Ka Nani 1991
Sun, sand, sea, sky and students amid the smoke of kilns are reflected in this raku vase by Michael Woo. Photographer Debbie Yamao captured this scene at Kualoa Beach Park annual raku firing.
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Art work was chosen on its ability to be reproduced clearly
Dear reader,

*Ka Nani* had its beginnings nine years ago as a supplement in Kapio. It was conceived by journalism students who wanted to showcase the art and literary talents of the KCC community. Since then, with the assistance of many dedicated souls, it has grown into an annual magazine. No prizes are awarded as being published is reward enough and all who are published are winners.

The editors and staff of *Ka Nani* are eternally grateful to those of you who submitted a part of yourself. You gave us the quality material needed to produce a magazine we are proud to be part of. To be creative one must dig deep into one’s heart and soul and bring forth one’s innermost thoughts and feelings, be it through writing or art. All who have the courage to submit a part of themselves to be judged and scrutinized are truly unique.

Those of you who would like more information about *Ka Nani* and are interested in submitting or would like to be on the staff of the 1992 *Ka Nani* may inquire at KCC's newspaper, Kapio.

Sincerely,

*The editors and staff of Ka Nani*
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Hanabata Days (photograph)
Randall Ajimine
Gripping the steering wheel on her Mazda 626, Randy complained to herself, “Oh man, I hate this part of practice.” The tan vehicle moved smoothly up the steamy asphalt hill. Seeing her house up ahead, her foot gently pressed the brake pedal. “OK, do it like Mom said,” she mumbled. “Just take your time, no one is around, you’ll be fine.”

“Now don’t psych yourself out when you park in the garage, Randy,” was her mother’s usual comment near the end of practice. Today was no exception.

“Easy for you to say, Mom,” Randy thought to herself. “Why did you and Dad have to purchase a house with a L-shaped driveway?”

Driving a few feet past their house, she stopped the car, put the gear shift into reverse and slowly turned the steering wheel to the left.

“Where are you going?” exclaimed her mother.

Sinking in her seat, Randy said, “Oops, sorry. Wrong way, huh?”

“Yes Randy, wrong way! Feel the car, dear. Can’t you feel the car?” her mother yelled.

Randy, her grip strangling the steering wheel, recklessly turned. Sweat rapidly wet the back of her Bartman T-shirt as her mother screamed, “Look in your rear-view mirror! Turn the wheel the other way! Slow down, Randy!”

“Feel the wheel,” Randy said to herself. All she could feel was her palms sliding on the steering wheel. Looking over her shoulder, Randy saw the rusted white garage and the deep gash she had made in the middle wooden column during one of her past driving practices. Blindly backing up the car, she, with the assistance of the car’s rear bumper, was about to increase the gruesome gash in the column. Grabbing the steering wheel, her mother yelled, “Turn it the other way! You’re going to hit the pole!” With the aid of her mother, Randy missed the pole and was able to park the car inside the garage without any further mishaps.

“Well! I made it!” Randy exclaimed, flashing an ear-to-ear grin.

She realized her mother was also sweating. Randy’s mother closed her eyes, caught her breath and said, “Randy, can’t you feel the car? How can you drive and not be able to tell which way the car is going? You know you could’ve hit the pole again.”

Frustrated, Randy sighed, “I know, it’s just that I didn’t know where the . . .”

“You didn’t know? You’ve had a permit for five years, dear. Five years. If you don’t get your license soon, I’m going to sell the car.”

“I’ll get my license. I promise.” Randy didn’t want her car sold.

Her mother got out of the car and said, “You’ve been saying that for how long now? I’ll give you two months. You better take the test by then.”

Randy’s foot was still on the brake pedal as she unleashed her seat-belt. She took her foot off the brake to get out of the car and it began to roll backwards. “Yikes!” Randy
screamed, grabbing the gear shift and shoving it into the park position. Her mother stood in front of the car, shaking her head.

"When you’re done, Randy, take some of your old clothes from the spare room and leave them outside for the Goodwill truck when it comes tomorrow."

Randy was not in the mood for doing chores. She felt like such a failure. She had been driving with a permit for five years, yet she still did not have her license. "What’s wrong with me?" She wondered. She tried to satisfy her mother by telling her, "I’ll do it later."

"Randy! Do it now so you won’t have to do it later," said her mother, standing at the front door.

"All right, Mom!" Randy yelled. "Man, why does she put up with me?" she moaned under her breath.

Randy got out of the car and entered the house. Walking down the dim hallway, she came to the spare room. "Oh well, I might as well get this over with," she growled, entering the room filled with boxes and garbage bags filled with torn books, unused sewing material, old and broken toys, and worn out clothes. Randy plopped down on a patch of scratchy army-green carpet. "Yuck! Maybe this carpet needs to go too!" She reached over to the nearest Glad garbage bag labeled RANDY’S in cherry-red ink on a decomposing piece of masking tape. "Hmm. I wonder what’s in these bags?" Randy tried to rip the bag open with her bare hands. "What’s this stuff made of?" Her fingers dug into the steel-like material, trying to sever the sleek gray skin. "Whew!" she said, wiping the perspiration off her neck. "Glad should consider going into the condom business." Finally, instead of wasting time and spraining her fingers, Randy simply twisted off the brittle rubber band wrapped around the top. Laughing to herself, she said, "How stupid can you get!"

As Randy shook her head, she thought about her mother. "I sure hope she isn’t still mad at me." As she turned the bag over, a waterfall of old clothes showered around her. Randy brushed her fingers on the discolored shirts; one in particular jogged her memory. As she sat on the prickly patch of carpet, a glow of nostalgia came over her....

Outside in the backyard, the weather was cool and breezy. On Randy’s head was a metal soup pan and on her shoulders hung her father’s cobalt jeans jacket. The sleeves of the jacket were rolled to the point where they looked like doughnuts wrapped around her wrists. The jacket draped down to her ankles. Smells of soaked-in oil and clay-colored dirt emanated from the jacket. Randy had in her hand a worn-out ukulele with two strings missing. There was a piece of frayed rope attached to the two ends of the ukulele with Scotch tape. She slung the ukulele around her shoulder as if it were a guitar. Randy felt tough and strong like Kikaida, the super-hero on her T-shirt.

Every weekend, Randy, like most local children in the ’70s, faithfully watched the TV show Kikaida. Randy got excited when the main character, Jiro, rode his coal-colored motorcycle like a dashing knight. She admired Jiro and enjoyed imitating his die-hard samurai appearance. She wanted to look like he looked in his fashionable jeans attire with
his guitar secured on his back. Whenever the time came to battle the evil monsters, Jiro was always on a mountain top strumming his guitar to let his presence be known. Every time an evil monster saw him, Jiro turned into the robot Kikaida. Kikaida’s beetle-eyed oval head and slender body were covered with ornate machinery. Half of his body was fire engine red, the other half was sky blue. Randy’s favorite part of the show was the ending when Kikaida always won by crossing his arms and saying, “ZEE END! ZEE END!” and the monster would die.

Twang! Twang! went the out-of-tune ukulele as Randy strummed on it. “I, Jiro, going to find evil and destroy!” she sang as she ran around the tangerine tree in the yard. Randy imagined the tree was a giant crab trying to catch her. In the back of her green cotton pants was her Kikaida doll. She took it out and shouted, like Jiro before he became Kikaida, “Changee, switch on! ONE, TWO, THREE!”

“Randy! Randy!” shouted her mother from inside the house, “Are you ready yet?” She came out into the backyard and saw Randy in her Jiro get-up, banging her Kikaida doll against the tree, screaming, “ZEE END! ZEE END!”

“Randy! I thought you would be ready for the Christmas pageant already? Why don’t you have your white muumuu on?”

Randy got up off the dewy grass and walked, barefoot and dirty, to her mother.

“Mom, nobody going to be wearing dress.” Randy hated to wear dresses. She lived for T-shirts and pants.

“Oh yes they will. I know your classmates will be wearing nice clothes,” her mother said as she took Randy’s hand and walked her back toward the house.

“Uh uh, Mommy. I’m not a Mary or a sheep. I’m a towns people. Towns people wear T-shirts, not dress.” Randy’s brown, hound-dog eyes were begging. She could feel that her mother was going to let her have her way.

“Are you sure? I think you should wear a dress and look pretty.”

“Nooo! Wahhh!” Randy began crying and kicking her legs. “No dress! Wahhh! Please Mommy!”

“Get up, Randy,” yelled her mother, pulling Randy up off the ground. “Okay, you can wear what you have on, but don’t feel funny when the rest of your classmates dress nice.”

“I won’t, Mommy, I promise.” Randy smiled to reassure her.

Later that evening, Randy and her parents arrived at her little private school, St. John’s. As she got out of the car, she saw two of her first grade classmates, Lisa Mori and Jan Izumi. Wearing white frilly, lace dresses, Lisa and Jan were hanging around the parking lot before the pageant started. Coming over to see Randy, they started giggling at her attire.

“Randy, I never knew Jiro was at Jerusalem,” snickered Jan.

“She not going in like that, dummy!” said Lisa to Jan. “You get extra clothes, yah Randy?”

Liquid glass glistened in Randy’s eyes as she looked up at her mother. Kneeling down, her mother asked, “Would you like to go home and get a dress, Randy?”
Randy felt like scrunching up into a ball and rolling away, but she let down her guard and asked, "Could ya, Mom?" Randy's peach-colored complexion flushed into tomato red. "Anything for Kikaida," her mother grinned, patting Randy's head.

Waiting by the car was Randy's father. He walked toward Randy and scooped her off the ground. Putting her arms around his neck, Randy felt secure. "Randy, you're going to be late for the pageant now," said her father.

"I don't think so," her mother said as she took out a Liberty House bag from the trunk of their Toyota. In the bag was a tiny angelic white muumuu, waiting to be worn.

"Randy, Randy!" her mother said, shaking Randy's shoulders. "Why aren't you taking this stuff outside? You've made such a mess."

Randy stood up, disentangling herself from bags and T-shirts, and hugged her mother. Surprised, her mother said, "What brought that on?"

Staring at the floor, Randy looked at everything she had taken out. Shrugging her shoulders, she said, "I haven't hugged you in a long time, that's all."

Puzzled, her mother patted Randy's head and said, "Thank you, dear. Well, let's get this stuff outside."

As her mom helped her put the clothes back inside the bag, Randy politely asked, "Mom, if I still don't take my driver's test in two months are you really going to sell my car?"

Twitching a wink, her mother replied, "What do you think, Randy?"
Keikis (photograph)
Randall Ajimine
From a Distance

From a distance
I'm thinking of you...

the nature of mugwort
and oak leaves
the sweet pastry of arrowroot
in the snow shave ice

the sound of a wooden pounder
pounding and pounding
breaking through the hot steam

seventy-three years
on your small and round shoulders
seventy-three years
on your hard and grave hands

From a distance...

waves are singing
the sun is smiling
until sinking
behind the horizon
Eulogy for Bldg. 925 and Philip Dattola

Sandra Perez

Old 925 is coming down
The wrecking ball draws nigh
Its sagging frame
And jaundiced eye
Support a "danger" sign

Time was, it housed our laughing place
A pleasure dome of wit
The stories dear to both our hearts
Rang forth in raucous din

A resting place from teaching trials
A haven from our fears
A home away from where we live
Confessional of peers

I should have known its end was near
Like you its life blood spent
The day you left, the building died
Like you its number up

It couldn’t live without our mirth
Without the joy of two
Old 925 is coming down
My friend, my brother too
Down the Up Staircase (photograph)
Debbie Yamao
A thick mist settled in the valley, while outside, birds began to chatter. Alice Mercier performed her usual morning ritual of grinding a fresh lot of beans in the automatic coffee grinder. The years since her youth had seen coffee transformed from a morning luxury into a daily necessity. She filled water and changed filters with absent-minded fluency that came from years of repetition. Gurgling sounds from her automatic coffee brewer signaled that percolation was in progress and she sat at the kitchen table to wait.

She sat looking toward the hall where the dog slept in front of the door to her youngest son’s room. At the sound of the coffee maker, the dog looked up and wagged his tail, acknowledging her presence. Alice thought the dog seemed awkwardly proportioned, conflicting traits that resulted from a Pit Bull sire and a Labrador bitch. She remembered how vehemently her sons had argued to let the dog stay in the house and how, reluctantly, she had agreed, but she remained firm on insisting the boys sleep with their doors closed, and the dog stay outside of their rooms.

Alice knew well that Pit Bulls had a tendency to attack their masters. She had heard stories of former dog owners on The Oprah Winfrey Show. She had heard of how the dog bites with a death grip and refuses to release its victims. She was also an avid reader who paid careful attention to books by Jack London.

Mr. Coffee perked his last drops into the pot as steam puffed out and rose above the machine. Alice poured herself a cup and began breakfast for the boys.

Jimmy woke up first. The smell of coffee and bacon crept into his room through the gap under the door. He exited his room and made his way toward the bathroom, patting the dog as he passed by.

“Morning, Mac.”

The dog sat up to receive his obligatory pat on the head, then slouched back down and waited. In the bathroom, Jimmy rinsed his mouth and flushed out the eye crap that had settled overnight. The sound of water running through the pipes was usually enough to wake his younger brother.

“Jimmy,” Alice called from the kitchen, “Would you please wake your brother?”

“Already did, Mom.”

Denny opened his door and was greeted with a flurry of licks to his face.

“Good morning, Mackintosh.”

Mac wagged his tail eagerly and cocked his head at an angle while Denny scratched behind the dog’s ears. When Denny was finished, Mac responded with another affectionate barrage to the neck and ears that sent the eight-year-old into a fit of giggles.

Denny skipped the bathroom and headed straight for the kitchen, but his mother refused to give him breakfast until he had thoroughly washed up. The boy went into the
bathroom, ran the sink water, and did not return to the kitchen until the dog had licked his hands clean.

Jimmy fixed himself a large plate of eggs, potatoes, biscuits, and bacon and was seated at the table when Denny came out of the bathroom.

Alice prepared Denny's plate with the same attention that she made coffee. The young boy accepted his breakfast and seated himself at the table beside his brother. He took a strip of bacon from his plate and began to look around for the dog, but when he saw his mother glaring at him suspiciously, he immediately gobbled up the bacon as if any other thought would have been the furthest thing from his mind.

"Where will you be camping?" Alice asked Jimmy.

"Just up by the north peak. It's real mellow up there. Denny can handle it."

"You be sure to keep an eye on your brother. I don't want him wandering around up there."

"He'll be okay. He'll get a big kick out of camping in the clouds."

"Don't you let him go wandering off."

"Not to worry, Mom. As soon as we get up there, I'll tie him to a tree."

Alice did not laugh.

When breakfast was finished, the boys changed clothes and gathered their gear. Alice helped Denny get dressed, something she had not done in years. For Denny, it felt strange to have his mother help him change his clothes. She put new socks on his feet, tied his shoes, and buttoned his shirt. Then she made him promise to wear his elk skin jacket that she had given him on his birthday.

"It belonged to your father," she explained. "Your grandmother made it for him when he was a young boy."

Denny agreed to wear the jacket and his mother kissed his cheek and hugged the boy tight enough to make it difficult for him to breathe.

The two boys loaded their gear into the back of the station wagon and Alice agreed to let Jimmy drive after they filled up at the gas station.

The gas station was close to home and as they filled the tank Mackintosh looked anxiously out the back window at the field across the street. He wagged his tail in anticipation, but Alice and Jimmy did not take notice. Across the street was a field of grass and shrubs where Denny and Mac often played. It was a field where they passed the time scaring up birds and playing fetch. It was the field that Denny and his father had visited when Mac was only a pup.

Dave Tilomon's worst fears had been realized when his champion lab gave birth. The traits of the litter were undeniable.

"It's that goddamn Pit Bull from up the street," he complained. "I drove three hundred miles and spent seven hundred dollars in stud fees and that worthless piece of shit came in here and knocked her up overnight."

Larry Mercier sat quietly at the lawn table in Dave's back yard, drinking beer and
listening to his friend gripe.

"Ought to shoot that damned dog. Maybe poison those miserable pups."

Dave continued his sadistic prospects throughout the afternoon, but Larry knew better than to take any of it seriously. He knew that it was the beer, not Dave, that was doing most of the talking. Six weeks later, the neighbor’s dog was still alive, the pups were happy and healthy, and Dave offered Larry pick of the litter.

Denny watched his father examine each dog carefully before making his decision. When the choice was made, the two men shook hands and parted, and Larry drove directly to the field across from the gas station. He set the dog on the ground and allowed it to roam freely. Denny began to follow, but his father held him back.

"Can’t do that, Denny. We’ve got to watch him first."

They followed far behind.

The dog explored his new environment, sniffing at the bases of bushes and urinating in select locations. The novelty of exploration peaked when the dog stopped suddenly and held his nose high in the air. He tracked a crescent pattern, stumbling clumsily over his large paws. The dog stopped again to sniff the air before moving slowly toward the center of the crescent.

Larry threw a rock and flushed a bird from the bushes two feet in front of the dog.

"Did you see that? Larry asked.

Denny nodded.

"Dog’s got real good instincts."

Again, Denny nodded.

"Well, what do you say, boy? Can I pick ‘em, or can I pick ‘em?"

"Yup!" Denny agreed. "You can pick ‘em, Dad."

Larry was overjoyed — the king of his environment. He scooped the dog up off the ground and put Denny upon his shoulder. He held his son’s legs against his own chest so the boy would not fall and walked triumphantly back to the car, his son in one arm, and his dog in the other.

Denny tried not to think about those times because it made him long for the company of his father, and the place in his heart that he held for him was a sacred place that often brought forth emptiness and anguish. Looking out at the field, tears began to form in his eyes, but he fought the tears because his mother and Jimmy would not understand. There were times that he and Mac would play alone in the field and he would remember his father. In those moments he would hide his face in the soft fur on the back of the dog’s neck and cry.

Denny fought the tears and won the battle, but long after his brother had driven out of the gas station, the memories still weighed heavily upon his mind.

When they arrived at the trailhead, Alice gave Denny a final round of kisses and hugs. Jimmy found the scenario ridiculous.

"Jeez, Mom, he’s not going off to war."
She unzipped Denny’s backpack and inserted a large plastic bag stuffed with biscuits. “You can eat these when you get hungry,” she said.

Denny nodded, but shortly after he and Jimmy began their hike, the burden proved too much for him. Jimmy came over and unzipped his brother’s pack. He took out the plastic bag and dumped the biscuits into a small stream on the side of the trail.

“We’ve got enough food. We don’t need the extra weight.”

Mackintosh ran ahead of them, following the trail and pissing on everything above ground.

“Jimmy?”

“Yeah?”

“Do you think that Dad went to heaven?”

“I dunno. I hope so.”

The boys continued their hike.

“Jimmy?”

“Yeah?”

“Do you ever cry when you think about Dad?”

“I did at first. But when you cry, people can tell that you’re hurt, and when they see you crying they’ll try to hurt you more, so you gotta be strong and try not to cry.”

“Did Dad tell you that?”

Jimmy was startled by his brother’s perception and it took him a moment before he could respond.

“Yeah.”

Mac came back down the trail, urinating on the spots he had already covered.

“Jimmy?”

“What?”

“How come Mac has so much piss?”

Jimmy laughed because the same thought had crossed his mind.

“I dunno. Maybe he’s got an extra compartment or something.”

The boys reached the camp site. They set up their tent and used their ponchos for a rainfly. Shortly after they had made camp, clouds began to move in.

Denny and Mac played in the clouds and their excitement grew as the clouds became thick. Visibility became impossible. The dog stood five feet away and the boy was unable to see him. Denny laughed as he hunted for his dog through the clouds. He heard the dog panting off to his left and he moved in that direction, but the dog evaded him. Then he heard the dog behind him, but when he moved, the dog had again evaded him. When he heard the dog in front of him, he took only two steps forward then bolted right in anticipation of the dog’s movement.

Denny went tumbling over the side of the mountain. Bushes whipped his face and neck as he bounced off protruding mounds of dirt and rock. He groped wildly as he tumbled and crashed into an outgrowth of shrubs before falling ten more feet to a small dirt ledge. A crack sounded upon impact and pain shot through his right arm. He laid still for a
moment, coming to terms with the gravity of his situation. When he finally sat up, more pain gripped his arm and he began to cry.

The dog heard the boy's pain and jumped down the side of the mountain. He smashed into the same ledge that broke the boy's fall, but when he hit the ledge he slipped in the mud and his hind quarters went over the ledge.

Mac struggled in the mud, his front paws digging furiously for a foothold as he began to slip over the edge. Denny reached out and caught one of the dog's paws. Fresh pain shot through his arm, but he did not let go of the dog. He pulled Mac up to the ledge where they sat together and waited.

They waited because Denny could not call out to his brother. If he called, Jimmy would follow the sound of his voice. He would follow, and he would fall. Denny decided to wait until he could hear Jimmy calling so he could warn him about the cliff.

They sat on the dirt ledge, the boy and the dog, listening and waiting as the rain began to fall.

Somewhere nearby, Jimmy called out. Denny yelled up to his brother, warning him about the cliff, but Jimmy did not need any warning. As a boy scout, he and his troop had often camped around the same area and he had, since then, acquired an intimate knowledge of the terrain.

"Jimmy," Denny called up. "I think my arm's broken."
The older boy stood on the edge of the mountain trying to think fast, trying to explore his options. In the end, there was no alternative.

"I can't pull you up Denny. I need rope." He waited for a response from below, but none came

"Stay where you are, Denny. Don't move, okay? Don't try to climb up, okay?"
"Okay."
"I gotta go home, Denny. I gotta get some rope to pull you up. Just stay where you are. All right?"
"All right."
The sky began to darken. Jimmy took his flashlight and started down the mountain. When he arrived at the spot where he had dumped Denny's biscuits, the stream, which had barely been a trickle then, had become a rushing torrent that threatened to engulf the trail. He raced past the raging body of water and made for home as fast as he could.

Alice was furious and frantic at the same time.
"Like hell you're going back up there."
Jimmy tried to argue how simple it would be to lower a rope and pull Denny up. He did not tell her about Denny's arm.
"Listen mister, I told you to keep an eye on him. I told you not to let him go wandering off."

Alice's words cut deep and Jimmy did not press her further. He sat quietly while his mother talked on the phone.
Outside the rain continued to fall.

Dave Tiloman at the fire and rescue station knew the mountain trails better than any of the scouts in Jimmy’s troop, which was not unusual considering that Dave had been the scout master for over a year. He acquired the title upon the death of Larry Mercier, and he maintained the office in reverent devotion to his old friend.

Dave spoke solemnly into the phone and tried to offer reassurance.

“Don’t you worry, Allie. We’ll bring him down safe and sound.”

He hung up the phone and went into the lounge to make the announcement to the other men at the station.

“Gentlemen,” he began. “It’s showtime.”

Shortly after the six-man team left the station, flash flood warnings were issued. Wind and rain whipped the side of the mountain, creating mud slides, while loose twigs became hurling projectiles. Denny and Mac lay shivering in the dark. They huddled together for warmth. The boy’s jacket, their only means of shelter, provided insufficient coverage. They lay together throughout the night while the rain washed the mud off the ledge and over the side of the mountain.

When Dave’s team reached the stream where Jimmy had dumped the biscuits, the water no longer threatened the trail. There was no trail. The water had completely eroded the land where the trail had once been. A raging river now stood in its place. The trail was down and the choppers could not operate in zero visibility. Dave suddenly felt stretched. Past and present seemed to be coming together and he did not want to bring Alice more bad news.

The team headed back down the mountain. The only thing they could do was wait for the rain to let up.

Morning came and Denny’s arm hurt more with every movement. The rain had worn down the surface of the ledge. A tree had, at some point in the past, grown sideways out of the mountain. Its horizontal trunk, half exposed and half embedded, divided the ledge in two. Denny sat on one side and Mac on the other.

Denny was worried because Jimmy had not come back. By late afternoon Jimmy had still not returned and Denny began to cry. He cried only for a moment, until he heard the rumbling beneath the ledge. When he realized what was happening, he became too frightened to cry.

Dirt collapsed beneath his legs and he began to slip off the ledge. He grasped the tree trunk in the middle of the ledge, but his muddy hand could not hold a grip. He struggled, kicking out loose patches of mud beneath his feet in a desperate attempt to gain a foothold. Sliding on his back, the tail of his jacket reversed behind his head as he went over the edge.

Half way over the edge, Denny’s slide came to an abrupt halt. Behind him, braced up against the tree, Mackintosh stood holding the tail of the boy’s jacket firmly in his mouth.

The dog tried to back up, but could find no leverage in the slippery mud. Denny thought to turn onto his stomach and climb back up, but he could not turn over. Even if he
could, there was no way he could pull himself to safety with only one arm.

The dog could not pull the boy and the boy could not pull himself. There was nothing either of them could do.

The rain continued.

It rained hard that day and it rained even harder later that night. Alice did not sleep. She watched from her window as the rain fell outside. She watched and cried.

Dave’s wife came over and Alice put on a fresh pot of coffee. Norma Tiloman provided the necessity of company. For most people it was a service that was taken for granted, but not for Alice. She was grateful for Norma’s support, and told her so, but more importantly the deep sincerity of Norma’s compassion made Alice feel honored to be acquainted with someone of such generous character. The two women sat together throughout the night. They laughed together, cried together, and drank coffee well into the morning hours.

It was dawn when Norma went home.

The rain stopped shortly after dawn and the clouds began to rise above the mountains. Dave went up with the air rescue team, figuring on reaching his objective before the ground crew. The helicopter flew high above the residential area, but when they reached the trail the pilot reduced his altitude and the team flew slowly up the valley. They followed the main runoff in the center of the valley, examining each piece of debris that floated by. When the stream intersected with the trail, Dave could see the ground crew at the same impasse that he had encountered two nights before. From that point the pilot followed the trail up to the camp site where a small blue tent stood alone in a patch of grass. The chopper maneuvered into the valley below the camp site.

Large patches of dirt streaked down the mountain side -- places where mud slides had occurred during the rain. Manual Martinez, a member of the crew, squinted his eyes as he pointed to the side of the mountain.

“There!” he yelled. “Over there.”

Dave and the other crew members looked hard, but no one could see anything. Then one of the men cried out from the back of the chopper.

“Holy mother of Christ!”

And Dave saw.

Protruding from the side of the cliff, a lone tree grew sideways into the valley. Rain had eroded most of the dirt around its roots, but the tree clung valiantly to the side of the mountain. At some point during the night, the entire ledge beneath it had crumbled, leaving Denny’s jacket draped over the trunk of the tree with Denny dangling on one end of the jacket, and the dog locked in a death grip on the other.

The team decided that an air rescue would be too risky. Wind from the chopper blades might cause the dog to lose his grip and the boy and the dog would plummet to their deaths. The chopper landed in the grass near Jimmy’s tent.

Dave was lowered on a safety harness and a wire stretcher was lowered beside him on a separate cable. When he reached Denny, he secured the stretcher beneath the boy.
“Denny? Can you hear me Denny?”

“Yes.”

“Okay! Do you know who I am? Do you remember me, Denny?”

“Yes.

“Who am I? Do you remember my name? Who am I Denny?”

“You’re Dad’s friend.”

“That’s right, but I need to know if you remember my name.”

“You’re Mr. Tiloman.”

“Okay! That’s great, Denny. That’s just fine. Now, I don’t want you to move, Denny. I want you to hold real still and just tell me whether you can move your arms and legs. Can you move ‘em?”

“I can move them, but I think my arm’s broken.”

“Okay, Denny. Well, we’ll fix that for you, all right? But right now I’m going to put something around your waist. I want you to hold real still while I put this on.”

“Is that so I don’t fall?”

“Yep.”

“Okay, but put one on my dog too.”

“You bet I will, Denny.” Dave said, and he did. The boy and his dog were pulled to safety.

Denny was flown to a nearby hospital, where his arm was set in a cast. When his mother arrived at the hospital there were more hugs and kisses, but these hugs and kisses were different from the ones before. These had tears on them.

Two days later, Alice took her son home.

The next day, Denny and Mac played in the field by the gas station. They passed the time scaring up birds and playing fetch.

That evening, Alice served up Denny’s favorite meal, roast beef with gravy. She sliced a thick cut of roast into uniform bite-sized pieces and smothered it with gravy. Denny accepted his plate and seated himself at the table while Alice cut another large chunk off the roast and fed it to the dog.

After dinner, Denny lay in his bed with his dog by his side. He watched the evening mist descend upon the valley and settle outside his window and his thoughts began to wander.

He thought of how lucky he was to have landed on the ledge instead of falling off the mountain. He thought about the bushes that broke his fall, and how his mother had made him wear his sturdy elk skin jacket. But most of all, he thought of how wonderful it felt to have the trust and companionship of his dog. He thought of all these things and he felt safe and protected, and as he faded off to sleep a question rose from out of the darkness.

“Well, what do you say, boy? Can I pick ‘em, or can I pick ‘em?”

Denny answered aloud into the night.

“Yes, Dad. You sure can pick ‘em.”
My Favorite Things (drawing)

Yasuko Toyama
Tree-Moon (computer art)
Bryan Akito Sekiguchi
Thanksgiving at International Marketplace

Salesgirls speak low together, Vietnamese, in the green light
Banyan branches, palmleaves, ferns driven by high winds
We stop to contemplate an Asian man in blue make colored candles.
He drops four at a time in boiling red and purple dyes,
Cools them in a watercan, cuts the wax with his sharp knife, and
Twists the cut strips deftly, one, then another and another.
(How many mantles across America will hold these silent swirls?)
Hundreds of windchimes tell us the meaning of the space.
Lateday winter sunlight drops leaf shadows on wood beams.
Pearls, iridescent green-blue shells, pink coral, island sounds,
We swim thankful through it all, enviable fish in our aquarium.
I took anthuriums to the graveyard yesterday,
And, on impulse, three tangerines and the sweet mochi
Mom and Dad enjoyed so much.
"Fool," the word echoed inside my head
Over the sounds of tour buses on their way to the temple.
"What is here except the ants?"
I placed the food on the bronze plaque,
My meager offerings scarcely visible.
All around me firecracker barrels and small tables stood
Awaiting families bearing feasts
And money and clothes for paradise.
Tomorrow would my parents silently watch
As neighbor Wong sucks his salty rib of roast pork
And tips his bottle of scotch?
As neighbor Lum crunches on his succulent shrimp?
What would they say at the taunts and jeers:
"Where is your son, your grandsons?"
"You should have trained your daughter better,
Mine is obedient and filial."
"Is she too poor or just tight?"
"Your funeral, old Leong, was a pauper’s burial,
Only sweetmeats and rice.
Lucky the priest carpeted your way with money
Even though your daughter said, ‘No litter.’
She takes after your wife.
That’s what comes of marrying a college woman.
Strange, foreign ideas.
Now you starve, no whiskey to wet your throat.
See your wife? Christian burial, hah!
Like haole parties — very fancy, nothing to eat."
I could almost hear the voices in the wet gusts
That swept in and around from the Koolaus.
But in a moment of stillness
I thought I heard my father calmly say,
"That’s all right; the kids don’t know.
We told them, ‘don’t fuss.’"
The Gate to Heaven (painting)
Quynh Nguyen
They sat, silent for a moment, on the cool park bench under a starry moonlit night.

"I'm yours, you know," she whispered in his ear, "and I always will be." Her confession was accentuated with a playful bite on his earlobe.

"Look at the stars," he said, glancing skyward. "Would you still love me if there were none?"

"Even if there were no sun," she reassured him. Then, changing the subject, "Did I tell you? My friend went back to the doctor for her ultrasound today. Can you believe it? She's going to have twins! It's so exciting. I helped her shop for maternity wear all day. Even tried some on myself." She snuggled up close and giggled. "But I felt silly. Can you imagine me in a maternity dress? Huge like that? Oh God, and curlers in my hair, wearing slippers. I wonder if we'd have a boy or a girl." She caught him staring into space and gave him a poke in the ribs. "Or something else."

"Twins, huh?" He chuckled. "I would name them Phobos and Deimos, after the Moons of Mars. They would grow up to be great scientists, of course. Maybe I'd help them with their homework, if they asked nicely."

"I'm sure you could get them through astronomy class before they finished preschool, you nut!" She laughed again and then held his hand tightly. "Really, I think you'll make a wonderful father someday. You're kind and sensitive, composed and graceful. Everything you do, you do with perfection. Even my mother notices. She says you move flawlessly. Like a robot, she says. But she's only kidding. You know how my mom is — she can be a real wacko."

"Well, it's a matter of practice. There's a right way and a wrong way to do everything. I've just done my share of studying."

"Studying? You say the strangest things sometimes!" She smiled at him with a gleam in her eye. "You don't have to study everything, you know. Sometimes it's okay just to let things happen... Isn't it?" He was listening to her, but his gaze was fixed on the twinkling of the night sky. So she continued, "I was over at my Mom's for lunch today, in fact. We had a great time, looking through old pictures, talking about my dad. She kept reminding me of what a terror I used to be. You know, she's still got all my baby stuff! Clothes, toys, a whole closet full of junk." She looked at his distant eyes and smiled, running her fingers through his hair. "Maybe someday I can borrow some."

"I think you're a little old for baby clothes now!" he said, finally turning to her. "Or did you have someone else in mind for your hand-me-downs?"

"Oh, I don't know. I just love all of those little things, don't you? Booties and pajamas and rattles. Maybe I'll get some for you!" She nipped at his earlobe again. "I love you, you know. I always will. He sat, silent for a moment. Then a tear rolled down his cheek as he
caught the evening’s first glimpse of Orion’s belt.
  “I’ll never leave,” he whispered.
  “Huh? What’s that, Darling?”
  Gently, he reached his arm around her tiny frame. “I said I’ll never leave you.”
Untitled (photograph)
Tom Marsteller
These Islands

The millennial dance
That glides the Pacific plate
Across the ocean of magma
Pushes up in spasmodic eruptions
These islands
Aligning over the vents
That open up
Bottom out
Into the miasmic core
The beating heart of Earth

In quickening explosions
In the long slow building up
Emerging from the sea
These islands know the pulse of life
The incoming tides
The rhythmic breaking of the waves
The beating wings of birds

How much later the steady paddle
The stamping feet of men in dance
The cadence of their labors
With simple tools
Voices chant
Bodies sway
As trees do in the trades

And change always change
The staccato quick step of progress
Jack-hammering
The honking hymn of commerce
As bodies multiply
The heart beat
Can still be heard
Away from the incessant noise
The dance continues in
The dual polyrhythms
of manmade cacophony
and Nature

As we glide our way
Inexorably
Towards the Asian shelf
To melt back into the singing core
Trailing islands in our wake
Beach at Diamond Head Lighthouse (photograph)

Shuzo Uemoto
"Oh my God, I'm going to die!  
23 years old and my life is over!"
This in response to the dread words,
Spoken quietly by the stranger in a white coat
But hitting with the force of a sledge hammer—
Bladder, tumor, malignant.

It was no dream, though it hardly seemed real,
Waking from an anesthetized stupor
Into the sterile smell of hospital green,
With tubes inside to drain the blood-filled urine.

I became intimate with the fear of death,
An unwelcome visitor who lounged in my favorite thoughts
And rearranged the furniture of my mind.

When a streak of crimson, the year before,
Stained the gleaming white porcelain,
I gave a youthful shrug and all was well again—
Until the crimson dripped into my dreams.

Then, awakening to reality, I fought for calm,
And took comfort in my mother's visit,
Recycling the doctor's other words:
Small, low grade, good prognosis.
Still, we had trouble talking,
separated by a lifetime of outwardness
And the unspoken knowledge that my father's malignancy,
Kept a secret from him until the very end,
Also began in his bladder.

Time has been good to me,
Bringing family, success, happiness.
Tubes, I tell myself, are history.
Now arthritis seems more real than cancer.
But in the depths of my being,
A new growth sprouts from the old roots.
Fear, that mocker of mortality,
That dark visitor
With the stealthy step
And steel grip,
Feeds on my happiness—
Rearranging the shadows,
Poisoning stray hopes,
Stalking my soul.
Regatta (sculpture)
Shonn Kawamoto
Surfer Ro Meets Smile Shark

Ripping down the ocean's face,
Ripping waves upon the sea,
On my board I saw a shark,
and he smilingly said to me:

"Sing a song about a whale."
So I sat with jaded fear.
"Wail, wail that song again."
So I wept: the shark drew near.

"Don't fear," the shark said,
"Praise the waves that bring me near."
So I prayed a wave to appear,
As he circled, smiling ear to ear.

"Surfer, why do you hesitate,
You are a guest in my abode."
He circled ever closer
as the exodus approached.

I dug into the water,
Stroked into the water clear
And my heart anticipated,
the escape from my fear.

Inspired by Introduction to Songs of Innocence, by William Blake.
“Bryan! Turn on the TV, we’re at war.”

“So what else is new? Will ya’ come in, Chico, and shut the damn door. Why the hell do you always stand in the doorway clucking like a chicken when you think you have something important to say? I rented you a room, not a soapbox for you to preach on.”

“Seriously, Bryan. We’re at war with Iraq. I heard the news on the car radio on the way home from class.”

“Maybe you’re at war, but I’m not. I don’t subscribe to that crap. All I do is take pictures and write. And not of, or about, war!” I slam shut my photo album, erupt from the couch, storm into the kitchen, grab a beer from the refrigerator and set my sights on the lanai.

The dark coolness on the lanai welcomes me, I sit and sip the beer. The beer is Chico’s but the penthouse is mine, twenty-three floors above the streets of Waikiki, six rooms, air-conditioning, wrap-around lanai—all the comforts of home.

“You’re in fine spirits tonight,” Chico’s voice echoes from within.

I’m forty-five years old, my roommate, Chico, is twenty-two. He’s a student at the University of Hawaii, majoring in psychology. I take pictures and write. Photojournalist—that’s my title. My pictures and writing win prizes and praise. I appear in magazines. I appear to be happy. Why shouldn’t I be? I have success, fame, and fortune.

Chico takes a beer from the refrigerator and joins me on the lanai. Sitting down, opening his beer, turning on the stereo, he attempts to practice his head-shrinking on me. “I thought you were one of those hippie peace-freaks during the ’60s. How can you ignore what’s going on in the world? You’re too cynical to maintain any degree of mental stability for any extended period of time.”

Changing the station on the stereo, I say, “I can’t believe that some day people will pay you a hundred dollars an hour just to hear that bovine excrement coming from your mouth.”

Laughing, Chico says, “Don’t worry, I’ll give you a professional discount.” He guzzles down his beer, burps, crushes the empty can with one hand, and says, “I’m going to the university. There’s a peace rally against the war going on. Why don’t you come?”

Changing the station again, I ask, “Who’s speaking, John F. Kennedy?”

“OK, OK, don’t say I didn’t warn you if an Iraqi delivers your evening paper. I’ll see you later.” Chico changes the station, gets up, goes to his room for a few minutes, then leaves the apartment.

Looking the sunset straight in the eye, I sputter, “Damn ass-hole, Chico, cigarettes kill more people than wars. Why doesn’t he go protest a tobacco farm?” I stare at the setting sun; bitter memories are rising. Rising from deep within. Rising until they flow from my eyes. . . .
“Bryan, you look like a walking sunset in those mod clothes! Don’t you know you’re enabling the government to fund the fighting in Vietnam!”

“What do my clothes have to do with war? This is the ’60s, man. Do your own thing.”

“Don’t fall for that commercial hype, Bryan. The tax from expensive clothes, along with the profits from big business, goes to making weapons and war toys. You should wear old jeans and cheap T-shirts to let the establishment know that you don’t support their ‘dirty little war.’ And don’t work or cut your hair until all the fighting stops. When are you going to wise up and get hip?”

“For Chrissake, Elliott, I’m just wearing these clothes ‘cause I’m here at school.”

“Man! You don’t need clothes to learn. Do you want to stop the killing or not?”

“Of course! Two of my friends were killed over there, but what the hell can I do?”

“You can wear old clothes, and come to the demonstration in Central Park with me later. We can take photos of the pigs.”

“Pigs?”

“Cops, man! Cops! Where are you from, Bryan, a farm?”

“No, Long Island.”

“I know. Come on, we’ll stop at my pad first, and I’ll give you some decent clothes.”

I met Elliott a few weeks ago at the photography school I am going to here in New York City. He has a degree in higher education from a New England college, but after teaching English at Columbia for a year, he claims to have become disillusioned with what he says is “a system that sends college students to a foreign land to be killed.”

Elliott’s apartment is in lower Manhattan—Greenwich Village, a mecca for artists, musicians, poets, and rebels of all types. Elliott is no exception. A penny coated with spit gets him penny phone calls. Waiting for the subway train to pull into the station, then jumping the turnstile and rushing through the train’s closing doors gets him free rides. Telling commuters at Penn Station, “I’m a college student and I was robbed. I need five dollars for a train ticket so I can get home to Long Island,” gets him money to live on. He doesn’t want to work and fund the government’s actions in Vietnam. It all makes sense to me, especially since he shares his extra money with whomever is in need, be it a hippie on the street or the legless World War II veteran whose only home is the maze of tunnels beneath the city.

Dressed for the occasion, our cameras loaded, we head to the West Fourth Street subway station. My new attire consists of old sneakers, dirty ripped blue jeans, and a tie-dyed T-shirt with a peace symbol on the front. I fit in perfectly with the denizens of The Village. Descending the garbage strewn stairs that lead to the subway, the smells, sights and sounds of the underworld greet us: newsstands, hot dog vendors, street people, bag ladies, screeching subway trains, the smell of electricity.

I pay thirty cents for a token and pass through the turnstile to wait for the train. Elliott looks at me, shaking his head in disgust. He positions himself near the turnstiles, waiting. The man in the token booth gives Elliott an empty stare and goes back to reading his paper. The train bursts from the darkness and the sounds of screaming steel wheels on crying steel
tracks fill the station, along with the aroma of power. As it slows to a stop, Elliott tenses, waiting for the right moment. Doors open—people depart, people enter. Elliott jumps and runs. The doors shut and the train lurches forward. Whining, it leaves the station and is swallowed by the seclusion of the tunnels. Elliott sits beside me, laughing.

He is still laughing as we walk up out of the subway and into Central Park. The park is fresh, warm, and inviting. A haven in the center of Manhattan, a half mile wide and two-and-a-half miles long, it is a home for gardens, meadows, woods, bushes, trees, fountains, restaurants, walkways, zoos, and a lake—a large lake with rowboats to explore hidden inlets and friendly islets.

Walking toward Sheep's Meadow, we are joined by others of the same persuasion. It may be the defiant mode of apparel, the blowing-in-the-wind hair, the something-good-is-about-to-happen look in the eye; whatever it is, we know who is part of the solution and who is part of the problem.

"Half the fun is getting there," a girl says as she passes a joint. Soon we are one, looking for utopia. Incense hangs in the air.

Sheep's Meadow, seemingly endless, overflowing with hopes and dreams, looms before us. Encircled by trees that seem to be reaching for the sky beyond the office buildings, skyscrapers and smog, the meadow offers sanctuary. With the wave of a magic wand, we enter. As if in the womb of humanity, we feel safe and content.

Music, soothing music, enticing music, flows in the breeze, drawing us yet even closer together. Birds fly among us without fear. A white dove lands on my shoulder. I offer a piece of pretzel. Taking the pretzel, the dove flies to the shoulder of a girl—a girl with long blond hair and sleepy blue eyes. She takes a piece of pretzel and the dove flies on. I go to the girl; we follow the dove through the people, through the music. At the edge of the meadow, where the earth slopes upward, we sit under a shade-giving tree. We witness the music, played by awareness, by the future, by what we are sure is to be.

"Hey! How's the air up there? Good thing you're above the crowd, or we wouldn't have seen you. You guys want some food?" It's Elliott and Susan.

"Where did you get it?"

"Some fancy-dressed tourists near the snack-bar gave us twenty dollars to stop gawking at them," Elliott says, laughing. "We acted like we hadn't eaten in weeks. After they gave us the money, I took my camera out of Susan's bag and took a picture of them. They asked how I could afford film, so I told them there was no film in the camera and asked them for more money for film. They told me to take a bath, cut my hair, and get a job. I thanked them for the advice, and we disappeared into the crowd. Take any pictures yet?"

Reaching for a soda, I reply, "A few."

With religious fervor, we share the hot dogs, hamburgers, french fries, pizza, and soda. We share with anyone who joins us in this ceremony that unites all involved. The girl with sleepy blue eyes lights a joint, and the ritual is complete. She tells me of the West Coast, and of her home in Hawaii. She tells me of studying art at New York University and of how someday she wants to return to her islands in the sun. She tells me where she lives in
Greenwich Village. She tells me to come visit her. She tells me much more.

While the sun drops behind the skyscrapers, a blanket of shade creeps over Sheep’s Meadow. In a few hours darkness will claim the park; the rituals are over, and the music is fading. As each note returns to the subways, the buses, the streets; the instrument fades into our consciousness, to wait and hope for the music to play once more.

Elliott, Susan, Blue-eyes, and I take the subway back to West Fourth Street. As the doors open, to let us out, the off-beat sharpness of the real world slaps us in the face. Across the cement platform filled with hot dog stands, soda machines, newsstands, and people; across a set of tracks; across an identical platform filled with hot dog stands, soda machines, newsstands, and people, a street-worn woman, ragged, poor, weak, apparently has been sitting, resting in front of a newsstand. The owner, wanting her to move, is literally kicking her off to the side as if she is no more than a bag of rubbish. Jumping down to the tracks, Elliott flies over the third rails, jumps up onto the opposite platform and goes to the woman’s rescue like an avenging angel.

Running into the newsstand’s owner, shoving him back over the Daily News and the Wall Street Journal, Elliott screams, “What the hell are you doing! Leave her alone!” Suddenly a cop appears, out of nowhere.

“OK you hippie creep, you’re under arrest. I’ve seen you causing trouble before. This time you’ve gone too far.”

Elliott is hysterical. “Are you nuts? This son of a bitch was kicking the hell outta the old lady! Why don’t you arrest him?”

“All I saw was you attacking the newsman. Ya drugged up, long-haired freak!” The cop shoves his nightstick in Elliott’s stomach. Elliott doubles over and falls. Blue-eyes says she has pot on her, and runs from the station.

Susan and I yell across the tracks, but a train enters the station. I run to the token booth and ask the man to call the booth on the other side and explain to the cop what happened.

“I didn’t see anything. Get outta here, you fuckin’ hippie creep.”

I turn around. The train is leaving the station. Susan runs forward, following Elliott’s path to the other side of the tracks. Screaming, she swings wildly at the cop, but she is no more than a nuisance. Two more cops arrive, and Elliott and Susan are handcuffed and dragged away.

Behind me another cop is talking to the man in the token-booth. “I wish we could take all those commie pig hippies and burn ‘em. Why don’t they go fight for their country in Vietnam. Damn pot-heads! They ain’t got no right livin’ here.”

I ask the cop, “Where are they being taken?”

“To the nut house. All you freaks belong there,” he growls. I turn and look across the tracks. The bag lady is sleeping on a bench, and the newsstand’s owner is cleaning up the mess. Picking up Elliott’s camera, I run up into the daylight, but there is no Elliott, no Susan, no cop, no answer. Dazed and confused, I go back to the demonstration in Central Park. There are groups of people scattered about, talking, smoking, playing guitars. I go to each group, but they are surreal. I am lost, scared, alone. I run to the edge of the meadow,
to the tree we sat under. The paper bag Elliott used to carry the food lies torn and soiled on
the ground. Next to it lies a white dove, trampled by the music as it looked for food. I
stare, not wanting to believe, not wanting to understand. I think of Elliott.

I leave. I go to my apartment. I sleep. I wake up and realize it isn’t a dream. No one I
ask knows what happened to Elliott and Susan. It is four days since they were taken away.
The phone rings and I answer it.

A voice tells me, “Elliott’s been drafted and sent to Vietnam, and Susan’s been sent to a
mental hospital.” A few weeks later I go to the address given to me by Blue-eyes. I am told
she has gone home to Hawaii—New York is too violent for her.

Months later, I sit in the Filmore East, mesmerized by Hendrix enticing the “Star
Spangled Banner” from his tortured guitar. A voice cuts through the trance.

“Hey, Bryan. Ain’t seen you around. Bad news. Just found out Elliott was killed in
‘Nam. Here, toke on this joint awhile.”

Days, weeks, months, or years later, I walk home in a pot-induced trance after another
night of musical bliss in the Filmore East. I am drawn down into the West Fourth Street
subway, as if some unknown entity is leading me into hell. A pay phone is ringing but no
one answers. Approaching the newsstand that once spawned injustice, my eyes fall upon
the headline of the Daily News: “U.S. Troops Withdrawing From Vietnam.”

The sun has set. I’m staring at the darkness. The doorbell is ringing, pulling me up out
of the trance. The radio is spewing forth empty words about the war in the Middle East. I
turn off the radio, stand up, and stagger to the door.

“Who is it? I demand, opening the door.

“Collecting for the newspaper,” a distant voice answers. “You owe fifteen dollars.”

“Oh, hang on.” I reach deep into my pocket and grasp a handful of paper. I put a twenty
dollar bill into the outstretched hand. I look up into the eyes of a young girl.

“Where’s the older boy who usually collects?” I ask.

“Oh, that’s my father. He’s fighting in the Middle East. He’s in the Army.”

“You’re brave to do his job for him.”

“My dad is braver. He’s doing America’s job.”

I give her another twenty dollars, take the evening paper, and slowly shut the door. I
turn out the lights and stand in the darkness behind the closed door. I hear doors opening
and closing around disjointed conversations as the young girl fades down the hallway,
collecting. Soon there is silence.

I go to my room to ready myself for my nightly ritual of searching in the streets, bars,
and night-life of Waikiki—searching for inspiration, for reality, for the girl with long blond
hair and sleepy blue eyes. As I stand staring into my bedroom mirror, looking for some­
thing lost, I think of Elliott, the newsstand, the bag lady, the subtle realizations of life. I
think of war, of peace, and, as reality flows down my cheeks, I laugh.
Sea Grove (painting)
Suzanne Bell
Free

John Hirano

She met him in a crowd,
pressed a ring
into his palm
with a slight quiver in her chin
with a look of regret from him...

She turned around
lost herself in a sea of nameless faces
as he searched,
and listened,
hoping to hear a voice suggest
ways to enjoy his new-found freedom
in the void
of her departure....
Color Theory (painting)
Theresa McClain
Was That You?

Was that you I saw
Dancing silently,
Swirling like a symphony?
The ripples in your gown
Like lemon silk,
Smooth as a soft blue shark.
Twisting your blossom shadow
Into a wrinkled sway.
Exploding around you,
The hibiscus mist of love
Shimmered bright, through
The dazzling universe
Of your electric lips.
Was that you I saw,
Dancing alone
Under the cool leaves
Of the mango tree?
Or just a whisper
Of my imagination,
A scene from a dream
Where your chocolate
Hugs and kisses
Are sweet
And begging to be consumed.
Untitled (drawing)
Suzanne Bell
"Over easy," I said to the waitress dressed in her pink double-knit white-aproned coffee-stained uniform with a patch that said "Viv."
"Hash browns," I told the mirthless woman who took my order.
"Tea with lemon," to her "Coffee?" question. And she trudged away.
My eyes followed her and I recorded the veins bulging from the backs of her legs the silver roots pushing out the brassy reds under a cap the color of old newspapers. I saw her hand shake as she poured coffee into a customer's mug. She droned my order to the cook: "2 over, spuds."
I watched her hunker down in the booth near the kitchen and reach for a smoke I watched her suck till the ember glowed. A curl of smoke in the wan slats of light. Elbow on the table, chin in her palm, she sighed.

The time-clock announcing the passing of every minute to her death.
The Long Rain

The long rain
is seeping through my skin
flooding my eyes
plugging my nose
cracking my voice

the long rain
is seeping
to the depth of my bones
drowning my soul
"I brought my son to see his roots," my cousin said,
Hiding her discomfort with a brittle laugh
As she stepped gingerly over the red mud.
They had arrived late one summer afternoon,
She in designer dress, clearly alien to the place.
I saw his curious look, that boy of 10, in white Reeboks, shorts and Disney tee,
As he surveyed the pasture overgrown with buffalo grass,
The rotting mangoes along the roadside, the squashed toads, dried into paper cutouts.
Had he imagined to see rice fields swaying in gentle rhythms,
Taro leaves green against the silvery water,
Neatly tended patches of cabbages and peanuts
As in his grandfather’s memories?

We walked down to the river, where his grandfather had ferried
Bags of rice to the river mouth,
Where his grandmother had sailed upstream to wed a stranger
In a boat bedecked in red, powered by sweating coolies.
A weedy earthen wall now blocked it from view.

“What happened to the river,” my cousin exclaimed. “It used to be so beautiful here.”
She stood there, lost awhile in memories
Of mango trees laden with glowing piries,
Coconut trees leaning out over the water,
The large white house overlooking the river.

“Come,” I told the boy.
We climbed to the top of the earthen dike
And watched a lone figure paddle by in his makeshift canoe.
“Upriver, my son still fishes in clear pools,” I told him,
“And shoots meijiros and wild chickens.
Would you like to go with him?”
He stands there silent.
Were he here three decades ago, would he have joined us in the golden fields,
Shouting "shaa" at rice birds,
Clanking cans and shaking scarecrows
Like puppeteers from our lofty command post?
Would he have squished through black mud in search of bullfrogs and snails,
Stained the soles of his feet with wild choke plums
And stood in ditches to feel velvet streamers of seaweed ripple
over his feet?

He runs down the wall to his mother's side
As I stand on the bank and watch the sun set the red cliffs aflame.
Untitled (drawing)
Brian Hartford
Artichokes

From your moist
And unfolding body
I tear
Limb
From succulent
Limb,
And reveal
The layers
Of your meaty
Treasure.

I scrape
Your supple
Flesh
Between my teeth
And into my salivating
Mouth.

I find
And then touch
Hidden beneath
The layers
Your heart
With my probing
Tongue.

I devour
Your soul
Whole.

Alvin Asakura
Still Life (painting)
Paul Sheldon
Hospice for Aids

He lies on his side in the near-night,
The feet in blue socks twitch quickly.
The face is skeletal—all nose
And eye sockets, bony and dark.

I sit to just look at him sleep
(If it should be called sleep).
Grizzled beard, matted hair,
I stroke his arm with care.

The arm is sticklike, thin and hard,
But the hair on it seems so soft
I am alarmed, yet oddly comforted:
It is the hair on a baby’s head.

This dying man now a child
Leaving our weary world with a cry,
A child his mother loved and loves,
Returning to a more nourishing womb.

His crossed eyes open.
He tries to focus on his
Upraised weirdly turning hand.
“Death,” he says, in wonder.
Untitled (photograph)
Shuzo Uemoto
In the grasslands where
weeds yield blooms,
Nature weaves rustles,
strings sounds into song
comforts me
with a lullaby
privately performed.

Sun and wind conspire
to ease the aches,
tickle skin,
and tease hair wild
with whispers
of a thousand words of hope.

-rereat
It would always embarrass me when Amy said hi to me. It wasn’t so bad when I was alone, but she would wave when I was with Da Gang, too.

Amy was tiny, really tiny. Her arms looked like dead branches you find washed up on the beach. The kind you can throw back into the water or just split in half because of the neat sound it makes when it breaks. It wasn’t that she looked like a nerd. I thought she looked all right. It was because of the way she moved, kind of dinky and lost.

Whenever I saw Amy, I would look away fast, but she always smiled goofy and waved her scrawny little hand anyway.

I think it was because one time I saved her butt by the bike rack in the back of the school. Classes were finished and most of the kids were already gone. I was heading for my car, really pissed off because everybody else was out cruising at the beach without me. Unfortunately, I had detention. I was walking, thinking to myself how much fun everybody else must be having at the beach, when I heard somebody yelling.

“Leave it alone.” Amy’s voice cracked, spurting out each syllable as if she were being forced to talk.

“Why, what you going do about um?” a huge Sole girl, about the size of the linebackers on the football team, asked defiantly. The Sole chick held fast in front of her a cherry cruiser bike that I instinctively knew was Amy’s. I don’t know why I got involved but I sort of felt like I had to help Amy.

“Eh, leave her alone,” I commanded.

“Screw off,” the Sole girl shouted angrily before even turning to look at me.

“What?” I said sharply. My cocky smile grew as I saw her mouth drop in shock and fear when she recognized me.

“Nah, nah, it’s cool,” the Sole girl pleaded, backing away from the bike with her hands in the air as if she were being held up in a robbery. It wasn’t me she was scared of, it was Da Gang that made her back away shaking. Everybody was scared.

Amy looked at me smiling. Her eyes were glazed with tears on the verge of spilling out.

“Thanks, Kari,” Amy said.

“No problem,” I said, suddenly aware I was smiling at her. Then I walked away without saying another word.

I guess that’s why Amy waved at me all the time. Or it might have been because we used to play together back in elementary time. I didn’t care that she was kind of goofy. Back then, we all were kind of goofy. I never found out what the reason was, but she always waved, even though I never waved back.

Anyway, one day, me and Da Gang, well, the female half, were sitting around in the “D” bathrooms during recess smoking and discussing very important matters like who was
hapai or who was fooling around with who. I went into the last stall because I had to use the bathroom. Just as I sat down I heard Da Girls start going “whooo” and making whatever other stupid noises we used to make to get everyone’s attention.

“What dooo we have here,” one of the girls said with sweet sarcasm.

“I think the poor thing is lost.”

Another girl laughed loudly. “Maybe we should show her what we do to trespassers.”

“I-I-I have to use the b-b-bathroom,” stuttered a voice instantly recognizable as Amy’s.

Great. Why didn’t she use the “A” building bathrooms like all the other girls? Everybody knew this bathroom was off limits. Amy looked dinky, but she wasn’t stupid enough to walk in without knowing what would happen to her. Nevertheless, here she was.

“Look!” One of the girls laughed shrilly.

“Gross,” another one added with genuine disgust.

Then all of a sudden they were all laughing like a pack of wild hyenas. I finished my business and jumped out of the stall to see what all the hysterical laughter was about. I couldn’t see anything. They were all crowded around in a circle pointing and laughing so hard that some of the girls were crying. I shoved my way to the center, angrily pushing aside the girls who were holding their stomachs because of the pain of laughing too hard.

In the center I found Amy, her eyes searching from face to face. When she found mine, she stopped searching. Through the tears I could see fear, shame and humiliation in her eyes.

My stomach ached. It felt as though my heart had fallen and shattered, and the pieces were littering my stomach’s tender lining. My eyes, heavy with pain, were drawn to Amy’s legs. A single trickle of blood made its path from beyond her shorts, past her knees, past her ankles, just on the verge of soiling her pure white sneakers.

Suddenly, I was overwhelmed with a wave of rage. Why was everyone just standing there laughing? Were they so cold in their hearts that they didn’t know how cruel they were being? I felt the need to slam their stupid grins clear from their faces. But I couldn’t move.

The bell rang, signaling the end of recess. Outside the halls began to fill with the sound of kids trudging slowly back to classes. Soon the halls would be packed with people.

“Push her out into the hall!” one of the girls demanded cruelly, the shrill laughter never leaving her voice.

“Yeah, push her out,” another girl added cheerfully.

Tears began to pour uncontrollably from Amy’s eyes. She didn’t say anything. She just stared at me. Her terrified stare pierced my heart more and more with each tear. I knew she was waiting for me.

“Don’t,” I finally managed. My heart was pounding so hard it felt like it was hooked up to an amplifier.

“What?” one of the girls asked in a very cocky tone.

Strangely, all I could think about were the fun times cruising at the beach, the expression on the Sole girl’s face when she recognized me, and the way everybody looked at me and treated me with respect. Or maybe it was fear. Either way, I liked it.
"I said don’t . . . forget to look out for teachers, we could get busted," I forced out. As soon as the words left my mouth, I felt sick. My stomach turned repeatedly as if it were disgusted by the fact that it had to be a part of me.

I forced myself to look at Amy, but she wasn’t staring at me anymore. Amy was staring at the ground, or maybe she was staring at the deep-colored stain on her white shoe.

The next thing I knew, Amy was pushed out of the bathroom entrance into the hall. Nobody really noticed her. I felt relieved. Maybe she could make it to another bathroom unnoticed. Everyone was just walking around her.

"Look, she get her rags all over. Gross!" shouted the girl who had pushed Amy out. Everybody turned and stared at Amy. For a moment there was silence, then everyone started roaring with laughter. Their laughter pounded painfully through my head.

Amy just stood there whimpering. Her eyes never left the ground or her shoe. Even when the teacher came to save her, she didn’t look up.

After, whenever I saw Amy, she would look away, not at me. I kept staring at her, even after she passed me. I wanted to look into her eyes. Maybe to convince myself that it wasn’t my fault. I guess I was hoping that Amy didn’t split with the same cracking sound as the dead branches on the beach.

One time, I was walking by myself in the hallway by “A” bathroom and I ran into Amy. She saw me coming and shot her head down really fast. I don’t know why, but I stepped in front of her path.

"Amy, look at me."

Slowly she lifted her eyes off her shoe. In her eyes I saw pure shame. Not for herself, but for me. She was shame for me.
Rosemary (photograph)
Brock Pemberton
For Mike

In the sweet after-glow of sex
wrapped in vanilla
scented candlelight
the sound of Maggie May
softly invades the moment.
Twin tears
diamond-bright
in the light.
Sad jewels for Mike.

Mike was a Waterman,
carving curves
and bringing grace
to violent surf.

Mike was
everyone's Friend.
Gentle, giving,
always too generous,
he'd stroll thru Lahaina
amid a litany of "Hi Mike!"

But deep inside
a firestorm raged,
its source a mystery.

Mike sought the Snow
to cool the flame,
but fell for the Lady.
Wrapped in her seduction
he forgot caution
and safety.
Though strong of limb
and soul
the fickle Lady
crushed his heart.

As I lay here
stroking her hair,
absorbing the pain
and loss
I find love grows
for my lover's brother
whom I did not know.

To love someone
is a true moment
of joy.

To love a memory
is to reach across
the void
and touch infinity.
Death Comes Calling

Death comes calling
In her red and black dress
From her corner of hell

Memories flood the soul
Of dancing lives away
On that far away shore

Amid the horror and beauty
That men call war
There she and I meet

Terrible to behold and know her
While still only boys
We embraced in a slow dance

She turned us old too soon
Stole our youthful dreams
Touched our souls forever

Come lady let us remember
Our first embrace and dance
For soon we'll do it once more

Then I will rest the quiet rest
Where only brothers live
Who study war no more
I insisted on 200 thread count sheets.
So you went out and bought
sheets
blue and white pinstripe sheets
with a thread count
more or less as I had specified
fitted
flat
and
two pillow cases.
I tore open the package and sniffed
they smelled crisp
they were stiff
I liked them
It was a nice choice you made.
The blue.
I whipped the sheets over the mattress
and thought of a cat that
long ago
would jump on the floating sheet as it settled on the bed
and purring
I did a
belly flop
into the center of the 200 thread count sheets.
Silly me.
Hanging in the closet
Loose and wrinkled,
Symptoms of wear
Encroaching in a death-grip,
Small tears and spots obvious
To everyone but me,
It cries out to be filled
With skin again.
You say “Throw it away!”
But you know I never could.
And if you rode its tired seams,
Criss-crossing up and down
The sleeves and collar
On faded old dirt roads
That lead nowhere in particular,
Passing holes with no buttons
Like your one-eyed teddy bear,
Or felt the brightness
That its paling color brings
Or wrapped it just once around you,
Then you would know
How much more than just a wire
And hook
It deserves.

Larry Lieberman
Hanging in the closet
Loose and wrinkled,
Symptoms of wear
Encroaching in a death-grip,
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Larry Lieberman
Lahaina Daze (photograph)
Brock Pemberton
Flight to Hawaii

Mike Molloy

Orange unending sunset:
We jet to that wind-touched volcano
Which we call our home.

Still black cloud
Drops silent sheets of rain
Upon the mother sea.

Overweight woman
Who fed us chats with a friend unseen
In the bright galley.

Loud old man
Laughs full-throated
At the film I cannot see.

You my love
Sleep—your head on a red pillow.
I catch your neck’s fragrance.

We weightless ones
Fly back to our fire-born home
Beneath the eternal stars.
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Raku bowl
Sachiko Bratakos