Pele‘aihonua

Mahina Kaomea

The sharpness of her tongue devours land, sends foreigners away screaming.

They say she’s a crazy, racist, good-for-nothing Hawaiian.
Don’t get too close—her fire might burn you alive.

‘Ae, lava destroys. And maybe we need a little destruction right now.

But this lava also births islands, feeds seeds and dreams that will grow into the night.

‘Ae, this lava will birth the ea of a nation.

He mele no Kumu Haunani

Mahina Kaomea was raised by an abundance of ‘āina and ‘ohana in He‘eia, O‘ahu. Community organizations Kauluakalana and Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea - Honolulu were also formative teachers of aloha ‘āina. Mahina graduated from Kamehameha Schools, Kapālama, and is now building pilina with occupied Muwekma Ohlone lands as an undergraduate student at Stanford University.
peleʻaihonua, ka lua

for kumu haunani

lava births heavy in its silence
a night with red-orange magma rising
and you, making it possible
for this lāhui to grow anew

your slyly reproductive words
birthing on each of our tongues a moʻo
moʻolelo that we hāpai like keiki
hāpai like leo floating across the kai
salt water healing our wounds

as pele flows to the ocean
I watch as the systems that settlers
constructed colonially on papa’s skin
go up in flames
    they are burning
and I am dreaming because your fire
has helped us to see what we don’t need

we are not american
the military is not public safety
but the threat of toxicity

we are not american
our lovely hula hands and sacred lands
are not tourists’ to prostitute anymore

we are not american
comprehensive management plans
have never protected our ʻāina or wai

you refuse this occupying nation and
the scorched soil your lava leaves
behind is rich like pō
a night deep and beautiful for birthing
we are born
kiaʻi, water protectors, aloha ʻāina

and we will die as Hawaiians
we will never be americans