

Now or Never

by Yumi Kawano

Part One: Working Through

If you think about it, our all-sustaining Mother Earth is in deep trouble with the world climate changing disastrously. On top of that, our human race is in a pandemic under attack from a deadly mutating Corona Virus.

So, we must stay on our mission of being a witness of Earthcare. Will everyone restore rare rainforest in Hawaii? No. Some will restore their *aina* (sacred land), planting a small urban garden or one tree in their small yard. Learn from the plants you tend. They will teach you about people communities, too. Some may sing songs for a local nonprofit forest refuge to raise donations and awareness about the urgency to restore our earth and ourselves and others. Some will talk it up on Facebook and have a window garden.

So ever more do we need to share and care. “Kokua” (ko kew ah) in Hawaiian means to share and care, to take responsibility enough to take action to show care. Easy to say, maybe not so easy to do. A dear Quaker Friend, Jim Summers, says often, “The only way over it is through it.” So, working through

conflict is a must, no matter how uncomfortable it gets. That’s my message. There is no time to bicker over our hurt ego stuff. We must apologize quickly in order to stay on course and be grateful for the mistake, because that’s really the only way we learn, us knuckleheads!

Conflict is a part of life! So, *embrace conflict*. It is the only way we truly grow is by working through it. You can do it. It’s Akua God in you. Please do not run from conflict, because it truly can be a Gift, which I think is from God. Not all of us will say that. But that’s okay – believe at your will.

Part Two: Sustainability

Our days are numbered because humankind has upset the balance of nature. Hence, more frequent, voracious, natural disasters are occurring all over the earth. For over two years, we’ve become isolated among ourselves, due to a deadly Covid Virus Pandemic. All the more reason we have to become self-sustaining and self-sufficient as family units.

We call our home the Alaula Kipuka Refuge “Alaula” means “first morning light on the rainforest dew.” “Kipuka” means “a piece of land protected from lava flows.” Our Alaula Kipuka Refuge contains 600-year-old native ohia trees.



Photo by Yumi Kawano

Some of the amazing tasks we do as a family unit on our aina land in the Hawaiian rainforests is catch our rainwater, grow gardens and citrus trees organically. We use organic fertilizers like 8-8-8, lime for calcium, dolomite, mulch, and compost.

For instance, we surround our vegetable beds with salty sea rock to prevent slug destruction. It works!

We enjoy occasional eggs from our two hens, and we utilize their manure to give nitrogen to our gardens.



Photo by Yumi Kawano

Another thing we do is work to restore these rare rainforests, which protect and encourage water retention in the aquifers beneath the ground.

Our hopes are to have Tesla roofing on the south side of our humble 812-square-foot cabin to generate our own energy.

In conclusion, our days are numbered should humans not become more self-sustaining and self-sufficient, much like plants are.

But I believe this is an opportunity for us humans to change our bad habits and now to restore ourselves and restore our earth around us. **We can do it together! We can!**

Part Three: Live Now

Live fully today my Friend

For tomorrow you could be gone

Take a breath

Like it's your last breath and smile

Cause you never know

You just never know

(August 27, 2021)

Part Four: Plant One Trillion Trees

Doesn't it feel like we're in a Marvel Comic book with the end of the world as we know it looming negatively on all our minds – not to mention the COVID plague doing that already? We are told we can change this disastrous "climate change" if the whole world gets on board with a plan to act now.

On October 5, 2021, I was feeling discouraged as I listened to the expert scientists say that we have less than a decade to reverse dramatic climatic change, which is unleashing increasing disastrous storms of hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, and wildfires – so many, some think, that we are at the end of the world, as in the Bible's Book of Revelations! More and more endangered species are becoming extinct daily. The temperature of our Earth is climbing. Sea levels are rising. People and animals are homeless.

I called Silent Unity, as I have in the last twenty years, for prayer. A prayer partner prayed with me. We prayed for the USA, our country, and the world to truly begin to restore the earth damage. And you know what? I received the affirmation, "We are open to Divine Direction as Perfect Order is Unfolding." So, I said it as long as I could.

In the last few days, I have gotten very excited, as I am seeing *Divine Direction as Perfect Order Unfolds* in the commitment of our great nation to the global effort to grow, restore, and conserve One Trillion Trees around the world. The website <https://www.1t.org> was launched by the World Economic Forum as a global initiative in January 2020. This is a nature-based solution and mission set up to support the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. This pledge was made by former President Trump.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), under the Department of Agriculture, is the agency responsible for helping restore our native forests all over our country. The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) will receive \$5.5 million from the NRCS. Brian Schwartz, one of Hawaii's U.S. Senators, had stated in September 2021 that habitat restoration offers the highest potential for carbon capture and improve habitat for the critically endangered birds of Hawaii. "Supporting these native trees will help recharge the aquifers (underground water) supplying the state's water, providing habitat for endangered Hawaiian bird species, and preventing dirt from washing into the ocean where it can harm coral reefs and fish." Schwartz also mentioned the DLNR plans to work with private landowners to plant 210,000 native trees and remove the worst invasive species from 1,650 acres, many which are highly flammable and intensify wildfires.

So, if my state of Hawaii is partaking in the pledge to plant one trillion trees, probably your state is, too! Whether you own land or not, please get in there and plant a tree. To learn about the tree planning we are doing on our own aina land, visit our ever-evolving website at:

<https://yamahilo.wixsite.com/akrefuge>

My motto is: "Plant a tree today for our tomorrow."

We can do this together. Since we began restoring our rare rainforests in 2010, we have realized it also restores our souls as a Unit and as a Family. When you "Malama the Aina," or "Love the Land," the Aina Land loves you back even more! I swear!

Soon our Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) will be revived! It will be called instead the Civilian Climate Corps and they will be a diverse labor force that restores our lands and waters! This will follow from an executive order by President Biden on January 27, 2021. (See sections 214-216 in <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>) This will employ tens of thousands of young people in livable-wage jobs that offer training and educational support.

Part Five: Planning for Change

We, the Volcano Friends for Truth and Peace, have gathered every Sunday at 2:00 PM for fifteen years. We silently worship in Hawaii's rare rainforests or other places on our Hawaii Island. *All* of our whole island is our sanctuary. The community of Volcano, Hawaii, is six miles from the entrance of Hawai'i Volcano

National Park. We are situated on the side of the sacred volcano mountain, Kilauea. Pele, the goddess of lava, is truly alive and well!! We are restoring our rare 600-year-old-rainforests on this Kipuka (an area saved from lava flows, which is a treasure of seeds). In 2019, half of our family's two acres were certified as a native habitat restoration site by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, NRCS, whom awarded us a three-year grant. We hope to receive a second grant to restore our back acre soon. We give free tours and a cup of tea afterwards, so come on over!

I'm passionate about Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW), so much so that I volunteered to be the PacYM QEW Representative at the 2019 PacYM Annual Gathering! My goal is to help others get an Earthcare Action Plan together, wherever those may be. We must *all* be witnesses of Earthcare, and not just read and talk about it. We've all been called to be stewards of the aina land; our magnificent Mother Earth is dying!!

We are affiliated with the Ministry of Racism. In Volcano and all over the island, we especially minister to Friends of Color (FOC) and even more especially to Indigenous Hawaiians and other Indigenous folks. We also encourage European-descent allies to join us in this worthy cause. My husband Kalani and I are honored to be on the PacYM Indigenous Concerns Subcommittee. We hope to educate Quakers about how crucial it is for Quakers to return stolen lands to Native Peoples who have lost and are still losing their homelands. This is *truly* making amends for the decades of decimating Native Peoples' ways of life. There must be a righting of wrongs to all the Friends of Color to restore balance with our only Mother Earth. Racial injustice and environmental injustice go hand in hand. Until this is done willingly, we will *all* feel the repercussions of drastic climatic change! Akua God help us help ourselves to Make the Change to be the Change. We can and must do this. We don't have the luxury of time, so let's make a plan *now*!

Yumi Kawano is a member of Volcano Friends for Truth and Peace, a worship group on the Big Island of Hawaii. She is active in promoting the causes of earth justice and racial justice within and through Pacific Yearly Meeting.