Pua O Ka Mākahala

‘Auhea wale ana oe, ē
Ka pua o ka mākahala
Mai ho‘ohala mai oe, ē
I ka pilina ua pa‘a

Keu nō paha ua pa‘a, ē
Kou mana‘o i ‘ane‘i
Pili ‘ia aku ‘oe, ē
Ko lā he kanaka u‘i

Nele i ka mea poe poke, ē
Pau ka pilina ua pa‘a
Ha‘ina mai ka puana, ē
Ka pua o ka mākahala

Where indeed are you
O blossom of the mākahala
You should not find fault
In a relationship that is secure

One would think it was settled
Your thoughts would be right here
And yet you are lingering elsewhere
In these days of your beautiful youth

But lacking the round thing, coin
That stable tie is ended
Tell the story in the refrain
The blossom of the mākahala

Katie Stevens Ti writes of the mākahala, a twining shrub. While the plant may be on one’s property, the flowers may wander afar. This metaphor describes a lover who strays, enjoying the prowess of youth and beauty, but when the money is gone, the affair is done. 1916.