



“Kīlauea Caldera, My Hearth”

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Kīlauea caldera sits on the southeast slope of Mauna Loa
The southern mountain on the island of Hawai‘i
Kīlauea means to spew out volumes of breath
Kīlauea is volcanically active and has been for thousands of years
It is the home of the volcano deity Pelehonuamea
Within the caldera of Kīlauea
Sits the crater Halema‘uma‘u
Halema‘uma‘u has been erupting continuously for the last thirty-four years,
Sometimes continuous for a hundred years
Other times barely sulfurous

I am from a family of dancers and chanters
Inheriting an archaic dance form
Our primary dances are about the erupting volcano
Composers of the chants describe the volatile earth
And the procreation of the islands
It is humbling to know that you are part of a whole
While witnessing the eruptive phenomenon
Described in a chant composed over three hundred years ago
By an ancestor who observed the same kind of event
And eventually choreographed the dance and chant
I teach my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren
E komo ma loko o Halema‘uma‘u
Welcome to Halema‘uma‘u
He mauna pu‘u e ‘olā‘olā nei
Lava gurgling, giving life to little mountains,
E Pele, e Pele, hua‘ina, hua‘ina kū
Pele, the fiery hostess, boiling, gushing up
Molten earth that grows
(An old chant extending welcome from
Pelehonuamea, the volcano deity
Part of the myth and the reality)

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Kīlauea is antithesis in nature
The east summit is a pristine wet native forest
Profusely endowed with native flora and fauna
The west ridge is dry and houses
Migrating geese and sea birds in the cliff of the caldera
The north rim hold fissures of vaporous steam



Rising from the depth of the earth
Depositing sulfur along the crusty crevasse
When honored with the north wind
An opulent waterfall of steam rushes down
From the caldera into the crater
Then exits on an updraft from Halema'uma'u
Dissipating skyward choreography unequal
The south bank of Kīlauea is a barren lava field
From giant boulders to silk threadlike
Rocks, a vast land of pure untouched rocks

Kīlauea's presences acknowledges its effect on the weather system
Providing the knowledge that lightning and thunder
Originate from the earth as well as the atmosphere
That our water is recycled not only from the ocean and forest
But also from the heat of the volcano

Kīlauea represents a flux and flow of lifetimes
It is a place of wordless lessons
Cultivating a spiritual union with elemental deities
It is a reconnective portal with ancestral fire-folk
Producing generations of fire names
Therefore a link to ancestral genealogy

Kīlauea is my hearth my link to predecessors and progeny
To the past and the future

Kīlauea is the source

Approach it empty, like a newborn
Sit quietly, patiently, no expectations

Myths are grounded, deciphered, and evolve
In eight strands according to the winds

Kīlauea
Comfortable, dependable, familiar always,

I sit on the west ridge with the sun on my back
Sit long enough you see it all

A misty rainbow grows on the sulfurous rim
To the north

Low-lying red rainbow over the cloud forest
In the east



And a steady stream of volcanic gas, uahi or vog
On the south bank moving toward the ocean

A rainbow appears in Kīlauea
Going through different stages of existence

Fading, bright, tall, wide
Recording the vitality of wind, sun, mist

Breath and life drawn into
And spew out of Kīlauea

Leave offering, breathe
A reciprocal process,

The cycle when one accepts it
Lives to direct the next

Kīlauea
The architect of island life.