

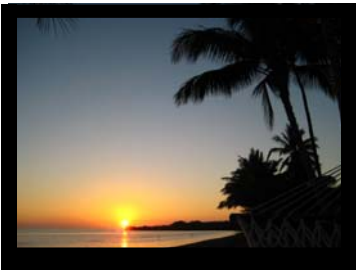


### Hawaiian Inch Worms

I fall in love with a region on Lana'i that housed the ruins of an old village and wild rocky terrain overlooking the ocean. Reaching it required a long jeep ride along a red dirt trail with more pot holes than red dirt. But once there, the land embraced me. I sat on an old volcanic rock. Everything about the place felt sacred. There, I learned an important lesson from a green inchworm.

I sit watching my first green friend as he moves at a fast pace over the dimpled and cragged volcanic rock. Bunching his body into a fold and then unfolding, moving as if the world were ending and he needed to get somewhere, rushing as if he were late to a meeting or had a patient waiting, moving as if he really mattered in the world. He kept racing at that same pace as I watched him, but he wasn't really getting anywhere. He seemed to be going in circles or at least circular patterns, ending up near my naked foot. But he didn't pause. He didn't seem aware that he wasn't getting anywhere. And he seemed happy, or at least as happy as a bright green creature can feel, moving super fast under the hot sun. After all, he's fortunate to not have a brain developed enough to process being happy or unhappy or to even process. Perhaps all he knows is that he needs to keep moving.

He appears to be communicating with me, almost seemed to look up at me several times, looking down on him. If he had eyes large enough to be seen by my eyes, then I felt like he would have caught my eye, winked at me. Trying to say how important it is to keep moving, to keep believing that all the work of moving is really worth the time. That perhaps in that motion of moving, you'll find why it is that you're moving. Or at least you'll experience moments when it's all clear that the movement is worth the work. And perhaps although none of it matters, not making the meeting or teaching the class or moving fast over an ancient volcanic rock in the Hawaii sunshine, we just can't allow ourselves to dwell on that. Because it is our own reality and we are the ones who give meaning to what we do. We are the ones who assign value. A homeless man may find more meaning in feeding his particular pigeon at 11:34 am than a surgeon making it into the operating room at the same hour. I sit on the volcanic rock with my green inch worm, watching him



race as if the world was ending and he needed to complete one last arc across the rock.

Who are we to really assign value to the tasks of others? Who are we to really understand anyone else's choices or to judge them? All we have are our own choices, our own lives, and our own minutes to fill. And watching my green inch worm, who was I to really judge the hard work he was putting into making his way around the rock? Perhaps I've wanted someone to sit me down and to judge me. Kids are starving, families don't have enough to eat, and I just meander around the world, playing with strangers. A day earlier, I picked up two hitchhikers, a man with blond hair pulled tightly back into a ponytail and strong blue eyes and a small-framed woman. He is living on the island for a month and choosing to hike the 8 miles up into town daily, hitching a ride that day. How different is he from my green inch worm? Is it really different for this pretty man to choose to live on an isolated island for a month and walk 16 plus miles everyday in the sunshine for no reason except he has the time to fill and enjoys the movement of his body over place, past trees, over red earth? Who am I to judge his choice? It's not my role.

And I give myself permission to meander as well. After all, through all the movement, I may actually discover why I am here.

