

Ua Ao Hawai‘i

Na Larry Kimura ka ‘ōlelo

Na Kalena Silva ka leo oli

Sitting out in his yard one clear night with ‘Ale Kālaiwa‘a at Ke‘ei beach, South Kona, we observed the full moon “Hoku.” ‘Ale, a “hulu kupuna” or an elder whom I hold high regard, explained to me, about that particular moon as “Hoku Palemo,” or the full moon that would set just as the sun would be rising. He pointed out to me in that late night sky, “ka wena a keao,” or a thin ray of light announcing the coming of dawn several hours away and how as this “wena o ke ao” grew stronger, “Hoku” would wane and slip away at the arrival of the sun.

In composing this opening chant for the conference, Larry Kimura could not help but think about our traditional knowledge slipping away, generation after generation, like “Hoku Palemo.” But only to be reminded with the rising of each new day that knowledge from our ancestors and knowledge of today can be ours if we want it, to make tomorrow even better.

Kau e ka wena o ke ao i ka lani
He wekeweke i ka pō pilipuka
He ‘elele o ka poniponi hikina
Kau ke kāhe‘a wana‘ao i ka ‘āla‘apapa
La‘i ana i luna o ke kūkulu o ka lani lā
‘O ka‘u ia e huli alo nei i ka ulu ē
‘Ae, ua ao ē.
Hō mai lā kō mālamalama
I ka honua nei i ka mauli ola
Ua ao Hawai‘i ke ‘ōlino nei
Mai ka pi‘ina a ka welona a ka lā
Kāhiko ‘ia i ka ‘ike manomano
Ka ‘ike kōli‘u mai o kikilo mai
‘O ka‘u nō ia ‘o ka pūlama
A pa‘a ma ka ipu o ka ‘ike ē
‘Ae, ua ao ē.
He mele no Hawai‘i ua ao.

The announcement of dawn appears as a glowing streak upon
the heavens, It is a narrow opening in the darkness heralding
the day, It is a messenger of the purple glimmer from the east
Streaks of red stain long cloud transformations
Reposing serenely upon the pillars holding up the heavens
I turn to gaze upon this, focusing on growth and the rising of a
new day, Yes day has arrived.
Bestow upon us your radiant light
Here upon the earth, filled with the spirit of life
Hawai‘i is in the brightness of day, it shines, brilliant
From its boundaries from the east to the west
It wears as its finery a myriad of knowledge
Of deep insight from the depths of antiquity
My sole duty is to embrace and to cherish
So it may be firm in the repositories of enlightenment
Yes, day has arrived.
This is a poem for Hawai‘i who has seen the light of day.