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Finding Maluhia in Kauai

by *Christine Scioli* • *More.com Member* { [View Profile](#) }

 Kauai is the oldest and most remote of the major Hawaiian Islands. It is where Pele, the goddess of fire, fell in love with the mortal prince Lohi'au, and where the mythical Menehune people live in the hidden forests and valleys above the taro fields. It was the last holdout when King Kamehameha sought to unify (a/k/a take over) the islands, and I think it is the most magical and serene place on earth.

The north shore of Kauai is home to an eclectic mix of folks; celebrities and vacation homeowners from every state on the mainland, tourists who aren't looking for high-rise hotels or condos (no building on Kauai can be taller than a coconut tree), and locals who choose the ultimate laid-back lifestyle to surf and coexist with the land of aloha spirit. It is here, in Hanalei town, I meet an artist who paints with his mouth. I have been walking the beaches of Hanalei and riding waves by the iconic pier for days. I am looking for a way to slow down deeply after a year that hardly bears recollection. Na ke Akua e ha 'awi mai I ka maluhia ... God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ...

Completely disabled, he is not physically a pretty site, however, he is anything but a sad man. He tells me God closed one door when he was paralyzed after a car accident in 2002, but opened another. What might sound cliché is his simple reality. He tells me he did not take his art seriously enough and spent most of the time surfing, but that has all changed now. He earns his living with his mouth – not by songs or words, which seems a profound irony. His name is Moses and I find its spiritual significance interesting: his art astounding. His painting of the Hanalei pier is a fusion of light and sea. It would be very difficult for Moses to go out there on the pier now, to see the sunlight and clouds play together in the shadow of the vast Napali cliffs. Perhaps his mind, his eyes, his heart and at final turn his mouth, have bonded with spirit of Lohi'au, because I can see so much fire and passion for this island in his painting. Most importantly, it is filled with both the aloha and maluhia he has found in his life and art.

I am home now and it is grey, but I am not. My resolution for the new year is working well, something I would have formerly thought impossible. Each morning I look at the painting Moses created with his mouth and find inspiration in his reflection of a place I was honored to experience. I move more slowly, savoring a bit more of the moment: my life, my love, my family, my work, my friends. I vow to chuck away just one stupid and needless stress each day and move one more tiny step toward maluhia. I think it is working.

Mahalo Moses!

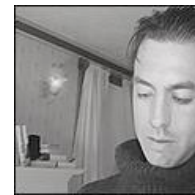
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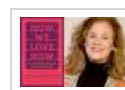


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