In this issue:

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Erik Fenske
Nora Lee-Williams
Kathy MacDougall
Georgette Magnuson
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S.C.T. Matsuda
R. E. McFeeters
Frances Meserve
Nnabiko Ngumezi
Brock Pemberton
Daniel Quong
Meena Sachdeva
Carlton Saito
Moriso Teraoka

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Ka Nani will publish its next issue in January 1994. Deadline for submissions will be during fall semester, 1993. Watch for notices in Kapi’o and on bulletin boards around campus. Anyone interested in working on the staff may contact the Ka Nani Adviser through the Language Arts Department in Kalia 101. Ka Nani invites submissions of imaginative literature—chiefly poetry, fiction, and short plays—and original artwork and photographs. Questions regarding submissions of writings or artwork may also be addressed to the Ka Nani Adviser.

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Fishing

(For F.S.)

The lines came so easily,
So gently, so effortlessly. But they have
Gone, and I can't find the words anymore.
They have vanished.
I thought they were good lines,
Ripe with promise and possibilities.
I wanted to send them to you and
Ask you to read them.
But the idea became a blur floating by
Quickly, like a fish reeled in,
Too silvery illusive to stay hooked.
Perhaps its mouth ruptured,
Bled before it let go.
The metal must have stung as it writhed.
My words struggled too.

Thinking back, I know I have lost something
I really wanted. I don't know if the
Fault were all mine.
I only know words don't come
Painlessly, not without thoughts of you.
Lament

Homeward he came in the night,
Through the dark waters, torn and in anguish,
His heart rent. Here where I crouch in my cold cave
I heard how he staggered and fell.
No tears could wash away his blood, no caresses
Stanch that pain. I held him,
My youngling, my own,
Who had haunted the Danes with the nightmare of his name!
No more will his shadow fall
On their nightly revels, his fearful shape
No longer haunt their dreams.
Cradling him dying, I sang to him
Of his dreadful deeds,
Crooned him to his last sleep.

Now from the hollow of my heart
I mourn, pledging death to that bright stranger
Who challenged Grendel's name and took his life.
Who is he, mere man, who strode into that great hall
And struck down that which they most feared,
Whom I most loved? I shall wait here.
In the night that never ends, never sleeping, till he comes,
His sword seeking my vengeful heart.

O, woe befall him who brought Grendel to his grave!
Her face is turned away, the pale northern light of spring illuminating the soft lines of her young profile. She is fair, with porcelain skin and curls the shade of moonlight cascading from under a dark cloche hat. With one hand she reaches to pull toward her a branch of flowering tree—apple, cherry—and the ghost of a smile tugs at the corner of her lips. I imagine the blue of her eyes, clear and bright like glacier ice, though the only color is the soft, rubbed black and white of old photographs. Below the picture, in white ink against the black page, my father had written in his careful student hand: "Lotte im Englischen Garten." Lotte in the English Garden.

It was 1934, and my father was a young student from Oklahoma, continuing his language studies in Germany. This album, salvaged from a fire a half-century later, is his record of those years, the only thing left that testifies to that part of his life I can now only guess at. This was his life before he became all those things by which I could name him: husband, father, teacher. This was his life before my mother existed for him, before children and mortgages and careers and grandchildren. And this life, bound within the pages of this book, included Lotte.

The picture echoes in my mind. She appears elsewhere, in other photos—on a lakeside picnic, at a Christmas Eve dinner, at a train station—but this is the one that stays with me, that asks questions there is no one left to answer. The sweet secrecy of her smile, the very closeness of the lens to her face, tell me this: at the moment his finger pressed down on the shutter, there was only, and forever, springtime in Munich, a young man from Oklahoma, and Lotte in the English Garden.

This is the story I have chosen, the colored fabric I have woven from the black and white threads of that photograph.

She, too, is a student at the University. She has met him through her uncle, in whose house my father is a boarder, one of many, but the only American. (There they all are in the Christmas Eve photo, carefully labelled from left to right, solemnly lifting their glasses in a toast; she is seated to my father's left.)
He knew the number of every locomotive
And he knew the time without a watch.
He lived on the rails for forty years:
All points North, South and West.
People knew him from Maine to Florida
And as far west as Minnesota.

He told us boys tremendous tales
Of places he'd been and seen:
About the killing yards in Chicago,
And the livestock cars that got him there.
He taught us how to stew grasshoppers
And how to set a snare for rabbits.

"Ya gotta remember," he would say,
"to check the traps everyday.
If ya don't," I remember him saying,
"you'll lose your dinner to a fox."
Sometimes we saw him plucking chickens
Though he never told us where he got them.

Thirty-eight years ago, a man could live like that.
Today, he'd be called homeless or a bum.
Back then he was just a friendly Hobo
Following the seasons down the rails:
Summers in Maine; Winters in Florida.
The "Life of Riley," some would say.

He used to talk us out of the fish we caught
Then share his lunch and a smoke or two
Before heading west for a jamboree.
He said we could join him anytime,
But we knew he didn't really mean it.
What would he do with kids tagging along?

Then one summer, he never came.
No chickens disappeared from locked coops
And we heard no terrific tales.
We boys went to the junction every weekend
But we tossed back all the fish
In hopes of catching them again, for him.

We never learned his name other than Mac,
And we never saw him again after that.
Looking back across the many years,
It's nice to think that in the mirage
On the horizon, we can just make out
A bright red kerchief bobbing up and down.
Tea Leaves

Her face was mirrored in a cup,
Eyes staring to see the bottom,
Trying to draw meaning
From an empty cup and dark leaves
(No surface stuff here).

As a child I wanted to see beyond her,
Beyond her curtains, cheap glossy tapestries
And wooden beads that clacked
To rhythms echoed in the voices
Of young sailors destined for uncertainty.
Empty tea cups lay before them,
Maps of times and places between them,
Mock patterns illuminated by candles.
Soldiers must have asked her about their girlfriends,
Who in the life before
Stood at bus depots and airports,
Waving as they said small town good-byes:
Eyes appropriately damp, lips tightly drawn
To hold back words, monosyllabic gestures.

What did the tea leaves say?
The answers must have
Overwhelmed and deafened,
Mixing with smells of sweat and tea and cheap perfume.
Hinting at a world more certain,
More hopeful, than this one.
It was the first day of Summer vacation of 1990. School was out of session for a full three months. Children everywhere were preparing for endless days of fun and games. Three months in the minds of nine and ten year olds was an eternity. For the twins of the Davis family, it meant baseball, swimming, fishing or blueberry picking. It meant the excitement of hiking untold miles of railroad tracks, rafting streams, ponds or swamps on homemade floats, the adventure of raids on corn fields, tree climbing or any number of exciting ideas the twins could come up with. The boys had arisen early that day in June, much earlier than they ever had for school.

The twins were ten years old, stood about five feet tall, and weighed in at ninety-six pounds. Looking at them from the side, they could have been mistaken for stringbeans. Their hair was that sandy colored blondish-brown of summer. They were as much alike as two peas in a pod. Their mother could only tell them apart when they were dressed alike. They had often switched classes at school with their teachers never knowing the difference.

Summer is that magic time of year when anything can happen. For the twins, Rick and Rob Davis, the unusual was about to unfold. Excitement hung in the air like a kite on a lazy breeze. After pulling on their jeans and pocket tees, they slipped into their well-worn sneakers and raced down stairs for a breakfast of cold cereal and OJ. Rick suggested a day of fishing at Harold Parker state forest.

"I heard that Berry pond got stocked a week ago," he said.

Rob was more for baseball. He countered with "Let's get some of the guys together for a game before it gets too hot."

Rick then, not being inclined to play ball, came up with another reason to go fishing: "Ya know, Rob," he said, "we could take along a skillet and some butter, catch the limit, eat a few for lunch, then go back for the take homes. The game warden would never know the difference."

Rob was quick to change the subject with "I'll bet Corum's swamp is loaded with frogs and turtles."
Rick's eyes widened at the mention of turtles. "Yeah," he said, "let's make a day of it and get as many as we can."

The twins gulped down their cereal and orange juice and bolted out the back door. They raced across the backyard and into the woods, along the low marshy area, indifferent to the brackish water seeping into their sneakers. They skirted the mud holes and ignored the songs of all manner of birds. Even the raucous caws of the crows and the screeching of jays could not deter them from their cause.

"If we're lucky," gasped Rick, "we'll get a couple of snakes, too."

Rob said, "A good size snake would be great, remember the one we saw a couple of years ago?"

They came out of the woods at Cunningham street, crossed without looking, and disappeared down an old dirt road that would take them to the back pasture of Corum's farm and the back pond of the swamp. Along the way they had stuffed their pockets with stones, remembering that mean old barnyard dog of Corum's.

"He's not gonna take us by surprise again this year," said Rick.

"Yeah," agreed Rob, "he almost got us last year. We'll be ready for him this time."

"Be quiet, now, or we'll have to wait an hour before we see any turtles," whispered Rick, slowing down so as to make less noise.

Rob matched his step and they approached the swamp with the stealth of indians. As they neared the swamp, they could hear the splashes and kerplunks of frogs, turtles and muskrats. Before they could even catch a glimpse of anything, the swamp went silent. They thought that they had made little or no sound, but no matter how quiet they tried to be, it was the same every year.

"We'll have to wait for a while," observed Rick.

Rob whispered in acknowledgement, "I'll crawl out on the stumps and dens, you take a few old branches for camouflage and wait close to the shore."

They passed the time in silence, taking in the wonders of nature. Behind them lay the open pasture. Pale yellow buttercups, purple hocks, golden dandelions and red, white and pink field roses quilted the green, adding to the serene beauty: a kaleidoscopic rainbow, which at once was an inducement to daydream and an invitation to romp. Birds and butterflies, plus all kinds of other insects, were drawn to the meadow in answer to nature's lure.

They waited for what seemed like hours, though only ten minutes had elapsed. Still, it would be a while longer before the frogs and turtles would resurface for air, sun and insects. Rob had perched himself on a long dead log overgrown with moss, lichen and wood morels. Along the shore of the pond grew wild irises. The violet and yellow blossoms atop the bladed green stems faced East, tracking the morning sun. Amid the pink and white clover, they offered a wonderful contrast to the brown and tan cat-o-nine tails, which reached above all else in rows, like helmeted soldiers invading the peace of nature.

Rick was the first to glimpse a snout protruding from the still water. "Look," he said. "Get ready. We'll have to be quick. They won't stay up for long."

Rob crept out on the driftwood as quietly as possible, his patience and balance being tested with every move. The swamp was coming alive with activity. Swallows and thrushes were snatching damselflies and other insects away from the frogs. Turtles were lumbering up onto logs and muskrat dens. Both boys stayed very still and quiet, hiding in the silence.

A yellow spotted turtle ventured close to Rob. In one quick motion it was nabbed before it could get back to the water. "I got 'im, I got 'im!" shouted Rob, holding up his prize for Rick to see.

At the same moment, Rick stood up and displayed a bullfrog. "Look what I got," he replied excitedly, grinning from ear to ear. They had their hands full.

Rob turned the turtle over and counted the squares on the bottom half of its shell: eighteen squares. The turtle was thirty-six years old. He told Rick, "This could be the same turtle I caught a couple of years ago. Looks like it found its way home since then."

Rick agreed that it might be the very same turtle. Then he stretched out the frog he was holding to its full length (a good twenty-three inches) and said boastfully, "This is the biggest one we've ever gotten out of this swamp."

They were ready to take their new pets back to the wetlands behind their house, where they would keep them throughout the summer, or at least until the old irrigation canals dried up.

He came out of nowhere! That old mangy farm dog had caught the twins off guard again. He was so quick and startled them so much that Rob dropped his turtle and Rick lost his frog. They made a beeline for the fence and the safety of their house, where they would keep them throughout the summer, or at least until the old irrigation canals dried up.

He came out of nowhere! That old mangy farm dog had caught the twins off guard again. He was so quick and startled them so much that Rob dropped his turtle and Rick lost his frog. They made a beeline for the fence and the safety of the woods beyond just as fast as their legs would carry them. They cleared the fence with a single bound and hit an old pine tree on the run. They never slowed. The sharp teeth and ferocious growls right behind had them swimming in adrenalin. They were half way up the tree before they ever looked back. They clung to the branches of that tree like two Koala bears.
"Where'd he come from?" asked Rob.
"He must have circled around and come over the tracks," figured Rick.
"Hey, Rick, ya still got some rocks?" asked Rob.
"Yeah, let 'im have it," said Rick.

Below them, the dog was jumping and snarling at the base of the tree. He was frustrated at their narrow escape. The twins took aim and hurled down their rocks, but because of their precarious situation they never hit the target. Soon they were out of ammunition and that barnyard cur just kept right on snapping his teeth and growling up at the boys in the tree. Rick plucked off a few pine cones and handed them to Rob. "Use these," he said, grabbing for more. "We'll bean him this time."

It wasn't long before they had him yelping and on his way back to the barn. That had been enough excitement for a while. Squatting down on the branches to catch their breath and looking downward, they realized how high up they had climbed. They were a good twenty-five or thirty feet up. They waited to be sure the dog did not return. Peering out through the thick growth of pine needles, they had a great view across the pasture, swamp and into the woodlands beyond.

"Wow, look out there," quipped Rob. "Look how far we can see."
"Awright," said Rick. "Let's go a little higher."

They had figured they were about half way up the tree at that point, but to realize that was not so. "Wonder how tall this old tree is," said Rick.
"Me, too," added Rob. "Can't see the top yet. Let's have a look see."

Unknown to the twins, they happened to be in the tallest New England white pine in the area. In no time at all, their hands and jeans were covered with pitch and turning black. They sure would catch hell once they got home, but for the moment nothing could've kept them from climbing as high as they could.

The higher they went, the better the view and the thinner the branches. They could now see for several miles in any direction. They noted the steeple of the Baptist church, which overlooked the town cemetery; the railroad tracks of the Boston & Maine, Co., which narrowed, then vanished in the distance on the horizon; and all the roof tops of houses, schools and places of business. Taking time to point things out, Rob identified their dentist's office, the police station, Silver Lake, some four miles away, and all the way to the next town.

The wind wasn't strong that day, but they could feel its sway. It was exhilarating, like a ride at a carnival.

"Let's go higher," Rick urged Rob. "I can't wait to see the view."

Without any hesitation they started climbing higher. "Test the branches as you go along," Rob cautioned. "Wouldn't want to slip."
"Look at the cars on the highway," Rick shouted over the roar of the wind. "They look like matchbox toys."

"Yeah," agreed Rob, "and they seem to be moving so slow, too."
"Oh wow!" exclaimed Rick, "a train is coming down from Maine. It looks like a snake in the grass."

Weaving in and out of their view through the forest, the train did appear to be a large snake making its way across a field.

Overwhelmed with excitement and the panoramic view, the twins just had to get a little higher. The one below pushing or the one above pulling, they ascended as high as they could, while still having good hand holds and secure footing.

The wind sure feels great, huh?" whispered Rob.

Rick hushed back, "It's almost like being on a swing."

The top of the tree was swaying back and forth and the boys were thrilled. They never once considered themselves to be in any real danger. They were sure they could see several of the surrounding towns: Andover, Burlington, Woburn and Tewkesbury; Reading, Billerica, Balladvale and many others. They were caught up in the moment: birds soaring past just out of reach, the wind whipping their long hair. The element of danger never entered their young minds. Not until the winds picked up anyway.

"Wow!" they both said when a sharp gust lashed the tree tops. Another rush of wind had them laughing outrageously, but their laughter was cut short by a sharp cracking sound.

"What was that?" Rick said wide eyed.

"Sounded like something cracking," Rob said, surprise edging his voice, just as they felt the branch give way under their combined weight.

Rick made a wild lunge for Rob, but that was all it took. They were airborne! For a millisecond they hung suspended grasping at each other. Down they went, screaming and reaching out blindly for anything to grab hold of. Tumbling head over heels, they shouted each other's name over and over. "Hang on, Rob!" . . . "Hang on, Rick . . . "Crack! Snap! Swish! Their fall was from upward of a hundred and fifty feet. Their shouts and screams must have been heard as far away as Boston. Once, Rick was snapped back upward by the spring of a larger limb, only to hurtle down again crashing into Rob. Gaining hold was futile. The slick green needles afforded
They kept telling each other to: "Hold on." "Hold on." The branches were cutting and bruising them.

Though it felt like an eternity, it was over in a flash.

Thump!

"Ouch!" they said in unison. They were breathless and speechless. The wind had been knocked out of them. Rob's mind screamed out for Rick. Fear had taken cold hold of them.

They tried to move, found they could and stared at each other dumbfounded for what seemed like forever.

Rick found his voice and shouted, "Are you all right, Rob? Are ya OK?"

Rob hadn't fully caught his breath.

Rick said, "Sit up, sit up."

He slapped his brother on the back a couple of times. It worked.

Rob got his breath, screeching, "OK, OK, don't hit so hard for cryin' out loud."

Through tears of surprise and fear, they saw that they had survived the impossible. They looked up, but could not see the top of the tree from where, only moments ago, they had careened.

The twins got to their feet shakily. Had this really happened? Who would believe it? Laughter overtook them. Raucous, boisterous, unchecked laughter.

They looked around in amazement. Branch upon branch lay beneath their feet. Their landing had been cushioned. On the way down they must have snapped and broken them off. They were scraped, bruised and scratched and would ache for days afterward, but all in all, not too much the worse for wear.

Before leaving for home, the brothers checked to see if that old dog had not come back. Then they started off across the pasture. But as though they had read each other's minds, they hurried back to the tree. Rob took his jackknife out of his pocket and handed it to Rick.

"Carve it big and neat," he said, "then we can burn it right into the trunk."

Rick worked on the tree for more than a half hour.

"Well, what do you think of this?" he said, with a great deal of pride.

Rob looked at the names and the date and was satisfied that that great New England pine was forever theirs:

The tree of the twin falls.

Rob observed that they both had all their limbs in one piece. The tree had given up some of its limbs for theirs.

The sun was heading toward dusk and the two boys once again started for home, laughing all the way. Tomorrow was day two of summer vacation. A whole new adventure awaited.
In the square, the gods stare and grin,
Poised above the secular,
Caught in human architecture,
Carved in niches of human space and time.
Beyond, the sky broods, heavy with the
Weight of July rains.
Mute Point

I see in your eyes
That your heart knows
My silence awaits

I read on your lips
What you may think
Is disguised metaphor

I hear with my eyes
What you might speak
With your semaphore

I speak with my hands
That you may see
My soundless words

I know in my heart
These voiceless words
Reach open ears

Laundry Day

An old blue blanket
worn to softness
and washed of color,
one end gathered to a point
to match your thumb
that exactly fit your mouth.

The brown eyes sad
as you sat
next to the washer
then the dryer.
Like a dog left outside
some doorway,
awaiting its master's return,
you kept your vigil
for your most constant
companion.
Morning

The lovers in the house across the street
have fallen quiet
The shouted curses and tears
dissolved into sleep
or reconciliation
in what must be
an unquiet bed

Light begins to color the sky
in the deepest of imaginable blues
Rain still falls
but softly now
as cars begin to wake
and rush about
the city streets around me
The first bird of morning sings
over the swish of tires
on rain wet pavement

One conflict over
if not resolved
as many more awaken
to give shape and substance
to another day
Miniatures

Cherry Blossoms
Pink in pink
Amble aloft
Announcing April
In Kyoto
Of old Japan
Below Mt. Koya

Singing Crickets
Silver on black
Fiddle furiously
Fairy flutes
Of nature
Pray for rain
In summer fields

Lonely Widows
Black over orange
Weave webs
Waylaying wasps
In nets
of silken deceit
Necklaced with dew

Concord Grapes
Red to purple
Dangle deceptively
Dripping dew
On leaves
Of verdant green
Yet to frost

R. E. McFeeters

Miniatures

Towerling Maples
Green to red
Pose patiently
Picture postcards
In mirrors
Of still water
Waiting for winter

Autumn Oaks
Yellow on orange
Tremble tentatively
Tossing tears
Of leaves
In fiery parades
Onto frostbitten ground

Daring squirrels
Gray or red
Chastise chickadees
Chattering charges
Of thief
At quick sparrows
On the feeder

Winter Chickadees
Gray on white
Forage feeders
Fighting filchers
For seeds
Left by children
With big hearts

R. E. McFeeters
What we are left with when all else fails is just ourselves naked alone without artifice or defense. The world moves through us leaving no mark but reshaping the boundaries that define what we feel what we know.

What I am left with is the knowledge bitter and bracing that there is no protection save what I can fashion from raw experience.

There is no strength great enough to insure safety from change There is only the world implacable and my malleable borders.

In 1955, I lived in Guam in the assigned Navy officer quarters that had been converted from World War II quonset huts. It was there that I learned that the children who lived at the bottom of the hill led freer, more loving lives. It was there I began to learn the price I would have to pay when I went past the barriers of the class-structured world I lived in.

On the morning of my sixth birthday, my mother presented me with a brand new pair of glossy, white, patent leather shoes. Later she boasted of selling my bike to pay for them, because it was dangerous riding where we lived. I remember shaking with anger. My bike was the only way I could free myself from my home. I had cherished every minute away.

My mother invited some children over for birthday cake and punch, but I felt alone. I soon wandered away from the house, staring at the shades of orange and blue in the twilight sky. I walked down the road, singing to myself. When I looked back, I no longer saw the house, and trees blackened the fading sky. I was afraid, but I knew all I had to do was turn around and head back, and I would be safe.

I thought about returning, but I was still angry about the bike, so I walked on, pulling at my dress where the crinoline scratched my waist. I deliberately shuffled my feet trying to scuff the glaring white away. I kept walking down the road singing Sunday school songs to push the night away, but soon my heartbeat was louder than my singing.

The sounds grew louder, so I ran faster. I tripped and my dress ripped as I fell. I felt a stinging in my palms and my knees when I jumped up to run again. Suddenly, I smashed into a warm, soft wall that grabbed me. A deep, bass voice chuckled and said, "Hafaday."

I was so startled that I could only cry. He patted my head, and then gently lifted me and held me in his warm arms. I heard him say, over and over, "Is aright li'l one. Shh, evryting's fine."

His strong scent surrounded me, but I knew he was safe because he spoke.
English. He kept talking quietly, asking me my name and where I belonged, but I was still too frightened to speak. After a few minutes, he gave up asking and said, "I take you Ruth."

He lifted me onto his shoulder and walked rapidly down the road. His shoulders were smaller than my father's and his hair was soft. His grip where he held my legs was firm, but not tight. He walked on for a long time, and I began to get sleepy.

I saw a light ahead and knew we were going toward the chicken people who lived at the bottom of our hill. I had been warned never to visit them, because they were natives. I knew I would get a beating for being in their home.

He waded through the sleeping chickens that were roosting in the yard, opened the screen door, and then walked inside the shack. The dim light from the kerosene lamp set on the rough plank table gave the newspaper-patched walls a shadowy, frightening appearance. Standing over a wood-burning stove was a thin brown woman stirring a large stained and dented pot.

I looked down at the head that I was clasping and saw that the man had dark skin, too. He looked up, smiled, then reached his hands up and lifted me down. He spoke to the woman rapidly in their language while he held onto my hand. I didn't want to move away because he felt safe.

The woman came over to where I stood, then squatted down in front of me. She smiled at me and said, "You trouble, miz." She examined my torn knees, hands and dress, then walked away, but soon came back with a wet rag and a green, smelly salve that soothed the soreness from my skin.

I looked up at the man and saw that he was smiling, too. I saw that he was really looking at me. I felt good. Unless my parents were mad and screaming, they never looked at me. Sometimes they would see a dirty smudge to fuss about, or teeth that weren't quite clean, but I don't think they ever saw me.

Ruth came back, handed me a piece of cloth and said, "Put dis on, n'l fix you dress." She helped me take it off. The crinoline had left a red rash around my waist, and she made a clicking noise with her tongue when she saw it. She looked down at my shiny, white shoes and said, "Bet dey hurt som."

I stood there holding the red and white cloth she had given me, trying to figure out how to put it on. She applied some of the salve she had used on my hands and knees to the redness on my waist. It felt so cooling—the awful itching went away. Then she wrapped the cloth around my chest and tucked the ends under and over until I was wearing a dress that was a smaller version of hers.

She asked me my name while she helped me put on the dress. When I told her who my father was, she looked at me intently and repeated his name. "Beeg trouble," she said and I saw tension flow across her face.

I knew that my father hit the natives; he liked to hurt people who couldn't hit back. He hit my sister and me every day. If he didn't leave a bruise or a welt, he would hit us again and again until his loud words showed on our skins.

The man had turned around to look at me when I said my father's name. "You fader Mesta Chap'l?" he asked. Then I nodded. I watched the fear flow into his eyes.

Suddenly, I heard the screech of brakes and the sound of the chickens squawking out of the way. I heard my father yell, "Check the yard!"

He smashed the screen door and stomped in. "I told you never to come here," he bellowed as he slapped me to the floor. Then he struck the man who had been so kind to me. The man fell to the floor and didn't move. Blood dribbled from his nose and lips, and they started to swell and turn blue. Ruth screamed and ran toward her husband. One of the M.P.'s pushed her down with his rifle.

Then my father reached down, grabbed me by the hair and jerked me up from the floor until I stood on tip toe. He grabbed the top of my native dress with his other hand, and ripped it from my body.

"Only white trash wear native clothes. Get that dress on," he said as he let go of my hair and flung me away from him. I quickly did as I was told. He saw the tear in the dress after I had pulled it on, made a grunting noise and then kicked the unconscious man in the head. I tried to move between them, but he grabbed my arm and half-dragged, half-carried me out to the car. I was crying and screaming. "He was just trying to help. I fell and tore my dress. Ruth was going to fix my dress. They were nice. They helped me and you hurt the nice man."

He lifted me by the arm and angrily threw me into the front passenger seat of the M.P.'s jeep. "Shut up. You're nothing but white trash," and then he hit me again. I felt a blinding pain and blood running down from my nose. "He was nice to me," I whispered.

I watched him climb into the driver's seat and saw the two M.P.'s hastily jump in back. He furiously drove away from the chicken house and up the long winding road to the top of the hill. I was rocking and hugging myself, trying to hold the pain inside when I looked down and saw those stupid, shiny white shoes in the faint light from the dashboard. I reached down, loosened the straps and...
pulled the shoes from my feet.

I put the shoes on my lap and when we came to the steepest part of the hill, I flung them as far as I could into the dark jungle night. I watched them arc and fall to be swallowed by the darkness below. I looked to see if father had seen, but he was hunched over the wheel, too occupied by his own anger. I knew I would get another beating, but I didn’t care.

Later that night, my parents took me to the doctor for a pelvic exam to make sure I hadn’t been violated. My father and sister called me “white trash” for over a year. The next time we passed the bottom of the hill, I saw that the shack, the chickens and the people were gone. I was afraid to ask about them.

The missing shoes were paid for with restrictions and beatings, but I didn’t mind. I never liked their tight narrow white feel.

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Rites of Passage

Oh, you think you’re so-o-o-o cool just because your name is Nathaniel Van Wyck Styvansant!” chirped Cathy.

What was this? Cool because of my name? I thought I was cool because I was throwing erasers out the third-floor window of my eighth-grade classroom before the teacher came into the room.

"Whadda ya mean?” I said in my coolest voice. "What’s wrong with my name?”

"Just because you have a fancy big deal name you think you can get away with anything! I’m glad I have a normal name and I’m normal like other people!”

Cathy squawked like an angry parrot.

I was in the twilight of adolescence—a time of discovering the opposite sex, acting tough and exploring what was in a name. I wasn’t aware of my name being any different than my friend John Smith’s. A name was a device used to identify a person and his belongings. I knew quite a few Johns and quite a few Smiths, but I knew only one John Smith. He was unique unto himself because of who he was, not because of his name. I was under the impression that my name was just as common as John Smith’s. Little did I know what lay ahead in the real world with cliques of jealousies, cities of egos, societies of hate and rites of passage.

Cathy was enlightening me.

The town was in a very affluent section of New York. The school held about six hundred students from first grade through the twelfth, and at the time there were only two black students who attended. The rest were white. There wasn’t really anybody to be prejudiced against—one had to rely on culture. It was June and school was soon to be let out for the summer. I guess some of the class could feel the excitement.

"Big shot freak!” Cathy squealed as she went to the other side of the room to join her little clique of select friends.

Cathy was smart, popular and pretty. Her opinion was well respected by most of the class. This taunt was news to me and I was quite overwhelmed, to say the
least. My emotions were mixed: confusion, alienation, anger. My name was very personal to me and to be chastised because of it didn't make sense.

After school I told my friend John about Cathy and her comments. He said she was probably on-the-rag and remarked on various parts of her anatomy. Laughter cut the seriousness. John always made me laugh, and I was glad we were good friends. My laughing stopped first. As his laughter faded, in the excitement, he blurted out that he had overheard his father telling his mother, "Those Styvansants think they are such high-class. They think they are descended from blue-bloods, so I guess they can't be red-blooded Americans. Ha, ha." John's laughter increased, until he saw my stunned expression.

"Hey! It's just a joke. Don't get all uptight. I didn't mean it to sound that way anyway," explained John. "Come on. Let's go watch the girls practice cheerleading."

I wondered what other words of wisdom were waiting to be shot out of the mouths of babes, like bullets from guns. I wished my parents had named me John Smith. Maybe then my blood would be red. I didn't understand what the connection was between by name and what my family was or had been. If I had a common name would I be any different?

At the dinner table that night, I asked my parents why they had named me Nathaniel Van Wyck.

"Your Uncle Don's middle name is Nathaniel and my maiden name is Van Wyck," my mother replied proudly.

My father smiled with approval, and said, "Your full name is a combination of family names that date back to before the American Revolution. Some of your ancestors were British Blue-Bloods. Others were some of the first settlers of this great country of ours. You are a direct descendent of 'Bull' Van Wyck, the man who earned most of Long Island from the Indians by riding a bull for a full day and night. You should be very proud to have such an important name."

Bull was the right word, but I was thinking of a different kind. I told them what Cathy and John had said.

"People like that make me sick," exclaimed my mother. "Those newcomers should be thankful our ancestors fought for this land!"

After a few moments of silence my father spoke, "Nathaniel, you are going to have to learn to live with the fact that some people are always going to be jealous of you. Their egos feel threatened by anyone who seems superior to them. They can't help the way they are. Their ancestors came to America long after yours made it a safe and civilized country to live in."

I excused myself and went to my room. I felt like cutting my wrists to see what color my blood was, but the weather was warm, and I couldn't wear long sleeves. Anyway, Cathy and John would really shoot me down for that. I went to sleep and dreamed about cutting my wrists—the blood had no color.

The next day was Saturday, and there was a baseball game at the school. Our team was playing a team from another school, and there would be cheerleaders to look at, hot dogs to eat, soda to drink and friends to talk to.

It was about a mile to the school grounds, and I had to walk through town to get there. The stores and buildings seemed different. I couldn't tell what it was; the same color, same size, same people in them, same smells coming from inside. Paul's Barber Shop was open, and he was sweeping the dust from the night before out onto the sidewalk.

"Hi ya, Nathaniel. Goin' to the game at the school? If our team wins, I give' um free haircuts. Can't be havin' um lookin' sloppy, can we," he said as he swept.

"No sir," I said as I walked.

As I neared the school, I could see that the game had already started. I was cut off from the game by a long fence, so I decided to take a short cut through the passage between the bus garage and the gym. It was about two-hundred feet long and twisted in the middle so you couldn't see through.

As I neared the middle. I heard muffled voices. I went around the corner, and there was Cathy and two strange boys. Cathy looked relieved to see me, but still she seemed scared.

"What do you want?" one of the boys demanded.

"I'm going to the game. What are you doing?"

"None of your business! Keep goin'!" His voice was shaky, excited. I knew from the expression on Cathy's face that I shouldn't leave her alone with these two. "Come on, Cathy. Let's go to the game," I said. I grabbed her arm and started to walk forward.

One of the boys stepped in front of us and said, "Where do you think you're going?"

Cathy was scared. The two strange boys were the aggressors. This much I knew, but I didn't know what to do next. An instinct from deep inside me took over, and I let it come out. I hit the boy in front of me in the face with all the strength I could find, pushed Cathy ahead and over the boy I had hit, who was now falling backwards, and ran yelling towards the exit, out of the passage and
into the middle of the baseball game.

"What the hell's going on?" one of the coaches exclaimed.

"In the passage by the bus garage! Two guys! Go get them!" I guess I sounded serious, and I guess Cathy still looked scared because there was a mad rush toward the passage. Both teams, coaches, spectators, and even a few dogs that were hanging around joined in the search. Cathy and I sat down on one of the benches. She was crying on my shoulder, and it seemed natural, and I felt normal. Five, ten, twenty minutes—I'm not sure how long it was until everyone returned. They returned with the two strange boys, their heads hung low. They were from the other school and had followed Cathy into the passage. She had also been late for the game. Someone said the two boys had gotten into trouble at their own school for a similar incident. The coaches from the other school took them into custody.

Cathy's parents came and took her home, the game started again, and finished, the crowd dwindled away, and soon the sun started to set, coloring the sky in the west a reddish-orange. Darker and darker the sky became, until all one could see were a few street lights in the distance, flickering with the warmth of the early summer night. The far-off barking of a hungry dog brought me back to reality.

I left the bench and started to walk home. Again the town seemed strange. Stores were open, people were walking and talking, kids on bicycles raced past, cars at the one and only stop light waited for the light to change from red to green, dogs wandered in and out of the darkness. This was all normal, yet somehow it all seemed different.

Monday found me back in my third-floor eighth-grade classroom. It too seemed different, although it looked the same: the early morning sun streaming in the long side-by-side windows opposite the entrance, the teacher's desk in the front corner against the windows, the five rows of brown wooden desks with attached chairs running six deep to the rear of the room, the closed closets in the rear waiting for winter clothes, the five rows of florescent lights running the length of the room over the five rows of desks, the light green walls and ceiling, the green blackboard, the smell of air-conditioning.

The teacher had not yet arrived, and the room was filled with intermingling voices. As soon as Cathy saw me walk in, she came for me.

"Nathan," she said, "please forgive me for what I said last week! You were so brave Saturday! I was so scared! You're a real hero!"

Her friends were all around, smiling and talking to me. "We don't care what the others think. You're one of us now," someone said.

Cathy went to the blackboard, took an eraser and walked over to the window. She looked at me, and still smiling threw the eraser out the third-floor window.
Petty Larceny

I wish I had a penny
For every dime I made.
I wish I had a picture
of every guy I laid.
I should have a quarter for every meal
I ordered and changed my mind,
Or a buck for every hand I shook.
I wish I had a dime . . .

I wish I had a penny
For every time I turned away
When love would come too near.
I wish I had a nickel for every dime . . .
S. C. T. Matsuda

I Have Loved Your Wife

I have loved
your wife
in your house
in your bed

All the while
you were probably
hard
at work

Forgive me,
because she is such a Beauty
I became
such a Beast

Fictional parody of the poem *This is Just to Say* by William Carlos Williams

Georgette Magnuson

I Enjoyed The Lies

I enjoyed
the lies
you told me
as we sat

on the beach
watching the ships
like dots
on the horizon

It's a research vessel
you'd say and I
would marvel
at your eyesight.
Carlton T. Saito

Morgan’s Corner

Tommy turned his shiny black Camaro onto Old Pali Road, which wound through lush Nuuanu Valley. The dense tree canopy overhead obscured the light of the full moon, cloaking the winding road in murkiness. The recent rains and decaying vegetation on the valley floor had created a dank, musty smell and muddied the ground.

Tommy parked his car at a bend in the isolated road and turned to face his girlfriend Laura. Tommy smiled as she slid over into his embrace. Laura’s giggles turned into low moans as Tommy nibbled her earlobes, neck and lips. Tommy pushed Laura’s skirt upwards and began to softly stroke her baby-smooth thigh, his fingertips probing higher and higher.

“Tommy! Stop that!” Laura scolded as she slapped his adventurous hand. “I told you that I’m not ready for that.

“Laura, I’m sorry but I just couldn’t control myself,” Tommy said. “I am going to miss you so much when I leave tomorrow for college on the Mainland.” He reached over Laura, opened the glove compartment, took out a velvet box and popped it open to reveal a gold ring with a tiny diamond.

“I saved my earnings from working at Fred’s Market all summer and bought this promise ring for you, Laura,” Tommy said. “Will you...uh, uh...will you wait for me?”

“Oh, Tommy! Yes! Yes! Yes!” Laura exclaimed as she threw herself into Tommy’s arms and smothered him with kisses. Her momentum knocked Tommy’s arm into the steering wheel, causing the horn to blare momentarily. Tommy and Laura, overwhelmed by their passion, ignored the noise and continued their love-making.

But the horn blast jolted Morgan awake from his dormancy on his tree branch perch above Tommy and Laura. The raw emotion of the teenagers’ youthful love-making fed Morgan’s insane jealousy. His deep-seated envy and hatred inflamed Morgan’s anger to uncontrollable proportions.
"Well, I can stop them!" Morgan raged. "I've done it before!"
As he thought back, Morgan cursed the day, so very long ago, that his wretched existence began.

"An accident," they said. Bull! The school principal and the teacher never should have allowed that stupid kid who sat next to me in science class to handle acids. He splashed acid on my face and made me into a freak. A damn monstrosity! My face was so hideously scarred that no one would look at me. Strangers on the street avoided me. So-called friends deserted me. Girls wouldn't talk to me, much less date me. They cringed when they saw me. Girls even panicked when I came around, like cockroaches scurrying for cover when the light is turned on. But the boys...those smug guys. I hated them most of all! Parading around with their good looks and girls on their arms, laughing at me behind my back. Well, they didn't laugh for long. I fixed them good!" Morgan recalled perversely.

But during his fourth venture, a passerby chanced upon Morgan gloating over his fourth victim's corpse. Morgan fled down the street, and the passerby ran to the police officer on the corner and gave him a description of Morgan.

"Help! Officer!" the man screamed at the beat cop. "I saw him! I saw the Back Alley Butcher! He was right over there murdering another poor boy! He ran up the street!"

"Calm down, Mister," the cop said. "Give me a description of him."

"He's about five-feet-nine-inches tall with dark brown hair. But his face. Ugh!," the man said with a shudder. "I can't forget his face. It was a horrible, scarred mess, like the face of the Phantom of the Opera. And he's wearing a white T-shirt splattered with blood. You can't miss him."

"Okay, I'll go and chase him," the officer yelled as he started running up the street. "Call the police right away!"

The Honolulu Police Department organized an intensive man-hunt. Police officers and civilians searched each alley, bar and hiding place, chasing Morgan deep into Nuuanu Valley. Once the police realized that Morgan had fled into Nuuanu Valley, they called for help from Old Man Lee and his pig-hunting pack. Morgan swore as the memories came back to torture him. Dogs! His pursuers had used dogs to track him, pushing him further up that lonely road. The snarling hounds, barking at his feet and legs, had cornered him next to a tree at a bend in the road. The dogs forced Morgan to grab one of sturdy hanging vines and climb the tree. He was then treed like a cat as the frenzied dogs below barked and yelped, calling for their human partners.

The police formed a cordon around the tree and called for him to surrender, but Morgan vowed never to be taken alive. He wanted to resolve things his way. Fully aware of the guns arrayed against him far below, he formed a noose from the strong vines that encircled the thick tree branch on which he perched, slipped the noose around his neck, laughed at his captors below and jumped.

As the vine snapped taut, Morgan heard a sharp crack and felt waves of intense pain and searing heat explode through his brain. Then his consciousness tunneled into an abyss, and everything went black.

When Morgan revived, he was puzzled to find himself back on the tree branch. He was even more mystified when he looked down and saw his body hanging below, as the police scrambled to cut it down.

"Noooo!" Morgan screamed as his mind struggled to understand the shocking finality of his fate. Morgan's monstrous misdeeds had so warped his soul that his depraved spirit was doomed to remain confined in that tree for all eternity.

Morgan had become a part of the ancient tree that imprisoned him. In time, as the memories came back to torture him. Dogs! His pursuers had used dogs to track him, pushing him further up that lonely road. The snarling hounds, barking at his feet and legs, had cornered him next to a tree at a bend in the road. The dogs forced Morgan to grab one of sturdy hanging vines and climb the tree. He was then treed like a cat as the frenzied dogs below barked and yelped, calling for their human partners.

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Morgan had become a part of the ancient tree that imprisoned him. In time, he learned to focus his mental energy and telekinetically control the tree and the vines entwining it. At first, Morgan could only rustle the leaves. With practice, he was able to make the vines and all parts of the tree obey his will. However, Morgan lost control of the tree during the day as the sunlight infused life into the tree.

"That was so long ago," Morgan's ghost thought as he snapped back to the present. Now the young, unsuspecting couple below gave Morgan another
opportunity to vent his hellish wrath. He directed the branches of the tree that he inhabited to scratch the car roof. The sudden noise startled and annoyed Tommy.

"Stay in the car," Tommy cautioned Laura. "I'm going outside to see who or what's scratching my Camaro. Dad will kill me if I damage this car. Keep the doors locked."

Tommy opened the car door and stepped out. He trudged hesitantly in the mud and struggled to peer into the darkness. As Tommy rounded the rear fender, Morgan commanded a tree bough to whack Tommy on the side of the skull. Tommy slumped with a soft groan.

Morgan then willed the vines to bind his hapless prey and hang him upside down from a branch above the car. As the unconscious youth swayed in the night breeze, his dangling fingernails scratched the bright finish of the Camaro's roof.

The jarring sound sent shudders down Laura's spine as she huddled in the dark. She was afraid to leave the car's safety and refused to leave her boyfriend stranded in that desolate, forsaken spot. Hoping for Tommy's return despite her increasing concern, Laura scrunched down in the seat, alone with her fears and worries.

The faint glow to the east heralded the approach of dawn, when Morgan would lose his powers. His control of the tree waning, Morgan ordered a jagged, broken branch to plunge through Tommy's throat, severing the carotid artery and cervical vertebrae. Morgan stared in wicked glee as Tommy's blood gurgled from the gaping wound and poured onto the car below. Appalled by the gore cascading down the windshield, Laura collapsed into a dead faint.

Morning light brought the police on routine patrol through that wooded area. When he surveyed the ghastly scene before him, Officer Lou Silva spilled his coffee and almost choked on his wad of chewing gum as he fumbled for the radio transmitter.

"Jeez, Sarge!" Silva screamed into the radio microphone. "You ain't going to believe this. Send me everything you got! Back-up, medics, meat wagon, everybody!"

With revolver drawn, Silva then tip-toed up to Tommy's Camaro, while scanning from side to side for any possible danger. When he saw Tommy's drained corpse, Silva turned and vomited his breakfast.

Straightening up, Silva recomposed himself, peered into the car's window and spotted Laura. He knocked on the window to wake Laura, who was startled but very relieved to see him.

"Miss, please step out of the car and come with me," Silva spoke softly and slowly.

"That's good, Miss," he continued to coax the trembling Laura along. "Just keep walking with me. And, whatever you do, don't look back."

But Laura was unable to stifle her very human compulsion to see for herself what had happened to Tommy. She turned and saw Morgan's grotesque handiwork. Tommy's body still dangled upside down above the blood-caked Camaro, his face contorted in petrified agony.

"Noooooooo!" Laura's horrified scream echoed through the valley as she pouted her fists on Silva's chest. Silva tried to comfort her as she sobbed uncontrollably. Above them, Morgan's specter smirked as other police cars and ambulances, sirens blaring, converged on the scene.

"This will be headline news," Morgan thought. "But memories fade and people forget. Other young couples will come here. And I will be waiting."
The Pali

I approach the precipice,
My eyes absorb the splendor.
La'amoa whispers in my ear
The secrets of this hallowed ground.

Niu Isle bobs gently in the tide
Of the Inlet of the Bamboo Man.
In the distance juts Mokoli'i—remnant
Of the fearsome mo'o slain by loyal Hi'iaka.

I stand between stone monuments that reach
To pregnant clouds in a somber sky.
Their sides are cloaked in olive,
Fluted by the tears of eons gone by.

Life-giving moisture drips down
between the bare basaltic boulders
Of mountains that stand in formation like troops
Lichen, like epaulets, on their proud shoulders.

Pine trees around me stand as silent sentinels
Over the shades of warriors fallen
In epic battles of centuries past.
Their deeds remembered but names forgotten.

I rouse at last from my reverie and turn
Reluctantly away from my reflections.
I travel the worn path to the distant city,
Back to its noise, lights and commotions.
The Trail

I scamper up the trail
Over rocks and tree roots.
But then the trail steepens
As it follows the ridgeline.

I haul my unprepared body,
Huffing and wheezing,
Up the ever-steepening hill,
Step by determined step.

I finally pause beneath a stand
Of towering eucalyptus trees.
Their leaves make the ground
Barren of any undergrowth.

I gaze at the tableau
Below me.
This is my reward
For the journey that I have made.

La'amo, goddess of the wind, whispers
Her secrets in my ear
And runs her fingers
Through my tousled hair.

Lilinoe, goddess of mist, then caresses
Me in her loving arms;
And her tears
Moisten my cheeks.

But it is time to go.
I reluctantly turn to leave,
A pair of mourning doves
Skitters ahead in escort.
Different Years

Spring,
your colors
bemuse my eyes
Like a kaleidoscope
in a child's hands,
always different:
A hue here,
A shade there.
Yellow blending with green;
Red's metamorphosis to blue,
And the ever present pink,
Softened with intermittent white,
Or sharpened by early morning dew.

Summer,
your sounds
delight my ears
Like a symphony
Played Al Fresco,
Somewhat distant.
A sharp here,
A flat there.
Cattle are your baritones,
Thrushes your soprano harmony,
Thunder is your percussion;
Wolves the tenors and altos:
All conducted by the wind.

Autumn,
your colors
Burn my eyes
Like copper ablaze
In a primeval dance,
Forever wild.
Green gone to orange,
Gold accenting red.
The way, perhaps, you remember spring
With your fiery dance
And your subtle announcement,
With your silvery frost
That winter now slides in.

Winter,
your silence
Muffs my ears,
Like a mute on a trumpet
That saddens the song
Of once melodious streams
Where geese and frogs
No longer orchestrate
Evening refrains.
You still the Autumn dances
With your whitened breath,
As if by a magic
That spreads a cold hush.
It comes
Kicking and shouting:
Warm air gets sucked into the cold,
Ominous dark clouds tumble down the sky—
Swirling
Like smoke from an oil fire
At the mercy of the wind—
And are swept across a deserted plain,
Leaving humanity soaked in its wake.
It comes
Hissing fire,
Mythological dragons,
Swooping down on electric wings,
Drumming the air with a weight
That falls to the ground
Like dying echoes
Screaming their last warnings,
As hard wind-driven rain
Drowns approaching night.
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