Hoehoe Nā Wa'a (Kawaihae)

Haku mele:	Uncertain. The song is sometimes credited to Emma Paishon.
Sources:	Kawai Cockett, who learned it from Alice Nāmakelua. Mader Collection, MS. Grp 81, 3.38, Bishop Museum Archives.
Discography:	Kawai Cockett, Hula Hou, O Ka La OKLP 101. Leina'ala Haili, Leinaala Haili, Lehua SL7007. The Hilo Kalimas, Your Musical Tour Around the Island of Hawai'i, Hula MH505. Hui 'Ohana, Hui Ohana, Paradise SLP920.
Text below:	As sung by Kawai Cockett. *Translation:* Kīhei de Silva.

Kawaihae, ka uapo a'o Hilo Hoehoe nā wa'a pili i ka pu'e one.	We reach Kawaihae from the dock at Hilo And the rowboats go back and forth, right up to the sand dune.
Māhukona, ka uapo a'o Miloli'i Hoehoe nā wa'a pili pono i ka moku.	We reach Māhukona from the dock at Miloli'i And the rowboats go back and forth, right up against the steamer.
Lahaina, ka uapo a'o Māla Kukui mālamalama i ka ihu o Mauna Kea.	At Lahaina we dock at Māla Where lamplight illuminates the prow of Mauna Kea.
Kaunakakai, ka uapo a'o Moloka'i Hoehoe nā wa'a, ho'okano kahi selamoku.	At Moloka'i we dock at Kaunakakai The rowboats go back and forth, and a certain sailor is exceedingly proud of himself
O'ahu, ka uapo a'o Honolulu 'Ike 'oe i ka nani o ka ua Kūkalahale.	At O'ahu we dock at Honolulu Where you see the beauty of the Kūkalahale rain.
Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana Hoehoe nā wa'a pili i ka pu'e one.	This ends my song The rowboats go back and forth right up to the sand dune.

This is a tricky song. At first listen, it seems to be little more than a Hawaiian "Row, row, row your boat" – a list of island ports to which *wa'a* are somewhat repetitively paddled. When we explore the meaning of "ho'okano kahi selamoku," however, our appreciation for the song's *kaona* is considerably enhanced. *'Ai ho'okano* refers to eating proudly of "high priced food" (Hawaiian Dictionary, 10) and to "eating food that one has

not helped to prepare" (Hawaiian Dictionary, 129); the phrase is used figuratively in songs like "Hoehoe Nā Wa'a," "Aia I Ka Maui," and "Selamoku Hula" to indicate a sailor who has a woman in every port: these woman are pricey commodities; he partakes often but offers no commitment to those who provide for his pleasure.

The song belongs to the late 19th and early 20th century Hawai'i when most island docks were too shallow for large craft. In those days, sail-assisted steam ships like the Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company's Mauna Kea were required to stand off-shore while passengers and cargo were ferried to and from port on shallow-draft rowboats. The activity of these ferry boats as they shuttled between shore and ship is captured in the song's refrain "hoehoe nā wa'a, pili i ka pu'e one, pili pono i ka moku." Since *hoehoe* means "to go back and forth" as well as "to paddle," the single word reflects both the repetitive and oar-powered nature of the task. *Hoehoe* also connotes intense effort of any kind – to go at something continuously and energetically. This third meaning, in conjunction with the secondary meaning of *wa'a* as "paddler," gives us a more people-focused picture of individuals engrossed in repetitive physical activity. When we understand that the song, at one level of interpretation, is about a sailor and his port-by-port pleasures, this picture of *hoehoe nā wa'a* – of "paddlers" going at it – easily lends itself to the same interpretive slant. Our song about ships and ports is also a song about sailors and women.

Finally, we should take note of the song's joke-like structure. It is not until the fourth verse that the promiscuous sailor is introduced. Up to that point, the descriptions are innocent enough, but once the "ho'okano" punch line is delivered, all that comes before is suddenly cast in a different light. Kawai Cockett told us that the song can go on and on (the O'ahu verse given above is one of several that he remembers hearing over the years; its reference to the Kūkalahale rain seems more in keeping with the themes of an innocent travel song than with the double entendre of the preceding verses), but he said that Aunty Alice insisted that "'ai ho'okano" always be sung with Kaunakakai. Aunty Alice's requirement suggests that these later verses of the song are, in fact, later additions to the original; her requirement sounds like an old-timer's effort to preserve, within the larger composition, the integrity of its foundation.

Māhukona

Hake mele:	The song is credited by Waikīkī Records (45-563) to M. Smith. The early texts, however, fail to name Smith or any other composer.
Sources:	"Sugar Boiler," Commonplace Book of Edward K. Lilikalani (1852-1917), Lili'uokalani Collection, HI. M.4:3, Bishop Museum Archives. Mader Collection, MS Grp 81, 10.43, Bishop Museum Archives. Kimo Alama, Puke Mele, I:68-89, and MS Grp 329, 5.42 Bishop Museum Archives.
Discography:	The Hilo Kalimas, Your Musical Tour Around the Island of Hawai'i, Hula SRB 2398. Lani, Lāhela, and Nina, "Māhukona," Waikiki Records (45 rpm) 45-563. Naipo Inc., From Kohala to Waimanalo, Poki SP9018.
Text below:	As sung by the Hilo Kalimas and edited by Kīhei de Silva. *Translation:* Kīhei de Silva.

A waho aku au o Māhukona lā
Hana'i'o ka ua iā Kohala lā.

I am outside Māhukona
The rain pours down on Kohala.

A la'a wale nō kā ho'i lā
Ka huila a'o Kīlauea lā.

It serves you right,
Kīlauea's propeller.

Hele kapalulu nei 'ili wai lā
A komo i ka ipu ho'omo'a lā.

To come whirring over the water
Only to enter a boiling pot.

'O ka mo'a paha ia o ke kō lā
Ke pipi'i nei ma ke aniani.

It is perhaps the cooking sugar
That bubbles up on the glass.

Ha'ina 'ia mai ka puana lā
Ka huila a'o Kīlauea lā.

This ends my song
Of the Kīlauea's propeller.

The Kīlauea was a propeller-driven, sail-assisted, interisland steamship that plied Hawaiian waters during the reigns of Kamehameha IV, Kamehameha V, Lunalilo, and Kalākaua. The ship began service in 1860 and finally retired in 1877; in those 17 years, he (Hawaiians of the day found in Kīlauea a decidedly male quality) had easily won the affection of his customers and earned a reputation as a tireless, resilient, somewhat accident-prone workhorse of the sea. At the time to which our song refers (probably the 1870's when Kīlauea's regular run took him between Maui and Hawai'i), the village of Māhukona on the Kohala coast of Hawai'i Island was a busy port at which the Kīlauea frequently stopped in order to serve the commercial needs of the Kohala Sugar Plantation.

The wonderful – and frustrating – ambiguity of the song "Māhukona" allows for a variety of interpretations. 1- It can be seen as the poetic description of a storm that forces the *Kīlauea* to interrupt its service to Māhukona: the ship waits outside the sugar port while the rain pours down on Kohala; the ocean is compared to a cooking pot whose contents

are at full boil; the Kīlauea simply has to ride it out. 2- The song can be seen as the poetic description of an enthusiastic male lover whose energy is compared to the tireless Kīlauea and whose passion results in the bubbling over of a sugar boiler. 3- The song can be seen as the poetic description of a disappointed suitor who hurries confidently to a lovers' assignation at Kohala, only to be disillusioned at Māhukona by the discovery that his sweetheart has found someone else with whom to "make sugar."

"Māhukona" opens innocently enough with a description of the Kohala scene: the narrator is outside the port of Māhukona while the rain's activity inland is characterized as *hana 'i'o* – really coming down. Because *hana 'i'o* also means "serious about what one does; to consummate, as a love affair," our poetic antenna begin to vibrate with possibilities: do we have here, in the activity of ship, port, and rain, a metaphor of love-making? Is this activity one in which our sailor-narrator is actively engaged? Or is he left out of what is happening "inside" between his sweetheart and someone who is perhaps more deserving of her attention? In many Hawaiian boat songs, the sailor is defined as *'ai ho'okano*, one who eats food that has not been prepared for him – in other words, a man who fools around with women not his own. If we follow the jilted-sailor interpretation of "Māhukona," then we find here an interesting departure from the stereotype: our girl-in-every-port sailor is left out in the cold; he arrives too late; the tables are turned.

Kimo Alama-Keaulana's interpretation of the song seems to follow this last line of thought. He notes that the place-name *Kohala* is "symbolically used here to show that someone has been drawn away (*kō* is to draw and *hala* to the point of no return – something has passed)." Thus "Māhukona" is about "disappointment in love;" a woman has been drawn away from her Kilauea sailor, and his true love for her "has now turned to pain" (Puke Mele, I:68). If we, in turn, follow Alama-Keaulana's lead, we can translate Māhukona to mean "leeward steam" (Pūku'i, Place Names of Hawai'i, 138); when considered in light of the song's subsequent description of a boiling pot and its bubbling contents, this place name seems to hint at both the poet's frustration over steamy activities in which he cannot participate, and at his own head of suddenly useless steam.

The next interpretive nexus of "Māhukona" occurs with the first line of verse two: "A la'a wale nō kā ho'i lā." Kimo Alama-Keaulana's translation of the line ("Just like no other") hinges on the meanings of *la'a* as "set apart" and "such as" and paints a somewhat boastful picture of the Kīlauea and the man it symbolizes. If, however, we translate the line as an idiomatic expression similar to Pūku'i's "A la'a, a la'a lā" (So you did get in trouble, hurt, serves you right! I told you so!), the tone of the verse changes considerably from boast to self-recrimination. In either case, the object of the narrator's attention is the boat's *huila*. Although Keaulana-Alama translates the word to mean "paddle wheel," the Kīlauea was powered not by a side or stern-mounted wheel, but by a single propeller. *Huila*, I would guess, is the short form of *huila ho'one'e*: a ship's screw or propeller. In one sense this *huila* is *la'a* – it is a unique, physical, decidedly male attribute for which

there is no equal. In another sense this *huila* is *a la'a lā* – an object of disappointment that, regardless of reputation or potency, has been rendered useless by its late arrival.

The ambiguity of verse three lies in the possibly condensed grammar of its first line and in the multiple meanings of *'ili wai.* If we play with the text a bit, the subject of the first line can be understood as the *huila* of the previous verse: "(Ke) Hele kapalulu nei (ka huila i) ka 'ili wai" – The propeller is whirring through the water's surface. Or: "Hele kapalulu (ka huila i) nei 'ili wai" – The propeller whirs through this watery surface. On the other hand, the subject of the line can be taken at face value as *'ili wai*: "Hele kapalulu nei 'ili wai" – This *'ili wai* goes whirring. *'Ili wai*, besides meaning "water's surface," also means "water hose." We wonder, then, if the propeller of verse two has simply transformed into the hose of verse three (though the metaphor changes, its referent is still the same), or whether propeller has been replaced by hose in the same manner that our sailor himself has been replaced by a new suitor. Whether we take the whirring object of this first line to be propeller or hose, sailor or new suitor, the third verse concludes with that object's entry into an *ipu ho'omo'a* (cooking pot) or *ipu ho'omo'a kō* (sugar boiler). This activity can be interpreted in at least four ways: 1) as a literal description of the plumbing of an *ipu ho'omo'a*; 2) as the sexual activity in which the sailor is intensely engaged; 3) as the sexual activity that the sailor unhappily encounters; and 4) as the pot of trouble – natural or human – in which he currently finds himself stewing

The song's final verse (excluding its *ha'ina*) expands on the imagery of what is now definitely a sugar boiler. I am not familiar enough with the design of that 19th century piece of machinery to know if it was equipped with a glass viewing port or gauge (*aniani*); this, however, would seem to be the literal intent of the verse: as the cane is cooked, it boils up and climbs the sides of the boiler; a port or gauge of some kind indicates the rising activity within. *Pipi'i* refers to love-making as well as climbing and bubbling, and *aniani* is also connotative of something "clear, transparent, obvious." The cane is obviously boiling. The conditions at Māhukona are obviously turbulent. The lovers are obviously at a climactic juncture. What is not obvious is the identity of these lovers: the song concludes without ever defining its context as that of a first or second-hand experience. Does the sailor find love for himself, or does he find others in the act of love? That ambiguity is the spice and riddle of "Māhukona."

A longer version of the song can be found in E.K. Lilikalani's scrapbook (HI. M.4:3) under the title "Sugar Boiler." The song's four extra verses add to our picture of the boat's energetic propeller (it is a spinning, iron *huila* that churns, without restraint, through a succession of waves), provides a third metaphor for the boat's special part (it is a curved tool that runs every which way), and casts aspersions on the conduct of the song's heroine (she is compared to the beautiful but promiscuous schooner Nettie Merril who lifts her bow to every wind). Although these extra verses contribute significantly to the tongue-in-cheek language of the composition, they offer us nothing in the way of ambiguity-resolution.

Mauna Kea

Haku mele:	Listed as traditional or unknown in all but the Roberts Collection MS SC 2.5:36b-38a where the author is given as Lioe. The song, as we know it today, was collected by Eddie Kamae and reconstructed by Eddie Kamae and Mary Kawena Pūku'i.
Sources:	Eddie Kamae (personal conversation, 1978). HEN 3:254, Bishop Museum Archives. Kapi'olani-Kalaniana'ole Collection, HI. M.30:411, Bishop Museum Archives. Lioe. Roberts Collection, MS SC 2:5:36b-38a, Bishop Museum Archives. Nupepa Makaainana, Sept. 17, 1894. Micro # 188, Bishop Museum Archives.
Discography:	Eddie Kamae Presents The Sons of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Sons HSC-1001 (1973) Eddie Kamae Presents the Best of The Sons of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Sons HSCD-41012.
Text below:	As sung by Eddie Kamae and The Sons of Hawai'i. *Translation:* Robert Lokomaika'iokalani Snakenberg for Hālau Mōhala 'Ilima, 1978.

E aha 'ia ana 'o Mauna Kea
Kuahiwi 'alo pū me ke Kēhau.

What is being done, Mauna Kea?
The mountain sharing together with the dew-laden Kēhau.

'Alawa iho 'oe iā Mauna Loa
He moa uakea i ka mālie.

You glance down to Mauna Loa
A mist-white chicken in the calm.

Kū aku au, mahalo i ka nani
Ka hale a ka wai hu'i a ka manu.

I stand and appreciate the beauty
Of the house of the chilly water of the birds.

Mahu'i ho'i au lā e 'ike lihi
Ka uahi noe lā o Kīlauea.

I also expect to catch a glimpse
Of the misty smoke of Kīlauea.

Ke hea mai nei Halema'uma'u
'Ena'ena i ke ahi a Ka Wahine.

Halema'uma'u is calling
So hot with the fire of The Woman.

Wahine kui pua lehua 'Ōla'a
I ho'oipoipo no ka Malanai.

The woman stringing lehua flowers of 'Ōla'a
In order to woo the Malanai wind.

Aloha 'ia nō a'o Hōpoe
Ka wahine 'ami lewalewa i ke kai.

Hōpoe is beloved
The woman swinging her hips in the sea.

Iho nā Puna i ka hone a ke kai

Puna's people descend to the soft sound of the sea

Ke 'ala o ka hīnano ka'u aloha

The fragrance of *hīnano* is what I love.

Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana
No Puna ke 'ala i hali 'ia mai.

The summary of the story is told
From Puna the fragrance is wafted.

Eddie Kamae explained to us in 1978 (when we asked his permission to perform "Mauna Kea" in the 1979 Merrie Monarch competition) that his version of this song was the result of an extensive search and compilation effort. An old man on the Big Island had given him most of the verses, but Kamae had to travel to three other islands to collect the remainder. When he finally tracked down all of his leads, he met with Mary Kawena Pūku'i, and together they assembled the "Mauna Kea" that the Sons of Hawai'i recorded in 1973. I suspect that the old man of Eddie Kamae's story is Sam Li'a of Waipi'o Valley, Kamae's mentor and inspiration. "Mauna Kea" and Li'a's "Hui Wai Anuhea" share the same melody line, so it is likely that Li'a knew and was influenced by the earlier composition and gave as much of it as he could remember to his attentive student.

I have since discovered several slightly longer versions of "Mauna Kea" in the Bishop Museum Archives. One provides us with the name of a possible author: Lioe (Roberts MS SC 2.5). A second supplies us with a date of newspaper publication: 1894 (Micro #188. And a third identifies the mele as having been composed for Queen Emma (Mele Index card for HEN 3:254). Perhaps the most inspiring outcome of my comparison of the Kamae and archive texts is its validation of the accuracy of oral tradition. Through diligent effort, Kamae was able to recreate in the early 1970's a remembered, orally transmitted song that differs in only three lines and a handful of phrases from versions that were written down and stored away in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. If, as the old Mele Index card suggests, the song was originally written for Queen Emma (she died in 1885 and last visited the Big Island in 1883), at least 90 years had passed between the event that inspired the composition and the LP that finally delivered it to a modern audience. The song's integrity over this four generation span of sing-and-listen has held up remarkably well and gives considerable credence to our faith in the powerful memories of our grandparents' generation.

"Mauna Kea" presents us with the 19th century poetic equivalent of a panoramic photo; its nine verses encompass a 50 mile view-plane that stretches from Mauna Kea to the Puna coast. Included in the song's orderly progression from mountain to sea are Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, Kīlauea, Halema'uma'u, 'Ōla'a, and Hā'ena (where the Hōpoe stone sways in the waves). We are treated, at each stop, to a description of the beauty and unity appropriate to that place: Mauna Kea, for example, is adorned and paired with the Kēhau breeze, Kīlauea with the smoke of Pele, Halema'uma'u with Pele's fire, 'Ōla'a with the *lehua* blossoms of the lei-stringing Hi'iaka, Hā'ena with the dancing Hōpoe stone, and Puna with the fragrant *hīnano*. The world of the song, then, is a world of order and completion; everything occupies its proper place, and everything shares that place with its proper companion.

The harmony of this world leads the human companions of "Mauna Kea" – the *'oe* and *au* of verses two and three – to their own harmony of residence and relationship. From their vantage point on the mountain's heights, they ask "What's going on here?" They find their answer in the very lay of the land as their eyes are drawn from the *wao akua*, the residence of gods, to their own place in the orderly scheme of things: to the *wao kanaka,* the residence of men at Puna's shore. Their homecoming, the endpoint of their visual lesson and journey,

is in a land redolent of *hīnano*, where the sea sings sweet songs to its people and where the aphrodisiac of male pandanus blossoms underscores the mood of love. Mauna Kea offers instruction in proper place-finding and our companions find their proper place with each other in Puna.

"Mauna Kea" makes an excellent *mele aloha / mele aloha 'āina* for lovers and their homeland. It also makes a most appropriate *mele māka'ika'i* for the last of Queen Emma's tours of the Big Island. Emma traveled through the districts of Hilo, Puna, and Ka'ū in the spring of 1883; the base camp of the Puna-Ka'ū leg of her tour was the Kaimū home of Joseph 'Īlālā-'ole's grandfather where she resided in contentment until a sky-omen warned her of Ruth Ke'elikōlani's impending death and caused her to hasten that May to Ruth's side at Hulihe'e Palace in Kona (Joseph 'Īlālā'ole, HAW 78.1.2-3, Bishop Museum Archives Audio Collection; Mary Kawena Pūku'i, HAW 33.2.2, Bishop Museum Archives Audio Collection). She is reported, a month later, have been riding horses at Kohala (Russell Benton, Emma Naea Rooke, 18-19). Mele composed for this extended visit probably include the four name chants: "He Ui A He Nīnau Kēia Na Hōpoe Wahine I Hā'ena," "He Ui A He Nīnau Kēia Na Hi'iaka-ikapoliopele," "Hanohano Wale 'Oe E Emalani I Ke Kāhiko Mau 'Ia E Ka Ua," and "'O Ka Wai Lani Kapu A'e Kēia." All four share with "Mauna Kea" a powerful sense of place-finding and homecoming. In the first "He Ui," for example, Emma discovers that her most valuable treasure is the reciprocal love of place and people. In the second "He Ui," Emma's journey takes her "home" to Kalapana where she finds her place with the most distant of her ancestors. In the third mele, her journey to Puna results in her acceptance by Puna's people as their sacred, rare, and cherished flower. And in the fourth mele, a red rainbow spreads over the surface of the sea and welcomes her to the birth sands of her ancestors. All four chants, moreover, exhibit the same sense of divine presence and sanction evident in "Mauna Kea." In the first, Emma is welcomed by Hōpoe; in the second, by Hi'i-aka; in the third, by Pele and her sisters; and in the fourth, by Kawelohea, the guardian of Ka'ū. It strikes me as more than coincidental that the first three of these women (the mortal Hōpoe, and the goddesses Hi'iaka and Pele) appear in a similar context in "Mauna Kea," and that three of the four mele for Emma begin in the same unusual, interrogative voice with which "Mauna Kea" opens. The two "He U'i's" ask "Where have you been?" "'O Ka Wai Lani" asks "What sacred chiefess is this?" And "Mauna Kea" asks "What's being done?" It seems to me, then, that the five chants share more than enough common ground – in theme, geography, character, and voice – to support the Mele Index contention that "Mauna Kea" was also composed for Emma. To this, I can add that the mele was probably composed in celebration of her 1883 Big Island tour and subtly invites her to remain in her ancestral homeland of Puna where she had found an unequaled sense of peace, love, and place.

A fifth undisputed *mele inoa* for Emma lends additional validity to this argument. The chant "A Mauna Kea 'O Kalani" opens with Emma at the summit of Mauna Kea; it then describes her visit to Lake Waiau, her return to Waimea along a broken mountain trail, and her enthusiastic support of her weary fellow travelers. According to Mary Ka'apuni Phillips,

Emma made this Mauna Kea trek on horseback in a company of riders that she had brought with her to Waimea. Larry Kimura's grandfather William Lindsey served as Emma's guide, and a Kawaihae man named Waiaulima took Emma swimming in the chilly waters of the mountain lake (HAW 192.2.2, Bishop Museum Archives Audio Collection). Neither the two Bishop Museum Archives' manuscript collections in which "A Mauna Kea 'O Kalani" appears nor Phillips's narrative of the trip gives a date for Emma's ascent of Mauna Kea. Because the chant is clearly patterned after "A Kilohana 'O Kalani," and "A I Waimea 'O Kalani" (*mele pi'i mauna* for Emma's 1871 ascent of Wai'ale'ale), we can reasonably assume that "A Mauna Kea 'O Kalani" was composed after this 1871 Kaua'i expedition. The obvious hypothesis, moreover, is that "A Mauna Kea 'O Kalani" belongs to a later leg of the same 1883 tour that took Emma along the Hilo and Puna coasts to Joseph 'Īlālā'ole's family home in Kaimū, to Hulihe'e Palace in Kona, and to the windy hills of Kohala. This suggests, in turn, that the song "Mauna Kea" provides an accurate summary of Emma's complete 1883 Big Island visit and that the five travel mele that we've touched on are specific installments in a poetic travelogue encompassed by "Mauna Kea."

I am certain that further research will determine the validity of my 1883 Mauna Kea hypothesis In any case, Phillips and "A Mauna Kea 'O Kalani" put Emma on the mountain If we accept "Mauna Kea" as an Emma song, then we must accept, as well, that the opening verses of the song are not merely figurative; they are grounded in fact. At some point after 1871, Emma was no less at Mauna Kea and Waiau ("the chilly water home of the birds") than she was at Puna in the soft singing of the sea.

Transcribed below is the HEN version of "Mauna Kea." I have italicized those portions of the text that vary from the Eddie Kamae version given above. The translation is my own.

E aha 'ia ana Maunakea	What's being done, Mauna Kea?
Kuahiwi 'alo pū me ke kēhau	Mountain sharing with the Kēhau breeze
'Alawa iho 'oe iā Maunaloa	You glance down at Mauna Loa
Kohu moa uakea i ka mālie	*It resembles* a mist-white chicken in the calm
Kū aku au mahalo o ka nani	I rise, appreciative of the beauty
Ka hā'ale a ka wai hu'i a ka manu	*The rippling* of the chilly water of the birds
Kau aku ka mana'o e 'ike lihi	*My mind is set on* catching a glimpse
Ka uahi noe a o Kīlauea	Of Kīlauea's misty smoke
Ke hea mai nei Halema'uma'u	Halema'uma'u calls
'Ena'ena i ke ahi a ka wahine,	Glowing with the fires of Pele
Ka wahine kui pua lehua o 'Ōla'a	The woman strings the lehua of 'Ōla'a
I *hoa ho'onipo* no ka Malanai	As a *love-making companion* for the Malanai
I ahona Puna i ka hone a ke kai	Puna *is refreshed* by the sweet song of the sea
Ke 'ala o ka hīnano ka'u aloha	The fragrance of hīnano is what I love
Aloha ia uka pūanuanu	*Loved are these cool, damp heights*
I ka ho'opulu 'ia e ke kēhau	*Drenched by the dew-laden Kēhau*
Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana	This ends my song
Pulu 'elo i ka wai a ka Nāulu.	*Of being soaked by the Nāulu showers.*

Ka Manu

Haku mele:	A young Kohala man of the late 19th century.
Source:	Alice K. Nāmakelua, Auntie Alice Nāmakelua,Hula HS-557.
Discography:	Auntie Alice Nāmakelua, Hula HS-557.
	Dennis Pavao, All Hawai'i Stand Together, Poki SPC-9055 (1994).
Text below:	As given and translated on Auntie Alice Nāmakelua, Hula HS-557.

'Auhea wale 'oe e ka manu
Ku'u hoa 'alo leo o ka pō anu.

Listen, O bird,
My companion who weathers the gossip of the cold night.

Mea 'ole ia anu a i ka mana'o
Ke koi'i koi mau a ka pu'uwai.

This cold is nothing to my mind;
The heart's desire is ever urgent.

Na wai nō 'oe e pakele aku
Ua like me ka liko a'o ka lehua.

Who could escape you
You are like the leaf-bud of the *lehua.*

Ka maka o ka lehua ka mea aloha
Ka wehi holu mai ma ka hikina.

The eye of the *lehua* is what I love
The adornment that sways to the coming.

E honi kāua e ke aloha
Ke noe mai nei ka pua lehua.

Let's kiss, love
The *lehua* flower is misting.

Alia 'oe a e pūlale mai
A hala o maile lau kapalili.

Don't rush me
When the *maile's* leaves are trembling.

He lili ka mana'o o ke kapena
Nā 'ale po'ipū a'o ka moana.

Jealous is the mind of the captain
Engulfing are the waves of the ocean.

Ua ana pono 'ia ko'u mana'o
E ka lei hulu nani hulu melemele.

My mind is made up
O lei of beautiful feathers, golden feathers.

He mele kaulana no Nihoa
Ua hui Kāne'ohe me Pohoiki.

Nihoa's song is famous:
Joined were Kāne'ohe and Pohoiki.

Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana
Good-bye kāua me ka 'eha'eha.

The story is told:
We say good-bye with great pain.

When Alice Nāmakelua (b.1892 in Honoka'a, Hawai'i) was only a girl, she learned this song from an older Kohala man who, in his youth, had fallen in love with a Hilo girl. The girl's parents did not want her involved with anyone who lived so far from Hilo, so they

forced her to end the relationship. The boy composed this song as an expression of the depth of his love and the heartbreak of their parting (verses six and seven are said to be her words, the rest are his own); he shared his composition with Aunty Alice some thirty years after that parting. According to Aunty Alice, neither the Kohala boy nor the Hilo girl ever married anyone else; they remained single all their lives.

"Ka Manu" offers considerable insight into Hawaiian folk compositions of the second half of the 19th century. It is not a mele of the royal court – it is neither for nor by the *ali'i* – yet it has the perspective, resonance, and grace of expression that characterize the best poetry of the period, royal or otherwise. Its beauty suggests that the distinction sometimes made between the high and low poetry of court verses country is less than accurate. It suggests, as well, that Hawaiian composers of both high and low station shared similar poetic values. I feel, then, that the following observations about the poetry of "Ka Manu" are representative of this larger body of Hawaiian composition.

Like the authors of countless other old Hawaiian songs catalogued in today's song collections as "traditional," the author of "Ka Manu" is not a big-name writer; indeed, he is an unnamed young man. Though influenced by western styles of composition, Hawaiian poetry of his century (and in much of ours), had not taken on western notions of property and personality. Poets did not own their poetry; in fact, a mele was meant to be the possession, like a feather lei or other cherished adornment, of the person it honored. The *haku mele* only stepped forward to gave his poem away, then he promptly stepped back into anonymity. Consequently, the image of the poet as a breed apart – as a gifted, uniquely suffering and sensitive, self-immortalizing genius – is largely absent from late 19th century Hawaiian composition. Consequently, the presence of an author's creative ego in a mele – as Walt Whitman, for example, is unmistakably present in his poetry – is again largely foreign to Hawaiian composition of the period. The late 19th century Hawaiian poet was neither intimidated by concepts of a poet's rarified talents nor concerned with making, or failing to make, a big name for himself. The Hawaiian poet was Everyman; it was a natural thing for him – *ali'i* or *maka'āinana*, known or unknown, young or old – to express his deepest thoughts and strongest emotions in mele. To expand on one of Keali'i Reichel's favorite similes, we can say that the practice of composition, like that of *oli*, was then "as common as humming."

Despite it sorrowful context, "Ka Manu" emphasizes beauty and joy. Although the song is obviously inspired by heartbreak, the language of *pō anu, lili,* and *good-bye kāua me ka 'eha'eha* – gossip, jealousy, and pain – takes up only three verses of the 10 verse piece. The remainder of the song is concerned with the wonders of young love: with attraction, desire, and union. The pain is huge (and perhaps even more poignant because it is not paraded all over the mele), but the focus is on that which nourishes the soul rather than eats away at it. There is no Romeo and Juliet outcome, no tragic double suicide, to the story of the Hilo girl and Kohala man; they endure. Mele of this age are the work of survivors, of those who refuse to give in to despair and self-pity. Their poetry is

characterized by this refusal; it is evident in as "high" a song as "Kaulana Nā Pua" and in as "low" a song as "Ka Manu."

The author of "Ka Manu" assembles his song with a beautiful selection of phrases, most of which would have had a familiar ring to his listeners. His opening "Auhea wale 'oe" is the opening line of innumerable mele; "'alo leo i ka pō anu" is a favorite expression for someone in the uncomfortable position of dodging or enduring gossip; "na wai nō 'oe e pakele aku" is a standard expression for irresistible beauty. The imagery of love and lovers – *liko lehua, maka lehua, noe lehua, lau kapalili* – are exactly those images that a Hawaiian audience would recognize, welcome, and delight in. This process of selection and arrangement is, in fact, what the *haku* of *haku mele* means. The Hawaiian poet's craft, like the lei maker's craft, is that of arranging carefully chosen flowers in a most pleasing, effective, and appropriate manner. The poet does not attempt to compose in a vacuum; he is not driven to write what has never been written, nor is he dedicated to going where no poet has gone before; creativity is not the big yardstick by which he measures his effort. Evidence of these concepts, like those of ownership and ego, is largely absent from Hawaiian poetry of two centuries past. Instead, late 19th and early 20th century *haku mele* love to use and re-use each other's language. Such recycling shows the interconnectedness of people, thought, and emotion; it establishes the all-important sense in Hawaiian poetry of foundation and continuity; it demonstrates an additional Hawaiian poetic ideal: that of cultural literacy – of knowledge of other mele, proverbs, and poetic expressions.

Creativity, however, is not absent from mele of the period; new or unexpected language is often used to accent a poem's otherwise traditional flavor and to startle us into understanding and insight. In "Ka Manu," the sudden appearance of three place names – Nihoa, Kāne'ohe, and Pohoiki – in the ninth verse of a song whose previous 16 lines are devoid of place names makes for a meaning-packed and incisive summary of the love that the couple has shared. He is "bamboo man," she is "small depression," their union is "firmly locked." "Aha!" we say, "this not puppy love; they have intimate knowledge of each other." The same kind of zinger is evident in the last line of the song when the English word "Good-bye" comes out of nowhere to hammer home the pain of their parting. "Aha!" we say, "it is as if that pain is so unfair, so foreign to love, that it can't be expressed in the poet's mother tongue." This is creative stuff – as is the flower vase of "Ka Nani A'o Hilo," the standing mirror of "Ka Ua A'o Hilo," the thin, magnetic, Mexican banana of "Piukeona," and the whirring propeller of "Māhukona" – but creativity's purpose is always to frost an already well-established, traditional cake.

Finally, the *haku mele* of "Ka Manu" constantly transforms the human into the natural. He describes the girl he loves as his *lehua* leaf bud and his lei of beautiful bird feathers. He describes their physical and emotional love for each other as a swaying *lehua* blossom, a misting *lehua* flower, a trembling *maile* leaf, and the joining of Kāne'ohe and Pohoiki in a bond that is Nihoa. He even transforms the forces of parental disapproval

that separate them into an image of the engulfing waves of the deep ocean. Transformation of this sort is an essential feature of Hawaiian poetry of the period; one could not expect to compose in a traditional Hawaiian manner without transforming people and their emotions into flowers, birds, winds, waves, cliffs, place-names, and (as western contact put us in touch with a flood of interesting objects) vases, row boats, propellers, and sugar-boilers. The converse is true as well: one could not expect to compose Hawaiian mele without infusing the natural and object worlds with humanity. Aunty Alice Nāmakelua's "Aloha Ko'olau," for example, was inspired by a car ride over Nu'uanu Pali. The song is a simple celebration of the beauty of the mists, rains, and waterfalls that she sees along the way, but there is no mistaking her Hawaiian viewpoint: the sky is a man; the land is a woman; the mist-rain-waterfall is their joyous union; life is the result.

These transformations are more than poetic techniques, more than metaphor and personification. They reflect a fundamental Hawaiian belief in the unity of me and not-me, self and other, this and that. The traditional *haku mele's* sense of unity explains his lack of interest in self-promotion, his eye for beauty, and his love of foundation and continuity. His devotion to humility, grace, and depth is one that Hawaiian poets of today would do well to follow.