.

## The Pool

### John Dominis Holt

It was perhaps as large as a good-sized house. It tended to be round in shape. At the far southern end of Kawela Bay, it sat open to the wind, the sun. Scattered clumps of coconut grew around it, splashing shade with the look of Rorschach ink blots here and there at the edges of the water.

Fresh water fed into it from underground arteries, blended with warmer water pushed in by the tide from the sea through a volcanic umbilical cord. "The lagoon," as we called it, had a definitive link to the sea, being joined as it was by virtue of this unique tubular connection.

We were always afraid of "the lagoon." For one thing it was alleged to be so deep as to be way beyond anyone's imagination like the idea of endless space to the universe or the unending possibilities of time. Its dark blue-green waters were testament to the fact of the pool being deep according to our elders. We accepted their calculation, but not entirely. It was deep to be sure, but not depthless.

Within "the lagoon," huge ulua, a local variety of pompano or crevalle, would suddenly appear in ravenous groups of three or four, chasing mullet in from the sea. Once in the confines of this small body of water the mullet were no match for the larger carnivorous predators. Ulua could grow to the size of three or four feet and weigh nearly a hundred pounds. The mullet feasts by ulua in the lagoon were wild and unpleasant scenes. We would watch as children, both enthralled and frightened, as mullet leaped for their lives in glittering silvery schools of forty or fifty fish, some to fall with deadly precision into the jaws of the larger fish. The waters swirled then and sometimes became bloody. The old folks said this would attract sharks. They would wait at the opening of the tube in the ocean to prey on the ulua,

- 101 Gary Tachiyama Here I Am  
 103 Marie Hara Old Kimono  
 111 Asa Baber The Surfer  
 117 Mary K. Pukui & Alfons L. Korn Ramble  
 Round Hawai'i  
 121 Alfons L. Korn Son of the Shark-God  
 153 John Dominis Holt The Pool  
 164 Lois-Ann Yamanaka Turtles  
 166 Maxine Hong Kingston "Great Grandfather of  
 the Sandalwood Mountains" Excerpted from  
*China Men*  
 169 Garrett Hongo The Hongo Store, 29 Miles  
 Volcano, Hilo, Hawai'i  
 170 Patsy Saiki Sachie, A Daughter of Hawai'i  
 175 Lisa Horiuchi The Mystery Writer's Class  
 Reunion  
 178 Puanani Burgess 'Awapuhi  
 179 Ty Pak A Fire  
 189 Dana Naone The Men Whose Tongues  
 190 Alfons L. Korn A Chant for a Wedding  
 193 Susan Nunes The Grandmother  
 198 Juliet S. Kono Hybrid  
 200 Frances Kakugawa Bonsai  
 201 Eric Chock Papio  
 202 Ryan Monico The Million-Dollar Mango Tree  
 205 Vittorio Talerico More Precious than Pineapples  
 206 Cathy Song Chinatown  
 209 Jim Harstad A Haole Stops in Kaimuki  
 212 Alissa Fukushima Pele's Children  
 220 James D. Houston A Pilgrim's Kisses  
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## A Foreword

This anthology starts with a fire chant to King Kalakaua. And that's a fitting place to start. It's true to the nature of these islands, which began in fire. It's true to the literature of these islands, which begins with the chanted poetry of a centuries-old tradition.

Not all literary editors have seen it this way, of course. The first popular anthology of modern times, still available and still being read, is *A Hawaiian Reader*, edited by A. Grove Day and Carl Stroven. Judging by the way that volume is organized, the literature of Hawai'i begins in the log of an English sea captain. In his original introduction to this 1961 collection, James Michener said, "The present editors have been wise to save to the end of their volume the five selections dealing with the folklore of the islands, for the language of these passages is so alien to the modern world that it might have alienated the casual reader. It was advisable to start with some selection more in the modern world, like that written by Captain Cook . . ."

Among those strange and "alienating" selections relegated to the back of the book is an excerpt from Martha Beckwith's translation of the venerable creation chant, "The Kumulipo." Here are the opening lines:

At the time when the earth became hot  
 At the time when the heavens turned about  
 At the time when the sun was darkened  
 To cause the moon to shine . . .

I have a lot of respect for James Michener as one of the major story tellers of our era. But you have to wonder what he had in mind there. Why should the Genesis-like ring of such epic lines be somehow less engaging than the matter-of-fact journal entry that opens *A Hawaiian Reader*:

# **Island Fire**

## **An Anthology of Literature from Hawai'i**

Edited by  
**Cheryl A. Harstad**  
and  
**James R. Harstad**

Curriculum Research & Development Group  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII  
and  
University of Hawai'i Press  
HONOLULU