

Aria Chang, Oahu Marine 1st
Ku‘u Kahakai: My Beloved Beach

It is 1957. The sun shines upon the crystal, clear blue water, the wave crests sparkling in the heat, rolling with the tide. Boats line the shore like the footprints in the sand. A little brown *honu* (turtle) peeps his head above the surface to say hello. A school of fish splash against the shore, hurrying away from the shadows of the children. Young Snookie and his friends hop onto the pier connected to the big pink house with their “Hawaiian sling,” aka spear-gun, and dive into the cool, blue water. *Humuhumunukunukuāpua‘a* (reef triggerfish, *Rhinecanthus rectangulus*), *mamo* (sergeant major fish), and more fish cruise around their homes in the coral. Snookie and his boys dive for *he‘e* (octopus, polypus) until they have enough for each *‘ohana* (family). The *keikikāne* (boys) drag their catch to shore, delighted with their meal of the night. They lay their catch on the green picnic table without a worry of theft because the people of Waimānalo respected one another. With much energy, the boys race to the fishpond to swim and play in the shallow waters. The walls of the fishpond, no taller than them, watch over the *keiki* (children). With a great yawn and the sun imprinted on their brown skin, they would lay out their *pareo* (thin cloth) and rest under the shade of the *kukui* (candlenut, *Aleurites moluccanus*) trees. They sit back and watch children run around, chasing small sand crabs, splashing around in the mellow sea, building sand castles. They watch the adults lay back, scold the children, bask in the heat of the sun. A day at Kaiona is well spent.

It is 2010. The sun beams amongst the smiling faces of Aria and Alana. The waves softly caress the sandy shores of Kaiona. The girls run to the ocean, their toes in the water, sinking in the sand. Schools of small fish scurry past their small hands as they splash water into the air. Papa whistles, “Hui (come)!” He then waves to his *keiki* (children). Papa Snookie revs up the boat engine. With a loud roar, the rusted boat begins to push off the shore. The *keiki*

dip their fingers into the clear water and breath in the salty air. *Honu* peek their heads above the surface every now and then as Alana sings her *honu* song. "Come *honu*, hello *honu*! How are you today?" she chants with delight for each turtle who answers. Papa chuckles and makes up stories of the man on the mountain with two of the most beautiful *mo'opuna* (granddaughters) in the world. Schools of fish race along the side of the boat. Papa brings the engine to a stop about 10 yards from the shore of Manana (Rabbit Island). The young girls stand at the tip of the boat and look out at the shore. The island is dry and brown; it hasn't rained much this summer. Four or five monk seals lay in the steaming sand of Rabbit Island. The boat rests as they admire the beauty around them. *'Iwa* (frigate bird, *Fregata magnificens*) swoop ahead and dive down, hunting for a meal. After more stories, and more laughter, the sun bends down, signaling the time to go back to shore. They park the boat, and head to the open field. The park has been cleared of bushes since papa was a *keiki* and many parties were now hosted there. The girls sit on a *pareo* and eat lunch, watching the other kids build sand castles, chase sand crabs, and splash amongst the cool, calm waters of Kaiona. The adults scold the children, barbeque, and talk story while relaxing in the comforting hands of Kaiona's sands. As the *mo'opuna* of Papa Snookie grow up, they would learn to go snorkeling, to pick the *limu lipoa* (algae, *Dictyopteris plagiogramma*) off the ocean floors and cleanse it to eat, to avoid *wana* (sea urchins, *Echinoderm*), and to respect the ocean. But for now, they relax in the arms of their papa, and enjoy the warmth of the Waimānalo sun. A day at Kaiona is well spent.

Kaiona beach. A beach said to be named for a benevolent relative of Pele. A beach that is connected to Pāhonu (turtle fence) fishpond, built by a former *ali'i* (chief). According to KITV4, "Pāhonu was built a long, long time ago by high chief, his name was Kukui. His wife was Pāhonu and she liked to eat *honu* and he built the pond for her and it was *kapu* to everyone else

but the high chiefs." It is a beach that has been maintained, and perhaps even improved throughout the years. A beach that has held many important memories for many people. Where I learned to go snorkeling, to pick the limu (algae) off the ocean floors and cleanse it to eat, to avoid *wana*, and to respect the *kai* (ocean) and the *'āina* (land). Where I learned to laugh, to relax, and to listen to my Papa.

A *hui* (organization) known as the Waimānalo Limu Hui has been taking care of the many *wahi pana* of Waimānalo by braiding and restoring the native algae so fish and other sea creatures are able to come back and leave on these reefs which were once dying. On top of that, this *hui* has also been preserving the fishpond Pāhonu by replacing and adding more *pōhaku* (rocks) in order to keep it stable. Though my *'ohana* and myself do not participate in this group, we can always sign up to volunteer, or continue to *mālama* (care for) the beach by cleaning up trash as we usually do. The future of Kaiona is bright. An *'ōlelo no'eau* says, "*Nani ke kula a Kaiona i ka ho'ola'i a nā 'iwa*- the plain of Kaiona is pretty as the frigate birds soar" (Pukui, 1983). The beauty and meaning of this *kahakai* (beach) will never change with the community of Waimānalo to protect it.

Works Cited

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