

*tramen 3*

***BROKE AIDE***

by  
**Gail Sher**

&

***A LITTLE HAWAII DIARY***

by  
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## A LITTLE HAWAII DIARY

It had been his idea to walk up to the town, to the little native breakfast place, instead of eating at the hotel. Having fallen asleep and missed dinner the night before, they were up early and hungry.

The road curled up from the beachfront hotel complex, with its shops, restaurants, and bars, past chicken coops that lay behind dense growth of flowering hibiscus and plumeria. He stopped to take a picture of some trucks and machinery.

She, walking ahead, on the left side, against traffic, encountered some difficulty. The white line marking the edge of the road left little room for pedestrians, of whom there were none, other than the two of them.

It was a place where the road curved. Down the slope to the left, cows were moving behind brush clogged with twisted roots and vines. Oncoming traffic was light, but it came close to the edge of the road.

She was alarmed by the nearness of a car as it rounded the curve, coming around suddenly from behind the vegetation where it grew out close to the road. When he got up to her she told him what had happened.

The road straightened, then curved again the other way. They crossed it and walked the other side where it passed a fire station with a grassy shoulder. Blocks of houses and low lying buildings lay further on. One ramshackle lot had two large hand-painted signs out front, white capital letters spelling out one man's war with organized religion, whose representatives had seriously wronged him and his family. The accusations were heavy. The word "LAIAR" appeared repeatedly. Money was involved and, perhaps, property. The lot had some rusted machinery in it and a house further back.

He stood looking at the signs, trying to read the message, as she moved on, having instantly rejected the obvious madness.

The town was small and dispersed. There was no one about on the streets.

Ma's Place was all the low-ball tourist book had promised—native, congenial, inexpensive, and good. They ate hotcakes with papaya and banana.

One could call for a taxi, they found out, but they walked out of the town anyway.

On the edge of town, the road forks. One way leads to the airport, the other curves down toward the hotel. Coming up that road they saw a green station wagon with a yellow taxi sign on its roof. He hailed the driver, using a gesture he'd learned in cities. Here it seemed unnecessarily broad.

The driver pulled over. In his fifties, a thin man, shades, hat, smile.

"Can you take us to the Kauai Surf?" asked the visitor.

"Kauai Surf!?" the driver laughed, "Okay," and they got in the back.

The driver drove right over the grassy shoulder at the side of the road and made a U-turn, heading back down the hill.

The road had three lanes. The left and center lanes were divided by a broken white line. A double yellow line ran between the center and right lanes. The cab was in the center lane.

"Shouldn't we be. . ." he started to say, half directing his thought to her, what they both knew but couldn't believe to speak, when the oncoming car appeared from around a curve, in the center lane, with another behind it.

"Go to your right," he said, "Right, right, right!"

The oncoming car sounded its horn.

The cab driver seemed stunned, unable for a moment to see what was happening. Then he pulled the wheel, and the taxi changed lanes.

"Wow!"

"Oh my, oh my," said the driver. "I'm sorry."

"You been driving long? You from around here? Is this a new job for you? Have you ever been here before?"

The driver grinned sheepishly. "My mind was in heaven," he said.

"Your body almost went there too just now," he said, stunned and eager to say anything.

They were at the entrance to the hotel parking lot.

"This is fine," they told him.

"Thank you, thank you," the driver was saying. They were all three laughing in relief and shock. Things could perhaps get a little too relaxed. Now they were wide awake.

## COCONUT PLANTATION

doves up on the lanai  
the wind away  
sounds the air  
condition back down

light on bro  
happy statutes  
the cloud bank over the ocean  
full on the walkways

seminal narrow range  
birds were at  
and cost tables in the sea salt  
winter in blue Hawaii

this turning tongue  
slays the material foundations  
hard cut rock against the sky  
in a giant formation

now appearing on a label  
of sleep juice you get  
toss meat on grill  
water drains down through sand

sugar comes out of the ground  
missionary children claimed  
as property concept natives hadn't  
by feathered surf

white plumeria wide

great lawn old

sugar mill purple

truck on red earth

line of ironwood trees

A. tells me that while I was writing it rained. I was sitting on the lanai, attentive, I thought, to light on palm leaves, clouds, sun, sea, and air, and never noticed.

## MENEHUNE DITCH

ground curve flaring cane  
burnt smoke truck line cane  
orange earth with green cane  
coconut grove stream guard

tractor drop sea ditch  
orchid vanilla triangle  
captain cook brick  
koa trunks by black sand beach

dwarf race engineers  
dolphin burger bay rum tans  
strikers riot in 1927  
martial law in 1941

pickets outside country club  
tv title location vistas  
workers dreadlocks trucks and boots  
shell leis of the old ways

offshore island privately owned  
since nineteenth century unchanged  
sugar industry down  
macadamia nuts up

POIPU

instructive trade winds  
strike clouds as even  
feathers of the palm court  
face slapping water

rock under water  
that went on to pass lava  
windsurfing foolscap  
pocket okay

sleeping giant  
turns over in grave  
alleyway of no light  
the red earth

wind caving days in eyes  
this time takes it all up  
curls in the horizon  
boys ride on



It was the deepest beach they'd seen, passing it on the road. Having returned from the end of the road, where he'd insisted they go, a point from which he'd hoped to catch a view of the Na Pali coast, rock mountains dropping two thousand feet into the ocean, green with tropical foliage, but which turned out to be an ordinary-seeming beach at the foot of an incredible green rock wall with view west cut off by rock and a full parking lot, the only such beach lot they'd seen, and the beach, called Kee, crowded, when all along the northeast coast from Anahola past Hanalei they'd been glimpsing terrific, nearly deserted beaches, including this beach, the one they'd noted, promising to come back (a bridge signaled the turn in to the left), they changed in a grove of small trees above the beach.

It was a place where a stream entered the sea. Twenty feet wide and a few feet deep at the mouth, the fresh stream water moved backwards with the incoming tide.

The waves along the beach were choppy and the sand sloped sharply to meet them. The north coast has good waves for surfing in winter. In September, on an afternoon after rain, the sea looked rough and potentially scary.

The water in the mouth of the stream was cool, cooler than the ocean water.

They were preparing to go when she pointed it out to him—a low arcing rainbow across the point of land to the east. A bar of luminous haze lay right on the horizon, half over water, the other half covering the large, multi-story facility under construction on the point some miles distant. A sailboat marked the left end of the bar. By the time the boat had moved to the center, it appeared under the yellow and pink bands of the by then more articulated arc. The rainbow continued to appear in front of the building, which would probably be a resort hotel, what else would it be?

"That building down there's the new Sheraton hotel," the helicopter pilot told them later. "It cost \$250 million. They're spending a million dollars per room."

