Always Lei of Ginger Blossoms for the First Lady of Hawai‘i: Queen Lili'ufokalani

June Jordan

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_environmental_law_journal

Part of the Environmental Law Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://repository.uchastings.edu/hastings_environmental_law_journal/vol8/iss2/7

This Comment is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at UC Hastings Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hastings Environmental Law Journal by an authorized editor of UC Hastings Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact wangangela@uchastings.edu.
An Always Lei of Ginger
Blossoms for the First Lady of Hawai'i: Queen Lili'uokalani

By June Jordan

Dedicated to Philip and Diana Chang.


Never mind
Even the Be-Still tree will never stop
The spirit rivers of the Koolau mountains
Nor the twisting smash surf drown
the great gong
pounded by the living
for the right to live

On your island dolphins
slope below belief
then rise in somersault or triple flip affection
for the laughter of the weary
ones who need

more than African tulips
more than bareback riding of a whale
more than Banyan roots
more than Diamond Head above their shoulders
more than mango guava sugarcane or pineapple and papaya
more than monkey pod elegance of shelter
more than the miracle revised to feed the blue and silver and yellow and spotted and large and small fish who receive bread from the fingers of a hand
more than forgive and forget about “the secret annexation society”

mainlander businessmen who held you prisoner
inside the lolani palace
kept you solitary in confinement
nine months
minus even pencils or a piece of paper
nine months
before the businessmen relented and allowed you your guitar
more than the southern star skies
and the delivering wild ocean swells
that rule the separating space between Tahiti and the statue of Your Highness
schooling Honolulu into secret conduct
suitable for thimbleberries
suitable for orchids
suitable for the singing ghost of your guitar

On your island dolphins
slope beyond belief
then rise

On your island (never mind)
the weary ones throng faithful to the great song
once again to the pound the great gong
sounds again and then again