

May 4th, 2005 (Wednesday)

If I had to take one single impression home with me of Moloka'i, it would have to be of endlessly barking dogs and run-amok rooster noise at night. Of course, this is Ranch Camp I'm in and may not be characteristic of other less 'urbanised' parts of Moloka'i. Oh, how I wish we were able to afford a place on the more remote east end, rather than a compromise on the *makai* side of Kam 5 highway where we are. The good news is that we know our left side neighbor (Cicada) and our right-side neighbor I come to find is the nephew of a local fellow (nephew lives on Maui at the moment).

The big task that confronts me is to secure the services of someone reliable whom we can contract to finish clearing our property and then make monthly return visits to keep it cleared. I guess I'll head for the *Moloka'i Visitors' Bureau* tomorrow and see what I can find. The classified ads in the Moloka'i Island Times were no help. First call to what was advertised as 'CJ's 'Ohana ('Family') Yard Service' seemed to be some neighborhood school kid with big aspirations (lawn mowing yes, property clearing no).

Second call to 'Tropical Inspirations Landscaping' turned out to be a wrong number. Hmmm. Back to square one. Maybe tomorrow will be more promising. In this search for just the right combination of capabilities, I am reminded of something our broker Cheryl Apaia told us: "*All Hawaiians are congenital, if entirely innocent liars.*" [Makes mental note: not good, since we've heard many times that local Hawaiians are also lazy. I feel like a missionary must have felt, heading off into the unknown to save heathen souls for Jesus, difference being I am heading off into the unknown to find an honest, hard-working heathen to cut weeds.)

Just got a return call from CJ, who apparently used the phone 'trace caller number' feature on his phone to contact me, after I switched off. Turns out that CJ is the father and the school-kid is his son, 'CJ, Junior' (who had answered the phone and in response to my question "*Can I talk with CJ?*" replied with "*I'm CJ*"). At any rate, we meet tomorrow to take a look at the lot and 'Big CJ' will give me a

quote for the job. 'CJ' is actually a fellow called 'Clyde'; I had called his home number, hence the confusion with his small son, and will use his cell number tomorrow. Ain't life interesting? Never a dull development, it seems.

Since I never have occasion to get any pictures of myself these days, I have fallen back to an old schtick I used to resort to in KSA—taking a few 'self-portraits' (now simply shortened to 'selfies' in our more modern social media age). Now while this may be considered an extreme expression of vanity by some, I look at it more as a sort of historical document recording changes in the old self. Besides, it's my life and I am interested in it much as an entomologist would be fascinated by a curious bug stuck to his collection board on a pin. Nothing really wrong with this, I think, since by so doing I only risk running afoul of my own disapprobations. The pictures are, on examination, fully as bad as I had feared: receding chin, barely kept in check with the Abraham Lincoln style goatee, gray hair gaining a noticeable foothold above ears, eyes reflecting a sort of uncertainty about them (have to remind myself to squint more often, like Clint Eastwood did; hey, it worked for him!). Other changes not so noticeable in the pictures: loss of skin elasticity all over, due to the savaging effects of the sun exposure in KSA (collagen destruction), some pre-cancerous skin changes on the cheeks (around the edges of the eyes--not good!) and perhaps even a bit of recently added adipose (too many chocolate toffee Macadamia nuts over the past week) around the midriff. The oval neck amulet is a small section of Tiger Shark skin, with a *Tiger Shark* tooth affixed to it (from Aussie friend, 'Dr. Shark' in Oz); the other item on silver chain is something Suki brought back for me from New Zealand, which I have always very much liked (it's a good-luck charm): a beautiful piece of jade-like stone carved into what the Maori aboriginals call the '*Path of Eternity*' (the stone is shaped in the form of a highly stylized *mobius* loop, without start or finish, and beautifully worked by hand—very unique item, actually). The hat, of course, is one I wore during the 1991 Gulf War in KSA; it's an old friend (lots of *mana*) that I take whenever I'm out somewhere 'adventuring'.

Breakfast was again library paste (Quaker Instant Oats) with the last of the dried cranberries, coffee (no bananas left), and the usual handful of vitamin and mineral supplements. Old Selix is out in the back yard, puttering about the grounds, raking up small leaves that have fallen from the Mango and Papaya trees. I guess this is what helps keep him going—90 years old! Tough old bird who obviously worked hard during his younger days, perhaps on the plantation.

Note on coconut carving: I managed to carve that coconut half mentioned earlier. I was reminded that carving coconut shells is much easier when the outer husk is still fresh and green; once the outer husk has become hard, they are a bitch to carve without screwing things up radically, through haste or impatience. This is good therapy and I find I enjoy it, although the small degree of dexterity I used to enjoy with my hands is greatly diminished from previous years (reason I don't attempt plastic model kits anymore). Wonder if I'd be any good at trying to make a hula pahu from a sectioned slice of coconut trunk? Just tried to reach Bill Kapuni, the pahu master, again. No joy. Maybe later. Only 4 days left to get this taken care of.

One thing about Moloka'i is the fact that fresh fish are commonly available every day. If not your own catch, someone else's. There are more highly edible species in the local waters than most can imagine. While I wouldn't want to tempt fate by doing any underwater spear-fishing, it's reportedly easy enough to drop a line in the water just about anywhere on the island and easily catch your limit within an hour. I've never been much of a fisherman (even trying to learn the knack of fly-fishing under Uncle Charlie's expert tutelage in Sun Valley, back in the late 50s/early 60s, but without much encouraging evidence of real piscatorial skill either then or now).

When living in Santa Cruz I even bought a surf casting rod & reel (still have it at home, in the garage), since I recall Dad formerly used to engage in that sport but never once caught anything with it. More proof of deficit talent in the Ichthyologic Department, I fear. Not much of a hunter/gatherer or fisherman, and definitely not much good at the ancient Neanderthal sport of clubbing women over the

head and dragging them home. Impression: would have made a lousy stone-ager (also known as an easy meal for a Saber-Toothed Tiger), I'm afraid.

If we ever end up retiring over here, I would probably look forward to kayaking around the reef and fishpond areas. Maybe then stop and drop a line over the side, earlier in the AM hours before the trades pick up and make the waters a bit choppy. I haven't the extreme motivation to take up serious out-rigger racing (like some of the buff women I mentioned I ran into, yesterday), but at least I am fairly adept at splashing innocently about in a sea-going (keeled) kayak (thanks to former youthful days spent as an expert canoer and sailing instructor).

"Arrr, matey. We be castin' off soon for fearsome adventures with our rubber ducky. Avast! Yessir, the scourge of the local duck pond, that's our Crusty Christian. Beat to quarters, Mr. Cuthbert! Arrrr-arrrrr-arrrrr!" (I think that's how blood-thirsty pirates are supposed to talk, anyway). *"A man's got to do what a man's got to do, Jaimie me boy! Arrr, etc., etc."*

Email from the other Aviation Museum board members informs me that our museum's Convair F-106A *Delta Dart* has now been successfully taken apart at AMARC (Aircraft Maintenance and Regeneration Center, located at Tucson, AZ) and is in the process of being loaded up for shipment to us in Sacramento (they said that there was still 30 gallons of overlooked JP-4 left in one of its wing-tanks, surprise!). Just my blasted luck to miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime adventure, retrieving a rare surviving specimen of my favorite aircraft from its hibernation out on the desert wastes for display resurrection at MAM. The process was delayed so many times, fraught with so many setbacks and broken deadlines (due to technical difficulties and political/bureaucratic hurdles at AMARC), that by the time the plan was finally cleared for take-off, I was over here on Moloka'i. I'll probably arrive back in Suckatomato at just about the same time it rolls in on the truck. At least I'll get to participate in helping put it back together.

Took a bit of time off to return to the Kawalo area just now, to check on that cemetery, as related yesterday. I searched the whole area over several times and found no such grave for a *Corinne Popolohu Hu'elani*, although there two *other* Hu'elani graves (both men). This is probably sufficient evidence to conclude that Carlo was having a bit of fun with me about the ghostly girl at the heiau, but he persists in maintaining a straight face when he assures me that this is in very real fact no joke! That also doesn't explain away the perplexing fact that I hadn't mentioned the purple color of the swim-suit top she was wearing!

I suppose I'll never really be sure, one way or another, but I know that what I saw was no day-dream. She appeared as solid and real as anyone can be. You just can't imagine visual details like that and others aren't able to routinely read minds, either; I also haven't had any *Awa* (intoxicating, mildly hallucinogenic ancient Hawaiian beverage) recently, either! At any rate, I guess I owe Carlo another 6-pack of Papeete Beer for at least giving me a most unusual experience (and unforgettable) that I cannot explain away with logic, reason, or any other conventional science-based process of rational understanding! I'm greatly tempted to return to the heiau and see if I can repeat the experience...

Thinking about that lovely vision of (spectral?) beauty, I am reminded of the way the ancient Hawaiians instituted what passed for marriage in their traditional (pre-missionary) culture. As I observed earlier in this rambling narrative, nothing approaching a conventional western 'sacrament of marriage' was carried out when a man & woman decided to mate. The only officiation of their status consisted of having them 'sleep with each other' (according to the references) in the presence of the local priests. Whether this 'sleeping together' consisted of simply falling asleep and sawing Zzzz next to each other under the same *kappa* (native paper-like fabric made from tree-bark), or whether it meant getting it on coitally under the approving gaze of the elders, is left to speculation. I can't personally imagine feeling comfortable enough to screw someone (no matter how beautiful or alluring) as the grandparents watched, approvingly (but on second thought, perhaps that's just my own

hang-up, based on cultural socialization under western customs and practices), so I'll assume that the 'sleeping together' was actually that and not wild coital debauchery.

One of the unique characteristics of the ancient Hawaiian culture that continually had the Christian missionaries sorely vexed was the perfectly natural native custom of what they (the missionaries) called 'an extreme act of apostasy'. By this, I mean the 'incestuous' practice of brothers and sisters 'marrying' (or even fathers and daughters, and sons and mothers). Although from a western scientific (genetic) standpoint this sort of behavior can have some very untoward results in terms of recessive genes being passed along to any offspring produced by the pairing, the custom was resorted to when a woman or man was considered to be of such 'high birth' (among the high Ali'i, or Hawaiian royalty) that a suitable mate of equal status could not be found. In that event, it was considered that the mating of a man and woman of the same immediate family bloodline was preferable to the mating of social un-equals. Thus, a brother and sister could (and frequently did) screw each other without much to-do. The curious thing about this is that there appears to be little documentation on the practice that survives today, despite the fact that even by non-scientific (i.e. Christian) standards, such behavior was regarded as being extremely reprehensible by the missionaries.

I am guessing that due to the extremely 'delicate' nature of this practice, the morally conservative and easily scandalised Christian missionaries were more than a bit reticent to discuss the matter, except within the most objective and figurative (religious) context. This is in all likelihood the chief reason why there was not much information on this subject recorded by those worthies that has survived to be passed along in their otherwise fairly comprehensive chronicles of heathen life. Too bad, too, since the speculative symbolic imagery of a brother and sister enjoying each other's healthy natural sexuality is an attractive one, as long as the scientific and religious proscriptions have been carefully excised and set aside (observing good aesthetic surgical technique, of course). [A note to any righteously anointed Christian readers, here, who may

be reading this: Remember, folks, I'm no God-fearing Christian myself; life is boring enough without removing some of the fun that such possibilities offer. If I had an absolutely drop-dead beautiful sister and I lived on an island paradise, I'd probably waste no time exploring her up-thrust mountains and lush, moist valleys myself. *Genetics and recessive genes be damned!*] We humans are, pretenses of being 'civilised' aside, merely evolved animals of a slightly higher order of development (and not much more, at that!).

Another common ancient Hawaiian cultural practice that was NOT quite so pleasant to contemplate was that of infanticide. According to many sources I have accessed, unwanted infants (there being no absolutely reliable birth control, per se, available—although some Kahuna-prescribed herbal preparations were used for this purpose) were not uncommonly killed. Apparently, if a child was born with less than perfectly normal features (and due to incestual mating customs, this was likely fairly common), that infant would be disposed of at birth. This apparently was routinely done by burying the infant alive, from what I read.

That seems more than a little heartless, given the fact that even sacrificial victims were usually strangled first, before being offered up at the heiau. However, I am reminded that human life mattered very little in a greater, overall context to the Hawaiians since theirs was a culture in which the social needs of all came far ahead of the needs of an individual. As Americans, who have been brought up from earliest childhood to subscribe to and embrace the ascendancy of individual rights over those of the majority, such an attitude seems grossly wrong. From my own personal viewpoint, as a person who has always felt the needs of the group should properly outweigh the rights and privileges of any individual member of society (within reason, of course), the practice in reference is slightly less shocking. In the absence of an artificially formulated religious proscription against such a practice, it undoubtedly made perfect sense to the early Hawaiians to kill a baby born with congenital defects of any discernible kind. The manner they used for killing the infants is still somewhat disturbing, however. Hawaiian eugenics, eh! *Huh!*

There's not much on the record concerning how the ancient culture treated mental illness, except for a few references to various individuals who were apparently so afflicted (again, such references as exist had to be passed along via oral histories, since there was no written language with which to record incidents of any possible relevance here), and the existence of several Hawaiian words that translate to 'sick in the head'.

It is also a fact that it was not unusual for Hawaiians (at least during the later Ali'i period, after the arrival of the priest Pa'ao (who incidentally was supposed to have white skin, and thereby assumed to be 'Caucasian', curiously enough) to regard very elderly members of the family as useless and not worth taking the requisite trouble to sustain, in the event they were incapacitated or incapable of supporting themselves. While this information conflicts somewhat with oral history information passed along about pre-Ali'i family customs on Moloka'i, it may in fact have some bearing on changes in ancient Hawaiian society that were due to or brought about by changes in the religion that occurred after the arrival of Pa'ao in the 11th or 12th Century. At any rate, the mention is made in several places that this was the later custom.

Naturally, as a western-raised person, the practices of infanticide and geriatricide seem unfortunate and somewhat disturbing to me (Haole kapu?), but seen strictly within the cultural context of their own civilisation ('Primitive cultures basic rule #1', as the cultural anthropologists are always reminding us), such customs appear perfectly functional and pragmatically practical.

I can hear the solar-heating water system cycling on the roof overhead. Apparently small, individual solar heating systems are routinely used on Moloka'i to provide hot water. Seems almost every home has some sort of solar water heating array on the roof, and why not? Now if they could simply harness the wind to tap into that cheap power source (the trade winds are always blowing here), they'd have the perfect little home-based closed system. Mainline electrical power on Moloka'i is provided by petroleum-fuel powered generation, as might be expected. There have been a few attempts to harness wind power on the other islands, but the cost of

mechanical maintenance for those early and less efficient systems were so high that they ultimately failed. I am advised that with today's available state-of-the-art technology, such wind driven power generation schemes are once more cost-effective, but there has been little development of individual (residentially appropriate) private systems done, to my knowledge; most of the research has been done in terms of larger area-wide generation systems.

My friend the bumble-bee has been absent for a day or two. He is now back at his usual habits of buzzing ponderously about the awning, just outside my window. It's a good thing I enjoy writing, as otherwise I'd be hard pressed to stay amused during my stay here. Reading & writing are two favorite pastimes, of course, but neither is very demanding physically. I'm glancing down at my waistline, something I've never paid much attention to owing to the fact that I've always been on the slender side. However, these past 28 days or so have not involved much physical activity (aside from the volcano climb already mentioned) and the cumulative effect of this lethargy and the delicious chocolate covered toffee macadamia nuts that are a particular failing of mine has been a noticeable bit of added padding around the gut. Not much, but enough to make me take notice.

Horrors! My worst nightmare is (and always has been) being fat and out of shape. I can't wait to get back to the daily bicycle ride and a muscle toning work out at home on the *OwFlex* torture rack. If we end up retiring over here, I'll have to devise some sort of daily exercise regime to help stave off these prospects that are so especially loathsome to me. Maybe running, but that's not good for the knees at this stage of life. Bicycling would be best, but given the traffic habits here and the routine DUI pattern that prevails among the locals, bike-riding is not without considerable risk on the island (from what I have seen and heard).

One awareness seems to be vaguely developing within me, thanks to the reflection pause this past few weeks has afforded me. That is, perhaps life in the islands is not as perfectly suited to me as I may have earlier thought. It may well be that what I need more is a life on the mainland in the northern part of the state, perhaps

somewhere along the north coast of California. I've always enjoyed the mountains and cooler climates found along the coast, so perhaps what I would really like is that sort of a climate-suited venue.

Moloka'i would be wonderful, if I weren't so concerned about exercise, getting old and fat, and suffering from the sort of indolent lifestyle that characterises life in the islands. Further, my far too idealistic and enthusiastic preconceived notions about a sense of 'community' here may also have been slightly premature, given the wide divergence that seems to exist between several different groups that one finds here.

An additional concern is the contamination of the island's adolescents by mainland pop-culture (and American mainstream attitudes) that is already noticeable may just be the tip of the iceberg. If this process continues to develop unchecked (and there's no reason to suspect it won't, given the immediate access of media and internet entertainment, with its unhappy and highly exploitative commercial effects accessed through electronic technology), Moloka'i won't be half as insular and/or remote from these progressively deleterious cultural disruptions as I would hope it would remain.

Whatever the final impact on my perceptions, after I fly back to the mainland, I feel I have definitely rushed into our purchase of a plot of land here a bit prematurely (that is, without giving this a lot of wise reflection beforehand) and we are now faced with this unavoidable and concrete reality to deal with in future as best we are able. If we are very, very lucky, the value of the land may rise significantly in the 4 years ahead of us, and in that event we should be able to sell it at a small profit (perhaps \$20,000). Meanwhile, however, we have to gear down to some serious meeting of the added financial responsibility that this new drain on our income poses. Consequently, perhaps I should investigate going on a regimen of Prozac to help me adjust to the unhappy realities of life that I thought were pressing in on me too much back home. Hmmm...strokes graying goatee absentmindedly for a second (but checks the unconscious urge to reach for another chocolate covered toffee macadamia nut).

In any comprehensive assessment of Hawaiian civilisation, from earliest origins through the latest period, one cannot but literally collide with the view that the early Christian missionaries were more of a harmful element (in the broadest sense) than a helpful one, considering the radical changes that the new religion brought to the Hawaiian islanders. It seems to be equally popular to take either one or the polar opposite other of two attitudes in this matter. There are those who will opine without restraint that the missionaries had, in their earnest desire to save the heathens' souls for their Christian god, by far a positive effect. There is another equally outspoken sentiment that the Christian missionaries bore ultimate responsibility for the fall of the Hawaiian monarchy (and the resulting loss of Hawaiian autonomy).

Both seem to carry partial validity, in my consideration, since there are as many positive as there were negative aspects of the early Christian missionaries' work. Among the most positive were the efforts they made to study and record the ancient culture and history and the devising of a written language for the islanders—something that the Hawaiians lacked, prior to 1820. The worst impact they had would probably have to have been their immense efforts to suppress the ancient morality and expressions of traditional cultural interactions with nature (in their efforts to save what they perceived as primitive godless heathens by converting them to the Christian religion).

As a proudly non-Christian heathen soul myself, I can never forgive them (the Christian missionaries) for their one-sided, mindless conviction that they had an iron-bound franchise or absolute insight on understandings of the universe, but I can acknowledge that given the mean, ruthless, degenerate and largely amoral nature of the non-religious white people who came to the islands (traders, whalers, sailors, soldiers, and commercial businessmen), the Christian missionaries are probably most wisely regarded, retrospectively, as the slightly better of two evils. Robert L. Stevenson commented on the grossly exploitative nature of those non-Christian white settlers, remarking that it was that sort of 'white person' who made him regret being of the same ethnicity. This

opinion frequently mirrors my own feeling about modern American society, although you don't have to be white to be common-minded and totally lacking in higher ethical awarenesses, certainly. God knows that no one culture, race, or creed has an exclusive lock on the baser aspects of human behavior. It's just a matter of the purest coincidence that I am white and the people responsible for Hawaii's ultimate downfall (as an ancient and proud people, possessed of a unique and distinctive culture unlike no other) were *also* (as anyone with intelligence would hasten to confirm). Nietzsche would argue that point, doubtlessly.

All other things being equal (my Ivy League, button-down collar, and Harris Tweed jacket wearing college political science instructor's favorite utterance), the missionaries probably did much more good than harm, in the final assessment. That doesn't mean that I am willing to completely absolve them of the many harmful effects of their religious fervor (since this has been a common theme with all religions since the dawn of recorded history, each of which believes its distinctive concept of 'God' is the one and only legitimate one), but I am at least willing to allow that for all their very human failings, the Christian missionaries felt they meant well. I suppose you could use that same sentiment to say that despite all of Adolph Hitler's many heinous outrages (or Mao's, or Pol Pot's, or Saddam Hussein's, et al), *he meant well*. However, I think my intended meaning stands sufficiently well qualified within the supportive context of these paragraphs to allow those words to be safely used here.

No religion has ever had, nor shall ever have (in my humble opinion), any more truly sagacious insight into the deeper, ultimate mysteries of human experience than that of your average frontally lobotomized individual. For that reason, any seeking after absolute 'truths', when it comes to the Biggest Questions (e.g. "*What's it all about, Alfie?*") is destined to wither on the vines of intelligent human inquiry. By virtue of that belief, I regard anything and everything accomplished anywhere in 'the name of god' as being nothing more than the inspired application of latent human abilities that arise solely out of the sources of all biological life (and sheer coincidence)

that are as sentient or non-sentient as logical possibilities allow for (and not from any party-line connection directly to a 'God').

Against that Kevlar®-like backdrop of my own doggedly maintained personal prejudices, I am very sad to find that the ancient Hawaiians lost so much of themselves not to one group or another, but to the fact that whenever a weaker group (i.e. possessed of a lesser quality of weapons technology) meets a more powerful group (i.e. possessed of weapons technology of a higher level or quality), the weaker group is categorically *doomed* to be subjugated.

That is ultimately what happened to ancient Hawaii. Western man with his advanced weapons (and only coincidentally, with his religion) came along, contact was made, and the more rapacious, overwhelming force came out on top. In that sense, the end was already foreseen the minute Cook pulled into the Hawaiian's parking lot, back in 1778 and the early Christian missionary provocateurs simply tossed a few low-yield theological hand grenades into the cultural battle here and there.

Drove into K'kai to take a break and pick up some things at Friendly Market. In the hottest part of the day you you'd expect things to be pretty slow and surprise...they were! On a whim, I dropped in at Kanemitsu's to check out their remaining goods and bought a couple of apple fritters. Didn't notice Wally at first, an older artist whom I had met at the art mart, last Saturday, sitting behind me at one of the tables. His wave caught my attention and after I bought the stuff I sat down to talk story for a while. Wally is the fellow whom I had mentioned earlier had had surgery for skin cancer on his face. As we chatted, it came out that he has also had abdominal surgery for more CA and was on dialysis for years before finally getting a kidney transplant. Some medical history, I reckoned. He's only 66, too. Makes me reflect anew on the importance of having good genes (and also perhaps a healthy lifestyle).

Wally is an artist and as we talked about this and that, Sturgess of 'Sturgess' Café and Gallery' came by. When I expressed some regret over the fact that Sturgess refused to sell any of his personal works on display in the gallery, this seemed to be a hot button for Wally,

who told me a few things about Sturgess that I'd never have guessed. Apparently, Wally had offered to help Sturgess renovate his old building some time ago and (Sturgess) then had rather rudely expressed no appreciation for Wally's help whatsoever. I told Wally that although I hadn't met Sturgess personally, I had gathered from this and that that he was somewhat of an arrogant individual. This Wally confirmed and went on to say that he thought it was ironic that Sturgess won't sell any of his local art to interested parties, while on the internet he apparently had quite a trade (apparently with customers in the Far East) going in works that Wally expressed as 'pure pornography'.

Wally doesn't strike me as a blue-nose Christian conservative, so his opinion of what he termed 'pornography' is of interest. Sturgess advertises a lot in the island papers for models that he wants to paint 'fully clothed' portraits of. Given this new bit of information about Sturgess' apparent erotic art side-line, I can't help but wonder about the emphasis on 'fully clothed' and how that may tie into his other interests. Just goes to show you that no matter what the appearances seem to indicate, there's never such thing as a fully *complete* understanding possible, no matter who you are dealing with (e.g. President Willie's notorious dalliance with Monika Lewinsky in the Oval Office).

Wally apparently needs some money, since he offered to paint a picture similar to one I had briefly admired last Saturday (of Mt. Fuji in Japan), that he had said he was holding for someone else. Now, Wally is one of those souls I would call a talented dabbler, despite the fact that he tells me he teaches art at the local community center. Anyone with even modest ability can, of course, teach anyone of lesser ability, so that's not saying much. The proof in art is in the viewing and not in the self-pronouncement of one's 'instructor' status. This doesn't change Wally's stature as a good fellow who it is fun to chat with, needless to say. (I finally found among his offerings a quite striking impression of the *I'ao Needle* on Maui, which I rather liked and bought.)

As we were talking, an exceptionally good-looking young lady walked in, took a look at the baked goods and then walked out. She

definitely caught my eye and I tracked her out of the corner of my eye as she walked down the street, thinking to myself: *"Holy shit, can it be that a lovely unattached young woman has somehow ended upon little old Moloka'i?"* I should have known better, as in the next 5 minutes she returned with a hunky, buffed out boyfriend. Alas, there's no justice in life! She had a great set of chi-chis, too, sticking out nicely against her T-shirt. [Note to self: What is it about women's breasts, anyway? Is it the latent infant still trapped in us grown-up men that they excite? Or the recollection of the last good lustful suck we had? Wonder what a psychologist would have to say about men and their fixation with firm, full female breasts, anyway? Ah, the marvels of blind sexual instinct.]

Since Wally knows Carlo, I decided to ask him if he knew anything about that old heiau out at Murphy's Beach that Carlo had steered me to.

"Oh yeah," he replied, *"Been there. It's a fish heiau, supposedly dedicated to Kuula (a minor fish aumakua). Did you know it's haunted?"* Ah! I told him that I did and that I had in fact seen what could only have been the ghost in reference. *"No shit...you saw her, huh? She's supposed to be nice looking, young, but hardly anyone ever sees her. How did you luck out?"*

I couldn't explain it any better than he could, of course, but asked him if the story about a haunting was really legit or whether this was more of Carlo's humor? I told him also about finding no grave, as Carlo has suggested I would at Kawelo.

"Nope, supposed to be at Pu'uuko'o, not Kawelo, from what I've heard. The locals there could probably tell you more about it, since she seems to have had family there. You really saw her, or are you just pulling my leg? Story goes she doesn't show herself unless she isn't afraid of you. Never heard of anyone I know actually seeing her before...must be afraid of everyone...but from what you said, that was one pretty lady...um, at one time, of course."

At that he stopped and looked at me with a puzzled expression. *"Strange stuff, that! You say you really saw her, huh? Wow!"*

I assured him I at least saw *someone* there. Whether a ghost or a real person was beyond my ability to say, since there was no indication of any ghostly behavior (or at least what I think would be ghostly behavior), as far as I could tell from those brief glimpses. She simply looked like a really good-looking young local lady to me, I guessed perhaps just walking back up from the sea, since *her hair was wet...*

I left Wally shortly afterwards to take my things back up to the place in Ranch Camp. Judging from Wally's reaction, I'd say that either this is a larger joke than I thought, or I saw something I simply cannot explain (there's that bit about her purple top and the translation of her name; everything else can be rationalized but those two tantalizing details!). Amazing and here I am, back at square one, a non-believer who doesn't know what to make of this whole thing. [Makes mental note to buttonhole Carlo again and ask him for more information. Maybe with some more warm Papeete.] I did learn one interesting further thing: it was the custom for the family to put a small circlet made of Maile vine on the left wrist of a very recently deceased person. I recall that she was wearing something on her left wrist, but the encounter was too brief to know what, other than it was green in color and seemed to be made of leaves. *Brrrr.*

Sitting here, thinking about the above developments and feeling a strong need for one of those apple fritters I bought earlier in the day (dripping with saturated fat and fried, to boot—*death wish?*). Clyde (CJ's Gardening Service) tells me he has a conflict in that his daughter needs to be at the library at 6PM to pick up some sort of award she won for reading. We've agreed to reschedule our rendezvous to check out the property for a cost estimate tomorrow. That's the Moloka'i way; nothing ever written in stone and always subject to the needs of the 'ohana (which is as it ought to be, I guess).

The last couple of days have been quite warm and humid. Lots of moisture-laden clouds developing late in the day, without a lot of the usual wind to cool things off. Since my room faces the sun (away from the trades), it gets fairly warm by about 4PM.

Another of my books sheds an interesting perspective on the early missionaries I have been holding forth about. The book was apparently written as a sort of response to all the less-than-positive insinuations James Michener made about them in his fictionalized novel *'HAWAII'*. By Michener's reckoning, the missionaries were all a bunch of holier- than-thou, blue-nosed prudes who had a greater number of human failings than most people, religious or not. The thread of hypocrisy runs strongly and centrally through the book. Apparently, some of the more 'God-fearing' brethren among us have felt Michener slighted their evangelical forebears a bit too much, even though Michener's book is fiction that was 'supposedly' based only roughly on actual people. The book (*'Hawaii: Truth Stranger than Fiction'*, by LaRue Piercy) takes pains to delve into the actual history that Michener researched so diligently (in typical Michener style) and contrasts the fiction to the true events that took place, since the parallels are quite real (just names, places, and actual events changed to make them seem purely fictional).

It makes interesting reading, but one gets the feeling that the author is trying hard to vindicate the historic figures that Michener used to model his characters after. He makes a remark in the preface expressing his pleasure in having received so many compliments from readers who felt such a book was 'long overdue'; one gets the distinct feeling that the 'grateful readers' are not modern-day godless heathens, either. At the very least it makes for interesting reading, since Michener's books are so well-known and widely read. An amusing image comes to mind: Michener returns from the grave and decides to do a similarly expansive and terribly complicated book with a bit sharper focus: *'MOLOKA'I'*.

I can see parts of it in my mind as I write this. One unforgettable chapter features a particularly strong-minded (but intuitively brilliant) heathen high chief named Kalika (Hawaiian for 'Chris'), who has a rep for being a stupendously well-hung lover (his *'ule'* is legendary, and in fact it's the real-life model for the sacred *Ka Ule o Nanaha*), and 6 wives, each of whom is more gorgeous than the next. As I see it in my mind's eye, Kalika has just sacrificed a particularly arrogant missionary (who bears a striking resemblance

to *George Dubya Bush*) for mouthing off at him, is about to lead his people up against the missionaries to overthrow them and successfully reclaim the islands for the Hawaiians. Oh yes, in this he is assisted by a couple of passing friendly alien UFOs, who decide to trade him some of their older (last lightyear's model, actually) proton cannons for a load of coconuts (which just happen to be made of the EXACT chemical ingredients from which their interstellar fuel is synthesized...what a coincidence!). It gets even better...

Of course, there's already a book (several, matter of fact) by that name, as well as a movie. The subject matter focuses on Father Damien's work with the lepers in the Kalaupapa Colony. I haven't mentioned much about that particular aspect of Moloka'i, since it is well known by most of the world and besides, the guy had a saint complex. Not my kind of *mensch*, really. Oh yes, while on the subject of *Hansen's Disease*, those insinuating rumors you may have heard about Father Damien, Mother Marianne, and Baby Ignatz are not true.... Father Damien is on the road towards R.C. *sainthood* (along with Mom Theresa) as I write this, which is great, because he really was a marvelous human being (somewhat STRANGE, but still a really wonderful, selfless guy).

Someone once remarked that the only genuine state of selflessness is achieved *after* one dies. Think about it. *Hmmmmm*. That was an 'off-handed' (pun) remark, if I ever heard one. Then there's the leper who left the prostitute a tip... This of course, reminds me of many more tasteless jokes one hears about lepers, but I'll spare you. They were questionably amusing originally and probably would not be much improved in the retelling here.

It's getting later, my humor is getting more tasteless and cynical, and that apple fritter is still sitting there on the counter, staring at me as it continues to ooze saturated fat in the afternoon heat like some baleful dietary monster. Come back tomorrow: I promise it'll only get better in these truly inspired pages.