

# *Hilo Rains*



*by Juliet S. Kono*

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*For David*



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## GRANDMOTHER

It is nothing more  
than the glimpse  
of a fleeting silhouette  
of some contorted woman  
against a light  
that evokes memories of you.  
*Issei* woman  
standing sturdy,  
feet apart,  
before an ancient kerosene stove  
adjusting the blue-flamed wick,  
cooking the meals, or  
weaving *lauhala* mats —  
seated upon a *zabuton*,  
feet folded back.

At night  
when the *pueo* sweeps  
over fields you've hoed,  
scoring the acres of your life,  
scattering its insignificant  
moments, like field mice,  
I balance over words  
on a tight-wire of late light,  
and become a silhouette  
of a bent woman,  
calling your name,  
your shadow, to move into mine.



## FACE

A boxcar slammed  
into grandfather  
and sheared off his face.  
Grandfather lived. There  
was no reconstructive surgery  
for this plantation hand  
and once-handsome man.  
He lost his nose  
and the smashed bones  
of his cheeks sagged  
and flattened his face.

There are no trains  
making runs  
from plantations anymore.  
The closest thing  
to these trains  
are the restored ones  
housed at the Bishop Museum.  
Recently, I walked  
among them and roamed  
the insides of the empty cars.  
I closed the door  
to one of them,  
placed my cheek  
against the warmth  
of the rough door's boards  
and Grandfather's voice  
resounded from the cane bulks  
and backs of bent men,  
vibrating my facial bones,  
urging tenderly  
my own face to form.







