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

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**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.

Originally published in *Naming
Our Destiny: New and Selected
Poems* by June Jordan,
Thunder's Mouth Press, 1989.

In Memoriam
June Jordan, 2002.
Poet, activist, scholar,
revolutionary.

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 sugercane 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 Iolani 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

