

Letter to My Parents™ Contest in Hawai'i 2023



As reported in our previous newsletter article, the final presentation and award ceremony for the 2023 Letter to My Parents™ Contest took place at the Hawai'i State Library on November 4, 2023. In this issue, we would like to introduce the letter by Selah Hahaimakealaiki Ka'upu Fronda, who was honored with the Reflection Award.

Even though the contest has concluded, the stories will remain with all participants and readers, serving as a reminder of the strength we all possess and the importance of improving family relationships.

Mom,

To the woman who raised me, who has loved me through 6,559 days of life and counting; to the mother who mothers more than her own, who sacrifices her grief to be strong for everyone else; to the friend who gives love even when she fails to receive any in return, who speaks from a kind heart despite having been broken down more times than one deserves— a simple thank you seems like an insult in comparison to what you've done for me and who you are to so many. However, a thank you will have to suffice for now. Maybe until I can buy you a house so

you can stop working and do something for yourself for once.

Karen Ann Marie Ka'upu, the woman I call "mom," thank you for choosing me day in and day out. Even when our family went from 5 to 4 in a moment's notice, thank you for choosing me. When you were forced to be a mother and a father, when 21 years of marriage were ripped from your fingertips, when you were kicked out of your own house by the man who once called you his forever, when the streets

looked more like home than our cottage on Pualeilani Street, thank you for choosing me.

**I hope to carry
the same courage,
love, and joy
for my family
as you did for me.**

To this day, I wonder if you ever cried. If so, I didn't see it. You'd hold me tight with a strong face, wipe my tears with the bottom of your shirt, and whisper a

little prayer over me. To this day, I wonder if anyone ever prayed over you. If anyone whispered a sweet word to your tears or asked God to rid you of your misery. I don't know how you did it, but

I'm grateful you chose me. I hope I can buy you a house one day, Mama.

While girls at school dream of being a mother, I fear motherhood— I fear not being the mother to my daughter that you were to me. A stay-at-home mom forced into the brutal world of the workforce, you managed to provide from the salary of a substitute teacher, putting food on our table, clothes on our bodies, and toys in our hands. You'd work every hour of the day if you could, just to make sure we had enough to live contently and with smiles upon our faces. You'd work to give us everything we wanted, probably as an attempt to compensate for the loss of a father. Maybe if I had one more Barbie to distract me, I'd forget how broken I was without a dad. Maybe if my brother could add one more Hot Wheels to his collection, he wouldn't question what



he did to lose a father. Maybe, just maybe, if you could buy our favorite flavor of ice cream, we'd feel loved enough from you as we once did with two parents. The truth is, nothing could make us forget how dad walked out on us. However, you brought a little more joy, a little more light, a little more sense of family. Thank you. I want to buy you a house one day, Mama.

I know it must've been hard around the holidays, swallowing the truth that we were down one man. The man who promised, "Till death do us part," in front of hundreds of souls, only to break that promise long before death was near. Though every day brought its own difficulties, December was a whole new monster. Nonetheless, thank you for making Christmas feel like Christmas. Amidst our questions asking when daddy's coming home, thank you for making our home feel magical. Daddy wasn't coming home, but you couldn't say that. You couldn't bear ruining the spirit of the season. You must've been carrying the weight of the world upon your shoulders, but you woke us on December 25th with all the joy you could possibly muster up, and that was more than enough. Thank you for showing me what it means to be a mom. I hope to carry the same courage, love, and joy for my family as you did for me. I'm gonna buy you a house one day, Mama— so you can rest your ever-working mind, ease your ever-giving heart, and calm your ever-loving soul. One day, you'll be able to live for you, and I hope to see that day.

Love,
Your daughter

