

## **The Place in the Middle**

<https://www.rlsms.k12.hi.us/>

How lovely to hear  
The school bell ring  
A ring atop a hill  
The thrill of running the hall  
Am I too late, am I too early?  
Caught up in the dream  
Of the mural on the wall  
A portrait of hope  
Hands to clouds  
Rainbows to earth

Where do I fall  
Between earth and sky?  
I am neither here nor there  
But just right in the middle

On the slide down a bow  
I rode the violet holding onto the red  
The yellow was quite hot  
But the green was just right  
Fluffy as the tops of kukui trees  
The orange warmed me  
Over the chilly, white clouds

I found myself on arrival  
Between royal and warrior  
Between poet and people  
Right in the middle  
Right where I belong

Wherever my hands reach out  
I am equidistant  
I found that everything was within reach  
Wherever I run from here  
Every destination takes just as long

I can't stay long  
Here comes the office lady  
Chasing me on  
The hallway beckons me  
Away from the middle

More there than here  
 Teacher at the door  
 Arms crossed  
 Curious look  
 Where was I?  
 Toying with the mana  
 Of imagination  
 Of my generation

*Notes:*

kukui tree: candlenut tree  
 mana: mystical or physical power

<p><b>Pe‘ahi i ke Ahi</b></p> <p>He ahi ka lima e wewela ai          ‘O ka penu nō o ka lima kuhi ma ka ipu wai,          A ‘o ka mohala mai koe o nā ‘ēheu pulelehua,          Ka lele mīkolelehua ho‘i o ka ‘upu,          Ka hā‘upu ho‘i o ka mana‘o,          Ua kāmoe i ke ailana o kahi waiwai,          Na wai ho‘i e ake ‘ole,          ‘O ka ho‘olale a‘e o ke keiki, ka makua,          Ō naue kākou e ‘ike i ka hana a ko ke ao,          Ke ao mālamalama ākea,          Ke kahua na‘auao ma‘a i o‘u mau kūpuna,            ‘O ke kahua ho‘i o ka ‘Ī, ka Mahi, ka Palena,            Ua ‘a‘e ‘ia ho‘i nā palena o ke ao,          ‘A‘oe e maemae kou inoa          I ke ala Polikua a Kāne, a Kanaloa          Ua hanini ka ma‘awe ‘ula ma nā moana a pau          Ā puni ka honua          Ā hala nā kūkulu o Kahiki          Ā pae ho‘i i nā kapa kai ‘olu          O nā ‘āina nani pāha‘oha‘o          Ua kamaha‘o ka mana o ka mana‘o          Pēlā kā kou lima i waiho mai ai          E ola ka nani o ka hua o ka mana‘o          I ke ani a ka lima me ka maka o ka peni.</p>	<p><b>Fanning the Flame</b></p> <p>The hand is the flame that burns          By the dunk of the pen in the inkwell          The wings of the moth are yet to unfurl          To take flight of eloquent tongue with anticipation          Elevating the fancy of thought          Carrying on to the island of bliss and treasures          Who wouldn’t desire such a thing?          What drives the child, the parent          Well, let’s go and see the works of the world          The world so brilliant and vast          All of it the schoolground of wisdom my ancestors              possessed          It was the playground of speech, of work, of              boundaries          Boundaries dashed at the edge of the world          Your name will never fade away          Whether on the pathway of Kāne or Kanaloa          That red shimmer on the ocean at sunset          Spills over, encircling the world          Bypassing the pillars of foreign lands          Reaching the calm coasts, so pleasant          Of lands of awe and wonder          ‘How wondrous the power of thought’          Said your hand as it set down again          May the beauty of thought live on          With the movement of the hand and the tip of the              pen</p>
--	--

## **The Effigy in the Room**

An effigy in memorial  
Lion, Tin Man, Scarecrow  
All in one  
Seeking all they desired  
Desiring nothing more  
Than to stand up and stretch  
The irony of it all  
The stretch of a lifetime  
From shadow to light  
From light to enlightened  
Frozen now in deep thought  
It was enough for me  
This shack, this banyan tree  
The cinematic play before me  
Outside my window  
Yet here, frozen in time  
I stay  
Staring out my window  
Here I was when they came  
And carried my shack away  
And away I went with it  
From Waikīkī to my perch in Mānoa  
Just the way I am  
An observer in time  
An observer of time  
The chatter of Kānaka  
Laughter, alarm, laughter, repeat  
My effigy, a time capsule afterall  
The knowing dummy in the room

### *Note:*

R. L. S.'s little Hawaiian shack originally stood on the property of the family of Princess Ka'iulani called 'Āinahau in Waikīkī Kai, where now stands the Ka'iulani Hotel in the bustling tourist center of Waikīkī. The shack was later removed and rebuilt on its current promontory in Mānoa Valley, with a beautiful view of the city of Honolulu. This poem is inspired by the display in the current R. L. S. hut at the Mānoa Wai'oli Tea Room.



The R. L. S. hut at the Wai'oli Tea Room, Mānoa, O'ahu, Hawai'i.