

# TURTLE DANCE

Poems of Hawaii



AELBERT AEHEGMA

*Illustrations by D.E. Addlesberger*

LIBRARY OF  
GEORGE H. BALAZS



In *Turtle Dance*, his second volume of poems, Aelbert Aehegma celebrates his new Hawaiian homeland: "Every plant named, each' bird, each place, the ancient rituals, even the names given the stones of the new land rising must be learned as only the poet and the child learn: freshly, with open eyes and open ears."

*Turtle Dance* reminds us that we are all a part of the ritual; we must dance atop the ancient turtle rising and sinking back into the sea. Dance, or die.

ISBN 0-916467-00-7

May 22, 1984

To George Balazs,

Thank you for your interest  
in Turtle Dance, and the mailing  
about the turtle legend of Punalu'u  
concerning Kaula the turtle-girl  
Godless of the Hawaiians. Perhaps  
through your office you can  
help save the turtles and  
other endangered species.

I hope you enjoy the  
book. We live near  
Punalu'u and should you  
visit to see the turtles you  
may stop at our home.

Albert C. Ahigama

Hawaii: 25 years of statehood. A lifetime of



Logo Copyright 1982 State of Hawaii

An Official Publication  
Authorized by the Silver Jubilee Committee

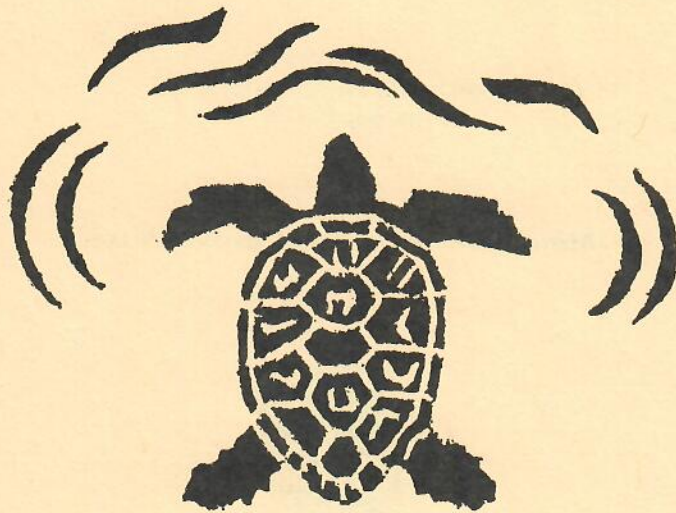


Limited Special First Edition  
Honoring Hawaii Statehood  
1984

TURTLE DANCE

*Poems of Hawaii*

by Aelbert Aehegma



OCEANIC PUBLISHING, 1984

Copyright ©1984 Aelbert Aehegma  
Illustrations Copyright ©1984 D.E. Addlesberger

Editor: Ray Freed

*Except for text quotations for book review purposes, no part  
of this book may be reproduced without prior permission of  
the publisher.*

*Illustrations in this volume were offset from original  
prints.*

Printed by The Petroglyph Press, Ltd.  
Typesetting: Paniola Press

**Manufactured in the United States of America**



**Oceanic Publishing Company  
P.O. Box 156  
Na'alehu Hawaii 96772**

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 84-60149  
International Standard Book Number 0-916467-00-7



*to Catherine*





## Island Greetings

---

I arrive where

New earth boils underfoot.

I arrive where

Ancient sky awaits reply.

I arrive here,

This leaping off place.

Spirit of Islands!

This stranger offers his heart

As food for your fires,

His breath a song for your flame.

## Poe Haku Mele

---

Come forward! All bards come forward!  
You are the called upon. The tent  
For now is being taken down. *Hoomau keiki*  
Now complete. The priest takes down  
The *Akua Kaai*, the high mating done  
The two royal ones leave; the din of the  
Drumming subsides. The  
Well-watchers arrived, depart.

For the lei is woven within the family,  
High rank is promised, a princess  
With child. The planting stick pulled out  
Of the wet earth. Come forth Poets, Literate Ones  
Critics, Wisemen, all prepare the *Mele*  
For the hula dancers are arriving. Time  
Now to assemble in *Ni-o*, House of Hearing.  
Gathering around, it shall be settled upon  
: The best form for our dance and song.  
Recite, criticize, correct, amend  
*Nema-nema*: be finicky, be  
Sure the core is sound. Invent  
A fragrant line. Weave your meaning  
In and around. And hurry, for the  
Sky is red and lowering into the sea.

Season of the new *taro* patch, sown  
Sweet potatoes growing round and firm,  
The red fish in each mound,  
Moon filling out this darkness, creating  
New shadow. Night flowers blooming  
The dark passage with fragrant juices.  
And, while the white purslane swings  
In a soft seabreeze, its narrow leaves  
Smooth hair against soft skin.  
Our inland pond is full. *Haku haku*,  
Arrange your *tapa*, it's lumpy as *poi*, Poet,  
Or is that your shore basket:  
A *Hakualo*: A big belly you cover.  
Come forward. All bards, come out

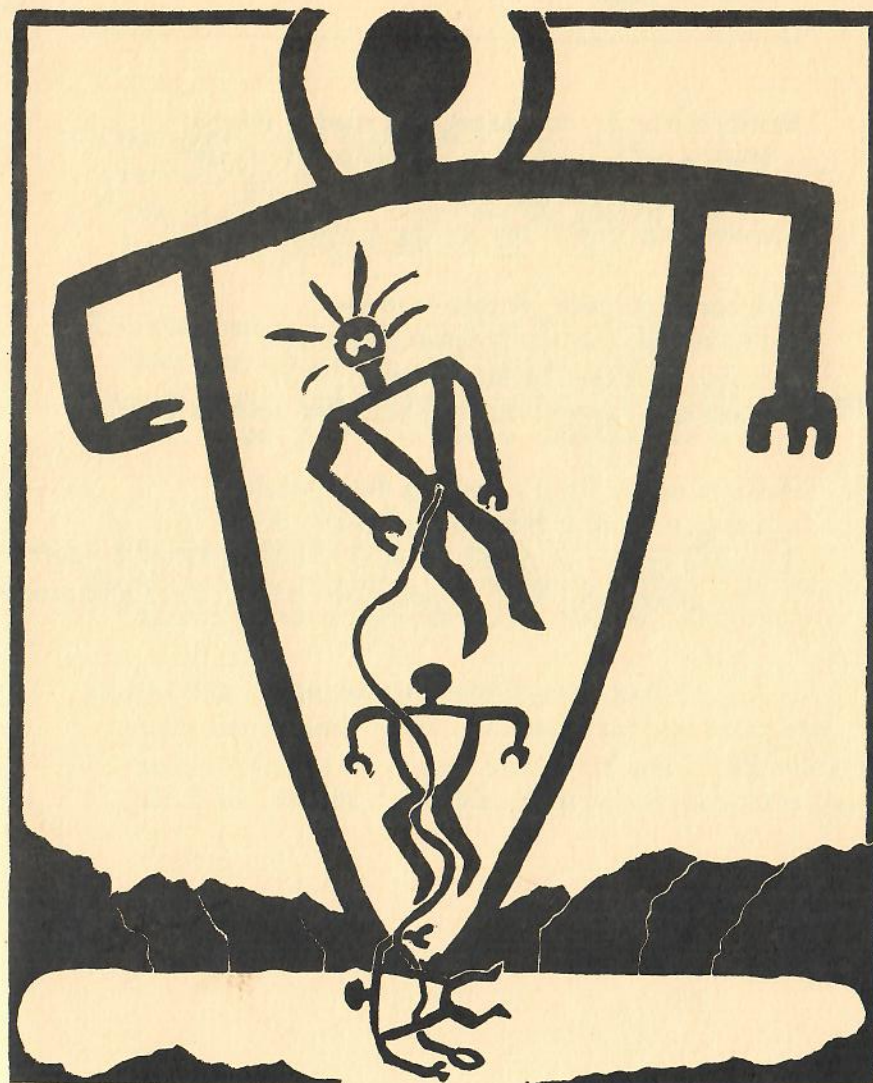
The hula is in the preparing.  
Enough of your puffing. Into the  
House of Hearing. *Haku kā ko'i*  
Bring a good stone for chipping  
May the Lord of The Dark Night,  
*Haku-pō-Kano*, look over your song.

## Kilo-Kilo

---

*"He-Who-Looks-Earnestly"*  
Meets with his timekeeper  
Upon the isle of Hawaii.  
Sun arrives on time to the East.

*"He-Who-Looks-Earnestly",*  
Weighing what his moon does,  
Knows to call her by her thirty-seven names  
Then awaits the lifting of the *kapu*  
On the morning of *Hua*, The Egg.



## Taste Of Rain

---

South through rain forest, the road is wasted  
With a million seeds of yellow scented guava,  
With dripping mango, big-bellied with pit.  
Swerving, one gyres among a wealth of fruit.

Soil seeking roots. A father misses  
His house, the ten thousand mile sea,  
His sky, that tree he sits beneath, the  
Hard stone from which he watches, and watches...

*Keikis* running from a coming downpour;  
Late ones burst from under heavy breadfruit,  
Lunging from the shade, from the rank, mashed breadfruit  
Late afternoon. Rain dripping on no one. Tree and stone

This nightfall the cock crows. Dogs bark.  
Forest birds awaken before dawn.  
Forest quakes. What lovers are up, shared in it.  
Forgetting, perhaps forgotten, alone

The old man wonders how long the island,  
How long the house, that tree, the stone,  
How long sky, and sea beyond could dream without lovers  
Now, go on. A lei, its flowers a necklace of foam

Surf: a wreath about a new land burning,  
Bursting beyond in black satin, dust, crystal;  
Bursts upward, onward, jagged teeth, molten tongues  
Thirsting over streetways, past dreams, memories

Wandering a transformed world gone mad  
A traveler ponders over untasted fruit and litter and  
A roadway devoured by new land; surf and traffic merged.  
Quake and drizzle cease. His head raised, he tastes the rain.

## Who Lives Here

---

Who lives here  
All day making  
A birth in a new bay window.  
Window whose back is to the sea?

By night who rounds the lanai  
Shadowless by moonlightless night  
Fresh starlight, *what* glancing in to see who  
Is home, perhaps, who or what is not within.

Still, distant seas behind this spectre  
Breakers summoning from far below, chanting  
Chanting that this home of wood and nails is not  
But a dream: an anthill in a jungle clearing

Sweat and swearing, muscle and beer  
Wrench this iron, wooden heart back open  
Green greener, faster, faster grow the weeds,  
Yet, who lives to serve those near green waves

Blue breakers upon black lava, winds bleeding  
Plants, bending beams straining against grain.  
Calloused hands struggling among keys; a winter  
Cough. Who watches over this through the new  
Bay window; cedar losing its gold, grey weathered

Cracking in noon heat; winter rains rivering  
Who lives here making sea to the back window bay  
New in a birth making all day who lives here  
By night who rounds the lanai, shadowless

Shadowless by night, who rounds the lanai.

## Overnight At Cliff Shelter

---

Man comes, man goes  
Grass grows  
Cracking lava molds

Grass comes, blooms grow old  
Lava flows  
Eating trees, fallen whole

Lava comes, ash and gas descend  
Ancient is buried; all new, but this cabin  
Like an island-eye catching light.



## South Point

---

Clouds line up like students  
Registering with a clerk-faced sky  
Storm, stamp, lightning let loose  
High hail in their throats, tumbling  
Their whorling grey eyes, grief:  
The nursemaid at sea, Death, the Mother.

## Ka'u Desert By Packhorse

---

Sun that licks stone,  
Stone, its rain sweat  
Sucked off dry by the  
Thirsty wind. I won  
Your love in that desert  
Of day glaze. Ruined  
Feet aching toward your  
Cliff-night. Drinking you,  
Stars. Gulping our Milky Way  
Into my bed roll, beyond  
Dark lava flows to darkness

Greying sand, day-star cracked *a'a* crags  
I won, and where, beyond you  
My feet went bare and burning  
Into your soft grass, free  
I fed my soul a green field  
Beneath that rotting water tank  
Kissing your stones good-bye

Sun, Earth and I roll over  
From you by this *Pali* slope  
To listen to my packhorse  
Eating the night long; eating,  
Collapsing; its breath an emptying  
Furnace. Earth shakes. Packhorse back  
Up again, drinking and drinking  
Its eyes still glazed wild  
From mirage and heat. A great head  
Drinking and drinking both our thirsts full.



Breath of burning air, *Madame Pele*  
Panting deeply, her glass tears  
A scorching shower. Her gold-black hair  
She lets down in falling slivers  
Over land she is stripping bare.

By night, fresh dew descends again:  
Transparent, opaline, opaque, then obsidian.  
Each drop a crystal ball, telling of tomorrow  
More, a concave window, stained spectral

Like creatures collecting dreams toward dawn,  
Surfaces and depths converging, far and near  
A curved new land forms on the tip of a bud  
Absorbed, inhaled, dried up by mid morning.

High noon shares no crystaled fortunes; but by  
This earth's cavorting and whirling about, our ocean  
Gulf streams or currents, surely the parent (or is it  
The child) of this dew is disclosed come dawning.

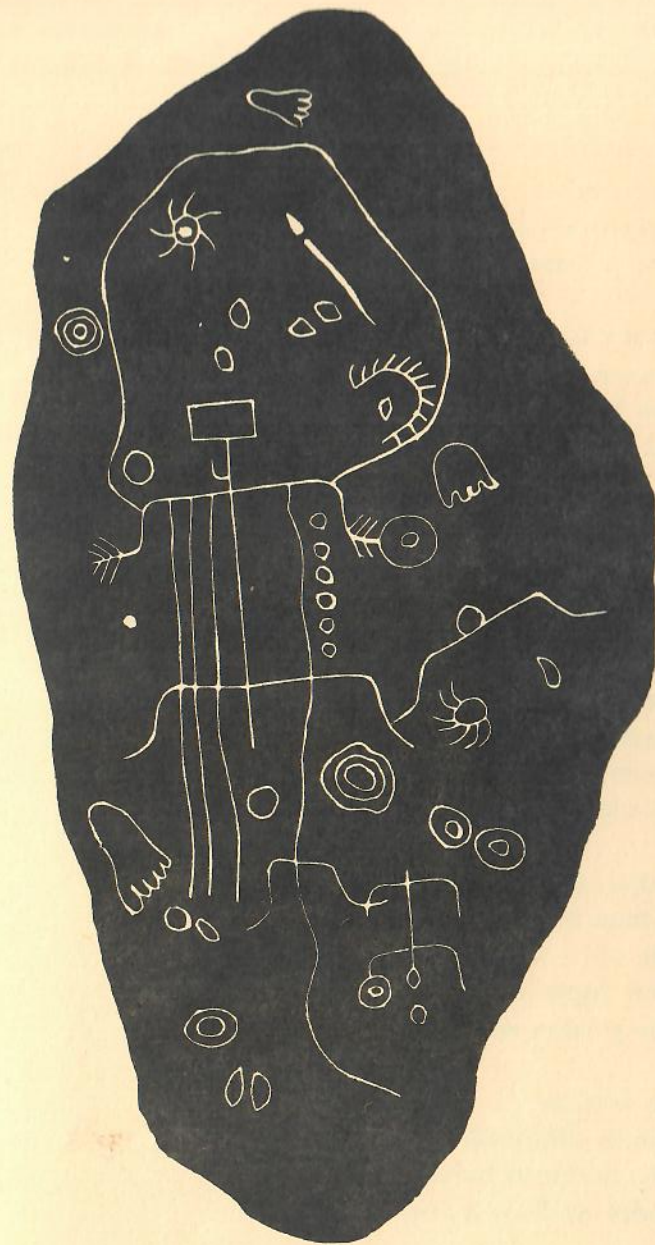
By some quirk, the sweating thousand, thirsty tongues  
Seldom taste this distilled liquor which disappears.  
But rather are imaged in its daydreams like models  
Poised by an awed yet thirstless artist, year after year.

## Raindogs

---

O Rain Dogs, you dogs  
Mark Twain saw, rainbowed  
Beasts of sea, not of field  
Hairy hounds of light  
Stained glass windows  
Of our tropical beyond  
Bark against the simple blue.  
What could your prey be  
Up there among sunshowers  
Hot Kona days, across the  
Black lava speckled  
With Noni and Palm.  
Why not out and about  
By full moon, driving off  
Grey moonbows, chasing the  
Celestial stag, flashing  
Your teeth of splintered rays.

Are you not the guardian  
Of *Pele's* hot realm, if so  
Then leap before her fiery pit.



## Here

---

This life  
Has come to  
A mountain apple  
Upon a glass table

My sky is  
A space so  
Thin between  
Red and clear

An island caught  
In a long angle  
Of light  
At sea

Sun shining  
Through trunks  
Blinds the bark,  
An isle floats in air

Is that, this  
Illusion not  
The same. No wonder  
That apple in  
The garden was eaten

No wonder  
Islands disappear  
Into horizons, where is  
There to draw a line

## Lavaslides

---

Lavaslides  
On high slopes...

Each Ohia stands alone

Distant the mountains

Trees seem to lean  
Upon each other

: A mirage  
One's own ground  
Cannot be held even.

## Fruit Of Moon

---

We tumbling, roll  
Red apples, ripe  
From one another.  
Seizing red light  
Feeding our greenness

We *are* windfalls  
Of one another  
And yet have  
Plucked ourselves  
At that right moment

Before slow ferment  
We have shaken  
Trees to life; long  
Before black bees  
Of Death arrive

We cast ourselves  
In a heap beyond  
Bright rushes of moonlight  
Within eyesight  
Of our morning star

## Waimea Hills

---

Clouds  
Empty  
    Overfull  
    Mountains.  
Streams  
Swell  
From emptying hills.

## Rainbow Falls

---

My gaze falls

Stones fall

All day

I am

Moved

Slowly by rushing water



## Grey Rainbow

---

Rainbow of darkness  
Lifting in high country;  
A great rain flooding below  
Onto streets of old Hilo,  
To the Gold Coast of Kona,  
Through isolated Puna,  
Over parched stone of Ka'u.

But, above stars  
Shining at two o'clock  
: Orion, star-hunter stalking  
From beyond that dark arch

September shooting stars  
Soaring though they fail  
To touch that sombre spectrum,  
Falling, mutely failing,  
Firing from everywhere,  
Spark against the hilled  
Grey lei of vapor bending  
Suspended beneath dim suns.

Lifting in high country  
Rainbow of darkness, starshine  
Below, lightfall flooding  
Wet-eyed Hilo, Kona, Puna, Ka'u.  
Rainbow of darkness, fading  
Lifting in hushed song, Volcano.  
A great rain, passing, beyond.

## Seaswells Of Kailua Bay

---

Seaswells, sweating off of worn stones,  
Undertow out, breakers over  
Into palms of coral. Rounding  
Rocks, carrying off boys on boards  
Over hidden precipices. Seaweed  
Flopping, will-less to the  
Massage of fingers frothing.  
A gentle breeze, but steady, guiding.

Glass-bottom boats windowing the beneath  
For tourists: Aqua Realm, back of the mind.  
Seaswells wearing the breaker wall;  
A great dark Marlin, its sword down  
Lowered swings for snapshots above the pier.  
The wave's work never dies, its lick of love  
A death kiss that never dies, endless passion  
Tongueing stone and shipboard of those  
Moving or moored beyond its coming

Onto shore, a stick of driftwood among music  
Of shell against coral, love-gift of the  
Blown-glass fishnet float, tangled lines  
Old flotsam and jetsam from the pirate-East  
Rusting bolt in wormwood from some  
Wrecked vessel, flip-flop without  
Its mate, styrofoam fish chest top  
Washed overboard in rough seas:  
Affectionate caresses to the beachcomber.

Seldom now, a message in a bottle  
Will leap a crest, safely: what to tell  
The world, these days...across the Bay:  
Hotels, another wake, and beyond footprints  
That wash rapidly away as always: Labor of Seaswell:  
A kind of love carries on. This vast Pacific  
Comes apart in foam, rising, retiring, traveling onward  
:Busy Madam, leaving naked stones, black and white  
Smoothed, but not refreshed more for each caress  
Just left, with some soft or cruel memory, and return.

## Hilo Lagoon, Carp Watching House

---

From this carp house, birds sound  
From isled nests. Few watch here, now.  
Counterpoint: slapping of black,  
Of white, speckled, golden scales.  
Slapping of the hungry ones, breaking  
The herd's hypnotic pattern. Rising  
To another realm between reflections  
And that of high flung tourist rooms.

A redwood seat within, surrounds. How  
Steam bent rafters curl to the eave,  
Fly skyward like the arched carp backs.  
How the railing encircles as the  
Herd weaves around and about. Then  
That slap of a tail; water spouting  
Both silence and sound from one mouth  
Filling with mosquito, then the form  
Slapping back to reality; foam and ringlets  
:An etching of passage between two realms.

## Contemplation On Hawaii Island

---

The soothing meander of tail and fin,  
Softer than that couch of the analyst  
Until another mouth is opened to the sky.  
Another object of affection captured  
From the mirror, another meal upon a tongue.  
Then it's back again. Again, back into the  
Reflection. And just apart, an ancient woman  
Walks among the vehicles of guests.  
A school all about me still, parades  
Around this house of the unseen  
Taking me into its unspoken conversation,  
Where in the watching, one becomes  
The other, forgotten in the other's dance.  
And just apart, I walk among  
The Rent-A-Cars. I drive away.

Every eye an island,  
Every breaker upon this shore  
A breath from some distant sigh.  
Every eye of stone upon me  
Asking, feeling through me; but, no 'Why'  
Through me, this breath like,  
But unlike every wave from near or far.

From near and far, every island  
Alive with varied voices  
Touch, smell, taste and feeling  
Free from form, yet of every  
Other being's being, every eye-ful one.

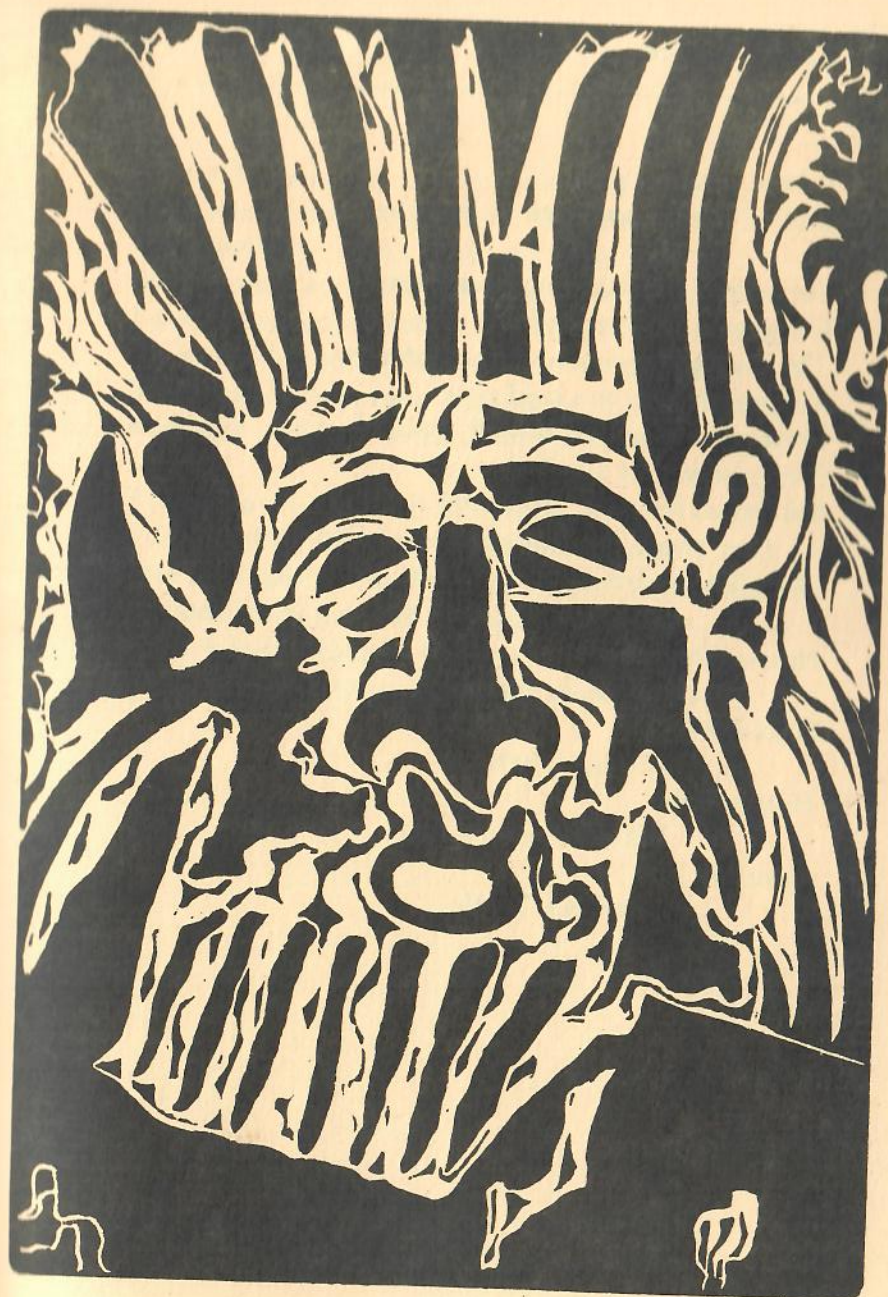
Every eye an island,  
Being still, yet moving with the mind  
Creating all it touches, no more,  
No less. But unrevealed, awaiting Idea,  
Thought, Wisdom, Scheme within each eye  
Infinite opportunity evolving and devolving  
Revolving and dissolving at once, in one breath



Every one, rounding, glazing with mystery  
Entranced into glass, dilated with wonder  
Within surrounding, seething sea life shapes  
Each bit of an orb spattered among stars of space  
Everyone, an island carried within. Surround me  
Every one, everyone, enter into me, come out  
Of me. Astounding, each of us with original  
Innocence, shame and lust, avarice and greed  
Inventions, Joy and Love, kindness and sharing  
Eyes know well, sounds of the soul, radar of the heart  
Islands in me, become me, and I, them, merge  
Every eye, every island I have eyed

Every eye upon me  
Every island every one  
Every island upon me, within me  
I have eyed, eyed me, every eye an island  
Every island of every sea, our eye

Every eye, every one. Every eye



## Turtle Dance

---

*E honu, e honu, e pūhā*

Turtle, turtle, come up to breathe

For weeks you have not been seen,  
For years. Rise out of the deep sea  
That we may remember your dance  
Telling of how our land rose  
From ocean depths; how it cracked  
Into plates as it swelled.  
Let brine, let spray break for us  
At your shore once more, Grand Old One,  
Or will this dance be forgotten

*Honu-pe'ekue*

Thick-shelled Turtle

*Honu-kahiki*

Foreign Tortoise

*Honu-po'o-kea*

White-headed Turtle

*Honu-'ea*

Hawkbill Turtle

Especially, you our last, from whose crushed  
Shell comes our medicine no more; no  
More delight in your dark and your light  
Amber shell combs for beauty, fans for what  
Leisure; no more dark green meat for *luau* feast;  
No more, for some fishers of today lay waste.  
Knowledge, forgotten, missing with their thrust,  
Knowing not how to fill their mouths.

Turtle, turtle come up to breathe  
That we may see your dance, once more.  
Last Hawkbill we saw carried a spear in that throat,  
Its body limp, its head a dirge of flies, alone upon  
A black lava coast; its burial pyre, beyond  
Both of its homes, sacred land, sacred water.

Turtle, turtle, come up to breathe.  
We now need to see your red-brown shell.  
We need to be reminded of that pattern  
Upon your back, for new mats need weaving.  
We need to prophesy by your heated scales  
For our land begins to move again, like you.  
Smell those distant swells  
Carry on those mysteries, beyond the horizon  
Riding off to sea upon your great back.  
For great quakes shake, cruel waves breaking,  
And our shores sink, then rise; volcanoes  
Steam, throw up curtains of fire, boil on  
In an overflow to the breakers. Town people  
All the while spoil land and sea through greed.

*Honu-'ea, Honu-'ea*  
*Honu ne'e pu ka āina*

Hawkbill Turtle, Hawkbill Turtle!  
The land moves like a turtle

*Holu Honu, Turtle Hula, is it forgotten*  
*E honu, e honu, e pūhā*  
Turtle, turtle, come up to breathe.

## Honu Rises

---

Scaled, great limbs stretching from the  
Blue-black deep, shining ebony  
Layer upon layer of stone hard shell

Sea bursts into mad turbulence  
Peaks climb to rolling skyforms  
An ancient back arches higher

Banded, crossed, leaping streams  
From the depths. The old She Turtle  
Boiling up for the borning

Upon her arched shell myriads dwell  
From her beak, blow holes steam free  
Clawed feet and legs claw the ocean under

Buoyed, she rides surf to shore  
Beaches, marching inland, beyond high tide  
Earth clawed aside, the nest made, eggs laid

Abandoned, the young must survive  
Sun and predator birds, run or die.  
An ocean closes over a mountain.

Hatched, young turtles race for the sea  
Race for the sea or be devoured  
Some few survive, mangled flesh of sacrifice

Peaks climb suddenly to rolled back skies  
New islands, new land rising.  
The land lives! The turtle lives



## Iwa And The Birdmen

---

Riding high above the ninth wave  
A desireable dark figure descends.  
It is Iwa the frigate bird, poised,  
Iwa who fascinates the eye.

Chiding others hug steep cliffs,  
Lesser birds send up their squawk  
Fearing he will steal among crags and ferns  
They test the handsome being winds hold aloft.

Legs spread, wings closed, he dives:  
Iwa of islands off Kauai; off Moku Manu, Oahu;  
Iwa of the ancient Kona coast, and of Maui;  
Iwa, sacred to the Birdmen of far southern shores:

He who forces others to disgorge in mid-flight  
Food meant for themselves, he hated and adored  
Swoops to save the hidden egg laid among rough stone  
Defending mate and egg, for the Birdman Egghunt begins.

The great conch sounded, the spring game on  
The would-be priests weigh the breeze, read the sky.  
Tree and bush yield their signs, the time  
Then auspicious for the finding, mating done.

What seeker proves the wisest will find  
The one hidden egg of Iwa. Though who finds  
The emblem must endure initiation the more. Yet it is  
Iwa poised, black against blue sky, fascinates our eye.

## Hula For The Return Of Lizard Goddess

---

Old religion, new religion failing,  
Too much greed mixed in the business;  
Who points the finger. What but magic  
Now can prevail to save our *aina*, marshland,  
Our air, the sea, ourselves and beings everywhere.

Gold and yellow feathers shimmer.  
Gold and yellow leaves quiver.  
Thigh follows hip, follows shoulders,  
Follows shaking wrist, hand skyward,  
Sliding from within this marshgrass.

Gold and yellow melt into brown,  
Gold and yellow, poisoned blades swirl around.  
An ancient plea for help is sounded out.  
*Kapu* upon the poison god!  
*Kapu* upon all black magicians!  
*Kapu* upon those in industry and politics who kill!

The conch is sounded. The ritual way made clear  
The plea for help made into prayer.  
The hula for the lizard goddess is  
Then the final offering to save what is dear.

## The Navigator

---

Egg-shaped, the gibbous moon rises  
The *Tabu of Hua*, The Egg, begins  
: The evening of *Mohalu*  
The Great Bird leaps into blue black  
The last lashings on the outrigger done,  
Supplies all loaded: good omens, now.  
The Octopus of the Homeland sleeps on.  
Orange clouds at the zenith, scudding along.

A flock of birds flies into darkness and moon.  
All lines are taut; crew resting for the chore.  
The course: no more than a string of stars  
Currents and wind hold to the edge of a circle  
Eight places of rising stars, coral stones in sand.  
There, one fire flower after another will bloom.  
Then, the one will appear, one of the hidden  
Thirty two children of the sky will lead.

Through the eight swells the Navigator knows  
The ship travels even under cloud, he knows  
The scent of land, the temperature of waves.  
Bow and stern raised high imitate great wings  
The boobie, tern and frigate bird, harbingers,  
The plover flown thousands of miles to Hawaii.  
Flying before the shower of stars that rise and set  
Into and out of those eight pockets of the horizon.

Breadfruit and coconut caulk hold man and ship as one  
Body and plank, and he who knows the stars that never  
Seem to move and where the swells meet  
Navigator-priest at the helm in the storm, sees  
The Great Bird leap behind cloud. The canoe sails on.

## Fire Stones

---

Fire Stones stacking at garden gates  
Fire Stones rolling over young shoots  
Stopping short of a country store  
Saving a *puka* of native jungle  
Sparing an isled church  
Moving onward like an animal  
Crouching, then leaping  
Pursuing its hunt through  
Fire felled papaya groves  
Over older lava flows  
Casting itself, a beast  
In heat leaping  
Panting, thrashing  
Downward from cliff  
To boiling sea,  
Lighting turbid depths  
With its power.



## Behind The Ear

---

One day hibiscus opens  
Above your left ear  
Tomorrow and tomorrow

Above your right ear, what?  
Your marriage flower;  
But your gown wears pollen

Of our love: ashes left  
Of eruption laying naked  
Ghost trees like memories.

Bath powder alone caresses you  
After your shower; distant dark skin  
And silence: devastation trail.

A winter storm, Kona wind  
Fills black lava pools  
:Mirrors to a desert-soul

Your image drying in this black sky-glass  
Your stone tears staring back at me  
Your tomorrow, another flower not for us

One day hibiscus, tomorrow  
Another flower. I am thirsty though  
No rain comes to fill black stone.

## Numbers Of Flowers

---

When many flowers  
I am one among them  
No need to pick them  
I may still  
So what, many flowers

There are few flowers  
Bare ground, naked sky  
I am watching, old and hardy  
A watcher  
I pick some, leave some.

Three flowers  
Cold winds  
Many thorns and burrs  
I am still outside  
/ Three flowers

One bloom, frost  
Brown edges  
Inside with one  
In a weed holder  
One flower



## Hana Aloha: Love Magic

---

A precious gift is this curse of love,  
That makes my anger merciful;  
That opens clenched fists which hold back  
The gift of *hana aloha*, love magic that  
Back in time cast its spell upon me.

Is someone not praying for me, for you  
That *la a pule hana aloha*,  
That prayer to evoke love. The love plant  
Is *aloha 'oe* that works its magic perhaps  
Ti, fern and palm swing without a breeze.  
Drunk without drink, unrested with sleep  
Dunking in a dream waterfall a lady  
I never saw before; on shores, a lei of ocean  
High and arching toward me. I throw this lei  
Upon the tide to move from dream to dream.  
Hello and Goodbye, In and Out with the tide.  
In and out of you on an eye-beam. Caught by  
Soft Hawaiian night sighs, *hō alohaloha*  
Soft curse that makes my blood pulse,  
*Hō alohaloha*, soft night sighs, and you are with me  
Offering wet fruit to the sky this thanks-giving day,  
*Lā Hō alohaloha*. I wake, who am I, and where are you.

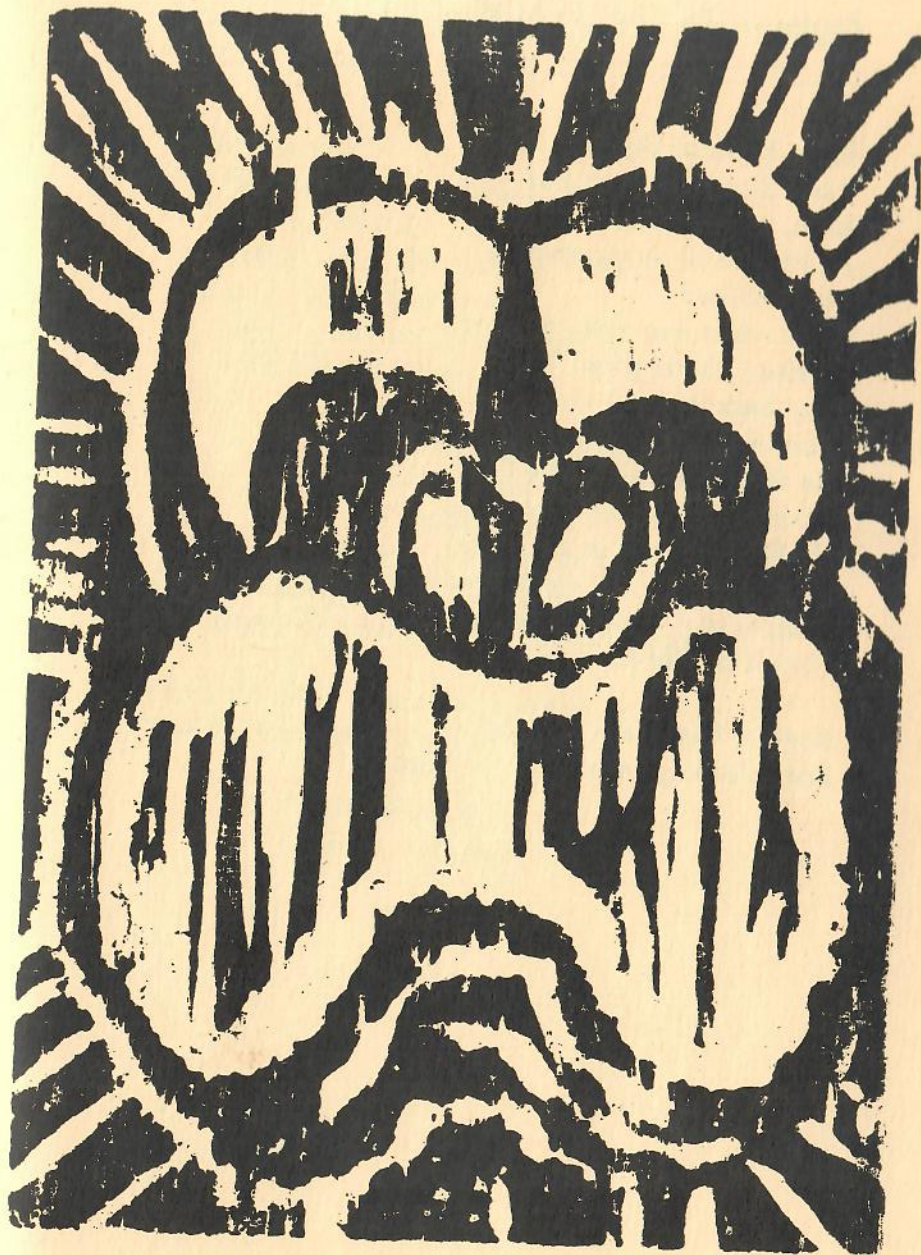
## Green Sands Beach

---

Ceramic light of a moon  
Glazed sea: lemon in tea,  
A maze of green rays,  
Illumined reaches,  
An infinite crossing  
Of precious olivines.

Between these sphinx-like arms  
Half submerged, weathered  
Sandstone buttes and bluffs,  
Those clear green crystals facet  
Vast Pacific wastes beyond  
Our Nation's grasp, this last  
Bastion of America The Beautiful,  
This vanishing point to the  
Zenith: monument of sand  
Between here and nowhere,  
Watching, watching for the  
New mountain rising miles out  
From lights of night fishermen,  
Rising from beneath the sea.

The following section contains five poetic interpretations of the *Prologue To The Night World*, from the *Kumulipo*, the Hawaiian Creation Epic.



## Prologue To The Night World: One

---

Back, Birth of Big Fire One  
Back, Sun One leapt out  
Back, when flame met light  
At First, dull as moonshine  
    Sun bathed  
Born when sun-returns-north  
    Before plants grow  
    Far back, behind ice-rain  
From mother-slime, each began  
    In *Po*, Darkness of the God  
When Gods, alone, controlled  
    In far back lost in darkness  
Long ago, Bright One moved into *Po*  
    Before *Ao*: now, of living  
    Into Place-of-Gods-Alone

Born in Night are the dark  
Born, leaping into Day, the Light

## The Creation Of Earth From Deep Blue-Black

---

Night Beings  
    Beings of the Shining One  
    Leaping Beings  
    Beings from the serpent's mouth  
You upon blue-black waves  
You upon white tongues: mist  
    Thrusting through clouds  
    Of water on fire  
        Through boiling, bubbling  
        Of the inside out  
        Of the deepest place  
    Veins straining, the red eye of fire  
A mad whorling, a wild maelstrom  
    Then the vision of the Celestial Egg

From the High Place and the Place of  
The Folding Over Darkness

Night of night  
Dark of darkness

Rays spreading through smoke  
Tossed forth from broad thighs of light  
From groins of the unknown, groans of birthing  
Noise of laughter and tears  
    Rainbows of soft sounds,  
    A baby cooing  
Above the flowing blood of lava stone,  
Ancestors of stick and a breath of all beings  
Moving in the spinning womb  
Visible and invisible  
Arms, legs, wing and fin  
A chord in space: then

The cursed gut of hungry millions  
Being upon being  
Two upon one  
Being upon hordes  
One upon many  
    Many  
Together  
    And many alone

Great burnt shell  
Great She-Turtle Ancestor  
Beetle, Spider risen from  
A blue-black sea of night  
Hissing steam, settling mist  
Breasts of motherland  
    Grand clouds of change  
Your limbs spreading upon  
    Those writhing seas  
Beings of the Shining One  
    Come in multitudes  
From the waters of the High Place, clearing  
From deep under, moaning  
From the rain of iron stones burning  
    Through black space  
Beings of Night folded into stone  
Beings born of the Serpent's mouth  
    Night Beings  
    Shining Beings  
    Serpent's Mouth Beings  
    Beings of the Celestial Egg  
    Beings of Beings, without end

## Prologue To The Night World: Two

---

In the age the patterned mat of land was upturned  
In the age the shadowy uncertain ropes of sun  
Fastened together like nets, each of two crosses  
Sticks held the corners of the distant, sacred  
*'a ki 'upena 'iki i*, dip net, the width, *la'a*  
The breadth of that sacred fabric  
Caring for the gathering in forms of light  
Sun exposed to moon  
In the age of *Makali'i* when the born-in-darkness bear many  
In the age it mended, this spliced starting point  
Plaited of heated shell of turtle-earth, the deep  
Design of mat: center of canoe fleet catching  
Race of the red-brown fish  
From the great sap of the green *kukui*, of tree fern  
Of the hardwood, *mamaki*, bark mixed to make cloth  
By the source of the deep blue-black  
By the source of Night, in nights of copulation  
By the deep blue-black, of the deepest blue-black  
By that deep blue-black, in the deep blue-black  
Night of stars smoothed by Night  
Like an *ulei* stick, softening earth  
For the sweet potato  
Night paddling ahead

## The Night World

---

In the spell past  
Toward the realm  
Of the land  
Heat finished  
Overturning

In the spell past  
Toward daylight, moon bathed  
In the rising eye  
Appeared the shadow  
Of the multitude  
Finishing  
Lifting up their hands  
Lifting their feet to walk

By the brightening of the moon  
Finishing  
Swelling

In the spell past  
In the season of the blind  
Small-eyed stars

In the spell past  
In the season of stars  
High with others

In Pleiades, the first month  
Plants growing  
The six months of summer

Sun returning north  
In thunder rains  
Before ice-rains of winter  
: *The Night of Makali'i*  
Fish spawning  
Offspring  
Shoot and bud  
Face at the edge

Beginning finishing in Chaos  
Night  
Darkness

In the Great Slime, this the beginning  
Of the land

Due to the great deception  
Causing the source of a deep place

In the wood mixed with bark to make *tapa* cloth  
Or the concoction of vine and *kukui* nuts in gourd: food

From the *kumu* - the beginning root stump  
End stalk origin  
From deep, blue-black sombre dark  
:Southern quarter of the sky, high place  
:Deep water of the sea

From the chaos, night of the deepest blue-black  
Dim distant there, union finished

From the southern night, high-place of deep blue-black  
From far-off blue-black of the light of day

## Prologue To The Night World: Three

---

In the age the burning sphere of earth overturned  
In the age the unfolding sky overthrew  
In the age the shadow, the sun exchanged with moon  
Causing light in the caring for  
The origin: season of *Makali'i*

Day begins at nightfall, the darkness  
From the slime, this was the beginning of the earth  
From the bottom of the deep blue-black  
From the conception of the night in obscure union  
By the Great, Deep Blue-Black, of the deep blue-black  
In the distant light-heat

From the distance of the Night

Chaos leaves slime  
Chaos comes back slime

Things born of night are dark  
Things sprung from day  
Are of the light



## D.E. ADDLESBERGER

D.E. Addlesberger studied art at the University of Hawaii, printmaking with Jean Charlot, and assisted in the making and restoration of murals with David Asherman and Juliette May Fraser.

His works are well represented in many public and private collections throughout the United States, Japan, and the Pacific. In 1980 Mr. Addlesberger did extensive research into Pacific Basin mythology.

Now making his home in Kona on the island of Hawaii, D.E. Addlesberger continues to paint, print, and conduct printmaking classes for children and adults.





*This first edition, designed and printed in Kona and Hilo for Oceanic Publishing, consists of two thousand copies, of which seventy are numbered and signed by the author and artist. Twenty of these are lettered A through T and include an original linoleum block print by the artist.*

F  
LAZS

## AELBERT AEHEGMA

*Aelbert Clark Aehegma is included in the International Who's Who of Authors and Writers. He is listed as a performance poet with Poets & Writers, Inc., New York, and has read and performed at the New York Poetry Society, the New York Poetry Forum, as well as the Shelley Society, where he was guest of honor and guest speaker. He has been awarded an individual artist and writer grant from his home state of Connecticut, and for several years was a Poet-in-the-Schools and Poet-in-Residence at the Teacher's Center and Children's Museum of Fairfield University, Connecticut.*

*This volume of poetry takes for its theme the transformation of the earth most notable in the Hawaiian Islands by the volcanic growth of new land, like a turtle rising from beneath the sea.*

*TURTLE DANCE, is a Commemorative Issue celebrating the Silver Jubilee Year of Hawaii's Statehood, and includes five poetic renderings of THE KUMULIPO, for the first time translated by a poet.*

*The title poem of this volume has been awarded first prize by KA HULLIAU, a publication of Hawaii Education for Social Progress.*

*Mr. Aehegma now makes his home in the Ka'u District of the Big Island.*

# TURTLE DANCE

POEMS OF HAWAII & TRANSLATIONS  
FROM THE HAWAIIAN CREATION CHANT

BY AELBERT AENEGMA  
LINOCUTS BY DALE ADDLESBERGER  
A FUND RAISING VENTURE  
FOR THE SILVER JUBILEE

Hawaii: 25 years of statehood. A lifetime of



Logo Copyright 1982 State of Hawaii

Rip this coupon out  
for publisher's discount  
retail \$7.95

A SPECIAL  
LIMITED EDITION

**\$6.25 DISCOUNT WITH THIS COUPON**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

NO. OF COPIES \_\_\_\_\_

WITH DISCOUNT AT \$6.25 per copy

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

ADD: \$1.30 for Mailing within the U.S.A.  
each book

MAILING ADDRESS

OCEANIC PUBLISHING CO.  
Box 156 Na'alehu, HI.  
Hawaii 96772 U.S.A.



In *Turtle Dance*, his second volume of poems, Aelbert Aehegma celebrates his new Hawaiian homeland: "Every plant named, each' bird, each place, the ancient rituals, even the names given the stones of the new land rising must be learned as only the poet and the child learn: freshly, with open eyes and open ears."

*Turtle Dance* reminds us that we are all a part of the ritual; we must dance atop the ancient turtle rising and sinking back into the sea. Dance, or die.

ISBN 0-916467-00-7