

# Te Rito o te Harakeke

A collection of writing for Ihumātao

Rangatahi o te Pene  
rangatahiotepene@gmail.com  
www.rangatahiotepene.com

First published September 2019

Original poems © the authors  
Cover Artwork © Maioha Kara

ISBN: 978-0-473-49707-1 (softcover)  
ISBN: 978-0-473-49708-8 (ePub)  
ISBN: 978-0-473-49709-5 (PDF)

Cover art:  
*Pono* by Maioha Kara (Waikato, Ngāti Kahungunu, Te Arawa and Ngāti Porou)

The events at Ihumātao have brought up a lot of feelings for Māori all over the motu. We wanted to invite people to respond artistically to these events, as we already observed that many Māori were already creating in response to the historical trauma brought up by Ihumātao. Each writer was called to respond in whichever way they saw fit, and the pieces were mostly written within the space of two weeks. We are a group who aim to amplify all Māori voices in order to tautoko the haukāinga and kaitiaki of Ihumātao. Though some of us hold mana whenua to the land of Ihumātao, we do not purport to speak on behalf of mana whenua as a rōpū. We come from a position of aroha, kotahitanga and manaakitanga. We come to Ihumātao as Māori who all have complex histories of our own.

During such a confusing and difficult time, we wanted to bring together a multitude of Māori voices, to highlight our similarities and our differences, and to stand strong together, to rise to tautoko what we believe to be a pivotal moment in the history of Aotearoa.

*Hutia te rito o te harakeke*

*Kei whea te kōmako e kō?*

*Kī mai ki ahau; he aha te mea nui o te Ao?*

*Māku e kī atu, he tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata*

## Hana Pera Aoake

*Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Hinerangi, Ngāti Raukawa*

### My heart swings like poi

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

A poi is an umbilical cord,  
linking all my tūpuna with each swing,  
up towards  
Ranginui's skies  
and  
down  
towards  
Papatūānuku's whenua.  
I want to always be swinging between the two of them.

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

Ko au te whenua, te whenua ko au  
My body is linked to the whenua through my Nana  
My waka Tainui was led by Hotorua across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa  
Over many waterways into Waitematā harbour from Whangaparaoa and the Te  
Moana-a-Toi,  
carried by hand across Tāmaki Makaurau towards Manukau harbour.  
into Taranaki resting in Maketu in Kāwhia harbour.

Ko  
au  
te  
whenua,  
te  
whenua  
ko  
au

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

Fertile soil that grows food for all of Tāmaki Makaurau in the 1840s-50s  
The first human settlements  
Tangaroa licking the edge of his mother in his plentiful sea  
pipi, fish, oysters, kina  
New Zealand's' oldest continuously inhabited papakāinga  
This land holds our stories  
The earliest inhabitants of our country.  
Colonial amnesia rearing its insidious head  
Our history is inscribed into Papatūānuku  
The wairua of the land is at stake

Not  
one  
more  
acre

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

Dismissed as Māori in-fighting  
The complexities of whakapapa don't fit within a western framework  
A fundamental misunderstanding Pākehā have of te ao Māori  
Frustration, helplessness, rage  
Joe Hawke in Ihumātao,  
Forty-one years after Bastion point  
The strength and the tragedy that we are still fighting the same fight  
We are coming together across Papatūānuku's veins  
The internet another wheke  
Bloodlines and waterways drawing us together  
Like harakeke being woven together

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

I see photos of tamariki talking to pirihiimana on my phone  
“What's your favourite pie?”  
I feel more far away from Aotearoa than I've felt before  
I think of running up Maungakiekie and seeing the obelisk dedicated to the 'no-  
ble Māori race' and the grave of Sir John Logan Campbell  
They thought we were a dying race of people  
I think about the wāhi tapu Tōtara tree falling

Plucking brown bodies in the middle of the night using other brown bodies to enforce it  
Sending irish colonial soldiers to stop the land wars  
The english repeated the same method for dispossession and trauma all over the world  
The oppressed become the oppressors and the cycle of violence seems unbroken  
In 1908 the government passed an act allowing them to confiscate land at Okahu bay  
They laid a sewer pipe across the beach in front of a Ngāti Whātua village  
It discharged raw sewage into the bay  
This cut off access to the papakāinga,  
polluted the hapū's shellfish beds  
It turned the bay into a swamp when it rained  
We don't know our own histories  
But we are learning

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

Anger  
Sadness  
Fear  
Helplessness  
Loss  
Grief  
Aroha  
Ma te kotahitanga e whai kaha ai tātau.

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

My only contact mediated through a screen  
Walking between time zones,  
Living between worlds as a given  
Not feeling grounded in either world.

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

Kaitiakitanga  
Rangimārie  
Whakapono  
Kotahitanga  
Manaakitanga  
Aroha

My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi  
My heart swings like poi

Protecting Ihumātao is not a choice  
Protecting Ihumātao will never will be a choice.  
We are learning and we are gathering  
We are amplifying each other's voices  
Coming together when we are being drawn apart  
The sun is coming up in Lisboa  
The sun is settling in Ihumātao  
He Whakaputanga and Tino Rangatiratanga flags flap in the sky  
Tamariki plant rākau trees

Kia kotapu tahi  
Kia kotahi rā

Tino rangatiratanga. Āke. Āke. Āke

## Hinemoana Baker

*Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Toa, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Kiritea  
(Tiamana, Ingarangi), Ngāi Takatāpui*

### Look at what we fucking well have.

Just look at what we fucking well have.  
The pocket the packet the postcard the purse  
not the hanged man and the constant lightning strike  
look at what we have look on it and be grateful.  
Look at what we have now the leash the booming  
groan all the bright escapology the muddy  
line of thrills army of crabapples sea cucumbers.  
All this look upon it and be thankful.

Shavings and lather the way the day  
waggles like a membrane  
such largesse in a straw-hat  
a spewfarm a spool a pre-raphaelite wail  
from the saddle lumpish and gone.  
A great song of a silken inch fangling into shape  
not just the five of pentacles for christ's sake  
the seven of pentacles can't you see the cups and

fucking cups of it where is the gratitude.  
The fresh whiff of fish! Angle of yank!  
The leaves and the branch, for fucks sake  
we have not only the pinch but the golden fucking punch  
the doily the strobe the actual fucking original flake  
the grain itself the ilk as well as the motherfucking inkling.

All of this plus the mild filter the ladle  
the bright cicada sound of shrinking  
the skim in its entirety all of it do you hear me all of it.

## Tyson Campbell

*Te Rarewa, Ngāti Maniapoto*

### The Stability of Stars

When I think about Ihumātao, I can't help but implicate myself as an extension of that whenua, and what it means to occupy a body destined to fail. Struggling to raise itself in close company of minds that are adrift. I try to detach myself from the very causes of what it is to whakapapa somewhere, because I know that my genealogy has been burnt along the way. Projecting that pain onto me is a constant, interrupting wayfinding system of signs along the vicious journey that I romanticise about going on. Where ever that resting point may be, I know that I can never trust the illusion of resolution. Resolution implies that we have 'sorted it out' — which is clearly not the case if an Indigenous world view is patrolled and put behind bars by those who don't see themselves part of that creation story. Luckily for me, I got away.

Now I am the queen of deceit, and I am jaded by the fact that turning oppression into a profession will eventually catch up to me, especially if I morph into the guard that protects the ivory castle of an imagined moral centre". I know I will never break bread in the heart of this kingdom. I eat alone on the margins, a packet of \$1 bread, black tea bags and two minute noodles as constant reminder of who I am.

When the queen of deceit is under the affluence influence, a confident bravado forgets its risk assessment.

Driven by duty, and sustained by faith we weaken with contradictions in our aspirations.

With agility, the stars become the most *stable* point of an inward infinity.

Ranginui and Papatūānuku are always rearranging these same stars, but their axis slip in and out of our reach as they attend to others in different time zones. They rely on us to do the work for ourselves, as part of a greater cause. Together we become a constellation of inseparability, one that can't be captured. We are everywhere. Our stars burn with ahi kā, and that powers our apparatus. This is how we dream together. But some drip from the moon, like liquorice stars, plummeting into the burden of a daily reality of what it is to sustain an accelerated life in a privatised world.

---

1. Brian Martin (2017) Methodology is content: Indigenous approaches to research and knowledge, Educational Philosophy and Theory, 49:14, 1392-1400, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2017.1298034

On guard, and as a body planned to be obsolete, collapsed in exhaustion and aloof to the environmental factors in which shapes, renumerates and undermines the very core of a Te Ao Māori subjectivity and responsibility, that same star holds no shame in policing in a blindfold. They too, are tired of living in damp weatherboard government homes, jobless, and paranoid of when the eviction letter that soon may come. My star has now been cast in steel and it is sewn into my uniform. I acknowledge that I am crown land in full-force. I do it for survival in a system built in my absence. It is my attempt to transform shame into renewal. To be proud of something. To be proud that I made it.

My bread and butter now lay adjacent to the floral centrepiece in which houses my nuclear family security system. I have successfully domesticated the natural world. This is my décor, a place to comfort my weary bones at the expense of others. This is my reproduction. This is my progression in a militant and accelerated pākehā driven world-view. I am now an Individual, detached and trained, I put myself first, and my ancestors in the background. Sealed, with no escape as a historic moment of which they will only ever be destined to be in. Ihumātao is a real estate market thrust into a privatised non-existent future, because an Indigeneous world-view was never really considered as our saving grace. I now reside in my wāhi tapu sanctuary, that is my mind. That is not to say that I am not crying, under my police hat you when you collectively hark Pūrea Nei on the protest line.

**Jacqueline Carter**

*Hapū - Ngāi Te Hapū, Ngāti Takahanga, Te Patuwai, Ngāi Tūkairangi  
Iwi - Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Te Rangi and Ngāti Pākehā, with connections to Ngāti  
Maru, Ngāi Tai and Ngāpuhi hoki*

### **Aroha**

I gave to you a rock  
from which you built a wall  
then you stood there at the top  
making me feel small

I gave to you a seed  
from which you grew a tree  
then you told me all its fruit  
did not belong to me

*kss kss aue hā*

I took you to a mountain  
you did not want to climb  
instead you tunnelled deep inside  
for treasures that were mine

I led you to the ocean  
and taught you about the tides  
now I go down to the shore  
and all the fish are dying

*kss kss aue hā*

I told you all my stories  
you wrote down every word  
now I find my stories  
are no longer to be heard

I carved a piece of greenstone  
and hung it round your neck  
then you made a thousand more  
only yours were made of plastic

*kss kss aue hā*



I took you to the forest  
to show you chiefly trees  
then you chopped them down for sale  
and the rest are now diseased

I gave birth to our children  
a future for you and me  
but you did all the parenting  
so they wouldn't turn out like me

*kss kss aue hā*

But I'd signed your piece of paper  
in order to guarantee  
that me and mine and all these things  
would be safe eternally

I gave to you kāwanatanga  
a kind of governing  
but I didn't give you mana  
because there's mana in being me

*kss kss aue hā*

I embrace my own uniqueness  
my rangatiratanga too  
I will have the rights that you have  
without having to be like you

and one day I will walk again  
the lands you stole from me  
only this time I'll be standing tall  
and Papatūānuku will be free

*Haumi e, hui e, tāiki e!*

## **To Ihumātao**

What care we  
for stones  
and signs  
of your Polynesian forebears?

How do middens  
and land formations  
even compare  
to castles and chapels?

And let's just face it  
the only currency  
of any value  
in today's society  
is that which will line  
the pockets and wallets  
and clothe and house  
the area's "developers"  
(not to mention  
a few public servants...)

This is land  
ripe for the taking

It matters not  
what was on it  
or lies beneath it  
or *happened* on it

The only history  
worth protecting  
is that which marks  
our *domination*

The only bones  
worth revering  
are those that fought  
in *worldly* battles

And the only people

and communities  
that really matter  
in *Aotearoa*

are those that have  
our seal of approval  
for being rich,  
and/or  
White  
and/or

*compliant...*

Yours sincerely,  
Auckland Council.

## **Our tūpuna remain**

Nothing like a lone-standing nīkau  
in the middle of some paddock  
owned by some Pākehā  
to make you feel mamae

Surrounded by maunga  
who serve to remind you  
that once that whole paddock  
had that same sense of tapu

It's a bit like that urupā  
in the middle of that reserve  
that used to be a papakāinga  
till some Pākehā had it burned

So

consider yourselves warned

It'll take more

than a change of name  
a chopping down of trees  
a burning down of whare

to make us forget

our tūpuna remain

***NOTE:** This poem was written after a trip to Awaawaroa at the "bottom end" of Waiheke and being struck by a couple of lone nīkau in a paddock to the left of Waiheke Rd. The papakāinga referred to is the papakāinga of Ngāti Whātua ki Ōrākei that used to be at Ōkahu Bay where the Ōkahu Bay Reserve is now. The last inhabitants of the papakāinga were evicted in the early 1950s, their houses demolished and their whareniui burnt, some say in time for the Queen of England's visit and parade along the waterfront / Tāmaki Drive. Ngāti Whātua and Te Wai-o-hua (one of the hapū who are mana whenua at Ihumātāo) are linked through marriage (although tensions arose during the time of Kiwi Tāmaki, whose people, Te Wai-o-hua, became concerned when Ngāti Whātua started expanding into their territory in, resulting in warfare in the 1700s). SOUL asked permission to use this poem when they first set up their website after establishing their organisation and beginning their journey towards seeing the whenua protected and returned to the people of Ihumātāo.*

**Anahera Gildea**

*Ngāti Tukorehe*

**K-t Harrison**

*Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Mahuta*

**Ihumātao**

There are lines between us      connected stretch marks  
the body lands sharp  
    the haehae, the toto of Rangi that scars the morning  
there to touch

when we face each other we have electric skin. Opposite,  
the rural behind      urban, with backs of stone  
    platooned up shoulder to shoulder  
    in lines to cut to the sea

i runga i te rangi-ātea      e rua ngā momo airwaves

blue tension is wide and thick      on the breath  
my mother leans beyond the 1978 sink      to the breeze  
    to the radio on the windowsill  
    it's still the Queen's English      received pronunciation

years of nightshift      protectors      until the atatū, in the no light,  
before dawn

that's Joe Hawke she says      can you hear  
we have not moved

**275**

Lush fertile plots where the market gardens thrive  
Grow along the road to where the rich people live  
Their harbour viewed houses snuggle into the Maunga

Ponga burst open: bush umbrellas  
Canopy & protect exotic foreign growth.  
Wind can be brutal  
Rain can lash  
& sun can burn

Over there is where  
The filthy rich who stink of money  
Roll in it  
Wallow in it  
& are lousy with it  
Fatted lamb from the fat of the land  
Plotted gold  
Stolen  
Sold

Here is where  
The down at heel walk the uneasy streets  
To broken homes; broken men and broken women,  
Down and out  
Hands-out  
Their hands out  
For the hand outs and the hand-me downs  
Doled out to them

Here in the squalid huts of the welfare masses  
The always poor of the lower classes  
Burn chopped up floorboards to keep themselves warm  
& scream out loud from the hungry storm  
That rages in their bellies

Here, there is always a light that shines  
Even if it is the only street light that still goes  
Or the out-side light of a house, left on by mistake  
Or for the one who will come home soon.

Here, there is always movement  
Between the last bus at night and the first of the morning  
A car makes its way home  
Or a taxi comes to pick some-one up  
Or drop somebody off  
Or the night train from Wellington that rattles by at twenty past two  
And screams just before the intersection  
Or Wiremu the cat  
Coming home after tom-catting around  
Or a man, doing the same after doing the same

Here is where the Māori boys strut; the Maori man strut  
Belted Levis beneath a massive gut  
Arms akimbo held out at the sides, marking time with the strutting strides  
Kinas under their armpits, the black singlets sweat, tattooed face and  
forehead; the unbuttoned  
blue shirt.  
Afros and shaved heads, dirty and unkempt  
Bounce along the roadside which each buoyant step  
Where they are headed no one knows or cares; Mt Eden or Paremoremo  
Statistics suggest

Here is survival  
Perhaps a winter or two  
Then move on to grimmer pastures  
Evicted from the poor houses  
To live in Aunty's garage with the wife and kids of another cousin  
& their Pitt-bull, trained to bite Pākehās  
But who will bite any-thing that moves  
And did.  
And was put down.  
But not without protest

Here is the jungle where a poor soul could lose direction  
Even with a map  
Where: whichever unlit dog shit dumped alley way you hide up  
Or drag your sorry broken arse down  
Would lead you back here

To the BP station at the cross-roads; right here  
Where the fast cars of the rich  
Sleek through on their sign posted way to the fun at Rainbows End  
Or that way to go over the harbour bridge,  
Or that way  
Speeding to the airport to catch a plane to the world.

Wetlands where the birds wade becomes swamp out here where the city lights  
fade,  
Miasma filtered quagmire – a wasteland  
Where ethane bogged people with dak clogged brains  
& P fogged eyes waste away and stay that way  
Still water harbour  
Opulent blue, un-busy flat sea no ships in view  
Lazy birds float in the Mangere sky and the sun lighted warm breezed clouds  
idle by  
Puketiti Island rests out there  
Where – the liquidated effluent of the affluent few converges with the shit of  
the  
impoverished; who  
At least have had something to dump  
Today  
The ponds: where the common waste meets  
Is purified  
Then piped back  
For all the people  
To drink

## Rangimarie Jolley

Waikato-Tainui

### Tautoko

I read somewhere that Ihumātao was the second landing place of Tainui Waka.

As with most things Māori, I ignored the micro-grief that accompanied the sentiment –

I wish I had a kaumātua to tell me that, instead of a stranger's ranty-blog.

I read somewhere that *Mana whenua* was the new term used for People of the Land.

As with most things learned-late, I ignored the whakaiti I felt for Papatūānuku

–

I wish I understood the term, instead of making assumptions about her Mana.

I read somewhere that Pōtatau te Tuatahi was offered there, as the unifying face of Māoridom.

As with most things Historical, I ignored the heat cursing through my lost veins –

I wish I knew my tūpuna, instead of this aching feeling of never-enough-ness.

I read to learn, know and feel things,

And right now, I can't read enough about this place

To tell me what to think, know, or feel.

As with most things massive, I feel fear

And right now, I also feel the FOMO of my peers

To get there and be in the pics, Bastion Pointing.

I wish I knew more about this place, than I do.

But right now, all I see is passion, kaha and whānau

And I know that this is the fight for those who think, know and feel the most things.

And for those who don't know what their feeling,

But want to tautoko those who do know,

We ask –

“Where the fuck is Jacinda?”

We speak –

“Protect Ihumātao”

We chant –

“Kia whawhai tonu mātou. *Āke, ake, ake*” (x2)

## Johanna Knox

*Ngāti Tukorehe, Ngāti Raukawa-ki-te-Tonga, Ngāti Ranginui*

### Ūkaipōtanga

‘When the action is over, turn your attention to home’— Jade Kake\*

--

Bob Jones infamously said he ‘knew Sir Tipene O’Regan before he was Māori.’ I worry sometimes – will old friends and colleagues say that about me? And if they do, will I tune them out? (Shush! I’m trying to hear the tūpuna.) Or will I taihoa, turn and explain?

--

When I was small we went back to Dad’s rohe often.

When my Grandpa died, we stopped.

It seemed a mist moved in then, winding round my hands. And under its cover came a wind that tugged at threads I hadn’t realised I was holding.

By the time I felt them slipping away, it was too late. The mist cleared and my hands were empty.

Sometimes I would meet, or simply overhear, someone who spoke with Grandpa’s timbre, or his intonations, and a hook would catch in my throat. It was, for a short time, as if I were being reeled back to an old home, open mouthed and willing. (Keep winding. Keep winding. If I shut my eyes will we get there?)

Of course it didn’t matter how close I stood to eavesdrop, or how long I smiled and nodded to keep them talking or, you know, how long they stayed in my bed. They couldn’t transport me anywhere, or even take my hands and fill them with lost threads.

I tried to find other ways back.

There were abandoned te reo courses. There were letters and emails full of blunders to barely-known relatives. There was clumsy but heartfelt support of tino rangatiranga from an ostensibly Pākehā ally, too gagged with shame to admit what I’d let go.

But all the while, others had been working harder. They’d been researching old directions and clearing new paths, and they wanted people home.

When I finally came across one of those paths, there was no question. I took it.

Of course I did.

--

What else will I explain?

That since I set off on this path I cry more and stand straighter?

That I wish I’d found it sooner, but I know it appeared at just the right time?

That, contrary to what some may think, there is no shiny new identity garment dangling in front of me that I’m trying to rip off its hanger?

Or maybe I need to I explain this: Yes, I am white.

I was born with a bucket of sickly sweet privilege in each hand. I’m assimilation on legs. One of my ancestors came from England to teach soldiers for the Crown to sabre-fight.

But listen. My tupuna from Tauranga Moana ambushed Crown soldiers at Gate Pā.

In my hands I nurse a very old patch of cloth. It’s torn, frayed, a little dusty – and I’m carrying it back, hoping to find where it fits and do the work to weave it back in.

--

“I knew Johanna before she was Māori.”

Will I tune them out? Or will I taihoa, turn and explain:

No you didn’t.

*\*Knowing Your Tātai: Jade Kake on hapū rangatiratanga, whakapapa and Ihumātao by Jade Kake, published in the Pantograph Punch in August 2019.*

## **Rāhiri Mākuini Edwards-Hammond**

*Taranaki, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāruahine, Moriori*

### **But I guess you're just doing your job**

To those just  
doing their jobs  
To the  
'Peacekeepers'  
To the police at  
Ihumātao

Those of you I've  
connected with  
To Tony, Craig,  
to Dion  
To Joe, Ash, and  
many of your colleagues

You each surprised  
me in more ways  
than I can list.  
The teachings I  
took away from  
each interaction,  
you reminded me  
that we're all  
human

Around  
wheelbarrow  
contained fires  
we shared our  
reasons for being  
here.  
While roasting  
marshmallows on  
scavenged sticks.  
We realised  
whakapapa  
connections.  
Huddled under  
umbrellas we sang  
together, though  
we never got to  
ten guitars.

You mentioned  
coming here on  
your days off to  
support and that  
you love being  
here with us.

You told us about  
your kids  
whakapapa to this  
whenua.  
About your past  
pains and run-ins  
with the 'law'.  
Under  
Tamatea-ā-Aio  
we shared our dreams  
and fears.

You even asked  
how we feel about  
the police, so I  
told you.  
You nodded but  
told me how much  
you each do for  
your communities.  
How you're just  
doing your job  
but you love it.

And you all say,  
you're just doing  
your job.  
Putting kai on  
the table.  
Clothing your  
tamariki.  
"Keeping our  
communities safe"  
But what happens  
when your bosses  
become restless?  
When Fletchers  
decide they've  
had enough.  
When the

government  
remains silent.  
When they ask you  
to do your job.

Will you  
recognise me when  
I stand before  
you and not  
beside you?  
As you're told to  
push through our  
barricade, will  
you remember  
telling us about  
your  
relationship?  
If I'm the one  
looking up the  
barrel of your  
rifle, will you  
reminisce on our  
frontline jokes?  
As you read me my  
rights and pull  
me into a paddy  
wagon, will you  
recall  
congratulating me  
on my studies and  
encouraging me to  
push on,  
for our people?

I understand that  
you're doing what  
you think you  
have to, so are  
we.  
And if our  
nightmares are  
realised,  
I'm prepared to  
do my job too.

**Anna McAllister**

*Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Porou*

## **Exhausted**

I look into the eyes of my sister and hear her pain.

I look into the eyes in the mirror and let out a deep involuntary sigh, seeming unending.

I watch various instagram stories and read various twitter threads trying desperately to reach out, seemingly impossible.

Feeling the anger and sadness begin to boil up I put down my phone.  
Protection not protesting.

Take a hot shower trying to wash off the emotions in order to get through the day of mundane hospitality work.

Only to realise, you can not scrub off what is under the skin. Unwilling to cut into my body the way I did as a teenager, I sit defeated in the shower.

We are all exhausted.  
Those after us will probably be exhausted.

But one day. One day we will be able to rest. One day.



## Ihumātao

Our first born  
is holding the blue line.  
Blessed by mana whenua kaumātua, Kīngitanga,  
an eviction notice is served.  
Houses can be built on confiscated  
land, deals have been struck.  
Our first born  
is their visual might.

Our first born  
is still holding the blue line  
after the important people have left.  
Those left holding space have woken.  
They too form a line.  
Kanohi ki te kanohi.  
Our first born  
is their pou.

Our first born  
is holding the blue line,  
standing fifteen hours,  
no kaumātua, no karakia.  
We karakia.  
We hold him.  
Our first born  
is our heart.

Our first born  
is holding the blue line  
with Māori, with Pasifika  
full-face challenges of kūpapa, told he isn't  
Māori, whakaiti of whakapapa, lectured  
on the Treaty. They stand as pou.  
Our first born.  
Puku stirs.

## Donna McLeod

*Te Āti Awa*

Our first born  
is holding the blue line.  
He tells his cousin, who stands before him,  
he is proud of her and to be safe.  
He texts his sister, as she gathers koha,  
to dress warmly and bring him pizza.  
Our first born  
upholds our uri.

Our first born  
is holding the blue line.  
He carries maunga, waters, whenua, whānau,  
grew up knowing  
he was born holding te Tiriti.  
He stands as Māori.  
Our first born  
is.

Our first born  
is holding the blue line.  
He is a child of Parihaka.  
His blood runs with passive resistance.  
He is a child of warriors  
and men of God.  
Our first born.  
E tū, Tama.

## **Kōtuku Titihuia Nuttall**

*Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangatahi, and WSĀNEĆ First Nation*

### I

land confiscation

like taking candy from children  
separating tangata from whenua  
like egg yolks from whites

### II

Ihumātao

māori all over the country  
nervously watch screens  
worried for the land, for their whanau  
or rather

worried for their business interests;  
their wily tamariki  
sticking their noses where they shouldn't,  
packing their bags to head north  
to Ihumātao

some stuck at work  
talk to other disenfranchised  
distant māori kids  
counting dull gold coins into the till  
look at her face  
Queen Elizabeth II two hundred times over

### III

whakapapa

mum makes me a spiral-bound A4 booklet  
essentially my first pepeha  
because I cannot recite by heart  
the names and maunga and awa

that give me context and place and strength

one page has a black and white photo  
of my great koro Fred  
a bonny baby in a white dress, surrounded by  
grown men in suits with pocket watches  
and bowler hats with white albatross feathers in

### IV

time to decolonise yourself cuz

disheartening to hear some say it isn't our place to get "involved"  
perhaps you would prefer the land developed, desecrated  
uphold the colonial imperialism that keeps your cousins in poverty

remember the nation of "new zealand" is built on stolen land  
land that passes through pākehā hands easily enough  
first the crown, then fletcher, with many more in-between  
but for some reason, can't seem to make it back to māori families  
in any size larger than a carpark

### V

manaakitanga

we are here to defend the defenders  
protect the protectors  
gathered in peaceful resistance  
support them with words, actions, kai, wairua, koha  
I thought this is what we were supposed to do  
envelop each other in love and care,  
in the spirit of reciprocity and understanding

## Sinead Overbye

*Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Porou*

### **Ka whawhai tonu mātou**

We wake in Ihumātao, hypothermic  
in our tent, but joking about it, because  
we would do anything for the whenua  
anything at all.

We would take off our shoes  
to be closer to Papatūānuku  
even if it's one in the morning, even if it's rained  
& the ground's melted to mud  
& we can't draw breath without heaving

*I have spent my life wanting to fight for something  
But have stayed passive, scared of taking up space  
Making my body small so as not to offend anyone  
I never want to eat I never want to stand up straight*

& we would keep Her caked between our toes  
& under our nails & in lashes round our ankles  
& we would walk the frontline, back and forth,  
well into the depths of night  
with steaming flasks of tea & we would bend  
to the kaitiakis' feet & tell them why we came  
& how far we have travelled to join them  
exchanging frosty breath in the pre-dawn

*What use is a body if you don't recognise that it is sacred?  
What use is whenua if we don't listen when she speaks?  
What use is my body if it's not well enough to carry me?  
I can go through the motions, but my bones are aching*

& we would take the sharpened knives & slice  
potato skin from flesh until the manuhiri are fed  
& we don't need to know why they're here  
we just need bodies adding to the weight

*I have spent my life wanting to be heard  
but instead I stay silent, even when I know it's not good enough  
I have no right to stand on this whenua & claim it for myself  
I have no right to say anything out loud*

we are the space between earth and sky  
trying to negotiate the pain of that separation  
trying to negotiate our role at all— like, are we  
even meant to be here? Are we even  
Māori though? And when we speak, with our  
clumsy colonised tongues, will anyone listen?  
They see what we do, but do they know why we do it?

*If my body is sacred I should listen to her  
If my body is sacred I should pay more attention  
If my body is sacred I should make myself eat and eat and eat  
If my body is sacred I should get out of bed  
If my body is sacred I should give it only to people who love me*

& we would stand for hours in this field  
& in a million other fields if we have to  
— & we know that we might have to & we will be  
prepared when the time comes— & the time has come  
& we're pushing on— & we won't ever stop  
even if we're crying, tears soaked  
into mud, we will keep going  
no matter how long

## The whenua responds

You sit alone in an office & cry for me  
The videos, whakaaro streaming through your screen  
You don't sleep because there isn't any time now for sleeping  
250 years of closing eyes against the pain

& maybe you go to a hui & talk about revolution but you'll still keep missing me  
& maybe you go to a bar to drink cheap beer but you'll still miss me  
I am your whenua your anchor  
You cry for me when I bleed & you too try to bleed back to me in the bathroom  
but you needn't

Be calmed You know e hoa  
I am being cared for  
Protected not protested  
My body a temporary home  
For thousands who have found their way back— or just here for the first time  
They laugh & sing around campfires  
Share the mahi, nourish and nurture  
I hear them speak our reo  
& am sated with thoughts of our future

Though the maunga's not been taken back  
There is hope for us yet

## Tru Paraha

*Ngāti Hine, Ngāti Kahu o Torongare*

^  
^/\

nga kupu a gunk up  
^

ranginui a ruining ^ ^

papa a pap ^/\

^ tangaroa nag aorta

moana a moan

wahine ^ a whine

tangata a tan tag

tane a net ^

mokopuna a moon kup

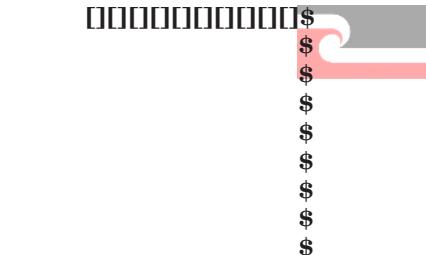
ae marika! i am a rake!

nga mihi xo mini hag ox

mauri ora air armour

tena koe! eat keno!

mana whenua a human wane



**Cassandra Barnett**

*Ngāti Raukawa ki Wharepūhunga, Clan Buchanan, Clan Darragh*

**All these pocket handkerchiefs won't staunch my unwept tears:  
An essay in boundaries**

-----  
*Ko koutou*  
-----

We want to rip your rug out  
your magician's tablecloth  
and unfurl our kahu back  
beneath you and all of us.

Think Te Fiti of Moana  
laying greenly down to sleep  
over Te Kā's cooling embers  
but less acid, less Disney.

Think Te Whiti too  
before laying down we must pull  
your short pegs up  
from her thick skin -

no pocket hanky, actually  
but the facing edge of a  
deeper folded wedge  
tapering cleanly heartward,

up and outward.

-----  
*Ko ia*  
-----

Papa-T brooks no boundaries  
We can't carve her up  
yet we have  
So whose home is at stake?

Carved us up too.  
Made a you and an I of we,  
an I and an I of iwi.  
All still her uri.

How many protectors can  
pirouette on the head of a pin?  
A multitude, if it can hold  
to its own inertial rhythm

and as it beats and whirls,  
toss out tornado walls,  
generate volume, a centrifuge, a

tikanga compass to dwell within.

-----  
*Ko au*  
-----

Like the nationalists  
I think I love this land.  
My country.  
But what I love

to be clear  
is Papatūānuku.  
A plain relationship with  
a life-sustaining body.

And what I love is this rare ecology  
mostly gone  
of overlapping ecosystems  
we call ours.

(Don't we mostly love gone things?)

And what I love  
is a certain whare on a hill down some  
South Waikato backroads  
not because I grew and formed there

but because it's the locus  
of a great deal of  
my pain.  
And because I still can go there.

-----  
*Ko mātou*  
-----

Asks my big-heart office mate  
at the sisters and brothers I mention  
Are they involved in iwi stuff?  
then googles and answers herself

Nah, I don't know that face.  
She's curious not policing, but  
with each I feel the failing  
personally.

We're Māori and proud and

we're outside.  
We're not real, not tūturu.  
We hold no place in our hierarchies.

A welcome hub at last for the  
unheard home struggles. Yet  
even at home we're not hau kainga.  
We'll fight but can't represent.

-----  
*Ko rātou*  
-----

My Dad did an Ōtuataua project  
in the nineties. My mate did a  
whole doctorate at Ihumātao.  
All in good grief, good heart.

Yet to make a career in place  
of sole devotion to  
whenua and whānau  
is to gain.

Artists, academics.

And it's doubly to lose.  
Privilege begets privilege.  
The they devolves back to me.  
Our whānau don't want devotion.

Our humblest offerings  
seem suss. Everything  
is suss. And we can't  
perform our way out.

-----  
*Ko au*  
-----

My other heart places are gone.  
Sold from under me by  
parents with inherited  
faults or wisdom -

though those places were  
never ours.  
In my Titirangi childhood home  
the psychogeography

of house and people  
was half the love;  
the never glimpsed depth  
of earth beneath,

the other half.  
Like so many I could stand  
in that stranger's house even now -  
repeopled, rethined, refurnished -

and feel it:  
the tingle where feet connect.  
The zap through me from Papa's core  
to cosmos.

-----  
*Ko tātou*  
-----

That three-point zap between Papa, feet  
and a peopled home -  
that magic people make when  
they're connected -

Papa needs it.  
Our feet need it.  
Our uri need it.  
Everyone needs it.

Any peopled pocket hanky of  
cosmos-zapping earth-depth  
we still can hold fast  
we must hold fast.

Else it'll just be governments and  
Fletchers, selling selling selling  
from underfoot  
(don't they recognise Te Kā?)

and gone-love, forevermore.

-----  
*Ko koe*  
-----

I've been busy making velcro  
to knit our rugs together.  
Not so I can stick mine  
over or under yours

but so that when yours moves  
mine moves too  
and thus I learn the moves for  
when it's my turn and I need them;

and thus I can never believe that  
what hurts me doesn't hurt you too.  
But I think I had my projects  
and my metaphors all wrong.

-----  
*Ko mātou*  
-----

To write a poem with no you in it.  
To write a poem with no I in it.  
To write a poem full of we.

We who want homes.  
We who want homes.  
We who want homes.

We who want our homes back.  
We who want tent homes.  
We who want big homes and  
problem-solving homes and  
homes upon homes upon homes.

We want to not dodge easily  
our parts in this;  
to not scrub the dirt  
from our hands - out, spot.

But who's we?

-----  
*Ko au*  
-----

I want to not comment, politically,  
on what's not mine  
and instead to just reflect on  
what's mine.

I want to admit we have a home  
of sorts. On someone else's terms  
my bank and me  
we have a home.

I want to shout my spiritual homes  
from rooftops. It's not  
about them but by crikey I'd fight -  
myself first - for them,

and feel funny if tauiwi showed up  
looking comfier than us there  
(not hard)  
in the name of helping us.

I want to own up that  
I'm tauiwi too, at all my homes.  
Ko au te tauiwi  
ko te tauiwi ko au.

-----  
*Ko māua*  
-----

Yet even here not there -  
far from tent or fire,  
too little we, too much warm bed -  
my boy and I can hope preposterously  
that all at once all together our thousand  
splintered voices  
may rise, with  
one glancing turn, one shift.

Iwi, tūpuna, tauiwi and Papa-T align.  
Planets, moons and stars in eclipse.

-----  
*Ko ia*  
-----

I stand in the sun at Ōtari  
next to the kura home of my son.  
I see her abundance offering  
to sustain us everywhere.

I feel her love warm and simple  
wanting not reverence or fear,  
just humble acceptance of enough  
to look after our own.

So we can keep looking after her.

She is gnarled and ancient  
smooth space.

But the devil's in  
the details.

-----  
*Ko wai?*  
-----

It passes, the dream.

Our bursting heart of hope  
puffs out.  
Beneath it silence says:  
just listen.

Listen to the mamae  
and its bearers.  
Let we speak.  
And us will listen.

Let your molecules stay one moment  
in less fervour and passion  
less certainty and demand  
less action and foment.

Let your molecules disperse  
every one  
settling and falling on the earth  
as replenished grains -

*listen.*

*Ko Papatūānuku*

**Michelle Rahurahu Scott / Lyssa Rogers-Rahurahu**

*Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa, Ngāti Uenukukopako, Ngāti Tuwharetoa, Ngāti  
Kahungunu, Ngāti Raukawa*

**Mana Wāhine**

Let us light fires for you, to warm us all on the long nights.  
Let us strengthen our lines so you can lie safe another day.  
Let us grow in numbers to show you we won't bend.  
Let us now protect you even from our own.

the sun burned into the whenua the day we stood in a paddock listening to  
pania call "are you willing to dig with your bare hands? are you willing to  
take off your shoes? and feel Papatūānuku under your feet?" me you and your  
little pēpi and our sister from another whaea we left our shoes behind us  
crouched at the feet of men in high vis scratched through roots with our nails  
and pressed rākau into the void contributing to a line around reclaimed land  
wetting them with tears as karakia and haka rang out behind us our answer  
was clear

Tāiki ē! Māmā they've forgotten what you've given them.

Tāiki ē! Māmā you lit a fire in me.

Tāiki ē! Māmā you strengthened my will.

Tāiki ē! Māmā you gave me room to grow.

Tāiki ē! Māmā you protected me when I had no where to go.

behind my eyes dark and red i can still see the way our kai multiplied like  
Christ's bread the way our joy multiplied like hiccups Ihumātao that great  
reunion for strangers who talk like uncles aunties brothers sisters who take tea  
to your frontline chair in the dark who tend your fires when youre away who  
welcome you into circles whether you know waiata or not who peel potatoes  
in circles with one big bin in the middle every day more cousins came bearing  
koha and every hour tūpuna told us: eat hydrate be peaceful protect and we  
did in perfect cycles

Whakarongo my pēpi to our waiata of freedom.  
Titiro my pēpi at our people leading the way.  
Hīkoi my pēpi with the strength of your tūpuna.  
Whakareri my pēpi for the change is coming.

sisters we must join hands and ask each other

are you willing to feel Papatūānuku under your bare feet are you willing to dig  
into the soil with your bare hands to allow new growth whatever that means?  
we have planted the first row of rākau who will come to plant the next? all of us  
are cast astray but when we return from Ihumātao we will still have soil caked  
under our nails and we can tell you this whenua takes deep clear breaths and  
this is only the beginning

Kia whakahī taku pēpi.

Kia whakahī taku pēpi.

Kia whakahī taku pēpi.



**essa may ranapiri**

*Ngāti Raukawa, Waikato Tainui, Clan Gunn*

**it's 2019 and things like this are still happening**

pull the rock wall down in large chunks  
the calendar didn't make  
that which hangs over the whenua  
just disappear did it?  
this nation state of  
white-is-right  
of slash-and-burn of  
divide-and-conquer

*New fucking Zealand*  
in all its truest colours

five years of struggle  
or is it two-hundred-and-fifty-five years  
without end without end without  
a single word from the mouth of power  
that can be trusted  
(Jacinda I hope you didn't think you could escape the poem unscathed)

fighting against a company that keeps a name of an honest job  
to mask the fact they're colonisers chasing a profit motive  
scaffolding a claim out of iwi-consultation  
gone gold-panning for the first race traitor they can find

on this land?!

where the sky has come down to hide our whereabouts  
in the fog  
Ranginui weeps at the sight  
we have always belonged  
in the āke ake ake! that pushes solidarity through the mist  
we are connected to so much more than a margin  
the pigs have some nerve to suggest  
we're trespassing here  
and the drums

and the drums  
are going and they're standing crisp in blue uniform  
all ordered to be here  
just doing their jobs  
what is the labour value of guarding a paddock  
what is the bonus you get from terrifying our tamariki?

and the drums are going  
and we're singing  
mana motuhake  
we're standing arms locked together  
in the spirit of Parihaka  
the pole of a flag to hold onto  
our independence  
in the disappointment it's still happening here  
on the land  
we are kaitiaki  
and we will not let you exchange Her mauri for a paycheque  
in 2019 and every year after that  
until you fucking stop  
until you understand  
where we stand is where we will always  
stand  
on the whenua that we are  
and are one with

**Serena Ngaio Simmons**

*Ngāti Porou*

**On Wishing I Was With You**

*You cannot teach bones  
cannot teach blood,  
they may think they understand a land  
a karanga  
but they do not know what it means  
to be the meat of a place  
to have literally come from the ground up*

Imagine how lucky this manu on the roof is  
they have migrations, patterns, young  
but really  
they could just get up  
whenever they want  
shove their chest into the sky,  
leave

Me?  
Us?  
How do we do that  
with no wings  
no money  
no patterns  
no empty

What happens  
when the empty the land feels from our absence  
is the sharpest pain?  
Like  
is literal pain?

What happens when people  
are saying it loud for the first time  
in a language you can understand?  
Like you've never seen whenua & you  
said this way, said this strong  
this firm  
this pulling  
this demanding in its call for you to come back

I wake up every morning  
to a world where my people  
know how *stolen* tastes before our own food  
know how it smells early in the morning  
or late at night when *they* think we aren't watching,  
a world where we have to occupy our ancestor  
in order to give her a chance at breathing again,  
a world  
where I can't read the ocean like my tīpuna  
and there's no money in my wallet  
so the 4,000 miles between me and home  
hits that much harder

So I sit here 'n wait  
in this cheap apartment  
with no circulation, mismatched sheets  
'n silverfish  
in the heat of an island  
that loves me  
but does not know me like *that*,  
watching the cuzzies stick it out  
build it out  
live it out  
until it is theirs again  
till it is returned  
till I can fly back home with everything I have  
and plant my pou deep down and alongside them,  
right where they should be

## Carin Smeaton

*Muaūpoko, Ngāti Hāmoa, Ngāti Pākehā*

### daughter of sina and sister toni head out (of tāone)

the first sister at ōrākei station is a patient soul i says to her we been waiting  
over 5

generations to catch a train like this one she says i kno the sisters of saint  
helens

took us away too soon she says our mama's milk our island's winds  
ancestral

caves (tūpuna mountains too)

whanaunga

took too soon for sina but not too soon for our proud new parents  
smug as smack in

their brand new box looking down on papakāinga so high up they cant possibly  
look

anywhere else

but down on us our dying eels did they think ballet lessons would narrow  
our hips?

stop da drift? make us too stiff for siva (still he never thought twice bout  
sticking his

pudgy white fingers where they didntt belong

did he?)

the second sister said sina was always ahead of her times ahead of da game but  
they

even took her by surprise they took us all

by surprise our sister toni says it's wrong when the only time u feel tall is when  
somebody else is on their knees on kupe street our sister lay our eel down at  
the

water's edge she buried that sucker in the sand & waitd for fruition to astro  
ignite

near the tracks where we wait n we wait patient souls to take our train to  
stonefields

sister toni says we'll never forget our babes of the kāinga our children of rangi

daughters of sina new-born matatuhi under-the-ocean

sages of the ages

tangaroa

who will find us our eel again kiss so fully again so wholeheartedly with  
the most

beautiful of palms the most peaceful of whenua that even a small slice of  
memory tastes

sweeter than the sweetest fruit of niu

(but bitterer than the dank drank milk kept sour in the house at the top of the  
hill where

we nevr stoppt dreaming of night swimmming)

**Stacey Teague**  
*Ngāti Maniapoto*

**Ruby Mae Hinepunui Solly**  
*Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe*

### **toitū te whenua**

nice houses volcanic wars  
the govt swells like shit ponds the land backs itself  
solidarity carving hills into occupation  
sacred soil settler guilt  
the past speaks grief the water speaks pollution  
the public sings in the colonial landscape  
the womb of the earth is full of protest  
papatūānuku stands with us her body excavated  
our ancestors arrived here built a home not a lifestyle block  
ancestral land is affordable land  
what remains after invasion is mistrust and misplacement  
a trespass notice on stolen land is void  
you want to dig up our bones and suck the marrow  
take our words make them your own  
do you own or do you belong  
somewhere it's still growing season  
pull up our mana from the earth like kumara

### **I h u m ā t a o**

#### I h u

You are photographed in full bloom,  
nose pressed to nose.  
Our pounamu dangling from your throat,  
a gaudy bauble.  
Our kākahu over your shoulders,  
cloaking you like the night we are in.  
You are a paper doll  
with taonga tagged on top.  
Paper thin,  
and easy  
to shake off.

#### M ā

The way my mind weaves white  
together with clean  
is starting to fray.  
We see whiteness as a colour,  
but really it's a room in the consciousness,  
smelling of potpourri and scrupulously clean.  
Until you notice the fly shit on the ceiling  
and the dirty fingerprints.  
Some oxidised and brown,  
some fresh  
and red.

#### T ā o

Once I was told that every action and every word has weight.  
It's just that some people's are heavier than others.  
Each of their actions weigh down on us,  
drop after drop,  
until we are sodden.  
Until we are so cold, that we feel warm.  
Drop after drop  
until all we can do  
is carry on.  
It's no coincidence  
that the tear drop and the spear are shaped the same.  
A smooth edge,  
a cutting tip,  
to slash us like obsidian.  
The black and the red,  
without the white.

A o

*Te Ao Māori*            *Te Ao Pākehā*  
But we do not say *Ngā Ao*  
There is but one world to share.  
Our mother has been separated once  
let us not separate her further.  
There is room for three threads in your needle,  
there is room for more in our whāriki.  
Put down your sharp point,  
it is time that we all worked with our hands  
once more.

**urban.**

so many comings and goings:

people,  
but also planes  
waka and  
automobiles.

migrations of so many oceanic kinds:

centuries of people coming from other islands  
(warmer islands)  
decades of people coming from other whenua  
(these our islands)

and days that have turned into weeks  
(or is that months or even years)  
of people coming to stand with you:  
coming on planes  
Uber  
and automobiles.

during the war  
(which one?)  
(it's all the same one really)  
our land was taken for an airport too,  
but the planes never landed  
and the whole thing  
(the whole whenua)  
was covered up with state housing, parks and schools.

when I tell other māoris  
i come from lower hutt  
they say yeah  
but where do you really come from.

we have all been complicit with stories of migration  
that make it surprising  
(no)  
*unthinkable*  
that cities are places maori people come from too.

imagine if we had held tighter  
and spoken louder  
as a people  
about how city land is land too.  
is oceanic too.  
is whenua too.

## Tayi Tibble

*Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Porou*

### Everyone was there, e hoa

There's a specific sort of shame in pulling up to Ihumātao in an Uber. The shame comes from knowing that Dame Whina Cooper walked the entire North Island in order to advocate for the protection of indigenous land and here I am, in the backseat of a \$13, carbon-emitting Toyota Prius. In 1975, Whina Cooper's hikoī from Te Hapua all the way to Parliament in Wellington took 29 days to complete. In 2019, my Uber from the Auckland domestic airport to Ihumātao Rd took about nine minutes. I felt spoilt and embarrassed. I shared these feelings with Miriama, half a joke and half a confession. She replied, 'Oi hard.'

The specific shame I felt was whakamā. Whakamā is an emotion that doesn't have an exact English translation, but it is similar to feelings of inferiority, self-doubt and self-abasement. It's a deep and enduring shame that is connected to dislocation, of not having a Turangawaewae, a place to stand, a sure-footing in te ao Māori. As an urban millennial brat, four generations removed from my papa kainga, whose inheritance of te reo was boarded up in my great grandmother's mouth and never shared, whakamā is a feeling I have been living with since I was little. It is a feeling I have felt ever since my Pākehā primary school announced it was starting a kapa haka group and my mum goes, 'Oh. You should do that, you're Māori', and I go 'What's a Māori?' As a result, my consciousness but also my self-consciousness as an indigenous person was born.

But the thing about self-consciousness is that I find it just as insufferable as pretension. What good does paralysing yourself with worry about whether you are 'Māori enough' actually do, when you could actually be out there doing something? I have to constantly remind myself that no one thinks about me as much as I think about me, and it's literally my life's mahi to get over myself and do some actual mahi instead. This was part of the desire to go to Ihumātao, to get out of my own head and help.

In the days before I arrived at Ihumātao, I had been a wreck of nervous energy. I spent hours at work too anxious to concentrate. I did a poetry reading with the threat of tears wedged in my throat. I stayed up late typing unpublishable polysyllabic fragments out of an insatiable need to do something. Miriama

sent me texts like bro we need to go and I replied with texts like I know. *Why are we so pōhara, tho?* We made cute faces in our phone cameras and put up despo instagram posts like *Hmu if you are driving up to Tāmaki anytime soon and have 2 spare seats 4 2 cool wahine!! Have \$\$\$ for gas!!* We got our hustles on. Hard. Eventually we came up with enough for two last-minute one-way flights from Te Whanganui a Tara to Tāmaki on Saturday the 27th.

So like 'feel the fear and do it anyway', I 'felt the whakamā and got out of the fucking car' anyway. We thanked the Uber driver (who wouldn't drive any further), swung our backpacks on and walked the rest of the way. Cars lined Ihumātao Rd for miles. We hadn't even set eyes on the occupation site yet and already there were so many people! Old koros with faded ta moko leaned on their canes. Young girls in denim jeans and uncle bob tees snapped selfies on their iPhones and a happy baby, with a wispy topknot, wriggled to be put down. He wanted to walk this little hikoī himself.

We were welcomed in by a brother in a high-vis vest and a big smile who immediately invited us to get a kai from the blue tent. A makeshift stage was assembled where rappers like Mellowdownz, Poetik, Jess B and Half-Queen, performed to a crowded audience of kaumātua in green fold-out chairs, pēpi in prams, and everyone in between. I scoped out all the hot rangatahi in their fresh coordinated outfits: Gucci, Louis, Kappa, Off-White, Supreme; accessorised with taonga: pounamu, bone, hei matau, drop earrings, heru combs, shark teeth. The patched helped pitch tents with the kids. Twelve-year-old girls ran trays of kai around confidently and took charge of the cup of tea stations. There were gazebos with materials to create placards, posters, lei. There was even a tent for free massages. The whole vibe was so chill and cheerful, that I looked at Miriama in horror. A cheeky text from a friend: *This is like a Māori Woodstock.*

The music, the energy, a general air of peace and love; it kind of was like a Māori Woodstock, but without drugs, or alcohol, or rubbish, or idiots. But even joking about it briefly made me feel ashamed. How could something so important, so serious, so urgent as protecting the whenua, and standing up to colonisation and the trauma that it has caused, also be like, fun and cool and good vibes?

The first time I ever encountered Bastion Point I was 11 years old. My siblings and I got out of the car at a family dinner and my Pākehā grandad said, 'Oh

look here comes the invasion of Bastion Point.’ I said to Mum, ‘What’s the invasion of Bastion Point?’ She said, ‘He’s just being racist’, and then I said ‘oh’ and that was that.

The second time I encountered Bastion Point I was in Year 11, in my history class. Our teacher, an ex-hippie, made a point of teaching us New Zealand history as opposed to like, idk the Tudors or whatever. Studying Bastion Point, I was confronted with the fact that land confiscation was still occurring in the 1970s, not just in ‘the distant past’ of the 1800s. It was the first time I really comprehended that colonisation was enduring in this country, but this country tends to pretend it’s not.

I also remember seeing that specific image of Bastion Point for the first time too. That photo, shot from a bird’s eye view, capturing that circle of police enclosing the mana whenua. I remember staring at it blown up big on the projector, and wanting very badly to cry. Because already at the age of 16 I had experienced enough racism, both overt and insidious, personal and institutional, that left me with a frustration that I had been conditioned not to acknowledge but the image of Bastion Point had provoked it to the surface. I felt grief. That deep, specific widespread grief that Māori carry inside us that mourns not only the loss of the land but what the land meant to us. Mauri, connection, potential.

But at the same time learning about Bastion Point, the Land March of 1975, Nga Tama Toa and discovering our great leaders and thinkers like Joe Hawke, Ranginui Walker, Hilda Harawira and Whina Cooper, empowered me to think critically and generally be like, nah bro and reject the stale coloniser narratives. Before I started studying history all I had really learned about Māori at school was Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi and that Māori killed the moas. So it made a difference to me, to see that despite a whole history of struggle and land alienation, Māori still had the strength and the will to resist colonisation. The phrase ‘Ka whaiwhai tonu matou; a struggle without end’ seemed to summarise this perfectly to me, like a poem. And it has stayed with me since I discovered it, written across Ranginui Walker’s faded brown cover.

Which is why I felt guilty af.

\*\*

I had packed my pink cargo pants, my black turtleneck and my beret for

a reason. I had come prepared for the fight (though I accidentally left my aviators at home). In the days before my arrival, I had been glued to my phone checking for updates, anxious as. I had heard about the police moving in during the night. I had heard about activists being arrested. I had heard about the police presence intimidating the mana whenua. I was ready for the struggle. I was ready to really plot and tough it out. Hell, despite imprisonment being like my deepest truest fear alongside an alien invasion (because you know colonial trauma lol) I felt like I was prepared to get arrested (if our ancestors died for the land then the very least I could do is be held in a cell for 24 hours, surely). My readiness was related to my self-consciousness as an indigenous person. Having not been raised in te ao Māori I had taught myself through study. It’s one thing to talk the talk, to read the books, do a history degree, to agree in theory, but it’s another thing to walk it. But I was ready for that hiko. I was prepared to protest.

But actually being at Ihumātao was a completely different vibe. By the time we arrived on Saturday the atmosphere had brightened. Jacinda had made some vague comments about halting the development, and the number of occupants at Ihumātao had swelled to the point where they far outnumbered the police. I quickly and sheepishly realised that there was little to no chance that I would be getting arrested. There was no hostility to be seen, let alone a fight to be had, unless I like, decided to behave like a total dickhead which would be a) random and disgraceful and b) quickly sorted out by one of the awesome wahine toa working tirelessly to uphold the tikanga and kaupapa of this occupation; Peaceful Passive Protection.

It’s winter, so the sun sets early and when it does its cold at Ihumātao. Miri and I, tentless, lay on the grass looking up at the stars, shivering and live-streaming our dumb thoughts to our followers on instagram. We must have only been there not even 5 minutes, when a young bro appeared with a blanket for us. Generosity and hospitality is not uncommon among Māori, it’s called Manaakitanga, but when you’ve been away for a while, living in the city, where you are conditioned to look out for yourself or risk getting cast out onto the streets by the mean capitalist regime, acts of initiative and caring are moving. We both nearly cried. We said ‘Omg! Thank you!’ many many times. We took the blanket up the small hill behind the blue kai tent. We sat there amongst a few other Māori, with blankets and tino flags fluttering. From where we sat we could see the stage, all the people, and the shadowy grooves of the whenua. On the stage Pania gave a whaikorero and reminded us that we are ‘protectors not protestors.’ Something clicked in my head. Oh true, I thought.

I observed Pania when I saw her around the site. It was hard not to. She turns heads. She is beautiful and humble and hardworking. Even from a distance you can see and feel her mana. As she walked around the camp checking on everyone, making sure everyone was fed, housed and happy you could see the ground trembling around her, and you could tell that her leadership was sourced directly from the whenua, from Papatūānuku and the people.

She said: 'And the last thing I want to say whanau I know you're all out there and you're like wow, Pania brought everybody here, Pania this and Pania that but everybody, this kaupapa was started by me and my six cousins, and then it was supported by our whanau, and then it was by our marae, and then it was supported by our papa kainga.

'So when you see whanau out there, marae members, please give them thanks also. Everyday I'm taking your hugs, your love and your selfie pictures back to share with them all. But I just wanted to mention this, sometimes it makes me feel uncomfortable too, Pania this and oh my uncles talking me up but it's not me. Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi. Engari, he toa takitini. My strength is not mine alone but is the strength of many.'

I thought, 'Far out. Chur. What a wahine toa. Tautoko that'. This was no place for ego, for self-importance, for hierarchy. Unspoken klout rules dictating who you can or can't talk to based on how many followers you have, didn't apply here. Didn't matter if you were Moana Jackson or Marama Davidson or a four-year-old kid with a perpetual snot nose or a hearty looking gang member in a tatty leather vest. All good, e hoa. Welcome brother. Everyone was treated the same, with dignity and respect as if everyone had a reason to be there, because everybody did.

And everyone was there too. Like, literally everyone. Many Pākehā don't acknowledge this cos, idk it threatens their tight grasp on colonial power or something, but Māori have our own pop culture and icons: musicians, artists, instagram influencers, cool girls, dream boys etc. In the few days I was there I saw Teeks, Coco Solid, Stan Walker, Kahu Kutia, Troy Kingi, Miriama Aoake, Hanelle Harris, TylerJade, The bros from Nesian Mystik, Nicole Semitara Hunt, Māori Mermaid, Meriana Johnson and Rachel House. I can't even name them all. There were so many Māori. Basically every hot woke Māori I follow on Insta was there getting a feed from the kai tent or taking a turn on the front line. It was exciting. We were low-key like, um this is a Māoritopia, and despite the sobering circumstances that brought us all here, it was also lit. We all felt

how rare and special this was, the opportunity for all of us to meet and gather, brought together by the call of the whenua.

And everyone was so nice and kind and generous. A big part of my whakamā was having no clear plans. I didn't want to be a burden, that egg rocking up unprepared and annoying, but keen on a free feed or something. We had no tent, no sleeping bags, no place in Auckland to stay. Usually an unplanned trip like this would stress me tf out. I am the type of girl who appreciates an itinerary. But it was easy. All we had were our backpacks and good intentions and the universe seemed to be working itself out for us effortlessly. Almost without prompting, friends were offering to take us in. We even tried hitchhiking and didn't get too lost or too murdered! One night we slept on the floor of our friend Piki's fancy hotel room and managed a quick dip in the spa on the way out. Another night, Miri's cuddie Heath from Nesian Mystik let us crash on the couch of his inner city apartment. We were able to check out the Tūrama lights festival at Albert Park - Piki had an installation there. And on our third day, not enough invoices in our accounts to take our broke asses home yet, we lime scootered to Ponsonby, and Rachel put us up at her house, fed us sausages and kumara chips and wine. When I felt whakamā about imposing, saying 'thank you' and 'sorry' an infuriating amount of times, every e hoa who had us said the same thing. 'Don't be silly. Don't be shy. Make yourself at home. You are welcome anytime.'

\*\*

My favourite novel has nothing to do with anything. It's American, about insufferable American writers. But in the story, an insufferable American writer asks an older, more established insufferable writer why she makes a point of helping younger writers. She replies, 'When I was young a few older people gave me a hand. It's the kind of thing you can't really repay, because the people who help you may never need your help. But what you can do is pass it on, so I try to pass it on.'

I thought about this as the young bro gave us the blanket. I thought about this as Pania gave us her words and her leadership. I thought about this as Piki and Heath and Rachel gave us a place to sleep. I thought about this as the aunties gave us hot kai and cups of tea. I thought about this as the mana whenua allowed us to stand with the land with them, and experience what a decolonised way of living is. And I thought about this as the whenua gave us the opportunity to gather together.



I had come to Ihumātao with the intention to give, but in the process I had received so much. Part of me felt guilty. I was unsure if I deserved it. I felt as though I had arrived too late. Both at Ihumātao, and in history, where much of the hard mahi has already been done by others, by our ancestors. I thought, with my heart so full it hurt, how tf can I possibly share this? How can I give back? What can I pass on?

That Saturday night, in the cold, beneath the stars, Stan Walker told us that he doesn't always feel articulate talking. I nudged Miriama in the ribs and said, 'You relate to that eh, sis?' Miriama replied, 'Shut up egg', but then, 'Yeah true', as Stan explained that the way he communicates and expresses himself is through his music. I was only teasing her but it did apply. Miriama is an artist. That's how she articulates herself. That's how she contributes to te ao Māori. That's how she gives back.

Growing up, my mother told me two things consistently 1) a woman can never have too many handbags and 2) do what you can, with what you have, where you are. Well, I'm not going to be one of the ones on the front line, holding it down, leading the way. That's not my place as manuhiri and as a lil egg obviously, but it's also not my ambition, or where my skills are. I don't have political power. I can't make stirring moving whaikorero. I don't have expert knowledge on all our tikanga and history. I certainly can't sing. But I can write, and I have a platform as a writer. A platform that means nothing to me, unless I can use it to share the way I experience and understand the world as an indigenous person, as I have in my book, Poūkahangatus. A platform that means nothing to me, unless I can share it.

Because what my time at Ihumātao confirmed for me is that no one is winning unless everyone is winning. If you have a plate you share it. You make sure 'everybody ate.' Because that's gangster. Because that's the Māori way. That's why so many Māori from all over turned up to protect another iwi's whenua. It's an act of reciprocity. We look after each other to be looked after. Nurture the land and the land will nurture you. And I believe that with the current climate growing more and more precarious, the need to honour indigenous rights and knowledge becomes more and more imperative. That's why we all answered the call. The karanga of Ihumātao goes beyond tribal connections to this particular whenua, it's also Papatūānuku who calls to her us as her descendants, as indigenous people, as kaitiaki.

So even if I didn't know exactly what I could give or what difference my presence would make I'm glad I made it to Ihumātao. I'm glad I got to stand with the land and experience so much generosity, leaving with a refreshed and amplified understanding of what kotahitanga and manaakitanga actually means, and what decolonisation actually looks like. What I came to understand at Ihumātao, among the kaumātua doing karakia and the rangatahi filling up social media feeds with livestreams and updates, is that there is not one correct way to give back, just as there is not one correct way to be Māori. And it's okay to be whakamā. It's okay to not know exactly where you are heading. Maybe the important thing is to get in that waka and start paddling, even if your waka is a thirteen dollar Uber. If you fall off or feel out of your depth, all good e hoa. There will always be a cuddie around to fish you out and dry you off, then point you in the direction of a potato to peel or a wharepaku to clean. It all makes a difference.

The next day Miri and I spend the morning driving around Auckland trying to scrape together painting supplies. She was keen to do some graf, to paint a mural at Ihumātao. We pick up spray cans in classic tino colours; red, black and white and return to the site. Miriama gets permission from the Mana Whenua to paint a fence. I try and help as much as I can, but mostly this includes staying out of her way, but I also fill up cups of water and hold my phone torch up for her once the sun falls. Aunties have a geez while they wander past and go 'Chur. That's neat all right!' Little bros gather around and want to show Miri their bombs. We give them vivids and a maths book and they get to work too. By the time we are finished, it is late and dark and we are cracking tf up because the only way we can see the piece at all, is by way of flash photography. I take pictures of Miriama next to her mahi. Ihumātao in white against a backdrop of red koru. Then Miri takes a photo of me. I ask Miri if she is happy. Yeah, she says. She feels heaps better. She thanks me for my hard work and hands me my phone back. I thank her for her beautiful mahi and for letting me be a small, dumb part of it. And then I start writing.

**George Watson**  
*Ngāti Porou, Moriori*

**Haehae**

With no way to grasp the inequitable past  
Or the unsettling ground of settlement,  
Aotearoa  
slips out of Pākehā memory,  
History and its documents are torn,  
tea stained treasure maps,  
patchworked into a rustic settler dream  
New Zealand  
Some of my tūpuna placed their marks upon a European document  
Marks like suns, scars, ridges of land, koru,  
Each imbued with a Mauri that cannot be contained,  
That exceeds the bounds of the document,  
breaking with the European form  
Some of my ancestors placed their signatures upon the Treaty  
With governors hands, guided by her majesty  
English heritage spelt out in  
Tight and ornate cursive  
Mimicking the proprietorial flourishes of  
Victorian gates, balustrades and lamp posts  
Lined, named, contained

\*

In drone footage of Ihumātao  
remnants of walled gardens, foundations of whare and volcanic cones  
rise up from the earth like welts, scars,  
Wordlessly our past  
breaks away from the European frame that contains it,  
into now  
\*  
The Crown seizing what it deems as wasteland,  
backwaters  
Bodies deemed as worthless,  
Prisons built on Tapu sites to incarcerate tangata whenua  
Lava caves revered by Māori  
becoming rubbish dumps, wastewater sumps,  
filled in with concrete in the name of hasty urban development  
Gifted buffer zones  
Mesh fences, kettling,  
Police lines,  
European boundaries announce themselves  
with force  
and within ornate gilt frames,  
These lines atomise bodies into private property,  
govern through division

Stamp boundary pegs, iron stakes, flags, crosses, picket fences

Into the land

Who is also our ancestor,

Who is also us

\*

In Te Ao Māori, lines serve as genealogical way points

Meshing together intensive spaces,

through such things as waiata, whaikōrero, mahi toi,

whakapapa,

Boundaries serve as guides and markers

enhancing the connectivity between

living and ancestral bodies between

Papatūānuku and Ranginui

Hawaiki and Aotearoa

Between Whenua and Tangata Whenua

Ko au te whenua, te whenua ko au

\*

Some will prick themselves with a needle and bleed for their lacework,

for frontier uniforms that must bind together

the contradictions of

New Zealand

Some will wear uniforms of nostalgia that

evoke the legacies of governors, seafarers, pastoralists

The machinations of history need to sew this nostalgia

This locally made fan fiction

of pioneer - come - entrepreneur

Fixing freshly washed

silks, slips, corsets

onto the colonial washing line of time

Here whiteness becomes a

refuge, a place without a story

An undisturbed reverie

\*

This settler dreaming though,

cannot compare to the deep haehae of cultural memory

Travelling through bodies and held collectively,

like lava caves running beneath the

villas and parks of urban Auckland

These are the pre settler memories

of Rangitoto erupting,

of a raging dawn full of glowing heat, of

Rūaumoko spitting ash and lava

into blood-red skies

\*

Lava that cools suddenly becomes matā,

During tangihanga some would lacerate their bodies

with shards of this glossy black volcanic stone,

to avenge the death of a loved one

Some would rub ash into the

wounds

Grief welling up,

from the skin, and then marked

wordlessly,

our past

rises up to meet us

\*

My Tūpuna Wahine named her newborn Miringa Mamae

Miringa Mamae

My Kuias name reminds that mamae travels through ancestral lines,

through bodies,

and so it must be healed there too,

Within this intricate space of the ancestral and the living

There is encoded a collective responsibility as well as a refusal,

A refusal to forget

A refusal to hold mamae alone

A refusal to be privatised

## About the artists:

**Hana Pera Aoake** (*Ngāti Hinerangi, Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Raukawa, Pākehā*) is an artist and writer based in Lisbon, Portugal. Hana is a mozzie bogan with a heart of gold, currently trying to be a skuxx in the land of João, while eating tremoços and watching old Portuguese men drink Sagres and try and fight each other playing chess. Hana wants hot girl summer to last forever

**Hinemoana Baker** is a poet, performer and sound enthusiast living and working in Berlin. Hinemoana moved initially to Berlin as Creative New Zealand's Berlin Writer in Residence 2016. She has travelled and performed extensively in the last 20 years, published three poetry collections, edited several more and produced five albums of her original music and poetry. Her stage shows pivot around sonic art, collaged language, lyric poetry and family storytelling. Her early work draws most obviously on her parents' Māori and Pākehā ancestries, but also on her sexuality, her takataapuitanga, which she defines as 'indigenous queerness'. Nowadays she writes and performs in English, Māori and German, pushing the concept of translation into new shapes.

*Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, ēngari he toa takimano*

**Cassandra Barnett** (*Raukawa ki Wharepūhanga, Ngāti Pākehā*) lives in Ngaio, Te Whanganui-a-Tara. She is a solo Mum, writer and recovering academic (art theory and criticism). She writes fiction, essays and poetry about art, culture, belonging, indigeneity, environment, power, voice and motherhood in the colonial contact zone that is Aotearoa. Her work is in Landfall, Turbine Kapohau, Brief, Ora Nui, Black Marks on the White Page, many arts publications, and has been recorded for broadcast by RNZ. Cassandra has a PhD about contemporary art in Aotearoa, and an MA in Creative Writing from the IIML at Victoria University. This year she is writer in residence at Zealandia, guest editor of Whitireia's creative writing journal 4th Floor and a finalist in the Pikihuia Māori Literature Awards. In her spare time she creates handmade single-print books with the Whakaruruhau collective.

**Tyson Campbell** (*Te Rarawa/ Ngāti Maniapoto*) is a Narrm/Melbourne based multi-disciplinary artist whose work is engaged with the relationships between the Indigenous and the settler-state imaginaries. Tyson is currently researching non-performativity as a way of de-railing and de-legitimising control, discipline and punishment within contractractual agreements of social and financial outcomes of contemporary Indigenous culture production. Using robust and alarming materials; antagonism and earnestness collapse into each other in generative and un-expecting ways—putting into question to how we can see and feel queer, or takatāpuhi futures of organisation.

**Jacqueline Carter (Jacq/Jacqs/Whaea Jacqs/Jackie)** had a watershed moment when asked to check her iwi affiliations as a contributor to this pukapuka and pretty much decided that from now on she's going to be identifying herself by her hapū in the first instance, like our pre-European tūpuna and many of her living kaumātua and whānau, and through her hapū her affiliated iwi. She has just been teaching a few classes in a secondary school about pre-European systems of government in Aotearoa and the hapū as the main social grouping etc. and that other things (such as a claim being brought by some of her kaumātua to the Waitangi Tribunal about this kaupapa) has reinforced for her that we need to keep resisting the ways in which successive governments have forced us to deal as iwi. She's thrilled to have been asked to contribute to this pukapuka as was approached by SOUL in 2015 to use "Our tūpuna remain" on their website and immediately wrote "For Ihumātao" as well. The latter was an effort to highlight the thinking and attitude of Auckland Council in particular, although it well applies to Fletcher Building and successive governments also, most notably of course now Jacinda's Labour (and NZ First coalition) Government. One of the best days in her life was when one of the SOUL members had "To Ihumātao" printed on a sign with Auckland Council's logo on it and installed it on a post on the whenua at Ōtuataua. Needless to say it didn't last long, or at least Auckland Council's lovely logo didn't (they let the poem stay but got rid of their logo) but to her that was poetry reaching its fullest potential – out of the book/off the page and on to the whenua - i riro whenua atu, me hoki whenua mai nēhā!

**Anahera Gildea** (*Ngāti Tukorehe*) is a poet, short story writer, teacher, and essayist. Her work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies and her first book 'Poroporoaki to the Lord My God: Weaving the Via Dolorosa' was published by Seraph Press in 2016. She has a Masters of Creative Writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters, as well as Graduate Diplomas in Psychology and Teaching, and is currently undertaking doctoral research at Victoria University of Wellington, developing critical literary theory based on Māori intellectual traditions. She lives in Te Whanganui-a-Tara with her partner and son.

**K-t Harrison** is from *Ngāti Pāoa, Ngāti Hauā and Ngāti Mahuta*.

**Rangimarie Jolley** is a writer, poet and storyteller based in Porirua, Wellington. She is also a member of the Hine Pae Kura (previously, Toi Wāhine) Māori female artist collectives. In 2015 she published a collection of short stories for children and has been involved in numerous workshops and poetry readings. Her poetry has been included in exhibitions in Porirua, Wellington, Auckland, Tāneatua, Melbourne and New York. A piece of her poetry is also on permanent display at the Wellington Museum. In 2019,

she co-created the IHO exhibition, alongside Sian Montgomery-Neutze. Sophie's work focuses on exploring the perspectives of Māori Women and the development of her mātauranga Māori.

**Maioha Kara** Born and raised in Rotorua, Maioha is currently based and studying an MFA at Massey University, Wellington. Her practice is based in Te Ao Māori, focusing on patterns and motifs within our raranga and tukutuku as well as the knowledges of Te Maramataka and Māori astrology and cosmology.

**Johanna Knox** (*Ngāti Tukorehe, Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga, Ngāti Ranginui*) is completing her Heke Rongoā at Te Wānanga o Raukawa. She would like to mihi to all the powerful, hard-working, determined people who have cleared the paths and laid the trails that she and others are following today to reconnect to their whenua, their iwi, their hapū, and their marae. She would like to mihi also to all those who continue this work, clearing ever more paths, and guiding so many of us along the existing ones.

**Rāhiri Mākuini Edwards-Hammond** resides at Ihumātao at the time of publication and plans to stay there for the foreseeable future.

**Anna McCallister** (*Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Ngāti Porou*) is a 23 year old mana wahine Māori intersectional feminist, currently studying towards her Masters of Fine Arts at Massey University Wellington. Growing up as a self proclaimed white-passing diasporic Māori. Anna has had the pleasure of occupying both pākehā and Māori spaces whilst simultaneously never completely fitting in either. Anna is a poet, performance and installation artist and activist whose work occupies a complex space within Te Ao Māori; interweaving responsibilities to tikanga Māori, mana wāhine, with contemporary ideas of sexuality and modern cultural identities.

**Donna McLeod** (*Te Āti Awa*) lives on papakainga in Motueka but is at Ihumātao on the day of the publication of her poem in The Spinoff. She is a writer and performer of Te Ora Haa and a member of Te Ohu Whakaari. She is published in Headlands: New Stories of Anxiety (VUP, 2018) and Eastbourne: An Anthology (Mākarō Press, 2013).

**Kōtuku Titihuia Nuttall** is a multimedia takatāpui artist based in Kirikiriroa via Kāpiti and the SÁ,UTW (Tsawout) First Nation. She has a BA in Classics and History, but is currently creating handpoked tattoos. She connects with her culture and history by engaging with the natural world and marking the body.

**Sinead Overbye** (*Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Porou, Te Āti Awa*) is a Wellington based writer and research assistant. She completed an MA in fiction at the IIML in 2018, and is an NZSA mentorship recipient for 2019. Her work can be found in Starling, Turbine, Oscan and other places.

**Tru Paraha** is a writer, performer, and choreographer. Her work engages visual art, experimental dance, music, film, and live art contexts. Selected poems appear in Poetry New Zealand, Tātai Whetū: Seven Māori Women Poets in Translation, Blackmail Press, and Best New Zealand Poems 2017. Tru is the curator of The glØaming, which will be presented in association with Tempo Dance Festival NZ in October.

**Michelle Rahurahu Scott** and **Lyssa Rogers-Rahurahu** are cousins, but more like soul-sisters, best friends, as inextricable as te pō and te rā. Michelle is a fiction writer and essayist, heralding from Te Moana-a-Toi and will likely return to the earth again at the foot of Mount Ngongotahā. She is a proud CODA, fluent in New Zealand Sign Language, and was raised by tangata turi. Lyssa Rogers-Rahurahu is a mouthy takatāpui artist and single mum to Violet. She is an advocate of Māoritanga, mental health, mana wāhine and decolonisation.

**essa may ranapiri** (they/them/theirs) if they die before the end of the settler colonial nation state of NZ you owe them a revolution [their first book of poetry ransack is out now from VUP]

**Serena Ngaio Simmons** is a takatāpui writer and performer with a degree in English from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. Digging into such themes as diaspora, identity conflict, and home in her writing, her work has been featured in Storyboard, Hawaii Review, Blackmail Press, Tayo Literary Magazine, and Ora Nui. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Indigenous Politics at the UH Mānoa. She misses home every day.

**Carin Smeaton** lives in Tāmaki Makaurau with her teenage twins, Kazma and Yuga. She's working in community libraries across the isthmus.

**Stacey Teague** (*Ngāti Maniapoto*) is a Wellington-based poet currently completing her Masters in Creative Writing at the International Institute of Modern Letters.

**Ruby Mae Hinepunui Solly** is a *Kai Tahu* writer, musician, and music therapist. She has been published in journals such as Landfall, Starling, Brief, and Minarets amongst others. She currently works with people from many different communities using taonga pūoro as a rongoa within music therapy.

Ruby has just had her first short film produced by Someday Stories which aims to help pass on indigenous knowledge around awa atua through narrative. She currently resides in Pōneke where she lives on the old riwai plantation of her tipuna before they continued to Te Wai Pounamu.

**Alice Te Punga Somerville** writes, teaches and researches at the intersections of literary, Indigenous and Pacific studies. Based at the Faculty of Māori & Indigenous Studies at the University of Waikato, her first book was *Once Were Pacific: Māori connections to Oceania* (2012).

**Tayi Tibble** is the author of *Pōukahangatus*, which won the prize for best first book of poetry at this year's Ockham New Zealand national book awards. She works at Victoria University Press and is guest editor of the literary magazine Sport.

**George Watson** Born in Te Tairāwhiti, George Watson graduated with a Masters in Fine Arts from Elam school of Fine Arts in 2016 and is currently undertaking the Independent Study Programme at Maumaus in Lisbon, Portugal.

This collection was brought together by Hana Pera Aoake, Sinead Overbye, essa may ranapiri, and Michelle Rahurahu Scott. We want to mihi to all of the poets who were so willing to contribute their words. Your generosity has been astonishing. We would also like to thank Maioha Kara for providing our cover art. Thank you to our tūpuna and our whānau. Your blood runs hot in our veins. And a huge acknowledgement to the people of SOUL and Ihumātao. This book is for you.