

## Add water

Whatever the case, he sold beer to anybody.

We talked about the seemingly pointless demands made upon us by teachers and coaches at Punahou; about the relative virtues of local girls and tourist girls; about the racial tensions and conflicts we'd begun to experience in athletics and around town; about surfboards, volleyball, football, canoe races, food, and Falstaff beer, which had recently been introduced at Benny's, but which cost nearly twice as much as Primo, which was made locally; and most often of all, we talked about where we would spear the following day.

The two of us spent whole days spearing, from daybreak until dinner time. Sometimes Tommy Fink came along. We wore only one swim fin, changing it from leg to leg every hour or so to avoid

streaming off his face mask, brown hair matted against his tanned forehead.

"Damn thing's stuck," he said, and took a breath and dove again.

This time he braced both feet against the wall of the reef and used the strength of his shoulders and back as he pulled. Suddenly, the spear came out of the crevice with such force that it pushed Robert backward through the water. He shot for the surface, arms pulling wildly, kicking so hard that the green swim fin flexed into circles with the effort. A 5-foot brown moray with the spear through its neck followed him halfway up.

It happened so quickly I had no time to react until it was over. I saw Robert coming, the moray close behind him, and then the spear was gone and the moray turned back and disappeared into its crevice. The barbed point had entered the

they showed in biology class in which flowers progressed from bud to bloom in a matter of seconds. The cloud banks darkened to gray, then black, then a solid sheet of rain appeared beneath them. Within minutes it was on us.

Driving wind with howling gusts blew the tops of swells, and the rain pounded down in huge drops that seemed to explode when they hit the choppy water. Visibility was reduced to a matter of yards.

We tried to haul our anchor up, but it was caught somewhere, and we didn't have time to dive. We cut the rope with our fish-cleaning knife and paddled in, pulling as hard and as fast as we could, arms and shoulders burning with fatigue, then numb with it. It took at least an hour to cover a mile.

When we finally reached shore we slid

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cramps. We discovered reefs and ledges in deep water so far offshore that the pink Royal and the white Moana looked small, and the Outrigger Club could barely be seen between them. The beach appeared as a thin white crescent of white with steep green mountains behind it, their peaks often hidden in sunlit cloud banks or slanting gray rain.

Once, Robert speared a large moray accidentally. It was out near a sunken barge that was said to have gone down in the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. He had aimed at an *uhu* and missed, and when he tried to retrieve his spear it wouldn't budge. Less than half its length protruded from a crevice in the broad side of a coral wall about 15 feet down. I watched him yank hard at the spear for several seconds, then kick to the surface. He came up close beside me, water

top of the neck and come out the bottom, allowing the force of the moray's charge to dislodge the spear.

Robert was back beside me.

"Did you see that goddamn thing?" he asked me.

"Are you kidding?"

He was pale through his dark tan, and I probably was too.

"Did you see that goddamn thing?"

That was the only moray we ever speared when we were out together.

Late one December afternoon, Robert and I were hit by a sudden storm. Luckily, both of us had swum to the canoe to dump the fish in when I noticed clouds piling thickly against the mountaintops. Everything changed so quickly that I was reminded of the movies

from the canoe and stood there in knee-deep water, hands braced against the gunwales, leaning over like milers after a hard race. We were too tired to beach the canoe, too exhausted to talk.

Noones finally saw us from his canoe shed office and ran down to help, his blue T-shirt plastered to his skin by the time he'd crossed the beach.

"We lost the anchor!" Robert told him, yelling to be heard above the wind. "We had to cut it off! Sorry!"

Noones shook his head, smiling. "You're two lucky *haoles*!"

I still remember his happy, wrinkled face in the rain.

Often, after a long day of spearing, we drove to the Ideal Inn on King Street for Chinese food. We