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10-4-2014

A Sense of Place

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Panel: A Sense of Place I

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Recommended Citation

Kamali, Daren, "A Sense of Place" (2014). *International Writing Program Archive of Residents' Work*. 524.
https://ir.uiowa.edu/iwp_archive/524

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A Sense of Place

By Daren Kamali (New Zealand)

There are so many places in the South Pacific I can draw from to express my sense of place and belonging. I think the most logical place to start from is the beginning, using the navigation, migration and movement of Pacific peoples, my ancestors and my own (going back five generations). I will talk about movement and journeys from villages, island homes and cultures, from island to island and to the big city (Auckland) to settle.

Today, my sense of place expresses my appreciation not only for my island home of Fiji, where I was born, or Aotearoa, in New Zealand, where I now reside, but also for Oceania as a whole (Pan Pacific), from ancient times to this new era, the traditional to the contemporary. My discussion will cover journeys on outrigger canoes and ships; how Pacific migration used the ocean and stars to navigate their way to new dwellings in ancient Pasifika and how in this modern day and time, like myself, they traveled and migrated abroad on flying boats (airplanes) in search of education and opportunities with a vision of a better life in the western world.

This conversation is designed for open discussion, to share my history, that of my father's grandparents – who eloped from Wallis (Uvea) and Futuna islands to Levuka, the old capital of Fiji in the early 1900's – and that of my mother's grandmother, who moved from Samoa to study in Fiji and fell in love with my great grandfather, a Scotsman and a builder. They married and settled in Suva, Fiji.

Immigrant Story

She from a line of Kings and Queens

He, a history of slavery

Sacrificing their island home

Their families and friends

All in the name of love

You both eloped

To a foreign island

Frigate bird above

Far from your home leaving behind

Generations of legacy

Kula birds singing songs of welcome

A SENSE OF PLACE

All in the name of love

(Tales, Poems and Songs From the Underwater World, 2011 – Anahera)

I am a product of migration and as a result, I consist of multi Pacific Island nationalities like Fijian, Wallis and Futuna, and Samoan. I also have Scottish ancestry, which I am very proud of.

Aotearoa is my home away from home. I have lived there for 21 years now, and have two sons there. I left Fiji in 1992, when I was 17 years old.

From Fiji to Aotearoa/NZ

In 92'

A different land

Something new

20 years past

My memories of home still last

I have come a long way

To tell this story today

In my mind, in my head

I can hear my ancestors say

Try your best to never go astray

Try to tidy up on your yesterday

(Tales, Poems and Songs From the Underwater World, 2011 – Anahera)