



the *Spirit* of SOUTH MAUI

original art and verse by *Steve Simon*



To Alexandra & Nicolas

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May only the sky be your limit!

Artist Statement

Few places can match the enchantment of the Hawaiian Islands and even fewer places can compare to the beauty and tranquility of South Maui. It is indeed a destination that leaves an imprint on you with its very spirit.

I first visited this part of Maui in 2001 and was captivated from the start. As a landscape artist, it is impossible to keep from envisioning painterly compositions at nearly every turn. Paradise, it seems, offers few creative obstacles to the artist.

The role of the landscape artist is to interpret the beauty of nature—land, sea, air, and light—and to express this essence in a manner that resonates with the beholder. The landscape artist's ultimate goal is to offer the beholder the opportunity to see and feel the moment without physically being there. It is a lofty goal that can be quite humbling, particularly when trying to express the essence of a place so special. I can only hope that my efforts do some semblance of justice to the beauty of creation that is in this corner of the world.

How often have you beheld art and wondered if you understood the artist's message or wondered if the emotion you were feeling was intended by the artist? It is for this reason that I enjoy writing poetry to accompany my art. It provides me with a second opportunity to “steer” you, the beholder, in the direction of my composition's intent and perhaps inspire you to participate in pondering what the composition means to you.

It is, therefore, my hope that as you flip through this collection, you might feel that you, too, are participating in a journey—part yours, part mine, the convergence of which we shall call *The Spirit of South Maui*.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Steve Simon". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Where

Where on the slopes of Haleakala there lays
A special place graced by Polynesian rays.

Where travelers come to relax and play
Find paradise and seek the perfect getaway.

Where nature offers rainbows in an apologetic way
For briefly raining on your otherwise sunny day.

Where a breaching whale claps like distant thunder
Humbles your thoughts with awe and wonder.

Where *aloha* itself seems to grow on the trees
Roll in with the surf and blow in the breeze.

Where a warm ambience plays the perfect host
This is the spirit of the South Maui Coast.





Over the Sea

An island on the horizon stirs the imagination

Arouses curiosity, and begs exploration.

I ponder the early Polynesians navigating by star

In search of these shores from islands afar.

The generations of natives who called this home

And Western explorers who here did roam.

Missionaries, whalers, men of fair and foul mores

Have come great distances to land on these shores.

They come and they go, only paradise still stands

History written like fleeting footprints in her sands.

Polynesian Romance

Like fireworks in suspended animation
The state's flower captures our imagination.

Unabashedly luring all flyers by
Nectar so sweet, hues pleasing to the eye.

I saw a blooming pair in a courting dance
One played coy, the other took a chance.

From every nook love seems to spring
As if *aloha* were carried on Cupid's wing.





Mauí Lifts the Sky

In a time long, long ago

The sky was positioned uncomfortably low.
The burden borne by plants was incredibly great
As their leaves were flattened under the weight.

There was only enough space for man to crawl
Until *Mauí* took it upon himself to change it all.

He requested a drink from a woman's gourd
"I will push the heavens higher," he gallantly roared.

After taking a drink, he pushed with such might
The oppressive clouds rose to treetop height.

A second heave and a thunderous shriek
Lifted the sky to the level of a mountain peak.

With one last exertion, the sky was firmly planted
To the heights we now all take for granted.

Out of This World

Nothing quite says relaxation
Like a seaside cocktail on vacation.

One sip and I get the sudden inclination
To find cause for a simple celebration.

Mai Tai — Tahitian for “out of this world” —
Best enjoyed with hula music and a dancing girl.





Grand Finale

Beneath the clouds and just above land
Glistening off the wet beach sand.

Casting trees and rocks in silhouette
Beaming brilliant colors before it does set.

One last spectacular and fleeting display
Before bringing an end to another sunny day.

As any great entertainer to a protégé would implore
Save the best for last and leave 'em hungry for more!

On a Bird's Wing a Tree Finds the Sea

The ancients hewed them from a single koa tree
In a spiritual process of ritual and ceremony.

Into the forest a priest would lead the mission
Seeking a certain bird to assist his decision.
The *elepaio* bird's knack for soft wood they pecked
Would steer the priest away from a poor prospect.

Prayers, incantations and sacrifices were then made
Before the tree was felled to the ground where it laid.
There the trunk was barked and pointed at each end
Then hollowed to make the return easier to descend.

Artisans of skill, intuition, and reason
Would then trim, smooth, shape and season.
Months would pass before the tree a vessel became,
It was then considered a man, and given a name.

A *luau* would precede the launch of what was to be
This "man" borne of the forest, destined for the sea.





Awakenings

You of most enlightening times of day
Violet the color you choose to display.

In you my soul finds renewed light
Animating my dreams with that which might.

So my passions hope today's their day
In which I might act on that which I pray.

Above It All

Peacefully the morning arrives
Quietly under agreeable skies.

A lifeguard tower reminds me
Of a forgotten childhood fantasy.

To have a secret hide away,
A sanctuary in which to dream and play.

Come to think of it, that still sounds like fun,
Especially tucked away in the warm, tropical sun.
I guess with age things don't change that much
When it comes to the inner child staying in touch.





The One Set Apart

Hawaii's most celebrated and influential man
A fierce warrior who became a king with a plan.
He was born as Halley's comet streaked across the sky
A tragic omen priests of the day could not deny.

His grandfather, King *Alapai*, was counseled to destroy
The "slayer of chiefs" who might become of this boy.
But the child was secretly rescued and whisked away
To a childless couple with whom he would stay.

After some years, the king learned the child had been spared
And returned *Kamehameha* to the royal life history had prepared.
True to the omen, a great warrior *Kamehameha* would become
Uniting the Big Island under his lone kingdom.

But *Kamehameha* had a still more grandiose vision
Uniting all the islands became his passionate ambition.
Eventually he conquered each island except *Kauai*
Which voluntarily joined the Kingdom of *Hawaii*.

A life truly without equal right from the start
Indeed *Kamehameha* means "the one set apart."

Simple Pleasures

The evening arrives, the beach clears

The sun sets, and the moon appears.

We head out to our favorite place

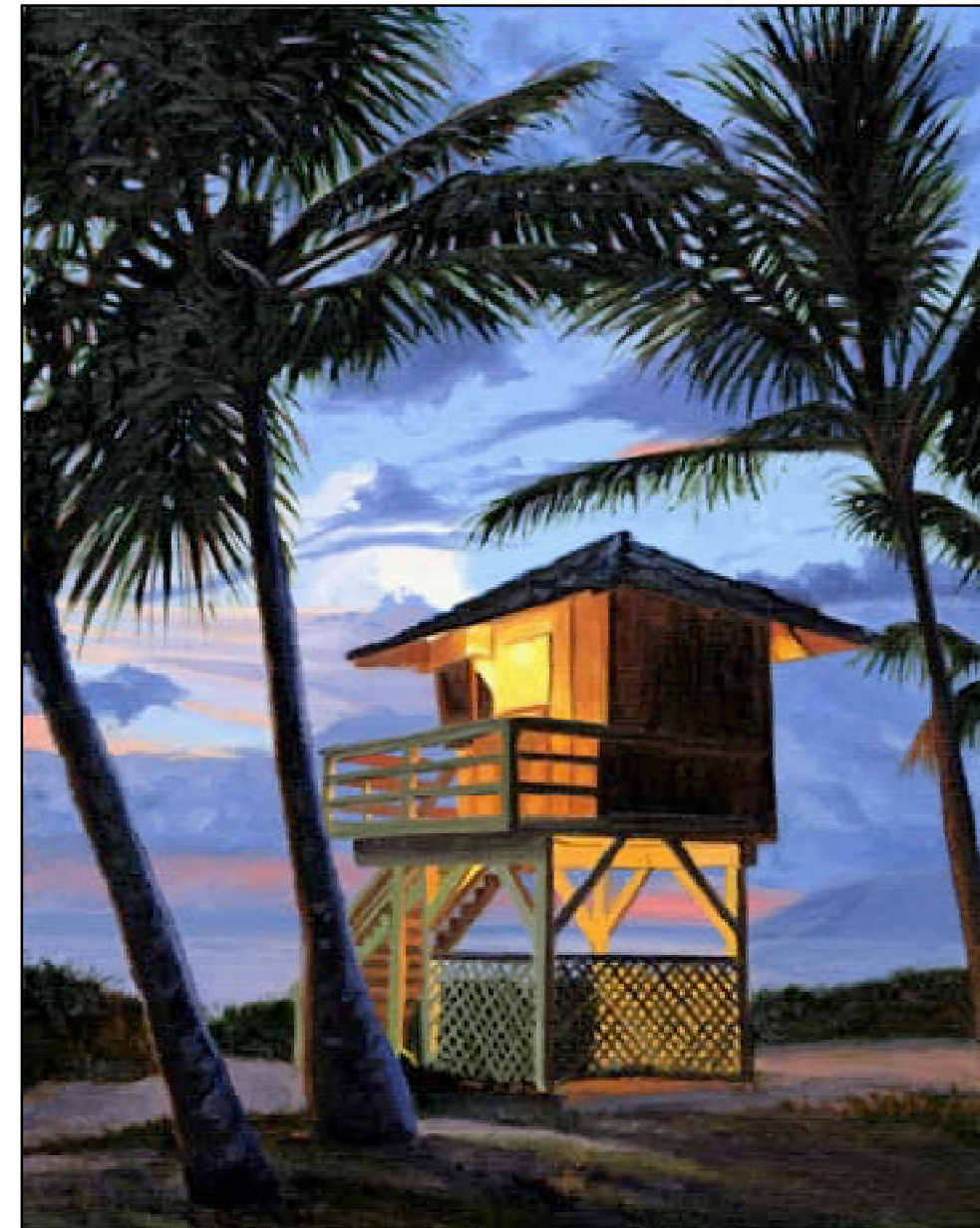
A palm swept beach with a serene grace.

Like a quaint home with porch light burning

A return to simplicity, I feel my heart yearning.

And so we give in to our next crazy whim

Diving through the surf on a moonlit swim.





The Bridge of Generations

There once was a boy, son of the gods *Hina* and *Ku*
The father wished to return to the land he once knew.

Finally one day *Ku* answered his homesick heart
And off to his native *Tahiti*, he did depart.

When *Ku's* son was older he wished to meet his dad
To reunite with his father his mother told him he had.
To find his father he would need to cross the ocean
Requiring that his mother set a clever plan in motion.

She chanted to a coconut as it sprouted and grew
The palm burst forth as she told him what to do.
He climbed the tree while she continued singing
The tree grew and arched, all the time bringing,
The young boy closer to his father over the sea
When the palm's crown landed, on *Tahiti* he would be.

Upon reuniting, father and son began their celebrations
And still today the palm is revered for bridging generations.

Hope Springs Eternal

For a century and a half they've congregated
At this quaint, little church idyllically situated.

A small cemetery lies between the church and beach
Set as if heaven itself must be somewhere in reach.

Rustling palms remind us of our family tree
And those dearly departed we might once again see.

The tide ebbs and flows but never does leave
As sunrays of hope shine on those who believe.





There's Something About Maui

There's something about being here
That draws so many from far and near.

Something about the aura of the place
Seems endowed with a special grace.

Something in the water or maybe the sand
Something I love but don't quite understand.

Like a hypnotised tree crawling on its side
Mesmorized by *Maui's* tug of the tide.

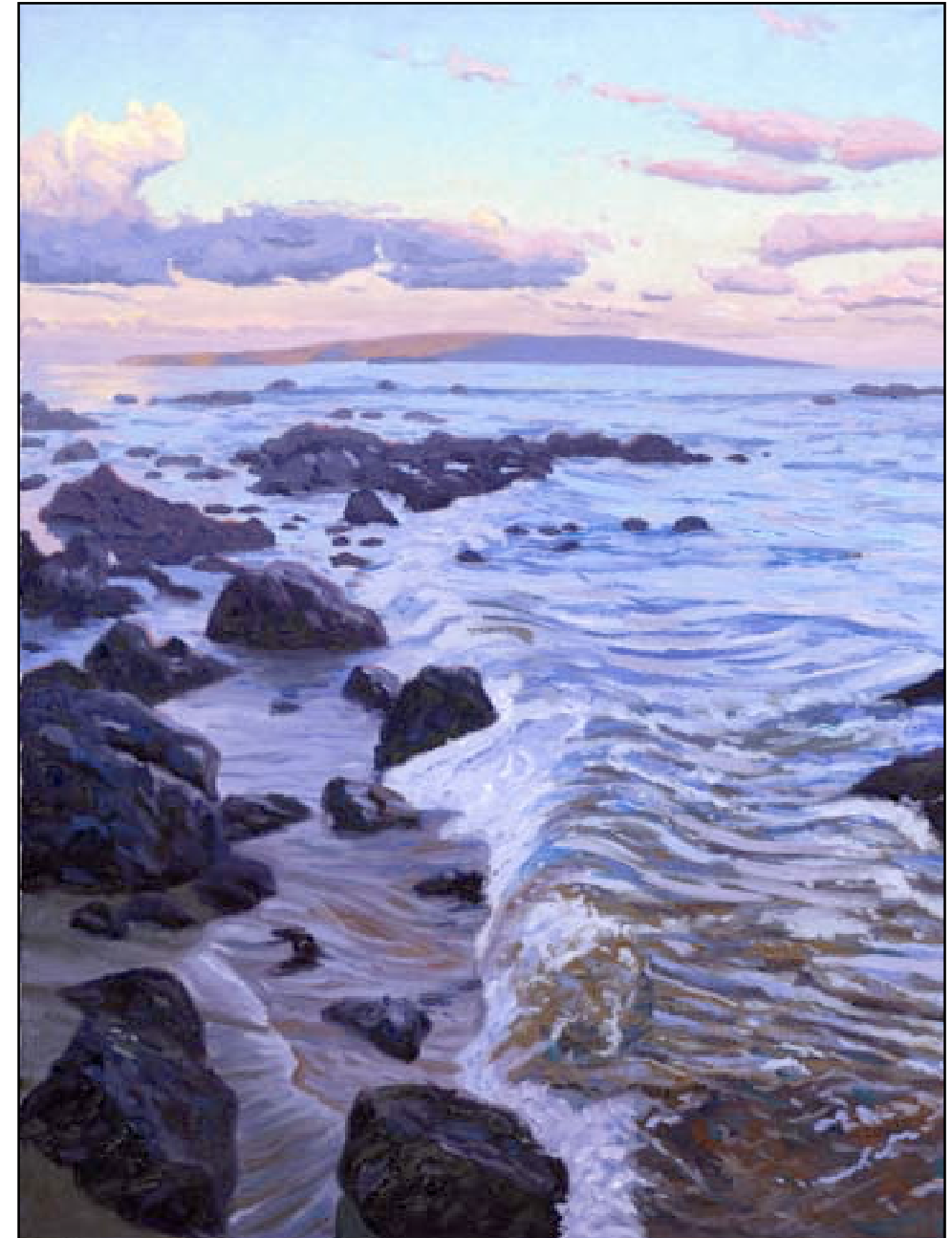
Mauí the Fisherman

Once upon a time there was not enough space
So *Mauí* sought a new continent for the human race.

He descended to the underworld, brave and alone
Asking an ancestress to fashion a hook from her jawbone.
She obliged, and when *Mauí* returned home he made a plea
For his brothers to take him fishing far out to sea.

With the sacred *alae* bird, *Mauí* baited his hook.
His sister, *Hina* of the Sea, then his lure took
To a fish named “Old One Tooth” whose sole purpose
Was to hold down the land beneath the water’s surface.
Preoccupied by the bait, the powerful fish lost his grip
As the giant land mass beneath him began to slip.

Mauí exhorted his brothers to row and not look back
But curiosity overcame one and with a sudden crack,
The continent shattered into pieces, and to be specific
Became the Polynesian Islands of the South Pacific.





Blowing in the Wind

Known as *ha* to the Hawaiians of ancient time

The element of wind, breath of God divine.

It follows, *aloha* means with His breath from above

Like a spirit-filled breeze of compassion and love.

In this revelation, I see sailing in new light

As capturing divine breath to go where you might.

Goin' to the Chapel

At her friend's wedding, she caught the bouquet.

Now, a year later and it's her big day.

She's dreamt of this since she was a young girl.

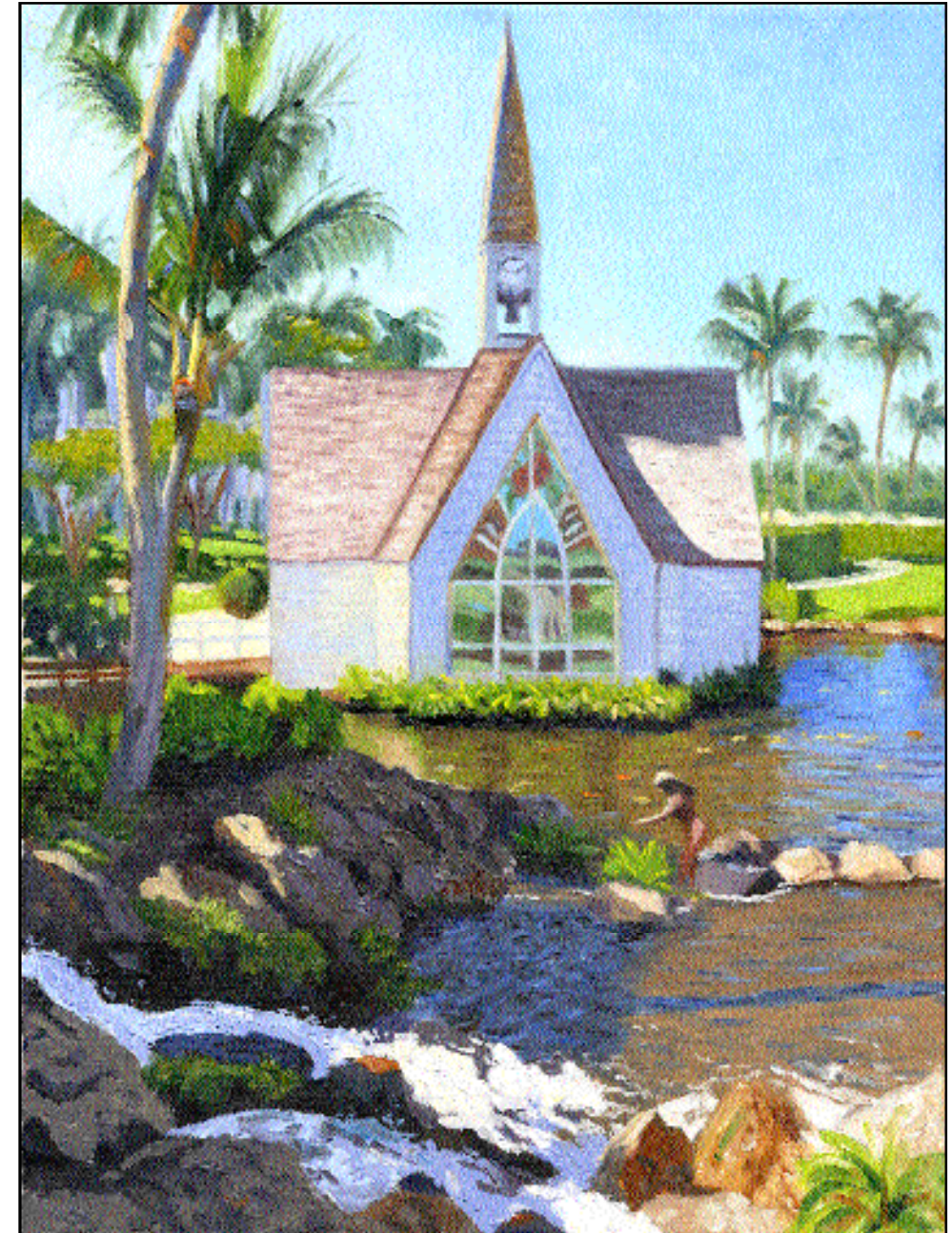
Now the magic of her day is about to unfurl.

Before her a statued nymph fittingly navigates the shoals,

Undaunted by whatever the course ahead holds.

Just as bride and groom vow, confirmed with rings

To care for each other, whatever life brings.





In Their Hands

At home, at school, or on this shore
The daughters any parents could adore.

In bathing suits and in bare feet
So innocent and charmingly sweet.

In the castles they build and dreams they chase
I see how this world might be a better place.

Kings and a Duke

Wave riders of every ilk and sort
Share the passion of this ancient sport.

The courage and skill to harness the sea
Was a celebrated pastime of *Hawaiian* royalty.

But for a period after the colonial arrival
The sport of the kings barely clinged to survival.

Hawaii's own Duke *Kahanamoku* by name
Helped restore this sport through olympic fame.

A gold medal swimmer and surfer extraordinaire
He became the sport's ambassador with grace and flare.

Though technology has improved boards big and small
We owe ancient kings and a duke for starting it all.





Top of the Morning

An inviting path ushers passersby
Past a gorgeous beach 'neath bright blue sky.

Cool morning shadows color the scene
Architecture evokes a sense of the serene.

It sure is hard to visit a place like this
And not be swept away by the embracing bliss.

Walking in Wailea

It's morning and I'm ready for my walking meditation
Soaking in the abundance of nature's creation.

The surf offers a gentle mist and soothing sound
Barefoot my soul connects with the energy of the ground.

The sun on my skin chases off worry and anxiety
As I breathe in fresh air from the splendid plant variety.

Across the water, the landscape reminds me
Of the awesome force of Hawaii's volcanic energy.

And so this, too, I tap with creative visualization
Letting it all resonate with my own body's vibration.

Then I offer my own *aloha* to that which surrounds me
Feeling truly connected to nature and all her great mystery.





What's in a Name

There once was a Frenchman with an unhealthy obsession
Who scoured the earth in quest of worldly possession.

A fortune teller told him to look for a bloom
With pedals the color of the new moon,
Fragrance so sweet it will overpower your soul,
Bringing forth riches more valuable than gold.

After looking far and wide, he was granted his due
The prophecy, faithfully believed, finally came true.
His soul was awakened by the fragrant pleasure
Thereafter devoting his life to nature's floral treasure.

This is the story how Charles Plumier a botanist became
And the unusual way the plumeria acquired its name.

Tropical Bouquet

Torch ginger to ignite the fire
Orchids their gracefulness to admire.
Birds of paradise to set you free
Anthurium to add a little curiosity.

Each instrument with its own part to play
In this concert of floral beauty on display.
Nature's magic bringing joy to the day
The rich harmony of a tropical bouquet.





Relaxing in Style

Cabanas to shade the midday sun

An inviting pool for refreshing fun.

A cool drink as a rite of initiation

The jacuzzi for some serious rejuvenation.

Here you can find the perfect vacation

With a healthy dose of luxurious relaxation.

Blue Hawaiian

Hanging out somewhere by the beach
I let my mind wander beyond worry's reach.

In a blissful daydream I get a notion
To order a drink the color of the ocean.

A parasol adorns my savory libation
A couple of hula girls join the celebration.

Lost in a world of sensory delight
Drinking in Polynesian sunlight.





Maui Solitude

When life's inevitable stress descends upon me
I like to think of that blessed tree.

What a tonic it would be for the attitude
To live in such spectacular solitude.

No binary, beeping computers, no traffic jams
No impending deadlines or marketing scams.

Just the essence of being alive
Without needless things for which to strive.

Mauí Snares the Sun

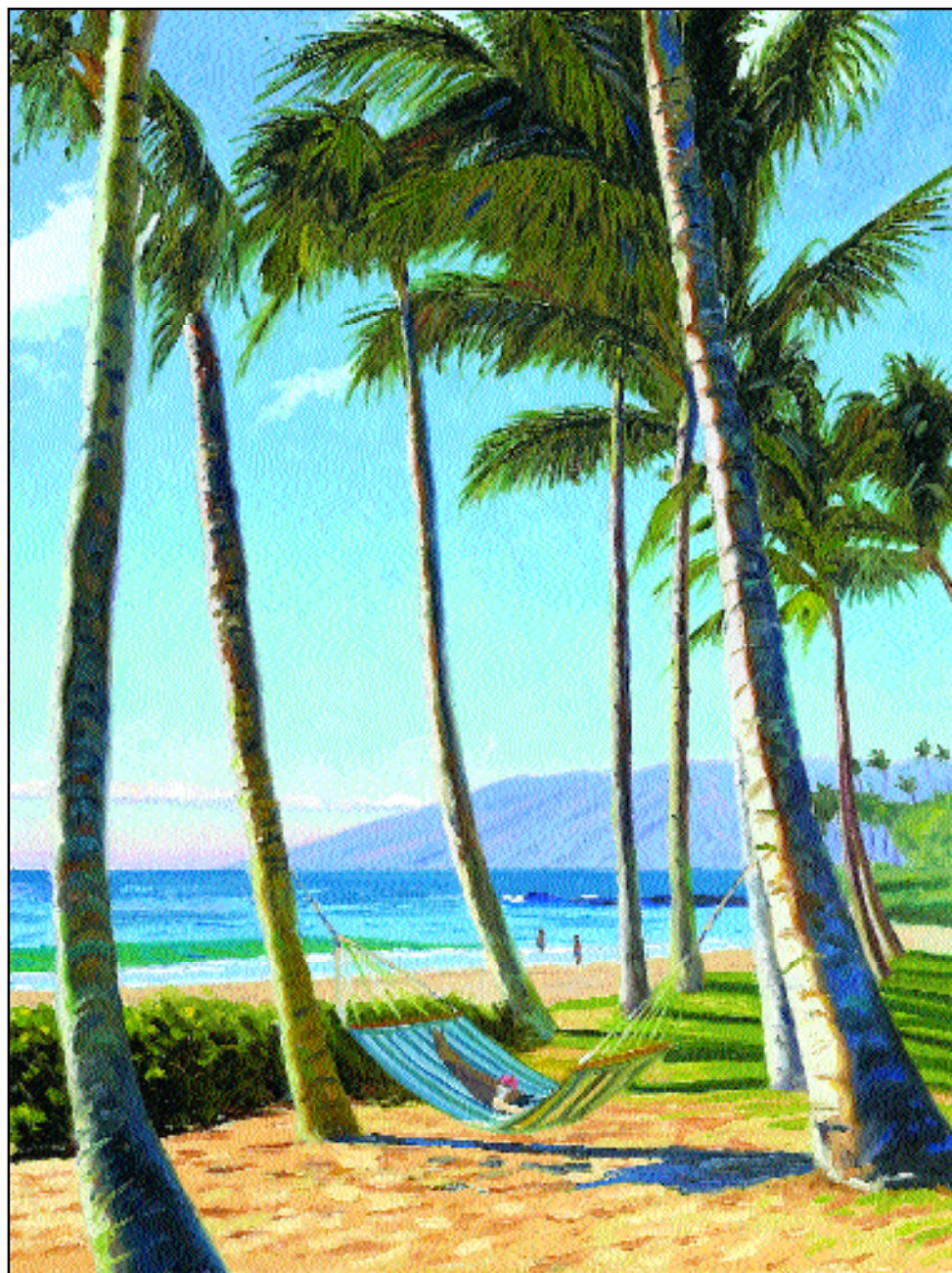
Sunset gazing on this beautiful shore
I recall a tale how in times of yore
The sun sped hastily across the sky
Irking *Mauí's* mother, whose *tapa* cloth wouldn't dry.

And so in an attempt to help Mom dry her clothes
Mauí crept to the hole where the sun always rose.
When the sun's head and shoulders sunrise had brung
Mauí's amazing sun trap would be sprung.

Incredibly the massive sun *Mauí* did snare,
Using long ropes made of his sister's hair.
With his strength and power of his magic jawbone
Mauí slowed the sun's travel so longer it shone.

His mother's *tapa* finally could dry
And now our days pass more slowly by.





Hawaiian Time

The late afternoon sun sets the mood
For a cocktail and appetizer food.

It's clearly time to relax and unwind
It's been a long day of the beachgoer's kind.

The hammock's gentle arc and rhythmic creaking
Set your Hawaiian clock, in matter of speaking.

Here there's a different sense of time somehow
Not so much "where and when" as "here and now."

Blessings

Thank you life for moments like these
The lapping waves, the ocean breeze.

Thank you life for the canvas of the sky
The sunsets you paint so pleasing to the eye.

Thank you for my lover's gentle touch
Thank you life that has granted me so much.





Pele's Wrath

Ancient legend has it that *Pele*, Goddess of Fire,

Was once smitten with passionate desire.

For *Lohi-au* a warrior who loved—in a twist of plot—

A giant lizard named *Mo'o*—believe it or not.

Enraged, *Pele* decided she'd have the last laugh

As the goddess cut the giant lizard in half.

The head landed and eventually formed a cinder cone

Still visible from Makena Beach as it's currently known.

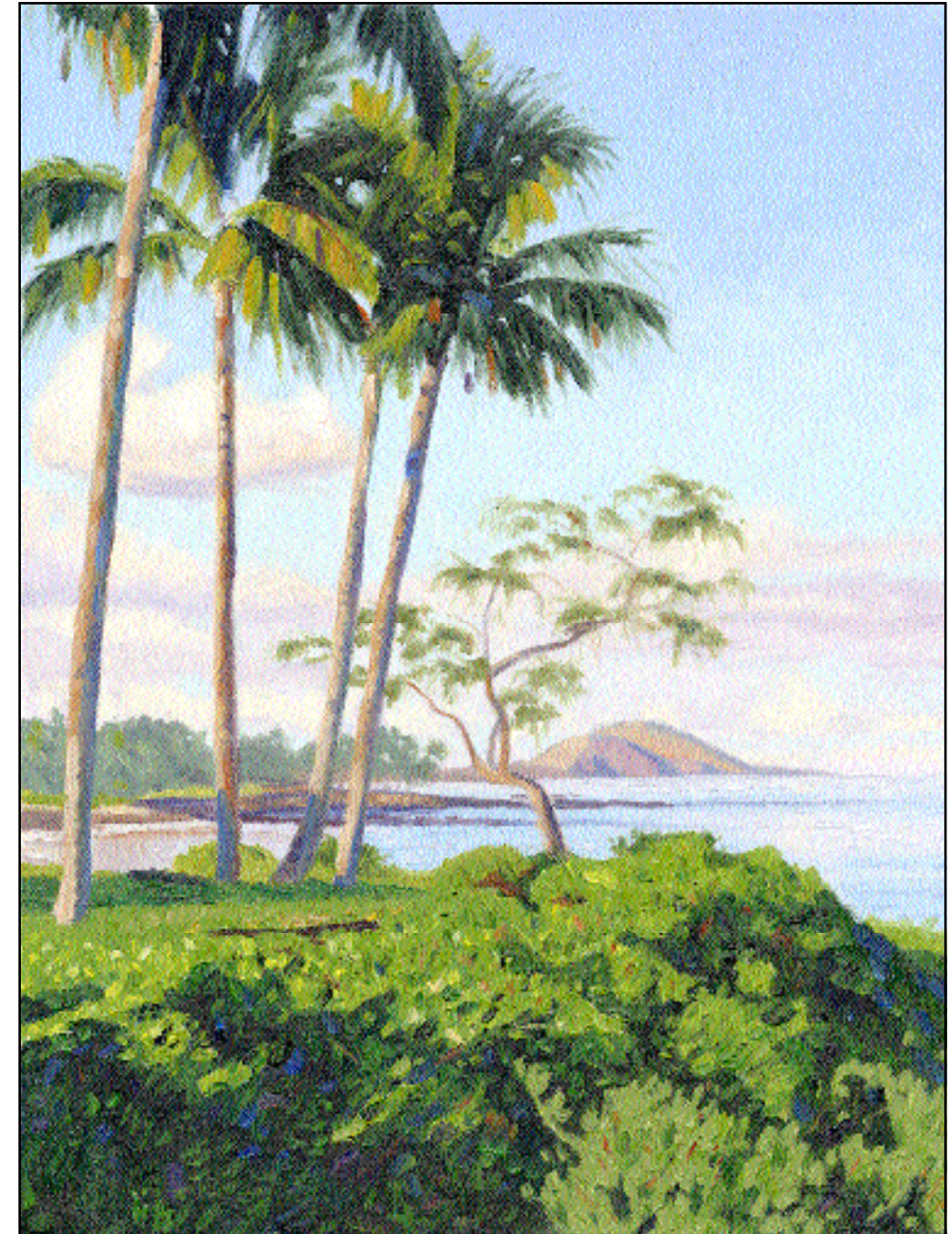
The tail *Pele* hurled a distance far out to sea

Became the islet known as *Molokini*.

Of Pain and Privilege

There in the distance, as the legend said
One can see the remnants of the giant lizard's head—
A conspicuous, rising mound for all to see
To ponder *Pele's* wrath for all eternity.

In striking contrast, before me a dainty tree
Seemingly so fragile but oh so free.
Living as grandly as royalty might do
Fanned by palms while enjoying the view.





Par for the Course

I had hoped the “hang loose” island mood
Would help my sporting attitude.

Instead today my ball kept heading for the sand
Like a beachgoing snowbird out for a tan.

Once I even hit a tree as my ball went beyond
The next hole’s tee box and into a pond.

After the third hole, I quit keeping score
Threatened my putter and went hoarse yelling “fore.”

Regardless of my frustrating and shabby play
Nothing could mar the view on this picture-perfect day.

Inspired by Laka

If *aloha* is the spirit of *Hawai'i*
Then *hula* its soul must be.

For it is in this native dance
And in its accompanying chants
In its gestures, feeling and in its sound
That the essence of *Hawai'i* is truly found.
It is love of nature, family and sense of compassion
Reverence for history and storytelling passion.

Laka, goddess of love, forest and plants
Is regarded as the patron of the *hula* dance.

When performed at its spiritual best
It tickles our very *mana* in a soulful quest
To link the spirit of our own human lifeline
With the natural world and with the divine.

So the next time you marvel at the skill the *hula* requires
Perhaps you'll remember the love *Laka* inspires.





Aloha and Mahalo

Flirting with the horizon, shimmering on the sea
The setting sun gives cause for a certain melancholy.

For this perfect day in paradise must soon end
Like the sad parting of a dear old friend.

Yet, in the morn over *Haleakala* shall rise
A renewed feast for the early bird's eyes.

The next *Mauí* day will pass amiably by
Before another beautiful sunset graces the sky.

So again it will be time to offer a grateful toast
To the *aloha* spirit of the South Maui Coast!

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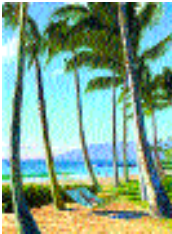


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