

Story: Why Do You Fly So Far?

December 14, 2025

Luke 1:46-55

Matthew 11:2-11

The kolea is a pretty mellow bird. They're not terribly skittish, though some will keep a sensible distance from people. We are a lot bigger than a kolea and probably look kind of scary to them.

The myna, on the other hand, is not a mellow bird. They sing a fair amount, but they also screech and argue. They're pretty sociable with one another, and one moment everybody is happy and content, and the next moment everybody is hollering at one another.

Which makes them a lot like some people, now that I think of it.

Mynas fly, of course, but you could call them homebodies. They don't tend to go very far. Kolea, on the other hand, fly long distances from where they nest in Alaska to where they spend the winter here in Hawai'i. If you've ever flown on an airplane to the North American continent, you know that's a long flight. Well, kolea fly it with their own wings and they don't go as fast, so it takes longer.

The mynas find it all rather puzzling and strange.

A myna was picking worms and seeds alongside a kolea one day. The two of them were quiet most of the time, because by chance most of the myna's other friends had had a big argument and flown off to continue it somewhere else. So it was just the two of them.

"I've always wanted to know," said the myna to the kolea. "Why do you fly so far?"

The kolea thought about it. "I'm not sure anyone has asked me that before," he said.

"Well, I'm asking," said the myna.

"I do like the change," said the kolea, "and I know that it gets awfully cold in Alaska during the winter."

"Then why not stay here?" asked the myna.

"There are different things there," said the kolea, "and it just feels right to raise chicks there."

"Then why fly all the way here?" asked the myna. "What do you come here to see?"

The kolea was quiet for so long that the myna was about to ask the question again, but then the kolea spoke:

“I come to see different trees, trees that blossom red and purple and gold. I come to see soaring mountains crowned with snow when there’s green all around the island. I come to see waterfalls that make rainbows. I come to see mountains with fire and beaches with black sand.

“I come to see birds that also live in Alaska, like ‘akekeke, and birds that don’t live in Alaska, like ‘apapane and nene and saffron finches.

“I don’t think I’d appreciated, though, that I also come to see mynas, and to be asked questions I was never asked. The next time I fly to Hawai‘i, I’ll be coming to see you.”

“I’m glad,” said the myna. “Next time you fly from Alaska, I’ll be very glad to see you.”

by Eric Anderson