



## New Year's Street Musician

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Happy Holidays from Doug Ikemi  
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I guess it's about time to start writing my greeting cards. As I think I've mentioned before (and these days I'm not too sure about what I've mentioned before) writing the cards has a certain finality about it. It's admitting that the year really is coming to an end. In a Ray Bradbury sort of way, maybe I believe I can stop time if I don't write my cards. On the other hand, I also have a deathly fear if I don't write them, but every year they come out later and later, although there is a natural limit of sorts. The Japanese, being conveniently ethnic for a moment, write nengajo, or new years postcards. Fortunately, they are not supposed to arrive before January 1. If I need to buy more time, I can agree with my Ukrainian friends who, like astronomers, still use the Julian calendar, which gives me 10 extra days. Finally, if I am desperate, I can make use of the Asian Lunar New Year, which gives me till January 22 this year.

Why do I want to hold on to 2003? Was it especially good? Probably not. I am at that point in my life that my father had warned me about when the years whiz past too quickly to perceive or understand. I would just like some more time to try to make sense of what is changing. I no longer have time to procrastinate comfortably.

Sometimes time can be compacted and we can experience too much of a certain moment. This year I decided to return to the big Island of Hawaii to complete a solo backpacking trip I had to abort in 1997 due to illness. The idea was to travel from the heavily visited Waipio Valley to the not so frequented Waimanu Valley. Each valley has a fairly significant stream crossing with chest deep (for me) water. Well, following all the proper precautions and procedures I crossed both streams, made it to the Waimanu Valley and was back in the Waipio. I'd already crossed the stream in this valley once, my rental car was in a parking lot not that far away, and I was triumphant knowing I had made good on my disappointment of '97. At the moment my pack forced my head underwater as my feet could no longer find the streambed, I realized that perhaps I had been a little hasty. Fortunately, there is a good surf break where that stream empties into the ocean and it was a Saturday with a plentiful supply of surfers. A public spirited young woman must have decided that my corpse and backpack would have been a surf hazard and helped ensure that I would be here to write this. At that moment, she was definitely the most beautiful girl in the world. My new digital camera didn't react well to the saltwater dunking, but as in the case of the Ehime Maru, the memory card survived with all of photos, and if you have internet access, you can see some of them at:

<http://dkikemi.www9.50megs.com/graphics/hawaii2003waimanu/index.htm>

I guess it is time to let go of 2003 and start planning my folly for 2004. I decided to get a helmet to go skiing this year. I wish you all the best for the New Year, and don't do what I do. I'll bring out and read your carefully stored Holiday cards in 2004 like preserved snow flakes to savor the past year.