

FURTHER

A dog and his boy ambled through mists of waterfalls and sweet water trickling from vine-drenched cliffs. But the soggy symptoms of humanity's failings shrouded the beauty. I argued with failure and depression, looked into them, even got out of myself and walked around them. Nothing would clear their tentacled grasp on my mind.

I played a flute as my footsteps trailed behind me, and Limpy scurried into fern grottos in hot pursuit of his own elusive nemesis, the sly mongoose. I was alone now...no home, woman, or financial charisma to fall back on. My ten-grand party was a shambled memory, drugs didn't last, friends seemed like customers, and women mere libidinous receptacles for my cock.

Somewhere near the Sacred Pools in Kipahulu, I realized it wasn't going to pass. The self-doubt that breeds depression remains man's link to mortality, echoing to mock those moments when he believes in himself, stands clear of any limits, and gets things done. After intense worldly victories, I was sliding back to the peanut butter boy.

Limpy pointed this out and raced off a side trail leading to our watercress patch at the base of a waterfall. He waited for me, smiling as if everything would be all right, and I smiled back. The seven miles home were not so funereal. I looked forward to Kona, the land I'd purchased next to my mom's, and a new way of life. International intrigue, incessant drug research, and probes driving me into darkness were behind now. I promised myself I would change, and putting Mama-san's ounce of heroin in the center of two pounds of pure ganja and other assorted chemicals, Limpy and I buried them in an ammo can high above the waterfall as a benchmark to my evolution.

Then the caravan of automobiles and loaded trailers paraded slowly out of Hana into the future. Leading was the old farm tractor with "FURTHER" painted on its scoop. I don't know if anyone cheered or waved as we filed by. I had tears in my eyes and so did my little dog. Visions of the peace I'd known there accompanied me for days. The serenity of Hana, its true Hawaiian spirit, and the joy I'd felt as cowboy carpenter for the ranch were highlights, like the raft I'd left in their bay.

The saints, gurus, and ladies of the Haiku Zendo, lessons I'd learned from organic farming, and even Saint George's bizarre tutorials, came from the human soul of Maui's unique period of consciousness. So it was with mixed blessings of sorrow, relief, and hope that I looked across the channel at snowy peaks rising above the Big Island, and planned a new beginning. With no ghosts in the closet and no

woman telling me I was hung-up, I'd finally become whole and maybe even find happiness.

The island itself was massive, both in size and content, abounding in natural contrasts like a world all its own. Three volcanic mountains rose from the sea floor...the tallest solitary land mass on the planet. They stood like a fifteen thousand-foot barrier to the tradewinds coursing across the ocean, blocking them so the Kona side was in a perpetual lee--a changeless vacuum of calm.

There, overlooking the "City of Refuge" and historic Kealakekua Bay, where Captain Cook had met his end at savage hands, my mother's ten acres waited with the five I'd just purchased below it. The property was an abandoned "koa" mill, and buildings of that beautiful hardwood were salvageable, their wrecked machinery and huge saw blades frozen in time. The whole side of the island reminded me of the Wild West, and we began exploring.

Crowley, my architect companion, was one of Frank Lloyd Wright's last pupils, an odd sort with long hair, a crazy laugh, and brilliant visions. Tab, Mike, and Lance looked like typical Laguna Brotherhood artists, but were extraordinary talents, and although I'd never considered them hippies...they were. From the outset, I sensed an alienation from local people for the first time in my life, and it disturbed the hell out of me.

I engrossed myself in the property, weather patterns, and endless projects, but couldn't shake the premonition of hatred prevalent around me. There was an "anti-hippie" petition in the newspaper with 679 signatures, and open hostilities were evident. Just then, a deranged local shot and killed two long-haired hitchhikers because he thought they carried "hippietitus" to the islands to infect his dogs. Jesus! I decided to let these bozos know right off who I was, and called Ralph to invite the coral divers over for a housewarming party.

Figuring it would take them a week to arrive with their boats, most of our tiny family set out in my Army surplus truck to explore. Wow, beyond the initial poor reception, this place had everything! There were red, black, and green beaches, lush rain forests, then lava flows, thick bluegrass like in Kentucky, and barren cinder deserts stretching for miles in the next breath. I couldn't believe the diversity! Everywhere one looked more was revealed.

We four-wheeled our way far into the Volcano National Park and camped on a moving lava flow, peering at the glowing red beneath us in slowly opening cracks. In the morning, we watched it pour into the sea...plumes of exploding steam roaring in our faces. We picked "opihi," the tasty shellfish clamped to the rocks at the water's edge. Returning along the coast minutes later, we watched in disbelief as the entire cliff we'd just clambered across fell into the ocean with a rush of boiling water, revealing its molten interior.

Yikes! This island was alive, still being born, and might eat you at any moment!

Everywhere we went, its virgin freshness held forth new surprises. We toured agricultural sectors, passing through miles of macadamia nut plantations, papaya groves, and banana fields, learning from some of the friendly farmers as we went. I decided to plant papaya, and purchased seed.

Hilo and the windward coast reminded me of Hana, with waterfalls and rivers flowing everywhere into the sea. We went corner to corner, from the black sands of Kalapana to the virgin, white beaches of Pololu Valley with its vista of uninhabited valleys stretching fifty miles in the mist of roaring surf. It was gonna take years to explore this place, certainly more time and equipment than we had then. We got a good feel though, ending in the snow at the summit of Mauna Kea near the observatories for our last sunset. I felt I'd found my home at last in this vast and untamed land.

Back at the farm, with Tab babysitting our homestead, some hippie girls had taken over the kitchen, and laid out a great feast for us. The rambling warehouse became our "yellow submarine," its multitudinous rooms and several floors holding us all. Limpy and I set up camp in the upstairs corner with Sheeba, the old Siamese. I cantilevered a screen door past the balcony for her toilet, and cut a hole in my door for my two trusted pets, setting up an Afghani tent for Limpy near my bed. Everyone had their own room, and there were still a dozen vacancies. Not for long, as I saw it, for there would be strength in numbers. I decided to unfurl our colors rather than wait for someone to snipe at us.

There were parts I distinctly disliked, and they ranged from low-life hooligans taking pot shots from cars to the smug "kamaaina" families who were encouraging this from their cocktail circuit. Our artist trio started itching at the same time. It seemed the girls had brought in either crabs or the human lice, scabies. I found myself greatly dismayed when no doctor would help us. There was a public drive going to keep our type out, and it surfaced at all levels. We ended up getting shunted around in the old Public Health Annex.

I sat like a leper waiting for a simple dose of Kwell Lotion from a bigoted nurse in rubber gloves, while I fomented in rage, barely able to control myself. I decided right then these opinionated guardians of morality would have their hands full, grabbed the bottle from her, and split. I was a well-born Hawaii boy, and no one was gonna treat me like some unwanted visitor.

I raced back to the farm, got a sheet of plywood, and painted a life-sized hippie on it, complete with beads and "peace" sign. I attached tuna can lids to its vital organs and got out my machine guns. Then I shaved my head, put on the Kwell, dressed in my white tuxedo, and emptied clip after

clip into my target, shouting machismo oaths into the pungent haze around me.

I felt much better after that statement of policy, but the sheer smell had raised my warrior imagery once more...and changing to fatigues and black beret, I prowled the farm's perimeters that night on a "mission" at my new station. I didn't get too weird, and it was a worthwhile reconnaissance probe, for the lava's irregularities made a normal stroll into an obstacle course. On that initial patrol I realized what a formidable land I'd come to tame.

The next morning, Crowley and I retraced my steps, poking and scraping at the cover of vegetation to discover the whole place was one big puddle of rock. I'd been had by real estate sharpies! You couldn't farm a fucking lava flow! Sitting on its crust, I glanced at the profuse growth surrounding me. Here were mangoes dripping off two-hundred year-old arboreal monsters, their gnarled roots clutching folds of rippled stone as if they knew no better. Coffee trees descended over the landscape in a colorful display of red berries while giant "lilikoi," or passion fruit vines, swirled in their canopy, choking them in primitive combat for mastery of the jungle.

Obviously everything grew here, even in this untended state. Wild pigs rooted up ferns and puddled grasses to expose a unique sub-soil, and everywhere avocados, guavas, bananas, and papayas lay strewn in profusion. There was no order to the chaotic growth, but everything certainly flourished...rock or not. It dawned on me that the very competitive abundance of growing things might be a drawback to organized agriculture, and we began a plan for mechanizing and mowing this stony ground.

Renovations and repairs consumed our days, while nights were abuzz with visions of the future and plans to convert the koa showroom into a roadside attraction and fruit stand for tourists. All sorts of expansive projects began, and we replumbed, rewired, and basically rebuilt the old structure, exuberant with a pioneer spirit that settling on your own land can induce. I was busy and absorbed. The demons in me slept while I became whole, and for a time I actually thought it was gonna work.