

# Creative Coping

A Collection of Poetry and Art  
Celebrating Mental Health and Resilience  
2023

Published by *Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i*

“Creative Coping: A Collection of Poetry and Art Celebrating Mental Health and Resilience 2023”

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Aloha kākou,\*

Healing comes in all forms, from the people in our lives, the words we speak, and the works we create with our bodies, minds, and spirits.

This collection of poetry and art shares the works of those who attended our “Creative Coping” workshops in the summer of 2023 or who use creativity, self-expression, and self-reflection to cope with life’s challenges.

We hope that this collection shows you that it’s okay to feel the way you feel, that all feelings are valid, and that your experiences matter. And we invite you to do the guided exercises at the back of the book and share your creativity with us.

Thank you to Katie Uekawa, Natasha Bailey, and Chaz Hill, and our inspiring poets and artists, for making this collection possible.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of creativity, hope, self-expression, and self-healing.

With aloha and appreciation,

Rachelle Chang  
Executive Director  
Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai’i

\* kākou means “all of us” in Hawaiian



## **Creative Coping 2023 Workshop Sponsor:**

**Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i (SCCH)** provides professional and accessible mental health counseling sensitive to the spiritual traditions of individuals, families, and communities in Hawai'i, regardless of their ability to pay. SCCH also participates in community events and outreach to increase awareness about mental health resources and help reduce the stigma of mental illness.

## **Creative Coping 2023 Presenters:**

### **Creative Coping: Lei Making**



**Katie Uekawa**, a doctoral candidate for Family Nursing Practice at the University of Hawai'i who is also working as the event coordinator for Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i. In her free time she enjoys spending time with friends, family, and taking her dog for car rides.

### **Creative Coping: Art & Poetry**



**Natasha Bailey** is Realtor-Associate® at Locations Hawai'i and a certified yoga instructor. A lifelong Hawai'i resident, Natasha's intention in every class is to create a safe environment for students to embrace every part of themselves with ease and enjoyment.

### **Creative Coping: SPACE**



**Chaz Hill** is a seasoned poet, actor, and performance artist, out experiencing the writing life. At age 69, Chaz makes poems, draws, composes songs (music & lyrics), creates new plays, including plays with original music, and writes prose.

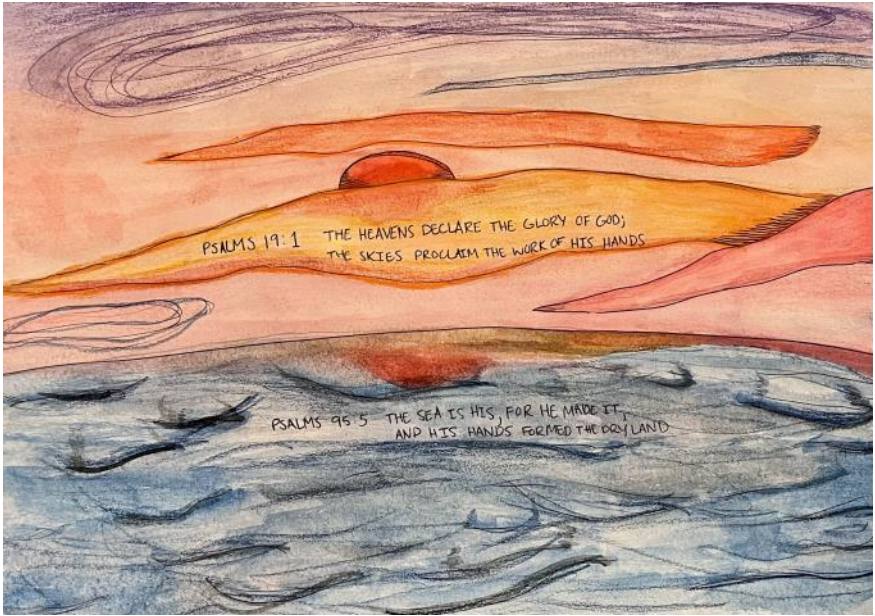


Creative Coping:  
Poetry & Art



*Amalia Houff*

## *Serenity*



*Rachelle Chang*

## *Opihi Picker*

*A character poem about choice*

She balances on lava rocks  
Reaching forward to the sea  
Her arm outstretched, her feet planted  
Selecting the perfect opihi  
Ocean cools her, sun warms her,  
She fills her pockets carefully.

r.e.p.

## Haiku

Haiku 

in the quiet dusk  
summer dreams  
dance silently  
mid the falling leaves

watching the bright moon  
in a puddle  
after the rain  
I long for Home

the chill autumn frost  
ghosts of moonlight wander  
among the fairy hills

october evening  
in a chilly gust  
at dusk  
leaves pile on leaves

the chill autumn dusk  
the last maple leaf  
shivers  
in a sudden gust





Katie Uekawa

# Vision Board



*r.e.p.*

## *Portrait of the Poet as a Young Boy*

Writing poems in my head  
while riding my bike home from school  
as I pass the neighbor kids  
in the corner lot playing ball  
watching the shop windows  
and houses flying by  
then the maples along the lane  
turning from scarlet  
to gold  
and the clear blue of the sky.

I wonder what my Mom'll think  
about these poems I'm writing in my head  
if she'll roll her eyes  
and say I'm wasting my time  
That I should be doing and writing  
things that matter  
instead of the way the leaves look  
as they turn color in October  
and the blue of the sky

Maybe I should tell her that I'll try  
and maybe update the Odyssey  
or write a sequel to the Aeneid  
of the battles of Alexander  
or a modern Beowulf  
and wonder if she'll roll her eyes.

Then we'll order out for a pizza  
with pepperoni and pull two Pepsis  
from the fridge. And we'll spend

the evening watching NET FLICKS  
while I wait for a butterfly  
to alight on the windowsill  
Or perhaps a white owl  
to happen by.

*r.e.p.*

## *After the Storm*

An old man and a child  
found themselves alone  
on a deserted beach at dusk  
among miles of starfish.  
The child picked one up  
and threw it back  
into the sea  
“What’d you do that for!”  
said the old man.  
“There’s too many of them...  
It won’t make any difference.”  
“It did for that one!”  
said the boy.



*Jay*

## *Universe*

A star in the night sky  
A blade of grass among millions anchored to earth  
Turgidly rising  
Reaching up

The star offers nothing to the grass  
Light not strong enough to open its stoma  
No rain to offer

But the star is there when the sun is not  
When the golden hour has passed  
The star is there when rain does not fall  
When the skies are clear  
It does not have to be anything more  
It is enough like this  
Limitless

*Kumi Macdonald*

## *Boundaries*



# BOUNDARIES

"I CAN'T BUT I CAN HELP YOU FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN."

"I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT, BUT NEXT TIME I'D PREFER..."

"I CAN'T TAKE ON MORE RESPONSIBILITIES RIGHT NOW."

"I'M UNCOMFORTABLE WITH WHAT YOU JUST SAID / DID."

"THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN, BUT I CAN HANDLE THIS."

"I CAN'T ATTEND, BUT I APPRECIATE THE INVITATION."

"I DON'T GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO DO [X] TO ME."

"I CAN'T DO [X], BUT I'M OPEN TO TRYING (Y)."

"I DON'T FEEL SAFE SO I'M GOING TO LEAVE."

"I WON'T BE SPOKEN TO IN THAT MANNER."

"IT'S NOT RIGHT FOR ME RIGHT NOW."

"I'M ALLOWED TO CHANGE MY MIND."

"THANKS, BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED."

"I WISH I COULD, BUT I CAN'T."

"NO, THANK YOU."

"NO."



**NAMI** Hawaii



*Reyna Miller and Breseyna Moreno*

*Lei Making*



*Anonymous*

## *Grieving Gus*

Grieving Gus gallops around “keeping busy”  
His heart is heavy  
His thoughts are jumbled  
He knows not where to turn —  
Just obeys his urge to “do something — anything.”

Gus’ friends call...  
His answers are abrupt — “I need to get back to work”  
No “thanks” — no “sorry, I hurt too much to talk.”  
And back he scurries to mindless galloping and accomplishing  
nothing.

Months pass and Gus continues to gallop,  
Then collapsing exhausted, and wondering,  
Where are his friends?

*Anonymous*

## *Frustration Freida*

Frustration Freida rushes through life  
Feelings are seen as a bother and waste of her valuable time.  
Freida has few friends because they slow her down.  
Aloha Fridays irritate Freida — way too much traffic on H-1, too  
many people everywhere laughing and getting in her way.

Frustration Freida avoids group projects at work  
She’d much rather “do it herself” and get it done!  
Frustration Freida... gets frustrated that more people don’t admire  
her speed and work ethic.

*Tom Morelli*

## *Chase*

Chase has begun the race.  
His speed is fast, in the open space.  
Legs of solid muscle, no actually steel,  
Carry him forth back to class to have his meal,  
His lunch box rests on top of the table.  
He thinks it's too bad school doesn't have cable.  
Saying hello to some of his friends in the hall,  
He often thinks of after school going to the mall  
Waiting patiently for the bus to arrive,  
He looks forward to his wading pool so he can take a dive.  
Thinking back to his time in Niu Valley,  
He often wishes there was a wide alley  
That he could walk along to reach a crystal geyser  
Anything at all that would be more fun than Kaiser!  
Sitting calmly in the classroom, pondering his luck,  
Feelings of being trapped, but his grandma came to pick him up.  
Now he is free, albeit temporarily  
From the drudgery of the school day  
When all he wants is to play.  
Fourteen hours left until tomorrow,  
His heart begins to fill with sorrow.  
Why does the school think I'm a fool, when I know that I'm cool?  
All I want is to relax in the sun.  
If things keep staying the same, then I think I'll be done.

*Vinay Hooda*

## *Bench of Desolate Dreams*

Upon this hallowed bench, I sit, in the grip of sorrow's tome,  
The specter of my dear beloved, carved in stone, my only home.  
A haunting visage etched on walls, 'neath night lamps' spectral  
gloom,  
Her tomb, a cruel echo chamber, each thought a crushing stone.

Sisyphus, my spirit kin, our hearts entwined in labor,  
Endlessly we toil, in dark despair we waiver.  
A rolling stone, a silent tomb, love's sweet but tragic flavor,  
Death's bitter kiss, a memory lost, a moment we can't savor.

Her fragile form, encased in wood, on lifeless morning drawn,  
An airport awash with sterile light, a tableau so forlorn.  
An empty casket to my heart, yet, in love's cruel dawn,  
Her beauty held, despite the chill, a rose amidst the thorn.

Each breath, a ragged plea to join her in the ether,  
Suicidal whispers weave a melancholic tether.  
Yet in this mortal coil I'm trapped, too weak to sever,  
Bound by love's enduring chain, a torment I must weather.

As I am lost within the night, my soul feels its impending,  
Doomed to bear this ceaseless woe, with only darkness pending.  
Forever shall I haunt these grounds, in despair unending,  
A ghost, entrapped by love's cruel hand, on sorrow's bench  
descending.



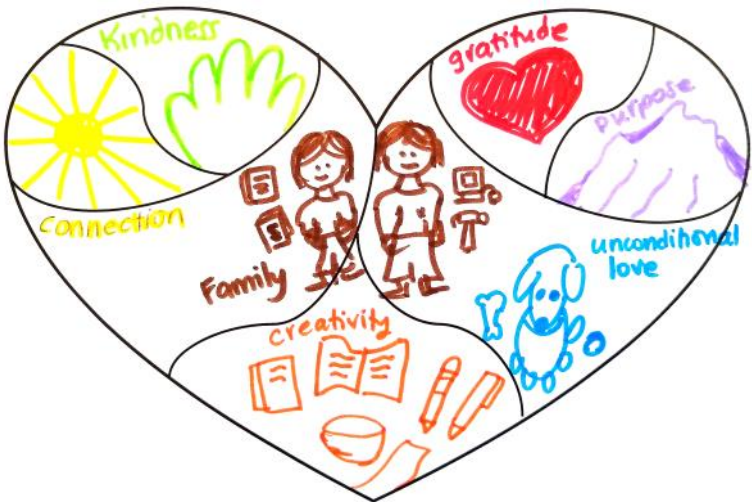
*Katie Uekawa*

*Heart Map*



*Rachelle Chang*

*Heart Map*



*Chaz Hill*

*Prologue: Beach Song*

Sea oats rocking boats  
harbor boons windswept dunes  
lonely lune flashing by

my mother sister grand niece cousin me  
set free on sweet shore liberty  
it's summer 2023

decades ago we splashed rode waves ate tomato sandwiches  
open balcony door footprints crashing waves  
splashing delighted squeals  
reels and reels unwinding  
incoming Crescent Beach tides so many summers past

watching it all again unfold pelicans gulls sand pipers advertising  
planes  
we so much older  
return to the sea



*Chaz Hill*

*Act I: To Climb*

*(Respectfully for the Korean Japanese singers of Arirang  
circa 1945)*

give us please  
space for a mountain to grow  
hand in hand in this foreign land  
you and I climb together

from years dreaming into months, then weeks,  
finally days  
unfold into  
a magical  
hour

set free our spirits though prison gates stand closed  
stretching in the distance a full ocean rises into snowy air  
holding on to each other  
suspend disbelief  
our toes on end  
fingers reach empty expanse when in one light flash we know we  
will go back  
no hill is too steep for us to climb  
we will make it to the top  
Mt. Fuji sunrise  
Arirang on the horizon  
waiting for us  
Arirang Arirang Ara—ri-oh  
we will go back  
we will go back

Chaz Hill

Act II: Our\*

Our moment came before I knew it  
seasonal things changing landscapes  
your hands held up recording eyes  
a vaulted room  
taped & videoed sanctuary remembering  
vulnerable fingers playing the keys I love;  
it was and wasn't a day like any other day  
worship itself was in this hewn rock place  
wood stone steel strings ivory keys Yamaha leather bench  
you moved in a dance around the instrument cinching the concert  
another grand piano my friend at the end  
music shape shifting words in time and space  
sweet release we knew after painting the face of God  
our moment held briefly in a looking glass  
we washed phoenix ashes off our skin

*\* After we missed out on a visit with someone who was instrumental in my missionary life in Korea, before returning for the night to Bird Song Cottage in Black Mountain, NC, we visited Gaither Chapel on Montreat College campus. We walked inside the empty place and I played the grand piano then I explained to my friend Julie that I composed a song in this same chapel the summer I trained for going as a teacher of English to Korea (1978). My friend Julie made a video of me singing several songs and this poem has its roots in our concert there on May 1, 2023.*

*Chaz Hill*

*Act III: Two Comets*

Living this way  
I have not experienced before  
under lighted banyan branches  
drinking a draft beer

your friend brought you out on a rainy Monday night  
introduced us though we only met the night before when I  
boarded  
my flight with him as flight leader in Tokyo bound for Honolulu

something happened when Gabriel remembered my name  
and I know only this until after our first kiss I must listen because  
from the start you sense  
I move through space knowing too little about myself.

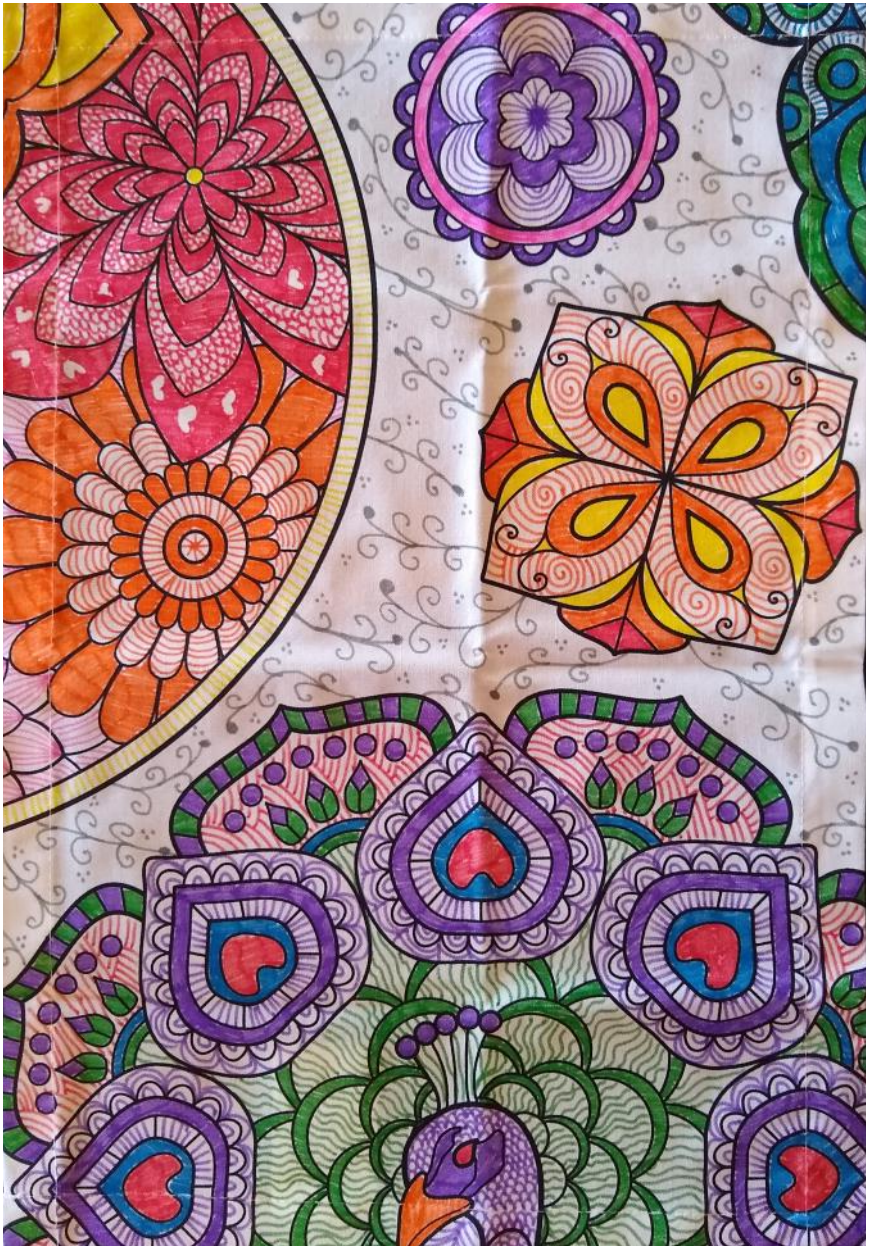
we both end up taking a leap of faith  
we both end up taking a leap of faith

like two comets crossing Andromeda racing up side by side  
fiery brilliance explosive streams  
nothing went wrong  
once apart twenty seven years later  
one summer night  
for all time  
lighted up  
more than a footnote  
our lives our years together practical as hell our marriage

when two people are ready it's worth  
drawing them toward an epiphany  
amazing just amazing  
beating the odds  
love woke

*Rachelle Chang*

*Mandala Coloring Cloth*

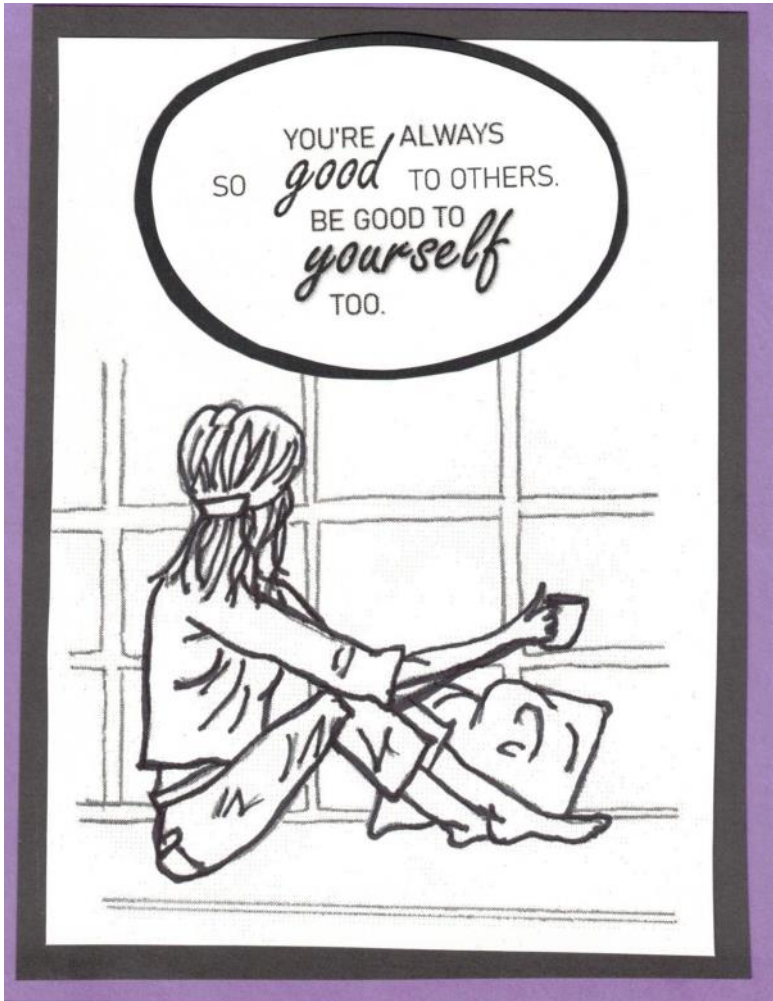


*Sue Sowders*

## *Coloring for Kids and Adults*

Coloring is a great way to relax, helping to cope with stress or a long healing period that has limited your ability to get out and go.

You can even make cards to color that you could simply print on cardstock and color.



*Sue Sowders*

## *Card Making*

Making cards is fun, but the best part is sharing them with family and friends, with some sweet words to let them know you're thinking of them and putting a smile on their faces.

And often, you'll even get a thank you, unlike texts and emails, which are just not the same.

Cards don't have to take a long time to create, and they don't have to be perfect. Have fun creating & sharing!



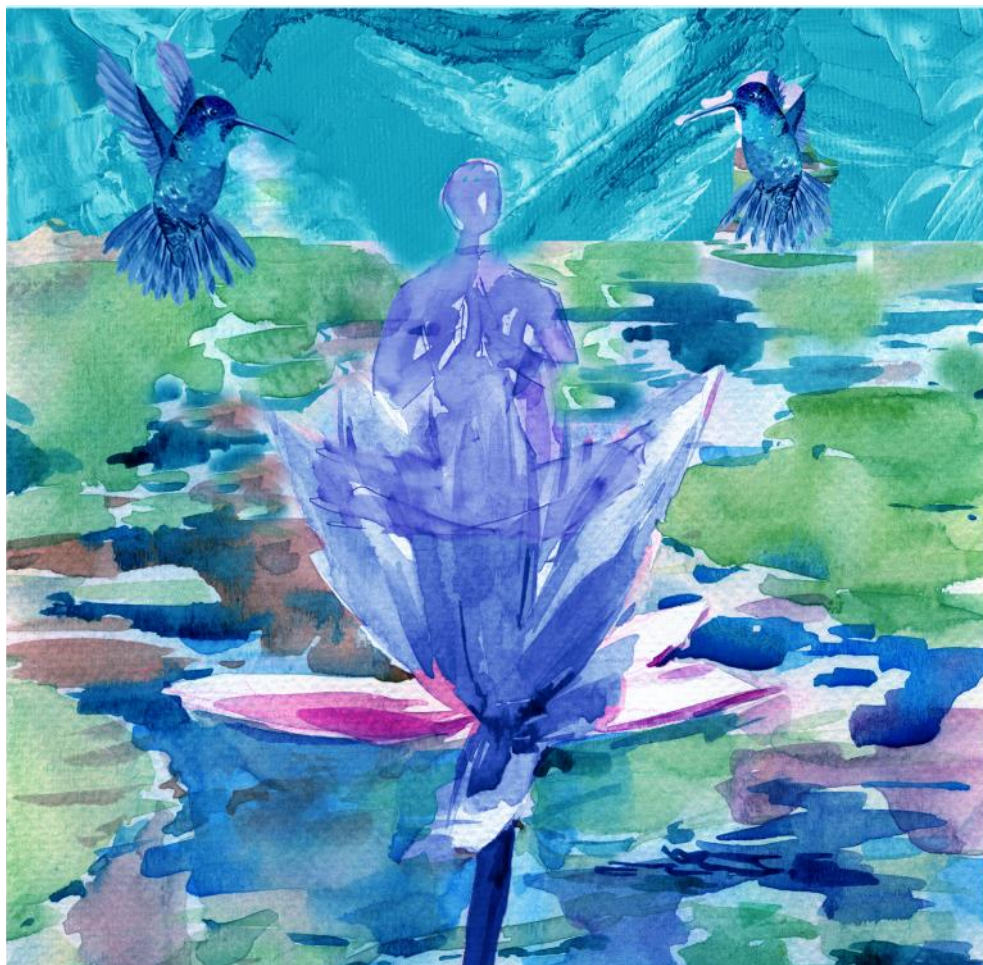


## Holy Nativity Sunday School

# Prayer Tree for Maui

Sunday School students at Holy Nativity Church made a "prayer tree" for Maui, remembering the Banyan Tree that lives at the center of Lahaina.





Bonus:  
Guided Exercises



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### *Guided Exercises*

We invite you to follow along with these guided exercises and express your feelings and creativity.

**Exercise #1:** Lei Making

**Exercise #2:** Worry Jar

**Exercise #3:** Heart Map

*Courtesy of Katie Uekawa*

**Exercise #4:** Character Poem

*Courtesy of Natasha Bailey*

**Exercise #5:** Prologue—Where am I? Who am I?

**Exercise #6:** Act I—Empty Space

**Exercise #7:** Act II—Our Space

**Exercise #8:** Act III—Their Space

*Courtesy of Chaz Hill*

How do you cope during challenging times? You are welcome to share your creativity by emailing [info@samaritanhawaii.org](mailto:info@samaritanhawaii.org).

We hope to see you at future “Creative Coping” workshops!

## *Creative Coping Exercise #1*

### *Lei Making*

Lei making is an essential part of Hawaii's culture and heritage. It embodies emotions and the Aloha Spirit, embraces nature's beauty, shows craftsmanship, and marks important life events.

**Purpose:** To practice gratitude and appreciation for others, enjoy nature, and create something beautiful.

**Getting Started:** Think about the person who will wear the lei. What colors do they enjoy or reflect their personality? What flowers or greenery do they like?

**Materials:** Raffia or string; fresh flowers such as plumeria, hibiscus, and bougainvillea (with the stems); greenery such as leaves, ti leaves, ferns, and Pele's hair; scissors or clippers.

1. Create a braided ti leaf or raffia headband that is long enough to fit around someone's head. Leave about 6" of extra braid on each end to tie it together.
2. Place flowers or greenery on the headband. Remember to remove any thorns!
3. Use raffia or string to wrap each flower or leaf to the headband, making sure that it is secure.
4. Add more flowers or greenery, making it as thin or as full as you choose.
5. When you are finished, tie the ends of your lei together, making sure it is a comfortable fit.



Source: Katie Uekawa

## *Creative Coping Exercise #2*

### *Worry Jar*

**Purpose:** To calm anxiety and help you think more clearly.

**Getting Started:** Transfer your thoughts, worries, and concerns onto paper. You can write them down, draw pictures, or doodle them. Then, set them aside for now or start to prioritize things that you need to do.



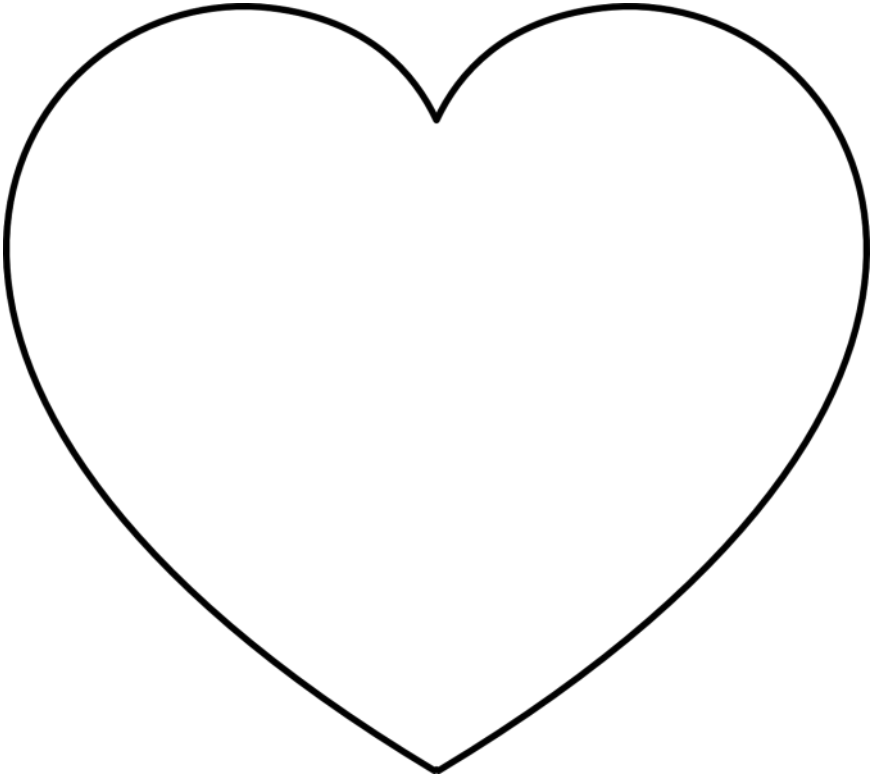
Source: Katie Uekawa

## *Creative Coping Exercise #3*

### *Heart Map*

**Purpose:** To identify what's important to you and the people, places, and activities that are sources of strength for you.

**Getting Started:** Start from the center of the heart and place your most important person, place, idea, or thing. You can write words, draw, or doodle. Use a pen, pencil, colored pencils, or markers. Then, working your way outward, add more things that are important to you, until your heart is filled.



Source: Katie Uekawa

## *Creative Coping Exercise #4*

### *Character Poem*

**Purpose:** To identify, describe, and befriend your emotions, instead of pushing them away or being consumed by them.

**Getting Started:** Choose an emotion or feeling and create a character that personifies that word. For example, Who is Anxiety? What is its name? What does it look like and sound like? What does it do? What does it want and why does it want it?

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Emotion:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Name or Title:* \_\_\_\_\_

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Source: Natasha Bailey

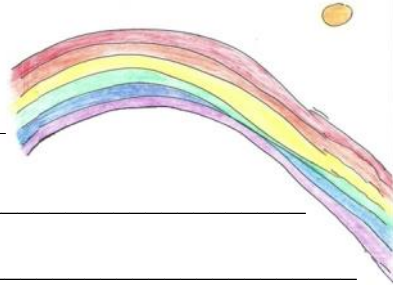
*Creative Coping 2023*

*Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i*

*Creative Coping Exercise #5*

*Prologue—Where am I? Who am I?*

**Purpose:** To ground yourself in the here and now. Where are you physically, mentally, emotionally? Who are you at this moment?



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Where am I? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who I am in this space \_\_\_\_\_

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## *Creative Coping Exercise #6*

### *Act I—Empty Space*

**Purpose:** To practice starting something new in your life and become more comfortable with taking a risk.

**Getting Started:** How do you start a new project, a new phase in your life, a new poem? What do you want to happen?

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

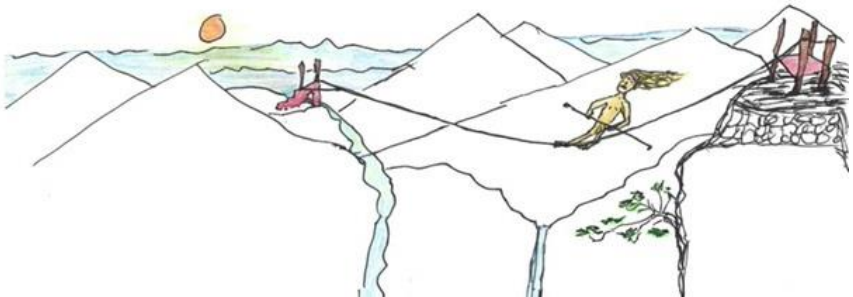
I wanted \_\_\_\_\_

But \_\_\_\_\_

With a heart \_\_\_\_\_

I must \_\_\_\_\_

And I will \_\_\_\_\_



Source: Chaz Hill

## *Creative Coping Exercise #7*

### *Act II—Our Space*

**Purpose:** To use all your senses to fully explore and appreciate an important relationship in your life, real or imagined.

**Getting Started:** Think of a relationship with a person, place, thing, or idea. Why do you value it? What does it mean to you?

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

I saw you \_\_\_\_\_

I heard \_\_\_\_\_

I smelled \_\_\_\_\_

I touched \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

You are \_\_\_\_\_

And even if we \_\_\_\_\_

We shall \_\_\_\_\_

Living this way \_\_\_\_\_

With you, I know \_\_\_\_\_

I move through space knowing \_\_\_\_\_

Since it only happens \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Chaz Hill

## *Creative Coping Exercise #8*

### *Act III—Their Space*

**Purpose:** To express yourself, practice gratitude, and converse with a person who is a source of strength in your life.

**Getting Started:** Create a dialog with another person by addressing your words directly to them. Dedicate your poem to them. How do they make you feel? What strengths do they share with you?

*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

Their eyes \_\_\_\_\_

Their ears \_\_\_\_\_

Their hands \_\_\_\_\_

Their mind \_\_\_\_\_

Their heart \_\_\_\_\_

Stay \_\_\_\_\_

Always makes \_\_\_\_\_



Source: Chaz Hill



*Samaritan Counseling Center Hawaii*

1020 S. Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96814

808-545-2740 ~ [info@samaritanhawaii.org](mailto:info@samaritanhawaii.org)

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