

It Could Always Be Worse



Nothing is happiness. Pause. Everybody is dead, still. Pause. The bicycle chain is rusty. Sigh. Look how far we've come. By any assessment standard worth its salt, we've no business being here at all. I think I forgot my belt. It could always be worse.

Not satisfied with what I beheld, I was always poking things. To be fair to my former self, it is not as if there were no voices prodding me along, imploring me to do this, do that. Sigh. My neighbors are talking to each other. "Sit down. *Sit* down," they say. I got up, walked into the old kitchen and had myself another Evil Empire Brand plastic covered espresso. With the Mass Production Factories all but a fading blip on our multidimensional timeline, the practices borne of my once hard fought ideals were losing their

context. The birds are thwit-thwittering. The sky is [sky-colored]. My nose is running. It could always be worse.

I had myself another espresso.

My uncle was out scavenging, preparing for a new project over at the new adventure store. I was waiting for him to return so that he could transport me to the coffee farm I would be living at for the next few weeks. He had been living on this island since he was half my age and he was acting as my outfitter/tour guide for this particular escapade of mine, the beginnings of which have been full of malodorous plot holes and various runny noses. But perhaps I've mentioned that. Well, it could always be worse.

I walked out into the old living room and played a tune on one of the guitars.

That pain in my neck continued to announce itself as I turned my head and made eye contact with the banana tree. I wondered why I was still writing in this language that was both foreign to this place and foreign to my body. My uncle drove up in his car. "Okay, done deal. Let's go."

"...Time for our Hawaiian Word of the Day—wana. We learned earlier about its meaning as

sea urchin, but also this. Sharp or spike. Long spike or ray of light, as in dawn..."

"Ah," said Uncle.

"...You know where to find 'em. Here we go. Brand new music—Maunalua."

There was a slight modulating buzzing sound in the distance. There was a louder buzzing sound to my left as I looked over to see a bee by the overturned bucket next to the tomato plant. I continued to shit into the other bucket that my host had set up with its sawdust bedding. There was a drip to my rear. I finished my export and wiped my butt with 8 squares of processed tree flesh. I dumped some sawdust over my poop and tried out some of the branded lemon meringue cheer deep-cleansing hand soap. I noticed that the shower head has an on/off/on switch in addition to the valve on the pipe that's attached to the 500-unit (gallon?) tank by the corner of the pavilion. Drip drip drip went the water on the roof, off the gutter, and into the various water receptacles. I suppose I do recall it raining briefly earlier in the day. I sat down in an old green chair. Sigh. I suppose it's time to sweep the floor.

“Look how far we’ve come,” I thought to myself. “Such a view.”

The black cat (Lola) meowed. This was some sort of language exchange. I decided that now was a good time to test out the shiny new cooking stove. Pause. Well, it could always be worse.

The leftover bonfire embers provided the spark for my meal of rice and peanuts and salt. The complimentary salt came with a small bit of plastic wrap that will need to find a home. Perhaps I should start a garbage can. Perhaps I should burn it (the plastic). Perhaps it is time to check on the frying pan that is currently cooking my rice. Ah, crunchy rice. My first meal. Satisfying. Well, it could always be worse. I mean, I could slide into a deep mental depression, due to my perceived loneliness and the echoes of the nagging disembodied voices that make me feel like an incompetent failure. I mean, just when I was starting to feel good about myself and my prospects.

“Hi, Lola.”

“Meow.”

“Chirp chirp thweet.”

Today is the last day of the moonth.

MAPS

Entrance (2 doors)

Clearing makai towards 'ōhi'a (leave wall to road at least until finishing auto access)

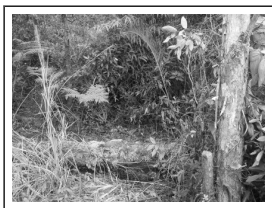


Wall from 'ōhi'a to 'ōhi'a. Waiwi marks beginning of footpath (will probably come down, though.)

'Ōhi'a from right of entrance to straightaway (right and back from waiwi (next to hāpu'u fern)) for clearing and turnaround entrance.

Right turn.

Turnaround perhaps, but limited space. Hāpu'u ferns ('elua) and palm ('ekahi). Still need to cut log, but auto drive in and back up in between 'ōhi'a and hā-



pu'u until palm is feasible, though tight. Perhaps another road is possible.

Geez. Clearing looks big now. Oh well, once inside, you are inside.

It Could Always Be Worse

Walkway makai (map later).

Middle road (right of 'ōhi'a, step over fallen log, veer left and go right)

Bathroom to your left at entrance to clearing)



“Thweet thweet trill chirp.”

“[Rooster crow].”

“Crinkle crinkle,” said the lau mai’a.

“Hey,” I said.

“It’s windy,” said the stove.

“Let’s try out that shower,” I said (out loud).

“Mmm. Delicious. Hey, could you quit it?” Another mosquito was buzzing around my body. I scratched the back of my head. Perhaps that haircut and shave wasn’t such a good idea. “I’d rather not sit here being paranoid,” I said to the mosquito. We were testing our boundaries. For the first time since I left the island, I thought about the garden, and whether it was getting any rain. “That’s still my foot,” I said to the mosquito that had landed on my foot. It flew off.

“That’s still a part of *me*, you know.”

“Myow.”

And for our next trick we shall perform for you a dance in the rain. A chilly morning, it is. “Str-reeeetch,” said my upper body. Almost ready to depart. Read a book. Smash the state.

Day 3: SHOES FALL APART

21 feet to right this turn. That’s a lot of shoes. 23 feet to fire pit. A tall-ish human potential wheelchair access between the ‘ōhi’a. So far, our shape is unknown.

14 feet ‘ōhi’a to ‘ōhi’a. Another 7 to the gateway.

12-ish feet ‘ōhi’a to other ‘ōhi’a, but one branch in the way.

Translation Exercise:

“Are those my fruit?”

“No, my fruit are inside of my body.”

Chop chop chop. Chop chop chop.

“Lunch!”

It Could Always Be Worse

Makai trail. Clearing behind the de-rooted waiwi. 2 potential trails. Will wait until sickle gets back from its day off. 27 feet from 'ōhi'a to clearing.



32 ft to border. Let's make a wall.



2 'ōhi'a behind clearing. Step over two logs. Go to right of crooked branch. Small clearing. Should hit wall and go right, towards back door, hopefully. Beyond wall. Ho'okahi 'ōhi'a

on right of what was once a path. One 'ōhi'a + strand of waiwi up ahead. Land dips down and there is a waist high overturned tree. This is our "true" boundary.

Back door tunnel should be plugged until mossy cross branch. Create door on other side. Hāpu'u fern is the ahu.

"I might need to finish that back door later," I said to myself as I ceremoniously pooped out this notebook that I'm writing on. Some call it the skin of the gods because it is for sending messages to friends far away. I looked down at the

machete, and over to the phone. I took a mental picture. "Perhaps we should fill in those pukas in our wall, as well." A dog barked in the distance.

Well, shit. I still cannot seem to get a fire started. Or figure out an ideal bathing procedure. These seem like fundamental elements, but perhaps we are still in confusion about the fundamental bits and pieces of this here rock wall. Anyway, it could always be worse. Oh, baby, it's one wild, wild world.

He shut off the electromagnetic wave distributor. He was having quite an adventure. Oh yeah. We forgot to inform you. This is also an adventure-survival novel that you are reading. Surprise!! All the more fun, yes?

"Coquí? Nah, never met him."

Quantum Jitters curled up in a ball. He looked to his right. How did he end up in this story, anyhow? He thought about looking for an exit, before deciding to settle in for the duration.*

"I used to go to camp," I said to myself, which

* See books 1 through 4 of an entirely different series of books for an introduction to the antics of Quantum Jitters.

is you, I mean, me. “My first girlfriend’s name was Dawn, actually.” [stop making sense]

I awoke in the night to realize that it was quite possible that my ignorance of the heating mechanism might mean that I have used up my hot water allotment for the moonth. Oh well. I awoke in the morning to find my blankets disheveled and the mosquito net kicked out. Bzzzzz. A constant buzz. My eyes itch but I shouldn’t rub them. I dumped the remainder of Lola’s food on the barbecue. Where was she? I sat down to think about what steps I should take to maintain this fine pair of two-dollar shoes. I added shoe goo to the scavenger list. The youngsters were heaving off this day. We are getting into the Kū moons. I’ll stack some wood later in the day. I walked up the wooden stairs, and removed the stretchy cords with the hooks on their ends from around the rolled up tent. My nose continued to run. I’m no cobbler, but.

TO DO (next week):
• Set up a catchment tank.
• Build a house.

He walked down the road, one hand on the handle of his machete and one wrapped round his mug of coffee, his makeshift shoelace digging into the back of his heel.

“Roof roof.”

“Hey there.”

“Baah. Baaah.”

Is someone lost?

“No, no. Just making a new (old) trail is all.”
He stopped and listened to the rain.

“Lunch!”

“Is this what I want,” he thought, “to sit around the fire, smoke in my eyes, smoke in my lungs, all alone with the stars and the frogs?”

PROCESSING

“I call that one, *The National Anthem*. What?”

And now, for our next tune, I’ll play, *Do You Hear Me?*

“That was maybe the best harmonica-ing I’ve ever done,” he thought. “Is anybody recording this?” He ran over to the sun-powered lighting source and flipped open this book that you are reading. “I better write fast before I forget,” he thought. “This recording mechanism sure does

take a lot out of me.”

I don't want to escape to the moon. Even if the world went boom. I just want to be with you.

“I don't want to live on Mars. I don't want to drive fast cars. I just—”

“Excuse me,” said Marranzano. “I think you're sitting on my head.”

Um.

“Surprise! This is just another book in an already existing series of science fiction books. And you thought you were reading a book inside a book inside a book. You were way off.”

INSERT YOUR RESPONSE

“Well, it could always be worse,” spoke the congregation (in unison).

THE END

Epilogue. Can't stop, won't stop. Time to sleep. But don't forget to dream.

It Could Always Be Worse

**So Far, So Bad, So What:
a collection of short stories**

It Could Always Be Worse

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OJPL-ID 6-3-14-1346

So Far So Bad So What: a collection of short stories
Conceived during the moon of Lono, Kaulua, Year of the
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**So Far So Bad So What:
a collection of short stories**

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Nah, we're just kidding. This be no short story. This is still a young adult adventure-survivance novel. The sustainability conference was taking place either this moon or the one afore. One of the loves of my life was probably in

attendance and here I was, taking notes in her sustainability (sp.16) blue covered notebook. I tested out the lua this morning (no.2). I think I should probably dig a deeper hole, but the concept worked. I used 5 squares of processed tree flesh and some fresh leaves and moss to wipe up. Washed up with a handful of water, some moss, and some clean dirt. The rain pitter-patters on my ceiling. I had forgot to make room for myself, but me and my stuff were able to figure out a solution. So here I sit, in my new house—

“Oh, hello cat whose name I don’t remember or cannot pronounce.”

“Hello,” said the cat as it stared into my soul. It walked off into the bush. “Thanks for the offering!” it called out as it merged into the land.

Where was I? Oh yes. That’ll be the sun coming up. Let’s eat outside. Well, it could always be different than it is. The rain started again mid-meal. I must say I am pleased with our temporary system, though I am noticing a few leaks in our roof. And now I have to lunch with this grumpy mosquito in its crowded home and hope I am not sitting on anyone’s head or limbs. The ‘ulu and poi and jerky were delicious. And the avocado? Oh, excellent. Fart.

Shabbat dinner was on the stove. The rain was oh so loud. Israel was on the radio. Time to add the fish. My eyes are no more no good. Mmmm delicious. My favorite: huikau rice and water from a cup. Seconds? Sure. Two shoots. Mmmm, my favorite. Huika'i rice with a cup of water. Wait a second. Was there another dance party scheduled for tonight? Well, it is the Sabbath. Fart.

Don't you want me baby? Don't you want me, ohhhohhhoh.

CLICK. And if you try sometime, you might find, you get what you—CLICK. Dance all night, play all day. CLICK.

Open Sesame.

Well, that dancing was nice, but I suppose this method...His mechanisms were clicking again. A game, love is not. So no need ticket.

“And that was called, *Kōke'e Kōke'e Kōke'e Mahalo.*”

“And that one was called, *Is It Kosher? No, But We’ll Make It Work.*”

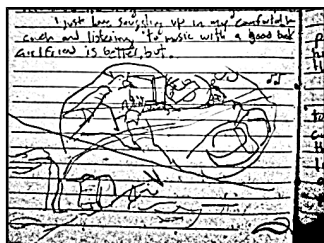
“And this one is, *It’s the End of the World As We Know It (and I feel fine).*”

“So, what did you do today?” asked his imaginary future conversant.

“Well, I learned how to take a piss with the lights off at night at my new house in the rain.”

While some may say that the best orange juice continues to come from oranges, you can never quite capture that flavor of your mother-in-law’s. The Hilo Tree on Nehoa Drive consistently puts on quality performances. I would recommend the orange-flavored oranges of Hawai’i.

I just love snuggling up in my comfortable couch and listening to music with a good book. Girlfriend is better, but.



That boyz up to something BZZZ Welcome to the party BZZZ This is Hawai'i—

“Whoah,” I say. “That there dried aku is ‘ono. Wait a second. I think I’ve got my grammar wrong.”

“‘Ono ka aku,” said the mo‘o. “Mahalo for the offering.” This book that I’m reading is pretty good, I think. Too bad I left it behind when I jumped islands. It’s the last book in the series, too. It’s called, *We’re Having A Party*. “Hey,” I said to myself, “that might not be such a bad idea.”

BATTERY CHARGING

He sat on the rock floor, watching the children play Gods and Aliens. Somebody wanted to suck his blood. Well, it could always be wars. Yeah, think about that. (Life is not a game)

I’m still not sure why we’re waiting until nightfall to start writing again. Some days are good for cultivating, I suppose. Sigh. I am imagining the connection mechanism for using my locally-produced gas to light my stove. I’ve

been thinking about temporary abundances all day, come to think of it. Oh yeah. Lentil soup. Sigh. It could always be...SARDINES!!!

“Well, we got no sun today, so I don’t know if we should turn on the lights tonight,” I said to the Lulz Cat after she had prompted me with a ‘myaoww’. But perhaps our mechanism is not a daily exchange. *Let’s find out*, I thought to myself. I was still claiming specific voices for my own.

“Lola, could you take that claw out of my eye? Thank you.”

“The switch is over there,” said Lola.

“Oh, thanks,” I said. Sitting back down, I thought, *Oh, much better*. Sigh. Many things are much better, perhaps, yet still I have this aching back. Oy. To get old and still have to run with the young. Such a journey, this is.

THE FUTURE: “Ah, a dinner of lentils cooked in water and sardine broth with some Hawaiian salt topped with chopped peanuts and whole, dead sardines.”

THE PRESENT: *Are we missing anything?* I thought (re: dinner). I decided to try to plan and tune into that ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i segment that was to be broadcast through the electromagnetic wave distributor at the hour after ‘elima, tomorrow, on

ka Lā Pule. I smiled inwardly. *Am I forgetting anything?*

THE FUTURE: Oh yeah, and a SIDE OF BANANAS.

“Did you enjoy your special dish, Lola?”

THE PRESENT: There was a slight disagreement about who was sitting in the comfortable chair. It went a little something like this:

“E ‘olu‘olu ‘oe. E noho iho ‘oe.”

“Jeez. I won’t sit there if you don’t want me to sit there.”

“‘A’ole. Ua ho‘omākaukau au i kēia mea ‘ai nāu.”

“I’ll just go over here.”

“E noho ‘oe i kēnā comfortable chair.”

This home work is strenuous/difficult/challenging. Which reminds me. I was gonna float an idea by Uncle Grandpa in the days to come. Instead of a home purchasing society, perhaps a home building society, where each member helps build each other’s home, until each member has a home to live in. Reminder: look up the word for home purchasing society so as to relate it to our ancestors.

THE PAST: And for dessert, lentils with

orange juice served on a bed of orange peel with an orange segment accompaniment. I thought, *Leftovers for breakfast and lunch. That's awesome.*

...Support the keiki with the Hawai'i Isle...

One of these days, methinks, I'm gonna sit on my front porch and [ride]. And that'll do it for tonight's band practice. My eyes are starting to itch. Better wrap myself up in my net for the night. Pause. Well, it looks like we slept through our language lesson. Oh no, never mind. 'Ōlelo nā DJ apau, still. Let's breakfast. Pause. Mmm. Leftover dessert amidst a jovial discussion of our moon calendar. Let's brush those teeth with our kīnehe powder and bamboo toothbrush. After all, today is a special day.

"Good morning, mosquito," I said as I blew it further down the road.

Taro, for lack of water, will grow misshapen.

"Take care of your self (using an expansive definition of self)," said the 'verse. The DJs let me know about that upcoming Rough Riders

concert with the 3 wise men that maybe you might call divas even though they are kane. Also, something about a hale hou. Time to pack a lunch. Pause. Deep sigh. Okay, do not forget your many plans and all that you have already stored in your cosmic bank.

Here I sit, balancing on this rock of love, attempting to coax my Camp Ruach STAFF shirt into wiping off my wood-chipped feet so that I can put on my wet socks and tiger shoes. A satisfying start to our week.

Back at the pavilion, we ponder re-attempting our fire-starting activities so that our damp friends do not catch cold. Remind me to add candles (the firestarter variety) to our list. Uh oh. Was that an itch in my eye? So early in the night? Such an adventure, this is. My belly rumbles. Things have relatively fallen into place. Let us sup on poi, aku, and beef. We will figure out our salads in the morn. Oy, my aching back.

TO DO:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn how to make a proper fire. (for warmth) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank the gods for our dinner. (which included ‘ulu) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sway back and forth to the music. |

Sitting on the toilet (which, according to the book I am reading, is a euphemism for *place that one repeatedly shits into*), I realized that if things had gone according to plan, I would have been sitting around a warming fire sometime tonight. Standing here post-shit, I realize that I should probably make proper acquaintance with the bringer-of-fire before making another attempt. Still, I fart.

“Thweeet!!”

“Okay, let’s call it. RAIN DELAY!”

So here I sit, adventuring still. I had vague plans of walking up to the house to see what everyone was up to, maybe catch a ride into town, but perhaps that window passed me by as I was catching a few more z’s during those early light-filled hours. So here I sit, polishing off my sickle. Good day for it, but. I breakfasted on hot

oatmeal with fresh banana + peanuts + salt. I washed the dishes. I brushed my teeth. I straightened up (the hale). I performed some maintenance on that borrowed handsaw as if it were my own. The sickle is certainly worn in. It has a cut by its notch that I will have to keep an eye on. I'm a little worried about the dampness of the camera bag, and, well, all the bags, in general. We'll give them a day, and then, well, we'll just see, won't we. I cannot help but think of the old friends I left behind, and my various failures of preservation.

"What?" I said to the mosquito. I looked over at the old plat map, drying on the side of the chair.

"Brrzzz."

The mosquito landed on this here book.

"I'm not getting anything out of this," said the mosquito, whose name was probably Henry or something.

"Do you want me to teach you how to read?" I asked. "Well, I suppose the first thing you need to know is which end is up."

You see, there is this section on one of the maps that looks to me like a crossroad that abuts the corner of this parcel that I am surveying. You know, for shits and giggles. Henry, bored,

flew off into the unknown. Pause. Oh, no, he went and got a friend. Time to get out of this comfortable chair and start our day in earnest.

“Hey, could you edit that to say, ‘The mo‘o came out with the hesitant sun.’?”

“Grumble grumble grumble.”

“What’s that, Stomach?”

“Hungry.”

“Well then, let’s do lunch.”

Later that day.

“Oh yeah. Lunch!”

Later that day.

“Oy. Radio during the day. Such a luxury, this.”

Early in that ‘olekūkahi moon.

“Well, is that your water?”

“Well, clearly you are some god or other.”

“Perhaps a forgetful one.”

He placed the offering on Lola's blue chair.

"Is that something you eat?"

Lola stretched against the chair's siding. "Perrhaps," she said. "But you can leave it there. It is my responsibility now."

PLEASE ADVANCE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

"No no. Let's skip ahead, this is my order."

"Okay, I give up. Am I happy or depressed?"

"That old man should not own dog," said the computer in the science fiction novel. And wouldn't you know it, but that perhaps now-dead computer was right. Funny how things, yeah? So, this adventure that we are currently surviving, have we been paying sufficient attention to all of the various nuance and that? A low grinding noise wavers in the distance. It grows closer and in height. It is sufficiently out of range to do us damage, but we cannot help but think of our comrades that were not so lucky. Life and death, is this match. And I am told that it is our move.

"Well," said the terrorist that was part of this

novel back when it was migrating from a mystery slash romance novel to what you see before you, “what if for every cow they murder in an industrial slaughterhouse, we kill a member of the U.S. military?”

The rag tag crew all averted their gaze, trying to keep their straight face. A mosquito buzzed into oblivion.

“Which side are you, on?” said the terrorist (who was also a bank robber).

Ka Pō‘alua: The Coffee Fields

Uh oh, I thought. Here we go again.

“Well, that wasn’t so bad,” said the medium-aged human. It took off its looking glasses and focused in on the specific contours that comprised the writing of this book.

“Oh, hello, Sun.”

“Aloha,” said ka Lā, “Hope you enjoyed your visit.”

“Oh, it was quite hospitable,” said the human.

There was a damp muskiness to somebody’s odor.

“Okay, buzz off already,” said the mosquito.

Thinking it was forgetting something it

wanted to remember, the human walked off to its tent, dancing a quasi-jig, to prepare for its journey back home.

“How goodly are your tents, oh Jacob.”

“Oh, mahalo. Couldn’t have done it without all of you, you know.”

I pulled the socks I was using as drip catchers off of the rafters.

“You’re gonna need to ring those out,” said a voice. “And maybe dry them in the sun for a second.” I walked over to the dish washing station and followed this advice. The shoes, too, were soggy on through.

“Bzzzz bzz,” said the mosquitos, after a bit of sunshine.

“Shoo shoo,” I said as I bent down to unbuckle my shoe.

My accent still no more no good. These mosquitos are giving me rash, but. But I am learning. Practice makes the world go round, they say. Somehow I need to find a way to make it from here to there. I have a feeling that someone is very excited about my return.

Like a maze, it is. Like walking on a balance beam. A triple beam balance. We could go this-a-way or we could go that. Well, might I have my cake, perhaps, and also, while I am at it, eat it, too? Well, as that song about a jackass (named Frank) says, "I am going out searching for some answers. Don't wait up for me. I'll be back when I can."

He cut the head off of an avocado and reattached it. But this is none of our business. Our business consists of selling you metaphors, such as the ones packaged in this here book, which is *For Sale*, remember? Jacob Rosen is a human author (amongst other things).

"Fuck, Lola, what the fuck?"

"This is my chair, now," said Lola.

"Fine," I said, "I'll sit somewhere else."

The remains of the fire in the furnace reminded me of certain tenuous facts of existence. Also FART excuse me, that I am still not exactly where I want to be. Not that I'm complaining, you see, I just want everyone to have accurate feedback for their various surveys and whatnot. I poked the tires on my recall mechanism and

looked over to the bonfire pit, which was now covered with a white tarp. *When did that appear?* I thought, *How did I not notice it last night.* Aha, it was a mystery, which would mean that, while we were out here attempting to weave the cords of our continued survival, there was still a mystery afoot. I looked down and noticed a small puzzle. I checked my files and noticed a newspaper clipping: “Oil train derails and explodes in W. Va.” Perhaps my public investigation skills from a previous life might come in handy yet still. Anyway, I just want to have something of unique value to contribute to the community, is all. Ah, community. A boy can dream, can’t he?

“Well now, let me come clean about what my ideal future would look like.”

Again, we are looking for some pidgin that means ‘go help yourself to some food.’

“Yahr. Eyahr. Meyahhr.”

Accomplishment #1: Built a tent structure using the rain flap, carefully, paying attention, noticing the different methods of attachment and

potential outcomes of design. Said thank you to the rain flap and the trees and limbs that are holding it in its particular place.

Note #1: Out of practice, I forgot to roll up the bottoms of ku'u lole wāwae. But perhaps pants are not something one generally ku'u's? A little damp, but.

Accomplishment #2: Chopped down a tree. Sawed off its top branches, checking for fruit.

Next Task: Chop down a tree. Measure twice, cut once or several times.

Note #2: A human rides by in the body of a bull(dozer).

Accomplishment #3: Cut down a tree without killing a fern. Close call, but we were able to catch all right. Still, much to learn about which way a tree falls, and, if it does, what does it sound like?

Accomplishment #4: Moved a log all by myself (well, with some spotting by some fallen trees and various clinging ferns).

“Oh well. A little to the right.”

Accomplishment #5: Thought like a beaver. Missed the mark by 1 foot. Fell on the first door. Good catch by the door, though.

“Oh shit. This just turned into a rescue

mission. We forgot we were living inside of an adventure-survival novel and a tree just fell on top of our only working exit.” I took a breath. Okay, I guess I can pick up the pace a little, if need be, but I’d rather work for pleasure. I mean, that is the only form of payment I usually receive for myself. Of course, we still have that binding contract for enhanced levels of peace and justice. The buzzing ceased and I returned to my sawing.

The door cleared, I reached over and picked up some firewood for later.

Accomplishment #6: Began construction of a firewood shelter. Utilizing previously cut-down skinny trees from a prior trip. Oops! Forgot to say mahalo.

“Uh oh! I think we’re under attack!”

He heard a helicopter in the distance and a buzzing in his ears. He jumped back waving his hat. His hand reached up to the back of his neck. “Oh,” he said, looking to his feet. “It’s only a mosquito.” He put on his protective headgear, and returned to the job at hand.

“Hey, man,” he said to the mosquitos, “I’m not at war with you fuckas! I just don’t want you to bite me.”

A mosquito landed on his left wrist, where the

bone juts out into his hand. He quickly murdered it with his middle finger. This happened again, a moment later.

“Coquí? Coquí?”

Accomplishment #7: Did maintenance on front door with fallen tree. Good idea for door levers/handles with branches. We will see how it functions in this real world, though. Lots of automotive vehicles down this road.

Note #3: Could probably use some green ferns for the front gate where it rolls back, to cover the raw leaves. Will leave gate brace by extruding branches in the pole direction, which, we are still not sure, is that the ocean I see up ahead?

Note #4: Front door braces (2) can lie down into the brush, with twigs sticking out into the path. Last brace will be on other side.

Accomplishment #8: Found out we are capable of sawing through a log.

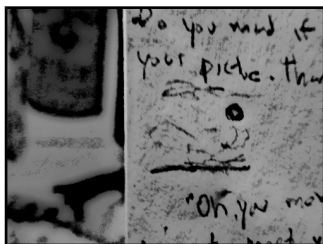
“Happy birthday,” said the grandchild.

“What are you doing these days,” said the Grandpa.

“Oh.” Pause. “Trying to find a safe space for a child to live in.”

“Hi. ‘O wai kou inoa? Do you mind if I take

your picture. Thank you.”



“Oh, you move fast. Nice to meet you!”

Accomplishment #9: Watched a gecko climb a tree.

“Oooh. Pretty bird.”

“We’re all in this thing together, I guess.”

“Yeah, well, that’s the thing about this here machine, ennit.”

It’s like he was learning something—the hard way. And maybe someone was getting impatient, but he wasn’t totally without experience when it came to building foundations. If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing right.

“And this lesson is called, *Using the Right Tool for the Job*. And we’ll follow that up with *Using the Right Technique for the Tool for the Job*.”

Throw in your relevant preexisting ‘ōlelo no‘eau if you got ‘em.

"Well, that went exactly according to plan," he said, a little out of breath, with a hint of surprise. He looked at the fallen tree whose branches fit perfectly in front of the door and between the 'ōhi'a, walls, and fern. He took a deep breath and proceeded to trim the limbs. Just then, a truck drove by.

"Okay, let's take a break. Cutting down a tree is a big thing. We shouldn't push on too fast. Let's get our bearings and make sure we are doing the right thing."

"Which is?"

He heard some movement in the brush by the front door.

"Oh, hello," he said to the cat. Or, no, it was two cats. "Do you want to come in the front door? There's a tree in front, but I think we can open it." He opened the door and the cats scattered. One might have gotten a little lost in the brambles.

"Well, what did you do that for?" he said, "I opened the front door for you."

"You need to drink more water," said the wao 'ōhi'a with its ua li'ili'i. Or was it an ua noe?

He finished taking his piss and went back to the break room.

“See you later,” said the cat, as it merged into the forest.

Some myowing happened in the distance. Oh, it seems the cat’s friend was still having some navigational issues. Okay, sounds like it found that cat door we built into the system. The wind picked up.

“Good job, today, everyone,” said the foreman. “I am rather pleased with the progress we are making.” The wind picked up, again. And so did the rain.

So, here I am, soaked to the bone. With ample opportunity to change into my swimming trunks, I decided to chance ‘em. Well...it could always be worse.

Okay, that should do it. I do believe we’ve untangled all of those threads. Hope you are satisfied (satisfaction guaranteed).

It Could Always Be Worse

OJPL Publishing
UPCOMING BOOK

...A disgruntled Quantum Jitters was breaking off nails in his teeth. He walked over the half-finished floors, wondering how he, a character from an entirely other series of books, found his way into this novel. But that's the multiverse for you. He passed the stairs and looked back over his shoulder. A dark purple towel hung over one of the rafters by the blue cushioned chair, the orange and grey rain flap draped over the rafter in the rear. Various things hung from various hooks. He beheld the strand of banana trees that comprised his backyard. A battery was charging in the corner and his companion for this journey stood watch atop the wooden planks perched on the old sawhorse in the tent out front.

"E ola e," said this 'verse's electromagnetic wave distributor.

Quantum Jitters spit out the nail that was stuck between his teeth. Broomstick shrugged and looked to the woods. It was about time to get that fire started.

About the Author

During the writing of this book, Jacob slept on a bed of rocks under the stars and wrestled with a specific number of gods that might or might not exist. He awoke in the morning and emerged from his cocoon to communicate with you this fact.

It Could Always Be Worse

E Pili Ana ka Haku Puke

‘O Jacob ko‘u inoa. Aloha.

“So, how was your day?” asked the black cat with the yellow eyes.