

Pupu 'O Ni'ihau – Words by Mary Robins, Music by Johnny Noble

Pupu 'o Ni'ihau 'auhea 'oe Ho'ike a'e 'oe i kou nani	Shells of Ni'ihau, where are you? Display your beauty
He nani hiehie 'oi kelakela Ka 'i'ini nui ia o ku'u pu'uwai	An elegant beauty held supreme It's the greatest desire of my heart
Ho mai kou aloha a pili me a'u I ko'olua noho kahi mehameha	Your love is drawn here, cling to me Just to be alone in each other's presence
I luna maua a'o Ha'upu 'Upu a'e ke aloha nou e ka ipo	We two were in the heights of Ha'upu Love surges only for you
Ka moena pawahe he'e iko ili I pumehana like a'i ho'i kaula	The fine woven mats resemble the skin of the squid Come, it will warm the two of us
Ka ua Naulu noho I ka uka Ho'opulu ana 'oe I ka palai	The Naulu rain of the uplands Drenches the palai fern
E ka wai huna ho'i aka Pao'o O ka wai kaulana ana kupuna	Go to the hidden water of Pao'o Of the famous cavern of the ancestors
E kanalu hai mai 'ao 'ohi'a Me na ulu hua noho i ka Hapapa	The priest brings offerings of 'ohi'a buds With breadfruit from Hapapa
Aia ia ku hai moana kau aloha Me ka paepae kapu a Hi'iaka	There the offerings are placed in the ocean with love And stacked and consecrated to Hi'iaka
He alu no wau e o mai'oe Pupu o Ni'ihau 'auhea 'oe	When I call you must answer Shells of Ni'ihau, where are you?
Ha'ina 'ia mai an kaupuana Pupu 'o Ni'ihau 'auhea 'oe	Tell the story about The shells of Ni'ihau, where are you?

Source: This old love song may have been taken from a mele by Kauanuaulu Waili'ula. The pupu lei of Ni'ihau is the most prized shell lei of Hawaii. The true Ni'ihau shell is the small Kahelelani named for the benevolent chief of this island. The Kahelelani comes in brown, yellow, white, speckled, red and pink; red and pink being the rarest and most valuable. The larger shell Momiokai (white), Lenalena (yellow), Onikiniki (speckled), Laiki (rice shell), Uliuli (blue), Kahakaha (golden striped) are also used for leis. They are strung into lei styles called tutu, kaneli'I (man's lei), poepoe, poleholeho, hale, pololei (sweetheart or wedding) and pikake. Verse 5-10 from Ea Collection.