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# TRIBE

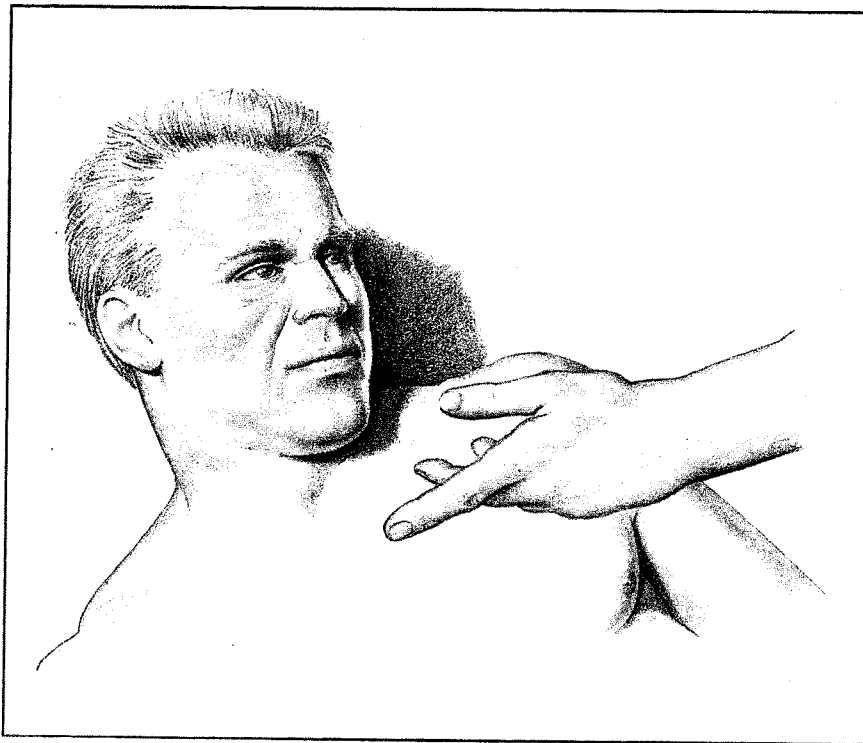
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# Trade

ROBERT J. MORRIS

ON AN EXCELLENT FULL-MOON NIGHT IN MID-JANUARY, the Makahiki season, Michael Palafox, the attorney, lay next to Pekelo Kāne, the dancer, and wondered that the wind blowing in from the sea could feel so cold while the moonlight dazzled so brightly on the white sand beneath them. Michael wished for another blanket, their rich Hawaiian quilt from Pekelo's grandmother, but he knew it would only make Pekelo sweat, so he chose the cold. The sea, too, was restless.

"Tell me the story of Lono and Kapa-'ihi," said Pekelo in a ragged voice Michael could barely hear above the wind and sea. Though it was cold, no rain threatened, and because Pekelo was self-conscious, they preferred to sleep on a mat on the sand instead of inside the compound with the others.

Michael knew the great story by heart now, having first heard it from Pekelo five years before. He retold it these days to Pekelo again and again, and he knew that Pekelo's request to hear it meant not only a demand for its catechism but also a special need for comfort. So he began.

"Then it came to pass that the great king of Hawaii, Lono-i-ka-Makahiki, after his victory over the armies of Maui, desired to sail to Kaua'i to see the rootless koa tree of Kahihikolo. So he sailed from Kona with all his warriors, servants, favorites, and companions, and his wife and all her train. And there were so many of them that their canoes covered the surface of the sea so that you could not see the water. And they sailed through the 'Ale-nui-hāhā and Ka-iwi channels, past all the other islands, in great splendor . . ."

". . . But as he reached Kaua'i," said Pekelo hoarsely, "Lono happened to look back and saw . . ."

". . . Not a man of the retinue that had left Kona with him was still there," continued Michael. "All deserted him."

Pekelo struggled to turn on his side. Michael helped him and then lay behind him, spooning fashion, Michael the *kōkua*, helper, to support the disintegrating body. High on the steep cliff behind where they lay Michael saw the blinking lights of the electrified fence against the background of stars. He felt Pekelo doze, twitch, and doze again, so he stopped the telling and let his mind drift again to Waimea Bay and their meeting five years ago on the day his excommunication from his church became final.

At the surfline, the great winter waves of Waimea rolled in to chase the bodysurfers and scoop away more of the beach's summer sand. As each

fresh set arose at sea and began its inexorable roll inward, the surfers whooped and hollered to cheer it on. Michael, his entire body and brown trunks covered with sand, glanced down at them, past the white egrets picking litter on the sand, and decided to join them. He left his Bible on the sand open at the fourth chapter of Ephesians and walked down to the water's edge.

But he was not adept at this water, and the next moment there came such a hooting that the onlookers stood bolt upright to witness the greatest wall of moving green-glass water they had ever seen. They saw the riptide sheer in to snatch two swimmers and sweep them down the retreating water to the open sea. One of them was Michael.

A moment later they saw a young local man, a surfer but this day a spectator in yellow trunks, race down the watery, backward-running sand. Then, as the next wave came in about to crash, he dived forward, slapping his straight belly and thorax down on the souplike sand and water in a forward driving flop as he sandsurfed face down under the new rising wave into the sea as the wave broke apart on top of his disappearing form. When his head pierced the surface he was well out beyond the breaking surf in the dragonback winterwater.

In three strokes, he took both swimmers in tow. There would be pictures of the rescue in the newspapers, an amateur videotape on the evening news, and the mayor would want to give him an award for heroism (this being an election year), but those yellow trunks disappeared hastily off the beach behind the veil of confusion, and no one even got his name.

But Michael got his image. Michael was unhurt except for fear and exhaustion, and his heart burned within him. Paramedics looked him over, asked if he wanted to go to the hospital, and left when Michael said no.

Feeling humiliated, he went to the great housesize Rock at the opposite end of the beach where its black lava bulk straddled both sand and breaking surf like a humpback whale. He climbed thirty feet to its pinnacle and the volcanic platforms and ledges from which, in summer, he and other jumpers lunged into the placid green water all day long. Now, however, it was utterly deserted in the winter spindrift and raging surf.

*I have seen the face of God and lived.* Michael scanned the beach for the yellow trunks, but they were nowhere to be seen. Then he heard bare feet slap the wet rocks of the plateau behind him on his perch, and he turned to see the yellow trunks, his rescuer, approaching.

"Howzit?" he asked Michael and sat down crosslegged.

Michael swallowed through a dry, salty throat. "Okay," he said. "I'm Michael. Thanks."

"Tanks, eh," the other said. "I'm Pekelo."

"Pekelo what?"

"Pekelo Kāne."

"You come here often, Pekelo?"

"Alla time, brah. I like feel da vibes."

"The vibes?"

"Da vibes inside of dis place." The rescuer reached out his left index finger and touched the mustache on Michael's lip.

"The vibes of my face?" Michael asked.

"No, man. Chee, I talking to you, and you don't even know what I talking about, you stupid." But Pekelo ran the tip of his forefinger lightly over Michael's hand.

"I just saw you run into a high sea to save two strangers," Michael said. "Looks like you're the stupid one." But he did not move his hand.

Pekelo jerked his head in taunt. "Nevah get too many *haole* boys like you come up topside of dis Rock. How come you?"

"You might say I'm a fisher of men," Michael answered. He found Pekelo, the color of monkeypod, impudent, the tradewinds and the sunshine in his hair making it a tawny lion's shag. Pekelo, like Jacob, was a smooth man. Michael, like Esau, was a hairy man.

As they talked, Pekelo told of his great-great-grandfather Pita, and Momona, his special friend, who were lepers at Kalaupapa during Father Damien's time. "Sometimes," he said, "he comes to me in my sleep. My grandmother was there, too, where she made Hawaiian quilts."

Michael told how his grandmother made burial robes for the dead. Death's clothier, he called her.

Pekelo said his ancestors had been fishermen at Kamuela, then called Waimea, on the Big Island. Michael's ancestors had been polygamists in Es Elsea, Utah, then called Deseret, on the mainland.

"I wish I could surf," said Michael.

"I like teach you, brah," answered Pekelo. "Meantime, you like get high, or what?"

On this Friday during Makahiki the sweet-sour smells of North Shore corn and sugarcane silage stole into their nostrils, and Michael watched the windsurfers skitter atop the water in the blinding reflection of the sunlight.

"Teach me to surf first." And so he did, as Michael studied Pekelo's lemon-yellow board slapping the green water clean under him, while the water sheeting on his skin turned it to caramel glass under the sun, luminescent as if Michelangelo's chisel had sculpted his loins and sinews, his chiaroscuro on his face.

Michael gulped much seawater and murkiness at first, but by the time that winter next turned to summer and the swells flattened out, Michael had developed a surfer's body himself.

When there was no more winter water they waded in the tidal pond at Pūpūkea or jumped off the Rock with the summer vacation crowds and kids out of school, or they lay belly down on rock ledges and stared at their reflections in the flat sunset water on rocks carved with petroglyphs. Those carvers of petroglyphs, they knew the beauty of men—the clean simple angles, the triangular shoulders, the abdomen.

Some time in the spring Pekelo came to live with Michael on Tantalus, high above Honolulu, where their fireplace often burned bright against the upland cold and rain. And they made love to Olomana singing "Come to Me Gently" and "Pili Aloha."

But now Michael felt Pekelo sweating so badly that Michael, too, was wet where he had pressed himself, spoonlike, against Pekelo. "Let's change your clothes before the wind chills you," Michael said. As he pulled off Pekelo's wet clothes he noticed that the bandage on Pekelo's neck had come off and the lesion was running milky fluid again. It was hard to stay clean on the sand, even harder to change the dressings.

"Go on with Lono and Kapa-'ihi," said Pekelo.

"If you will let me swab inside your wound at the same time," Michael bargained. Pekelo agreed by waving his hand angrily, and so Michael continued the story as he worked.

"And it came to pass that as Lono trekked across the wastes of Kaua'i without a guide, he noticed a single local man, a native, following him at a distance, saying nothing . . ."

" . . . But keeping the exact same distance between them whether Lono walked fast or slow . . ."

" . . . Until at length," continued Michael, "Lono finally turned to him and said, 'Who are you, and why are you following me?' To which the stranger answered . . ."

" . . . '*Kapa'ihiahilina ka inoa*' . . ."

" . . . 'I am Kapa-'ihi-a-Hilina, and I followed you because I heard from your people who were on their way back that they had deserted you, and I, pitying you . . .'"

" . . . *Aloha iā 'oe* . . ."

" . . . 'And I, loving you, followed you.' . . ."

" . . . *Ukali mai nei*."

With cotton swabs and green antiseptic, Michael cleaned out the knot of nocardia deep in Pekelo's left neck and expressed as much of the primitive infection as Pekelo would let him before clenching his fists in pain.

Thinking his wound was small, Pekelo said with anger, "How come one small cut goin' take you so long and so much pain for clean out? Before, brah, I went clean 'em every day in five minutes myself in da mirror."

"Because the last surgery opened it wider to drain," said Michael wearily. "You can't do it yourself anymore because you can't see deep enough inside. It's bigger."

The wind blew sand on them as with the tip of his forefinger Michael gently touched the purple blotches on Pekelo's face and lips. *Makani nahu i ka 'ili*. The wind that bruises the skin.

"You fussing too much. I no like dis Good Samaritan routine and bullshit from you."

"I don't like your bullshit, either," said Michael. "I guess it's time you saw something." From his beach bag he removed a round shaving mirror and a flashlight. "Turn your head to the right," he told Pekelo. He aimed the light onto Pekelo's open cut, which, like a large lobster-white "L"—the same size of the "L" you make with your thumb and forefinger—came down his neck from the base of his left ear and then forward under his jaw nearly to his chin. "Look," Michael said.

Pekelo saw the gash in the mirror, then turned his face away and began to sob. "Oh God, Oh God, God, God! How you could let them do this to me!" he yelled at Michael.

"I *made* them do it to you," said Michael softly. "I couldn't stand to watch that thing grow anymore. Do you understand? I couldn't stand it." Michael held Pekelo's head in his lap.

For the next hour Pekelo's sobs pushed waves of the white fluid out of the wound. Then Michael stood up and went off to a crag in the rocks to weep, to rage at the sea. When he returned, his coming woke Pekelo from a sweaty sleep.

"Sorry I got mad," Michael said.

"What for?" asked Pekelo, not remembering what had happened.

"Kimo he went take da current tonight. I went see him."

"You saw him tonight?"

"Think so. While you was dreaming a while ago. He went walk out to da las' rock and jus' slide in."

"*Leina a ka 'uhane*," whispered Michael, the pit where the souls of the dead jump to the netherworld. It was this Ka'ena Point, this red-hot, raging, angry point where the north and south lines of O'ahu met and thrust into the sea like an adze blade, the green pleated coastlines falling back in either direction for miles, that was the last wilderness in modern Hawaii. Guarded as it was by the sentry point two or three miles back at Camp Erdman on the north edge, and at the naval sentry point two or three miles to the south, and the high cliff and plateau above and behind them, called the Back of the Sun, it was the perfect endpoint.

Nothing about the land had changed since they first came here in November at the beginning of Makahiki five years ago as sightseers, coated for the first time with the dust of these ancient trails. The sisal hemp, like asparagus twenty feet tall, grew in the brush along the cliff sides with the scrub koa. Here and there remained pieces of narrow-gauge track and culverts from the railroad that carried sugar cane between the North Shore and Honolulu a century ago. Naupaka shrubs flowered in the sand.

Pekelo had taken care to explain the naupaka to Michael, each of its tiny white flowers a half-blossom, complete only when they held together with another of its kind, like the bilateral symmetry of a man's body, each side answering the other.

But when Michael complained that Ka'ena was only a great deso-

lation, Pekelo said that the land is never ugly; it is the land, the *'āina*, the sacred! And even Ka'ena was beautiful beyond description. For this reason, Pekelo would blame no one else for his being there. He said they were just being made to see its beauty more closely. It was the edge of the world. From here the current flowed out from the *kai*, the shallows near the shore, to *moana*, the great world-sea.

Ka'ena, where the north and south currents converge in an overpowering run of water into the deep blue, was hard to reach. Both north and south accesses were dirt footpaths, and now huge chunks of the south road had been washed out by floods—or made to appear as such. Only four-wheel-drive vehicles could approach from the north, boats could enter only with great caution, and helicopters could touch down only in calm wind.

They had lashed their two souls together like the twin hulls of a canoe, and when it became apparent that Pekelo was sick, he began to catechize Michael regarding all of his knowledge of the ancient things of Hawaii.

At first Pekelo continued to wear a hibiscus flower in his hair, but they could find no hibiscus when they came to Ka'ena. Pekelo gave Michael to understand that who they were, and what they had between them, that cleaving to each other as they did, was a gift, a terrifying special gift, *makana kā ho'i*, and he taught Michael how to verbalize these thoughts in Hawaiian. He taught him the legends and stories of the love between men in the old days, when the title or office of a chief's lover was called *aikāne*.

For a year before this one they had left each other but found out that each was still in the other's heart nevertheless, and so even as Pekelo grew sicker, they again lived and slept together, *noho pū iho la lāua me ke kapu loa*, in greatest sacredness, whether at home on Tantalus or under the searching beams of the Ka'ena Point lighthouse, where the sea's great peristalsis lapped the Point.

When Michael began to practice Hawaiian rights law, Pekelo taught him the Hawaiian language he needed to introduce original documents into evidence, to cross-examine—and impeach—expert witnesses on the meanings of original land grants and constitutions.

“But there is no salvation in the law,” Michael reminded him. “We asked for the right to be left alone—and got it. Remember Moloka'i?” Kalaupapa and Kalawao—the internment centers for lepers on Moloka'i in the 1800s for being sick. Honouliuli, Topaz Mountain, and Manzanar—the internment centers for Japanese-Americans during World War II for being Japanese. The legal precedent was abundant.

In 1907, the United States Supreme Court granted a writ of certiorari to Mikala Kaipu to test the constitutionality of her internment, but her death mooted the case before it could be argued, and the appeal was dismissed. Like a tidal wave, internment was always a possibility.

In 1986, the United States Supreme Court, deciding *Bowers v. Hardwick*, over a strong dissent by Justice Blackmun, held that since there is no constitutionally guaranteed right to commit sodomy, the state police have the right to come into your bedroom and arrest you. In 1995, after public hearings, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta adopted model administrative rules requiring absolute quarantine for all persons infected with the AIDS-causing virus. In 1997, the United States Supreme Court held in *Seldon v. Grace* that the due process and equal protection clauses of the federal constitution did not prevent the states from exercising their police power to quarantine if the rational basis for doing so was to protect the public health by segregating the sick.

Pursuant to that ruling, the Hawaii State Legislature, adopting verbatim a portion of the new *Model Penal Code* (1998), as well as the CDC model rules, enacted an amendment to the Hawaii Penal Code, *Hawaii Revised Statutes* (HRS) Section 707-710.5, making it an assault in the first degree to, and removing the element of specific intent from, the class B felony of knowingly communicating the infection to another person by any means, thus making prosecution easier. The relevant *Hawaii Rules of Civil Procedure* and *Hawaii Rules of Criminal Procedure* were amended accordingly. Chapter 325 was amended to make the status of infection with HIV-III alone a *per se* basis for quarantine and to remove all confidentiality safeguards, including the protection of habeas corpus, subpoena, and discovery.

In a companion bill, the State ceded Ka'ena Point to the United States for a federal enclave as the most equitable spot since no resident population would have to be displaced. By amendment to Titles 10 and 42 of the *United States Code* (USC) the following year, Congress included Ka'ena Point in the new Ma'i Ho'o-ka'a-wale ("Separation Sickness") Federal Military Reservation to be administered jointly by the United States Army and the Public Health Service. The amended provisions of 10 USC Section 1484 provided mandatory cremation for persons who died of AIDS-II.

Michael, who was not sick, volunteered to come with Pekelo as his helper, as permitted by law. They had not left Ka'ena since. Many asked him why he came. He spoke for many of the other *kōkuas* when he said, "So many times in life, you fuck up. And then you get a chance to do something right. You do it because you're afraid not to."

HRS Section 325-101 was amended to provide a rebuttable presumption that any *kōkua* who dwelt with a sick person also had sex with that person and should be treated as if he were sick also and, therefore, once inside Ka'ena, not be allowed to leave the reservation.

When they were registered and marked, Pekelo signed in as Pekelo Kāne IV. "Three generations before you were the same name?" asked Michael.

"Not," said Pekelo. He explained that when he came out to his



family and they disowned him, he moved to the North Shore. He took over the unexpired lease of a friend, who had done the same thing with a friend before him. The original tenant four transfers back had actually been Pekelo Kāne. "So I'm da fourth," Pekelo said. "New name, new life."

"Don't you want to tell me your real name?" Michael asked.

"Pekelo Kāne IV," he answered.

They gave each other gold heirloom rings with their names enamelled in black, and so Michael ceased to wear the ring of the marriage to his former wife.

More than anything, Michael had loved to watch Pekelo dance, and over time he dressed him before each performance. The *hula hālau* to which Pekelo belonged had thirty students, all young men, nearly perfectly matched in physique and talent, led by a master who allowed them to speak nothing but Hawaiian during their training.

Michael dressed Pekelo in the ochre-and-red *malo* or loincloth, the *lei niho palaoa* necklace of braided hair and carved whale tooth hanging against his breast, the boar tusk bracelets on his wrists, and rattling buskins on his ankles. And the young men danced ancient *kahiko* war dances to the chanting of their master.

Then Michael dressed him again in black trousers and ruffled white shirt, and they danced the melodious and graceful *'auana* of King Kalākaua's day to guitars and ukuleles. And many of these young men who danced together also were *aikāne*, and Michael and Pekelo numbered them as their friends.

In the passing of time, Pekelo and Michael cleaved more and more to each other when Pekelo became too sick to dance. Michael watched Pekelo's desperation to train harder, even paid for karate lessons, to rebuild his waning body, denying all that was happening to him. He watched as the lump of nocardia appeared on his neck and his appetite left him because swallowing was too painful and the fever too high. It was to go up to 103 and remain there. The last thing they did together on the outside was go to Castle Park and ride the speedway cars with the kids. Then Pekelo was too tired to ride the boats.

Michael prayed for him:

Lord, Pekelo is the ocean, and he has possessed me so astonishingly, this sea in which there is never rest, in which lies the beauty to break a man's heart when it gets inside of him;

This sea apart from the land, like this disease of his, like the way of a wave as it looms up out of its own water and builds itself up into a wall, like the kind Moses must have made with his staff, Lord, and then gathers strength and darkness coming in along the setting sun's winter wake until it turns the color of black obsidian under the cresting white foam of its release and destruction;

Lord, hot is the love that comes! *'Ena'ena ke aloha ke biki mai!*

And Lord, we will praise you for we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and our substance was not hidden from you, when we were made in secret and curiously wrought, and your eyes did see our substance, yet being unperfect; and in your book all our numbers are written;

In the mystery of all this such a flood of magic fills me today that I want to shout it from the housetops. We commune with each other and I taste his flesh and his blood, and I feel his whiskers and the nape of his neck and his spirit, and the blood in me pounds so hard I can feel each of my ribs as the floods of autumn cover us, and I am glad I am not as other men;

In the silence afterwards, Lord, I tremble. Can I show myself to him again in the daylight? I feel afraid, dear God, for what thou hast made me and what thou hast made for me, this surfer;

Oh, how can such things be?

Grant him safe passage.

"You mumbling again, brah," Pekelo whispered. By Michael's watch it was 3 AM. He felt Pekelo and knew that his fever was up again. Pekelo was becoming Pele, full of fire and heat from the inside out to his very extremities. The stench of the volcano was upon him too, and its excrescences upon his skin. "I need to walk over to the infirmary for aspirin and codeine for you," Michael said.

"Try wait," said Pekelo, holding Michael's arm with a burning hand. "First, I like hear about da long march through the mountains of Kaua'i."

Michael made himself sit on his haunches and continue: "And it came to pass that they two, Lono and Kapa-'ihi-a-Hilina (the Sacred Mantle of Hilina), wandered through the mountains of Kaua'i in search of the rootless tree of Kahihikolo—the war club, the law of his ancestors—pinched by hunger, thirst, and cold, nearly naked, the one behind the other in the forests and on the cliffs of Hanalei, above them the roots dangling in their faces, beneath them the boggy mud under their feet—two beautiful young men . . ."

". . . And always locked in the bosom of Lono," continued Pekelo through his fever, "was the thought . . ."

". . . Of how he should some day reward Kapa-'ihi . . ."

". . . And it came to pass that Lono took Kapa-'ihi back to Kona with him, and there was nothing he did not give him, and no one was greater in his eyes . . ."

". . . And where the one slept the other slept, and where the one dwelt the other dwelt, and they were *aikāne* . . ."

". . . And Lono made Kapa-'ihi premier over all the Island of Hawaii, and this made the inferior officers jealous, so they accused Kapa-'ihi of illicit relations with Lono's wife and persuaded Lono to close the doors of his house and post sentries against Kapa-'ihi, which he did . . ."

". . . But Lono did not close the doors altogether, and Kapa-'ihi stood outside the fence and chanted his lamentation, reminding Lono of their perils and their love together on Kaua'i . . ."

". . . *He lau kapa'ahu nehe e Lono . . .*"

“ . . . Lono is like soft mats without number . . . ”

“ . . . *He hoa, he ka'upu e Lono, he kanaka . . .* ”

“ . . . A friend, a lustful lover is Lono, a man . . . ”

“ . . . And as a token of their love, he made a heap of rocks as the place for their offerings and prayers . . . ”

“ . . . So the story goes, and now it is free . . . ”

“ . . . *Ola, ola, kalana ola . . .* ”

“ . . . Life, life, buoyant life . . . Come on, kiddo, let's go use the bathroom and wash you off before I make the codeine run. ”

Michael hoisted Pekelo to his feet, pulled one of his arms around his shoulders, and for ten minutes walked him twenty feet down to the boulders at the water's edge. There was a bowl-like rock that Pekelo could use to relieve himself. Pekelo was misshapen now, the long bones seeming to grow within him as his flesh shrank, pressing his feet and legs and arms with odd curves that Michelangelo never would have drawn.

Michael took him into knee-deep water, sat him down again in water up to his breast, helped him to anchor his feet on the rocks underneath the botton sand, and then washed him with the living water of Kāne. Because he knew the cool water felt good on Pekelo's skin, he flung it into the wind to make spindrift. But Pekelo could not relieve himself because of the painful constipation.

“ Just sit in this little pond until I come back, ” he told Pekelo, “ and let the water lower your temperature and make you feel better. ”

“ Cannot, brah, ” Pekelo said, reaching for him. “ My head stay spinning round and round. ” He began to slump.

So Michael walked him the twenty feet back to their camp and Pekelo said, “ So easy for you, ” and tears rolled from his eyes. “ Tanks, eh, for being my *kōkua*. ”

Pekelo took both of Michael's hands and touched the heirloom rings on both of Michael's ring fingers. Pekelo could no longer wear his ring for his finger was too thin, so Michael wore it for him on his right hand.

“ Thanks for being my *aikāne*, ” Michael answered. It amazed him how much your own body could hurt, and how much his love for this man could hurt.

“ You all I get, brah. You need to sleep. ”

“ You saved my life twice, ” said Michael. “ What's a night's sleep to that? I'll go get the codeine. ”

Pekelo restrained him feebly. “ Da hardes' part is saying goodbye to you. I no more strength for say goodbye to you. ”

“ I'll be right back. Hold that thought. ” So Michael went off to get the medicine, and also to trudge up the hill to cry again and pound his fists against the earth.

He thought of all the things he had lost—his wife and children, his

faith, his past. What if, he wondered, what if, finding yourself, you lose your way? And he thought of all the things that he had found.

He recalled the words of Saint Paul to the Ephesians, about growing up into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, by speaking the truth in love. That was it, the truth in love. Time to grow up.

Pekelo was dreaming of children playing far from Ka'ena, seeing the little lighthouse afar only as a shimmering white toothpick, when he heard footfalls crunching the sand. He was muttering "Red Rover, Red Rover" when Michael appeared with the medicine. Michael gave it to him with water, and Pekelo noticed the new shape of the pills. Michael said, "I ate the cookies you didn't finish this morning, so I brought some more. You need the calories."

"Not hungry jus' yet." Pekelo looked at the drug requisition receipt. "Brah, you did it again. Should be January 18, 1999, not 1998."

"You remind me earlier next year," said Michael.

"Lono was a good man?" interrupted Pekelo, urgency moving his voice.

"He was an average man," answered Michael. "In the beginning, he was often abusive of his wife and people, and he loved war."

"But he changed?"

"Yes, Kapa-'ihi brought Lono to his best self," said Michael.

"Lono and Kapa-'ihi, dey went live happily ever after?"

"We both know the story by heart."

"I goin' count on it," said Pekelo. "Tell it, brah."

"Kapa-'ihi remained premier of Hawaii until his death, and Lono reigned in peace until the time of his death."

"And the slanderers?"

"Instead of executing them, Lono placed them in the front battle-lines of his army so that they would die in war, and thus they perished. It was their law. Let me dress your neck; it's oozing again from swallowing the water."

He packed the abcess on Pekelo's neck with gauze. There were no rubber gloves to use. "When I get better, you like go wid me to Castle Park again?"

"Sure, and surfing and hang gliding, too." Truly, there is much which lieth in futurity.

Pekelo waited for Michael to finish the dressing. Then he said to him: "Before, brah, I give you life, at Waimea . . . you said so."

At this, Michael flinched. He knew these words, for he had heard them in prophecy, in the chants about *ka make loa*, the Great Death, *make*—death, desire, and love—and Pekelo had now actually spoken them. Michael knew what was coming, but he also knew the answer he would give. "At least twice. And in many ways, more, I owe you my life."

"Den I need your *kōkua* for help me die."

There it was. Michael had come to his peace on this decision long ago. "I will," he said, "if you want it."

"I like take da current tonight."

"Doesn't it seem that when one is to leap into the Night, one should leap from the Day? Sleep till the sun comes up."

Pekelo's anger flashed. "Brah, you always trying to control my life. *Mai ka pō mai*. From night to night." But the codeine made him sleepier than usual, and Michael could not be sure any more whether Pekelo could help the flashes of anger. Michael spooned him. Lord, how the rules change, he whispered.

Pekelo said, "Brah, save yourself before you cannot."

"I will," Michael said. He reached his lips around the side of Pekelo's head to kiss him, and Pekelo whispered, "*Mai pōima 'oe ia'u*." Don't forget me.

For the rest of the night, Michael kept his vigil and reviewed his life's two prayers—the one, that God would send him Someone to Love, to let him be a part of Some Great Love; the other, that God would come with healing in his wings to rescue this very Love from death. He prayed as if he were Pekelo, and as if he were in turn Hezekiah, for God to lengthen out his life and turn back the sun by ten degrees as a sign, for the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee. Yet the second prayer did not come to pass.

Pekelo died in the night. His last breath spoke the name "Kapa." The *kōkua* had wrapped himself around his shivering, feverish *aikāne* like a sacred mantle, knowing he would trade places with Pekelo if he could, and together the two of them had slept for the last time until the daylight. Michael had laid his hands upon Pekelo's head, and his fingers had felt the sweat and grime and fever. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee," he said. "The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

And it was done. *Hulihia ke au*. The world had revolved.

By noon, they had cremated Pekelo, and the two of them—the *kōkua* and his *aikāne* in the urnful of ashes—made the slow march to the water's edge and then across the intermittent rocks until they stood on the last leaping rock just inches above the swirling waters where Ka'ena cleaved the sea.

Behind them on the beach six of their fellow inmates stood silently next to a small outrigger canoe. Some of them had been dancers with Pekelo. A concourse of a hundred more of their friends from the colony stood silently nearby. All held flower leis, such as could be made in the barrenness of Ka'ena. The women and children held the most.

Michael cradled the urn. So light. The hard brass was all he could feel. "Lono and Kapa-'ihi, Pita and Momona, and you and me, brah," he said to it.

The others placed their leis into the canoe which was put quietly into the water. Michael boarded with the urn. The six and Michael shoved off into the turquoise water, and the paddlers and the strong current carried them out swiftly from the beach. When they reached the appointed spot, the canoe master stopped the paddlers. Michael whispered, "A fond embrace; a *ho'i a'e au*." Then Michael let Pekelo's ashes pour out of the urn. There was no struggle; he made no gap in the water. Pekelo merely slipped from Michael's hands and mixed with the elements.

Briefly, Michael stared at the water. His gaze was broken when the hundred leis that the watermen had thrown onto the surface of the water encircled them. Michael remembered those feelings he had when he had witnessed the birth of his two daughters.

"One last swim with the brother," said the canoe master, and they all slipped over the sides. They held hands in a circle, treading water, embracing the ocean.

"You like leave us now?" one of them asked Michael.

"And go back to the Third World, and the bars, and let that reclaim me? Oh, no," he answered. "Besides, that's against the law. I am staying here to become Pekelo Kāne v. I will not leave this beautiful place. And who do I love more than you?"

"The night you showed him his neck in the mirror," one of them said, "it was an incredible act of mercy. God bless you."

"Just the truth with love," Michael said. The watermen climbed back into the canoe, but Michael bade them return alone saying that he, a strong swimmer, would swim alone back to the shore. But they, having done this before, would not let him and, instead, pulled him into the canoe, for his sake. As he emerged from the water, he flung handfuls of it high into spindrift, playing with it, rejoicing in it.

On shore, he washed himself in the coldwater shower at the beach. He felt surprised that all was as it had been before. He expected some change, some upheaval, or thunder, or eclipse.

Then he waded through the deep white sand back to the camp, where the funeral feast was starting. He heard the music, the slack-key guitars and ukuleles, the singing and dancing, the celebration of buoyant life.

The fountains of his deep were broken up. Before he joined the others, he stood alone. He wished to consider how to keep his memory forever clear regarding these events—how a man must feed on baby food because he can swallow nothing else, and how the hand of a disease ordains him and sets him apart.

A high wind blew in from the sea, and the deep currents ran silently in the darkened sea.