Mele Kanikau - E Puhi E Ho‘i Mai

A mele kanikau is a type of funeral chant that is very rarely heard today. Chants were used in almost every arena of life, and mourning the loss of a loved one is no exception. Mele kanikau are rarely even taught today because of the personal intimate nature of the mele and because of the concept of death. However, it is shared here as a means to incorporate 1st and 2nd year patterns of Hawaiian language. Once a mele kanikau is performed at a funeral, in most cases, it is never done again.

This mele comes from the vast collections of mele found in the Hawaiian newspapers of the 1800s and early 1900s.

E Puhi, e ho‘i mai! Puhi, come back!
Eia kou ‘ai, eia kou i‘a, Here is your food, here is your fish,
Eia kou kapa, eia kou malo Here is your clothing, here is your loincloth
E ho‘i mai a ‘ai a mā‘ona! Return and eat until satisfied!
E hele, a pā‘ani, a lelele! Come and play and jump around!
‘Āmama, ua noa. It is done, it is freed.

Often times in mele and in pule, you will find the phrase, “‘Āmama, ua noa.” Similar to the use of the word “Amen,” there is a certain level of sacredness that comes with mele and pule. But once those words, “‘Āmama, ua noa” are uttered, the restrictions and taboos that accompany those prayers are lifted and freed.

There is no audio file included due to the sensitive nature of this mele. Please consult your kumu ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i for an appropriate leo.