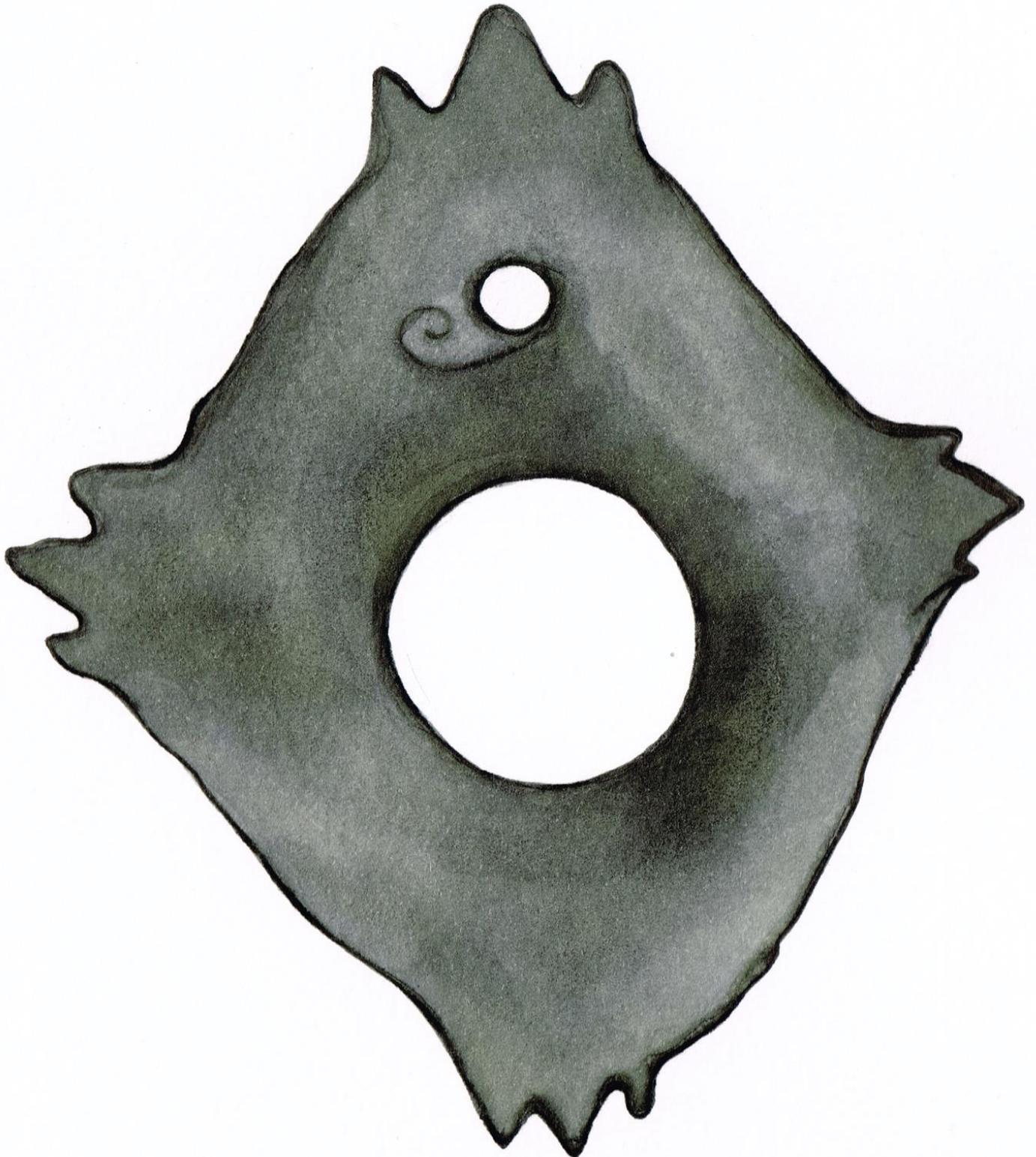


saltwater love



contemporary Indigenous writing from the heart

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E iti moa ana, nā te aroha.

WHORLS / IONA WINTER

I listen to manu warm up their throats / as if the sound is foreign / tentative notes tested out at low volume / until light begins to eek through curtains / their chatter increases / mothers call children and kairoro awake / I think of you / and stare at whorls in the wood panelling and how they match your disposition / all broody waves and swirling currents / like seaweed that will pull me down if I'm not paying attention / it throws me off balance / that look of yours / an unexpected full moon in daylight showing herself on the horizon / or dark country skies with whetū smattered above / like a benediction

TOIKUPU AROHA 1 / IONA WINTER

I waited all night for you to come home
to plant kihikihi into your cupped palms

now as you sleep I glide my fingers
memorising the tracks that led me here

to this chest - arms - manawa
with such vastness and proximity

I lean down taking in the entirety
of your pulse and there my hā quickens

above lifelines grooved
with spacious and honest certainty.

PŌWHIRI / MAGGIE LEIGH WHITE

Waking with the light
and the chanting of the trees,
feeling washed open like the sky
after the rain
clears,
the old path damp underfoot — *ko wai au?* —
breathing with bowed heads shuffled steps, onward as one, advancing
this moment is sacred
hearing the call
the voices on the air —
ko wai koe? Haere mai, haere mai, haere mai ra — the beckoning
of the *whenua*
the hum of the *tīpuna* from the throats
of the *kuia* stirring
oceans under my skin —
Te Wairoa Hōpūpū Hōnengenenge Matangi Rau my river running
from my eyes
Whakapūnake, my *maunga* steadfast in my bones —
calling me back to this house
of stories
woven on the walls
this house
of unsleeping eyes
that see me in all my layers, my ancient fullness
my *whakapapa*

Ko wai au?

Ko au ngā mea katoa e arahi ana ki ahau

I am everything that has led to me.

Ko au te maunga, ko au te awa

I am the mountain, I am the river.

Ko oku matua, i roto i ahau

My ancestors breathe through me

me ka whakarongo ahau ki ta ratau karanga i te rangi

and I listen to their call on the air

RONGOĀ / MAGGIE LEIGH WHITE

Trust, *e kare*
the healing is in your blood

go to the land, to
ngā rau
ngā kobuke
ngā take,
ground your feet and hands
build your quiet altars
of forests and clay
breathe your grandmother's *kamakama* smoke smudge
in circles following the sun

go to the bathing pools
of your ancients
let them remind you how to float whilst singing,
let the rivers lick your wounds wash
your *mamae* your fear of being
not enough not
dark enough

go to the shores
at the peak of the storm
wail your anger to the salt tides
let them pull your breath away, then back again
draw lines in the sand
write hymns with the point of a stick
and let them be washed away
under your feet,
then gather rocks and broken shells
to fill your pockets — always, you carry land and sea with you

come home, *e kare*, come home
to yourself
to your *ahi*, flickering since before the stars

led your *tipuna* here

e kare, there is still a long way to go:
this journey
never ends
only constantly begins

MY FIRST TIME HERE / RHEGAN TU'AKOI

i remember what i thought this would feel like

unfamiliar air licking at bone and flesh until the red dissolved in the wind or
my great grandfather appearing as the customs officer to stamp *denied* on my passport or
my village hidden, golden & glowing, in a dark cave behind a huge rock –
while i shivered outside and googled how to say *open sesame* in tongan

but this isn't what it feels like

my hands don't sink to the ocean floor instead they float
and the faikakai is sweeter & drips down my chin
and people uma my cheek like this isn't my first time here
and coconut trees lean towards me to whisper the stories they've seen

my heart bubbles and
the papaya grown on my family land bursts in my mouth

PATUPAIAREHE / BRIAR POMONA

Hei whakatūpatotanga he tika, he pono katoa tēnei kōrero. I taka mai i tōku tīpuna koroua rāua tahi ko tōku māma.

I te ao Māori, tērā tētahi iwi tipua ehara i te tangata noa engari he tipua. Ka noho rātou ki ngā ngahere me ngā maunga whakahī o tēnei whenua.

Pēnei me he Pākehā te āhua, he mā tōna kiri, he kōrakorako mai i tōna mahunga ki ōna rekereke. Ko ētahi he makawe whero, ko ētahi atu he makawe kōtea. Otirā he patupaiarehe rātou. I ngā wā o mua, i te taenga mai o te Pākehā, ka whakangaio atu rātou ki te iwi Māori. Hei tā rātou, kāore e tūturu ana ngā patupaiarehe i roto i tēnei ao. Tau ana nā whai anō ka warea rātou e te ao.

Ka haere te wā, ka haere te wā, ka hipa ngā tau. Ka tae mai te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, waru tekau. Ka noho tētahi kōtiro ki te tāone o ngā tāone, ki Ruatoria. Tekau mā rua ōna tau. Ia te ata ka oho ake ia, whakarite ai ia mō te rangi, parakuihi ai ka haere ia i tōna haere. Haere ai ia ki te mahi i te taha o tōna pāpā. Ka hīkoi rāua ki te mahi mā te ngahere i te mea he poto ake taua huarahi i te ara matua kei te rori. Nō te teitei o ngā rākau ka hunaia te rā. I te nuinga o te wā ka rongō ia i ētahi rongō me te mea nei he taniwha e amuamu ana, he tamariki kēhua e katakata ana rānei. Heoi kāore ia i te matakū nō te mea kei tōna taha tōna pāpā. Ka haere rāua ki te hēte o ngā kaikatikati ki Ruatoria. Kua roa kē ia e mahi ana mai i te rima karaka i te ata ki te rima karaka i te ahiahi.

Heoi i tētahi rangi, muri tata iho i te rima karaka i te ahiahi, ka oti tāna mahi, heoi kāore anō tāna pāpā kia mutu i tāna mahi.

Ka whakatau ia ki te hoki ki tāna kāinga ko ia anake. Ka tīmata ia ki te hoki ki te kāinga. He whero tāna mata mai i tāna puku mahi i tēnei rangi, kua pau hoki te hau i te hīkoitanga ki te kāinga. I mua i taua wā, kāore rawa ia i hoki ki te kāinga ko ia anake. I ngā rā i mua, i haere ia me tāna pāpā. Engari i tēnei rangi he tino wera ia, kāore ia i whakaaro ki taua āhutatanga. I mua i tāna whakaarotanga, kua ngaro ia, kua kotiti tāna huarahi. Kua ngaro ia i roto i te ngahere nui. AUE!

Ka tiro tiro haere ia mō tētahi tangata, tētahi kaikatikati rānei i roto i te ngahere, auare ake.

Ka maurirere haere ia nā te mea kua tata tō te rā. Mea rawa ake ka rongō ia i tētahi tangata.

Ka tahuri ia ki te nōta, e korekore ana

Ka tahuri ia ki te tapātiu, e korekore ana

Ka tahuri ia ki te taitonga, e korekore ana

I taua wā, ka rongō ia i tētahi mea anō.

Kātahi anō ka tahuri ia ki te īta, ā, ka kitea e ia ngā patupaiarehe.

He kiritea, he tūrehu, he makawe whero hoki ka wani kē, he ātaahua. Ka kai ōna mata i a rātou te reka hoki. Ka kata rātou ki a ia, ka kanikani rātou ki runga i ngā rakau.

Kāore ōna waewae e neke ana, ka ātahungua ia me he whakapakoko ia.

Kua tuwhera tāna waha me he ana nui, ka heke tāna hūware me he waihirere.

Ka haere te wā, ā, ka hoihoi ake rātou.

He uaua te whakahaere, te neke rānei i tōna tinana. E mohio ana ia ka kāwhakina e ngā patupaiarehe ngā tamariki, ā, kāore tōku māmā i te hiahia kia kawhakina ia. I taua wā tonu ka rongoi ia i te reo o tōna pāpā e karanga ana ki a ia. Ka tere tonu a ia ki tāna taha. Ka huna ngā patupaiarehe i roto i te ngahere ngaro atu ki te pō. I muri i tēnā wheako, kāore ia i hoki ki tāna kāinga ko ia anake. Koinei tōna hokinga mahara mō ngā patupaiarehe nanakia.

TAMA / KIRSTY DUNN

From my own bed

I watch my son in his,

beside me,

sleeping.

His face

a pale pearl – a moon –

against the dark.

Each of his breaths

is a wave

pulling me in and

sending me out.

I am floating

waiting

asking

for the tide

to pull me in

please,

please

wash me up on shore

completely.

PORT HUTT / KIRSTY DUNN

I take my Aunty to see the shipwrecks at Port Hutt.

When we close the truck doors,

small birds fly from the lichen-bordered roof of a faded yellow caravan
propped up on blocks beside the beach.

It is quiet after the rhythmic pop and slide of gravel on the coastal road.

There are three of them, I say, and she looks out as I do.

One lies alongside the wounded jetty, it's flaking pale blue paint betrays the rot;
another, glowing with rust, leans out towards the open ocean;
the third – still white, the newest – adorns the shore across the bay.

We watch the manu come and go from all of them as they please.

I say the things I save to tell her only – try to explain the way it feels to look at them.

The discomfort and the awe of seeing something we aren't supposed to see.

The thrill and the dread of it. Bones without a burial.

The detritus; the sediment; the fragments left behind.

She gently sifts the kupu, offers some of them back to me as I knew she would.

Look, hon. She says and so I do.

She is turning a piece of pāua shell in her fingers;
polished by the sand, it gleams in the afternoon light.

Another bird flies over our heads
and lands on top of the truck.

You could never replicate those colours, she is saying, as I hear more manu flying in,

never really reproduce them in any kind of art form no matter how hard you tried.

She smiles and holds the taonga out for me to take it.

But what I see more clearly than the colours now,

is how much her hands look like

mine.

/ STACEY TEAGUE

SPELL TO REPAIR BROKEN THINGS

absent-mindedly finger the hole in the gusset of your stockings / the same way that you notice yourself tenderly cupping your own breast / it's out of love for yourself /

-

SPELL TO DIVERT LOVE FROM ONE OBJECT TO ANOTHER

red curtains falling over a red couch / you've never written a love letter / but you have gone bodiless into the night / you have bitten the inside of your lover's cheek / so fast that it drew blood / think about everyone you've ever loved / drag them into a folder marked 'indiscretions' /

-

SPELL TO CARVE OUT SPACE

move your body as a wave / in the tsunami-safe zone / that is one way to be seen / you know there's a world beneath this one / you've been harbouring too many fantasies / you know can become real / give up early in the day / to go about your window-watching / on the screen the two women hold each other / pay close attention to where they place their hands / think about things that are not on fire

-

SPELL TO ENTER A HOUSE SAFELY

kiss their river mouth / it is like a doorway / listen for the click / of the close /

THIS MODERN LOVE. / TERINA KAIRE

It is in the dim early hours of the morning that I love him most. When the sun hangs low in the sky and all one can see is an array of pastel blues, purples and pinks. When the only sounds are the faint murmur of birds, the soft breeze that dances with trees and the distant growl of car engines from a road far away from here.

From us. From the warmth of the bed. From the sleepy haze that has captured us, keeps us both in a dream-like state. A state that is quickly deflated by familiar beeps and sounds of notifications coming from devices that should not be kept near us at all times and should not be kept with us in bed. We know better, of course, we know better.

And yet, another opportunity to sleep this morning away is ruined by a careless decision made in the past. I am awakened by the unnatural sounds that have punctured the calm that had previously filled this morning. The familiar glow of blue light interrupts the last few seconds of sleep that I had tried desperately to cling onto. Reality calls and her call, her interruption, is bright and it is repetitive and it is loud. And although I answer reality's interruption with a dizzying array of curses muttered under my breath in my early morning ritual with her, it is him, my love, that brings me out of an annoyance that could spoil an entire day before it begins.

It is him, my love, that brings a smile to my lips. In the solitude of this space, he manages to extinguish the quiet flame that awakens at the sign of mild frustration. In the peace of this bedroom, it is him, my love, that settles my angered and confused mind. And it is here, in the dim early hours of the morning that I realise that this, this is the reason I love him most.

It is in the bright hours of the afternoon that I love him most. When the sun hangs high and a mixture of light and dark grey clouds stain a pale blue sky. When the rest of the world is alive and the sounds of cars, of people, of animals and of everything in between competes for dominance in my mind and threatens to drown him out. My focus should be here.

Here with him. Here with us. Here in the moments that exist when the responsibilities of everyday life grow and twist and contort into something disastrous. These tender moments where the world is both too fast and too slow, too much and too little. Where the chaos of sounds outside turns into a deafening hum and it is his voice the anchors me in these moments. As it does, of course, as it always does.

And yet, I never grow tired of the way that his voice sounds. The tumultuous sound of the outside world threatens to interrupt our private conversations filled with sweet nothings and utter nonsense, it is him that I return to. Despite being easily stressed in these moments by

colourful advertisements and questionable statuses projected from a blue-lit screen, it is him that I return to. It is his voice that soothes my anxious mind and drowns out the distractions of reality, the coldness of reality. And although I have heard him say my name a hundred times before, the novelty of hearing my name leave his lips never grows old.

It is him, my love, that calms the worries of my anxious mind. In this urban space, he manages to subdue the frantic worry that dances in my mind at the first moment of confusion. In the chaos of this city, it is him, my love, that settles my troubled and apprehensive mind. And it is here, in the brightly lit hours of the afternoon that I realise that this, this is the reason I love him most.

It is in the quiet late evening hours that I love him most. When the moon hangs heavy and light comes from the glitter of stars that decorate a dark indigo night sky. When the faint hum that comes from our appliances and other technological devices mix with the distant sounds of laughter and music from a party far away from here.

Here. Here in this room where the world happens outside our doors and away from us. From the peace and the solitude that we have built for us, despite it all, in spite of it all. It is here that we settle into an all too familiar routine where our conversations follow the same patterns that they always have. Because they always do, of course, they do.

And yet, I do not grow tired of the familiar routine that we have created for ourselves, these moments that exist just for us. These moments can only exist in the evenings as our daily lives and the responsibilities of the everyday render our love secondary. It is only when the day melts into the nights and the chaotic afternoons slip into the muted evenings that we found ourselves in these moments, cemented in our own reality, together again. We are united by the marvels of technology, connected through the internet, his face displayed in all its pixelated beauty on my smartphone screen. And although the glow of a phone screen is hardly a substitute for his physical presence, it is still him, my love.

It is him, my love, that has shown me what a lover should be. In a world away from mine, he commands the attention of my once wandering heart, a heart, that danced with creatures who disguised themselves as suitable lovers. In the peace of his own bedroom, an ocean away from mine, it is him, that opened my confused and anxious mind to the possibility of love. To the world of love. To the idea of his love, to the idea of him, the man that I call my love.

And it is here, in the quiet late evening hours, in the brightly lit hours of the afternoon and the early hours of the morning that I realise these, these are the reasons that I love him most.

HE PAPAKUPU O AROHA / VAUGHAN RAPATAHANA

kāore he kupu ki tēnei reo

kia whakaahua koe.

e tarai ana ahau

kia kite ētahi tūāhua.

kāore rawa.

mirumiru? he rite tangi ki te waireka.

mamahi? he rite pūhonga ki te kupu-ā-kaupapa ki te kura.

ataahua? pono, engari he kīwaha tonu.

ko 'he tangata pai'

i tua atu o te whakarehurehu.

pai ki te tango

kia kōpaki koe i roto i te tā.

ko koe noa atu i tua atu

he toikupu;

tētahi ture tātai i te katoa.

kāore e taea e ngā arapū ki te hopu te aroha.

A LEXICON OF LOVE / VAUGHAN RAPATAHANA

there are no words in this language
to describe you.

I attempt
to discover some adjectives.

there are none.

bubbly? sounds like a soft drink.
diligent? reeks like school jargon.
beautiful? true, but so clichéd.
while 'a good person'
is beyond amorphous.

better to forgo
encapsulating you in print.

you exist well beyond
poetry;
any formula at all.

alphabets cannot spell love.

FAREWELL DEAR BANOO / AREEZ KATKI

Perhaps this isn't the place or time to be smoking a cigarette and writing like this. I feel these uncanny sensations realised; having only begun to address the likes of these a year ago. For my immediate family, to identify as Zoroastrians was seldom a public affair. We still are, for the most part, these invisible refugees from the Greater Khorasan province of Persia; descendants of the Sassanids; of the Achaemenids; still contributing to our adoptive nations but also retreating now, regardless of where our pathetic numbers have assembled & procreated. Last year I made a spectacle of us: examining, celebrating and contemporarily admonishing the unsavoury characteristics of ethno-religious (*pseudo*-religious) matter.¹ Perhaps the subject was too emphatic for India & too esoteric for New Zealand. The procedures were instinctive, so none of it felt clean or easy to execute; I was not simply historicising or simply criticising but doing both simultaneously, through text and textile. However tempting it may be to revisit those appraisals, perhaps today I should just sit on this damp park bench – and scribble some words about the funerary rites I just participated in this morning – for my Great Aunt Banoo, who passed away yesterday.

It is 7:45 in the morning and I have been awake for over three hours. I was delirious and sore from embroidering yet another panel and barely able to sleep. In a daze, I rose at 5am and made my way up Malabar Hill by 6. Ascending this most treasured piece of land on our chaotic peninsula. A lush mount reserved as a sanctuary for the Zoroastrian Parsi community, whom many say built this city. (Regardless of contempt or admiration for the means by which they did it, they did it.) Encountering highly restricted access once I arrived: no non-Zoroastrians, cellphones or photography are allowed here, on account of the sacred rites performed around these grounds. The original Towers of Silence were adobe and stone *Dabkeme* (a few of which I visited around the desert surrounding Yazd last year). They date back to the 5th Century BC. A site for the practice of sky burials: where birds of prey are summoned to tear apart and consume the flesh of the deceased until only our bones may remain to calcify the soil. The spiritual act of feeding our planet's living creatures with our useless, lifeless bodies might sound like a barbaric ritual. I always thought so, to be honest – cringing, wincing – each time the subject came up during our childhood Zoroastrian studies classes. However, what I experienced today was anything but barbaric. A series of solemn elegiac rituals strangely attuned to our ecology – devoid of mourning or wailing. These were graceful, accepting gestures and they felt magnanimous in the face of tragic loss.

¹ See Olcott (1975), especially where he addresses 'tamashas' (ceremonial enactments) performed by 20th C. Parsi elders. According to Olcott they are purely driven by economic and socio-political affinities; devoid of religious or historic evidence.

By 6:15am I raced up to an isolated cluster of bungalows halfway up the mount where *Paydas*² rites are prayed over the body of every deceased Parsi who has been admitted to the Towers. Today's bulletin of deceased community members was a short list of five: Banoo was in Bungalow no. 4. So off I went to look for the correct building; each architecturally spartan in a Georgian-revival style that resounded with the villas I saw in Udwada, along the coast of Gujarat – from my childhood summers and then more recently with my Uncle Polly and Reza last winter. At last I found Bungalow no. 4 and walked in as discreetly as one could. Late. But dressed in crème & white; light tones as advised by my mother, with my grandfather's faded black velvet *Topi*³ covering my crown. Awkwardly realising that I did not recognise a single person there – these were members from an extended family on my mother's paternal side; the one we seldom engaged with. Not for any particular reason, mind you – the branches of some families are simply too dense and over time, grew distant. Perching on a stool at the very back, I felt a hand on my shoulder. As my head turned, a kind faced lady appeared to whisper in my ear, "Areez – Is that you? My how you've grown. Come. I'm Firdaus' wife Nazneen. Sit with us please – and thank you for coming." Firdaus was my mother's cousin, whom I had last met at my *Nanjote*⁴ when I was 7. He wore a warning, curious expression that was dulled by an almost invisible veil of sorrow. When I looked closer at his hands, I noticed a slight tremor. While fragments of my attention took fascination with the funerary prayers and their small idiosyncrasies – for example, having a dog led in to inspect the dead body – a creature designated to detect whether the soul had crossed over our underworld's *Chinvat Bridge*⁵ or if she still dwelled among us (no barking meant it was a successful crossover, hurrah!). Another part of me continued to study my uncle – his face but also his hands shaking and gripping the pale grey textile of his trousers around the knee. I wanted to say or do something; feeling compelled, as I often have lately, to tenderly address how masculinity needn't impose restraints around feeling or expressing emotional distress. But I didn't. Because in that moment I too felt victim of a phenomenally overpowering emotion: Shame. Shameful distress. *Hold it in – be a man* – just like dad must have at his own mother's funeral. My mother confirmed this at the time, by the way, as I wasn't allowed to attend – being only 6 at the time my paternal grandmother passed away.

The priests were dressed in sheer white muslin robes that cascaded over wide-legged trousers

² Prayers recited on the first day following the death of a Zoroastrian: includes a ceremonial gathering around the body, as three priests and a canine inspection sanctify its departure from earth. The earliest records of *Paydas* rites employ portions from the *Yasna* scriptures, in Young Avestan (1st millennia BC) and the *Vendidad* in later Pahlavi.

³ Shallow velvet prayer cap worn by Zoroastrian men. The author and several members from his family occasionally employ its use while one's hair is wet after bathing.

⁴ A Zoroastrian initiation ceremony that inducts children into their clan. On this occasion the child is introduced to spiritual responsibility and physical accouterments, the *Sudreh & Kushti* garments, which mark their procession toward adulthood – thus an agency for autonomous moral judgment.

⁵ From chapter 71 of the *Yasna* liturgy: The *Chinvat Bridge* is a Zoroastrian construct that demonstrates the dualities of judgment after death. Described as a curvilinear passage through to the spirit realm. Perceived by each individual soul as either narrow and treacherous, or wide and pleasant – depending on virtues weighed during the crossing.

cuffed above the ankles. With the very familiar *Padan* veil I had to wear over my face during my own initiation as a priest, aged 10. I felt indifferent to these sensations – their spirituality was not *my* spirituality – if I even had any in me. Three of them systematically tied a series of knots using the strips of white cloth fastened to a rectangular wooden litter that contained Banoo’s corpse. She was so tiny; I could barely see her in there. They then sheathed her with two layers of white cotton cloth; ready to embark upon one last stroll through the *Gardens of Silence* before her body would be taken up to the Towers; made fodder in this physical plain where she too, once took breath, ate, drank and dwelled. As they recited some final passages from the *Paydast* scriptures in Pahlavi (*Vendidad* XVI and XVII – I believe), our three pallbearer-priests lifted the litter above their shoulders. We stood up also, following the body as it exited the bungalow. Nazneen and Firdaus introduced me to their son Shiroy – my second cousin it would appear, who studied spatial design in London. We barely exchanged words, as this was still part of the ritual: in pairs, we were instructed to hold each end of a pale ivory handkerchief between us, forming *Paivand*.⁶ Only a cluster of eight or ten pairs participated – close friends and family, in one final procession behind the body. I had no idea what was expected of me, so I simply followed and observed with the kind of gratitude and curiosity one feels upon the occasion of inclusion from these strangers – most of whom I happen to be related to. That curiosity transfigured into delight; a solemn grace through unified participation, as we walked almost two kilometres up that hill in complete silence. Amid a fecund, sumptuous growth of plant life – butterflies flickering in the morning light; flowers willingly opened; dew dripping off lush, crimson hibiscus blossoms and papery pink bougainvillea. Several peacocks awoke by then – tenderly dancing, observing; erect with their plumes cascading over brick & plaster Ionic follies that my ancestors built. The occasional coo from a pheasant – a scampering flurry of squirrels – earthly creatures of all kind witnessed our quiet procession up that hill. That hour has transfixed and enchanted my memory; perhaps aided by some new associations around death? Partaking but also witnessing as our family moved forth, pair after pair, in silent acceptance. *Farewell to a beloved matriarch* – all linked by a simple square of cloth. Pale handkerchiefs trembled, swayed – some stretched between our hands at a bias angle, some held taut at a right angle – fluently maintained their symbolic significance; some evocative link between the tangibly material and physically ephemeral bodies and words that tether us to the earth.

⁶ A binding spiritual gesture, *Paivand* involves two persons holding a small piece of cloth between them; intended to show that they are physically associated and united in an act of cooperation, or of mutual sympathy.

M. / HANA PERA AOAKE

I want to wrap myself up in your skin not like your a korowai but like we have always been entwined together and we have flattened our bodies together like Papa and Rangi becoming inseparable always unless Hine-nui-te-pō pulls one us to the underworld or we have some ungrateful brats but our tamariki will be cheeky, but beautiful. Our love is like breathing or like Tane doing hongī into Hinetiitama and bringing her to life, except they are both wearing surgical masks and gloves and smiling through a screen and longing for taste and smell and touch. *Wassup baby free Palestine*. Rona romance ahahaha well honey we have lots of support and you send me flowers *twice* in the absence of your body and I want to squeeze the roses as though they are your hands but instead I'm too overwhelmed by feelings of love that I watch the 6pm news to sober me up and then hate myself when I imagine Hilary Barry as a coked up sloppy cowboy and everywhere we go Pīwakawaka fly around us as if they are giggling or threatening to take you away from me, but you say Hine nui te pō ain't coming for you, you tell me it's a good tohu and I hold you hand so tightly I imagine my fingers become your fingers and I cook for you because it's the main way I show care, but also I'm a bit of a show off and we are both Matariki babies, except we are born a day apart and so I am older, but sometimes you are the one who is wiser and I run my fingers across the edges of the obsidian stone you gave me and listen again to the karakias you have sent me through voice messages and how you are so apart of me I don't know how you were ever not there.

MĀRAMATANGA / CHEYJUANA

In a moment,

I was stargazing in night sky eyes
Seeking the stellar remnants
Of the heavens
You once called Home.

And in a moment,

I understood
The legends were wrong.

Rangi

And
Papa

Locked in a final embrace,

Did not weep over a goodbye.
They wept
Because all they had ever known
Was darkness

And now,

They could gift their children
The Light.

3.

He refuses to call me anything but
My name
That has twisted the tongues of
People so quick
To reduce me to a condensed version of myself
A name more palatable
to their mouths
A person more pliable
To their world

They have taken so much, he said,
This, they cannot have.

4.

He isn't good with
Words
Instead, he calls me beautiful
With kisses
And tells me I taste like forever.
He composes sonnets on my skin
with his fingertips
Recites my name
Like a prayer
Over and over and over
He isn't good with words,
But he speaks of me with such reverence
That now,
I can't help but worship
Myself.

8.

I housed a monster

 In my chest

Claws around a

 Beating heart

Fire eyes ready to burn more than bridges

He saw instead

 A girl,

Making shadows twice her size on the ceiling

 Tricks to frighten intruders

And he was not so easily scared.

- 3, 4, 8 come from *The Top 10 Moments I knew I Loved You*

SPEAR THE SUN / ASHLEIGH TAUPAKI

I climb on your back
We swim to the other side
of a green sheet bed

Hold your fingers to
my throat chin up brown boy
I will cry for you

Share your spit with me
Open my mouth so I can
taste the rising sea

/ MIRIAM GEMMELL

gimme a b o n e

can't tell if you're
Māori are you
M ā o r i -
how will I know
to let you take up
space with nō te
raki ramblings of
lived s o m e
things or to c o n
fisc a t e the
blither blather hei
give v o i c e to
tētahi a t u -
how will I know
to roll my eyes or
be i n f i n i t e l y
patient for tētahi
a n ō struggling
to separ a t e a
c o l o n i s e d
self from deeply
t ū t u r u
one - how will I
know if I like you
as a p e r s o n
or by default -
gimme a b o n e
that a b r a'
m a t a u round
your neck there
or tourist taonga
- how will I know
whether to beat
myself late r for
g r a t i n g your
every word or if
we hono through
the w a o and
o c e a n waves
i h o matua and
Papa t ū ā nuku
who sustains us?

DON'T HURT MY FEELINGS / NGĀHUIA BRITTON BRUCE

Sometimes when I don't want to make a decision I use a Magic 8 Ball. If I don't get the answer I want I try again. It's an online one and it's stupid, but I have to know answers. Should I send that risky text? Well I'm likely going to do it but I'll check and if the Magic 8 Ball says do it then I can blame it's encouragement.

It's the bane of my existence to need all of the information all the time. A rare moment of spontaneity is likely underpinned by some careful out of sight planning.

I was asked to write about love. Having quite recently been, not out of love but mostly just mad and bummed out by another human I found this a complicated request. You see, I took the whole of last year to be alone, completely alone. All was well until a bottle of Fijian coconut water vodka and a really minimal amount of lunch mixed on New Year's Eve. I caught the eye of a stranger, and we shared a New Years kiss. This surprisingly progressed to a modern-day 'no label' relationship. You know the drill, that never ends well.

Mid February, I was seriously lacking in #selflove. My work was getting me down, living at home wasn't a vibe and my travel savings were pitiful. Oh yeah and I was being dragged along in some kind of shitty casual-but-not-really arrangement. Remember mid February? It was really hot and we were kinda worried about Covid-19 but mostly worried about water alert levels and which beach to be at that weekend.

About that shitty no labels thing? What to do? Lockdown rolled around, I felt like I needed support and a few nice messages wouldn't take much energy to send but it was akin to drawing blood from a stone.

Once again, I consulted the Magic 8 Ball, it encouraged me to ask the questions I had skillfully avoided for a couple of months. I sent the message. I asked for what I deserved, which is ya know just a bit of respect. But they couldn't give that and that's their problem really. All I can say is cheers, I have a lot of time for my new hobbies now, and about that #selflove? Going spectacularly thank you.

UNTITLED / ANONYMOUS

What hurts the most
is the careless way
in which he let me down
with any less care
than one ought to let down a baby animal.

My heart is a forest
of Pacific Wild Bleeding Heart.

My father said to me,
“I had an opal ring,
and I couldn’t get over this girl.
My buddy said,
‘You have to get rid of that ring, man.’
I did, and the next day I met your mom.”

I’ve kept a gold locket ring from my high school love for over a decade.
“True love lasts forever,” I thought,
And this is true
where the love is true.

A true love would let you down with love and care,
Realizing how precious
the land in your heart is
How precious to have occupied such space.
Instead, it’s easy for him to displace you.

Being displaced
is not new for our people.
When I love, I love deep.
“My love for you’s not going anywhere,” He said to me.
And I believed those words.

My love is not for displacing.
If my love is not for you,
hold it gently in your palms
Feel the soft warm heartbeat
of a white-breasted cottontail

and lower that baby rabbit to the ground
So she can run free to the forest of Bleeding Hearts.

I plan to toss that gold locket ring to the ocean. I bought myself the most stunning vintage heart-shaped gold locket ring from the Pawn Shop. I had my eye on it fall, winter and spring – it will move with me into summer.

“You deserve real gold anyway.”

The salt water will erode
the nothing-lasts-forever-ness
of that locket. Saltwater love.

My new locket will remind me
that the true love story was always
my ability to love.

True love lasts forever
for it is passed
from my ancestors to me
from me to any life
that is touched in my own lifetime
from my saltwater tears
to the saltwater tear-bath of the ocean.

BEACH / MEG PRASAD

you slid into me amongst
the rocks and salt
I felt like a seal, trapped by choice
I tasted ocean and smelled
waves in your hair
pain blossomed where you
bit down into my thigh
cried out to the moon as though
the wolf in your chest was drawn out
by my tongue
we inched along the sand each time
you drove further into me
felt you in the base of my throat
a knot in the pit of my bare stomach
the drawl on your lips was
breathed across my skin
like stars

MILK / MEG PRASAD

a week after you left
my milk came in.

dripped from my red breasts like tears
it filled no mouths
it ran down my thighs.

my shirt felt wet and warm as
a reminder of the hole in
my body and
my life.

maybe I could thumb it over my wounds
to heal but I know
it will serve no use now

that you've died inside my bones
and I died inside yours.

TAI MATE / RUBY SOLLY

On the waxing and waning moons,
it is dark enough to wash myself under the broken gutter.
It has to be raining hard enough to fill the house with static.
a constant level of white noise,
the kettle boiling
for conversations that come up empty.
When the gutter can take no more
and bursts,
into the black I go.
Slipping off my skins
and standing under.
the water falls.

*There was a book in the school library
about a woman who bathed in moonlight.
She hid a cake of soap in a little pocket
sewed into the hem of her skirts.
She would wait for her moonlight
to come through the barn door,
remove her clothes
and scrub her body in liquid moon.
I wonder if she put her face under it,
mouth open,
for as long as possible
before taking a breath
to get as close as she could
to drowning in Rākau-nui.*

The bath is full tonight.
The world outside is silent.
A pin drops a mile away.
A stone falls in the stream.
This is a cave within a home.
Lights off,
windows closed to wet the air.

If this is a cave
then I am an artist
painting the blackness
with all the places
this water has been.

“Water has memory”;
the tōhunga said.
“of all the people it’s fed,
touched,
listened to.
Speak underwater;
it snaps up your sounds,
makes them small lines
of colour curling
in blue.
Water has memory”
The tōhunga said.
But we already knew,
we already knew.

On warm nights
we sneak out to the stream
to look for kōura.
Not to kill them,
but to watch how they survive.
The water is always flowing here.
Each day filling their sodden homes
with new ripples,
new sediments being pulled free.
And when we shine light on them
they dig up their fear
from under the wet,
cloud themselves in it,
then wait for the dust to settle.

*One holiday my friend told me there was a taniwha in her moana.
When you went down deep enough, you would see its eyes open.
You would know you were going to die.
We took a paddle boat,
and rowed until we were touching the horizon.
Then I dived down,
until it was so black around me
that the eyes showed me colours
I'd never seen before.
I woke up back in the boat.
"No, not for you";
She said.
"Not for you."
But it was too late.*

HE WAI TANGAROA I HAERE AI KI UTA / SANJANA KHUSAL

I offer you waikino
Raging cold and rough
Crashing away from land
So I may send a Waka taua
Overflowing with mortal men

Your sins have not been forgiven
Poaching the ocean
For everything you see
All that you want

But you are ungrateful
Hot air blow in the wind
Like a summer storm
Steam you skin

A hot simmer from surfeit
Corruption slowly brewing

You will all return a sacrifice
Drown dry beings
And I shall turn them
To the unwavering seas
In the Endless abyss

If you refuse
I shall send floods
Tremble those caged on earth
Shake them to the swallowing seas

Under the damp mist ashore
I'll raise a storm of ripples
Send my ocean to flood the earth
Men will be fated to the sea
And die at my feet

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD
ASSEMBLED INTO A PILE THE SHAPE OF GOD AND SET ON FIRE /
ESSA MAY RANAPIRI

u r out there pulling plants up to full height w/ ur revolutionary love
carrots sprouting hair to form their own linear graphs of grass cover w/ ur revolutionary love
turning the soil over to make room for seeds loosen to the strength of growth w/ ur
revolutionary love
assembling the code of reality and pulling it apart w/ ur revolutionary love
to make the mess of creation legible to our rangatahi w/ ur revolutionary love
to sing the chorus of AJJ's 'Mega Guillotine 2020' in harmony w/ ur revolutionary love
running the only good blue line of painter's tape around the edge of the room w/ ur
revolutionary love
to mix sulfuric acid and hydrogen peroxide w/ ur revolutionary love
and build a whole garden out of the bones of the rich w/ ur revolutionary love
witchery in the backyard drawing eyes into the land w/ ur revolutionary love
what spell to cast to make the future dance w/ ur revolutionary love
in such a way that we have something to hold onto w/ ur revolutionary love
finding the best memes and sharing them before we go to sleep w/ ur revolutionary love
the light of the phone and the light of your eyes
a fire to burn all the money in the world and build
something better in its place

EDITOR / KŌTUKU TITIHUIA NUTTALL

(Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, W̄SÁNEĆ, and Snuneymuxw First Nations)

Kōtuku is a takatāpui artist and writer currently completing an MA at the International Institute of Modern Letters. Her work has been published in Landfall, Turbine, Starling, Food Court, and Te Rito o te Harakeke. This is her first zine.

ANONYMOUS

Is Métis living on Lekwungen Territory.

AREEZ KATKI

Areez Katki is a multidisciplinary artist & writer from Aotearoa. Drawing from historic and social research, he addresses the values of craft sensibilities through a research driven contemporary practice. Over the duration of his career Katki has focused on the significance of materiality from the domestic realm through personal processes of fabricating textiles and an ongoing engagement with their narratives. With a background in literary studies and art history, Areez also celebrates how his early childhood was imbibed in the values of craft; over the years Katki developed a practice based on instinctive responses to textile & fibre research. Often juxtaposing the ephemeral synaesthetic responses to his environment with a subjectivity around formal processes of fabrication that were matrilineally inherited.

Katki's comes from a diasporic community of Parsis who fled from Persia and settled in India, following the fall of the Sassanid Empire in the 8th Century AD. The Parsi community is a small, insular sect of Persians who still practice Zoroastrianism, the world's oldest monotheistic faith which dates back to the 4th Century BC. Areez is one of less than 120,000 remaining descendants and was ordained as a Zoroastrian priest at the age of ten. Born in Mumbai, India and having lived around the middle east and Europe through his childhood, Katki's family settled in Tamaki Makaurau, Aotearoa twenty years ago.

Since early 2020 Katki has relocated to Pōneke, Wellington where he has been working on his Masters of creative writing manuscript with the International Institute of Modern Letters at Victoria University.

ASHLEIGH TAUPAKI

Ko Te Rae o te Papa rāua ko Rangipo ōku māunga
Ko Waihou tōku awa
Ko Tikapa tōku moana
Ko Ngāti Hako tōku iwi
Ko Mahutoro tōku hapū
Ko Te Kotahitanga tōku marae
Ko Hauraki te whenua
Ko Ashleigh Taupaki tōku ingoa

BRIAR POMONA

Moumoukai te maunga, tu mai ra!
Te whakaruru, te whare korero
E kore e riro.
Waitirohia tae atu ki Nuhaka nga Awa, E rere ra!
Te matapuna o te ora
E kore e maroke.
Ka rere iho nga wai o Nuhaka,
katahi ka tae atu ki te tatahi,
kia whangai ai te moana, a, ma nga hua o te moana,
ka ora ai te Iwi.
Rakaipaaka te Iwi, o ratou ma!
Ngai Te Rehu te hapu
Te Poho o Te Rehu te marae
Kore, e kore e ngaro!

CHEYJUANA

Ko Tarakeha te Maunga
Ko Opepe te awa
Ko Mataatua te Waka
Ko Ngai Tamahua te hapū
Ko Te Whakatohea te iwi
Ko Opape te Marae
Ko Cheyjuana Taku Ingoa

ESSA MAY RANAPIRI

essa may ranapiri (Ngāti Wehi Wehi, Ngāti Takatāpui, Clan Gunn) is a poet from Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa. They have lines that draw them back to Maungatautari and Waikato awa, where they have stood in the rancid waters with a deep sadness in their heart. They have a book of poems out now through VUP called *ransack*. They write for their tīpuna and their mokopuna. They will write until their soul has flown over the cape.

HANA PERA AOAKE

Hana Pera Aoake (Tainui/Waikato, Ngaati Raukawa, Ngaati Mahuta, Ngaati Takataapui) is an artist, writer and heartthrob living on Kai tahu land in Te wai Pounamu. They hold an MFA in fine arts (first class) and are currently a participant in the ISP at Maumaus escola des artes. Hana sometimes teaches critical theory at the Zurich school of art, co-hosts a podcast KISS ME THRU THE PHONE with Mya Cole and coordinates Kei te pai press with the love of their life. ACAB TIKA & PRAXIS LIVE LAFF LAND BACK BB

IONA WINTER

Iona Winter writes in hybrid forms exploring the landscapes between oral and written words. Her work is created to be performed, and has been widely published and anthologised. She is the author of two collections *then the wind came* (2018) and *Te Hau Kāika* (2019). Iona is of Waitaha, Kāi Tahu and Pākehā descent, and lives on the East Otago Coast.

KIRSTY DUNN

Kirsty Dunn (Te Aupōuri, Te Rarawa – Te Uri o Tai) is a writer and researcher based in Ōtautahi, Aotearoa (Christchurch, New Zealand). She is currently working on her PhD in Māori literature at the University of Canterbury and a collection of poetry and photography inspired by her time living on Rēkohu (Wharekauri - Chatham Island). Her work has previously appeared in *Huia Short Stories 10*, *Headland*, *Mayhem*, and *Popshot: The Illustrated Magazine of New Writing*.

MAGGIE LEIGH WHITE

Maggie Leigh White (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Pākehā) was born and raised on the long, open shores of Tairāwhiti (Gisborne). Her tīpuna Māori whakapapa further south, to Wairoa and Nuhaka. She has lived in Te Whanganui-a-Tara since 2011, where she is an actor, poet, and painter.

A lot of her writing explores her identity as both wahine Māori and wahine Pākehā; which often feels like two very separate worlds colliding. This collision brings with it the obvious frustrations and conflicts, but also brings immense love, pride, and calm. She likes to sit with this gentleness in her poems. Through writing she can express her deep love for (and connection to) te taiao, as a person walking in two worlds on one land.

MEG PRASAD

Meg Prasad is a new-on-scene poet from the Kapiti Coast. She lives with her two children and partner.

Meg makes music and art during the day and works as a bar maid at night.

MIRIAMA GEMMELL

Ko Ngāti Pāhauwera, Ngāti Rakaipaaka, Ngāti Kahungunu ngā iwi. Miriama's poetry has been published in Landfall, Cicerone Journal, Awa Wahine, Sweet Mammalian, and other places. She completed Heke Reo at Te Wānanga o Raukawa in 2019. Miriama lives in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara with her hoa rangatira, Richard, and two tamariki, James Rewi (6) and Hana Tirohia (3).

NGĀHUIA BRITTON BRUCE

Ngāhuria Britton-Bruce aka @naanibb, Ngāti Hine

Born at home under a Christmas tree in Kaiaka, Northland some years ago yet a true grinch at heart. All about outdoor activities and socialising. Fumbling my way through embroidery projects. Struggling with the true meaning of existence, the state of the planet and the world we live in, just like you.

RHEGAN TU'AKOI

Rhegan Tu'akoi is a Tongan/Pākehā living in Pōneke. Her family's village is Holonga on Tongatapu and her Pākehā side are from the grassy plains of South Canterbury. Rhegan is a Master's student researching anti-nuclear literature by female Pacific authors and her poems have appeared in *Tupuranga*, *Sweet Mammalian* and *Turbine | Kapobau*, among others.

RUBY SOLLY

Ruby Solly (Kai Tahu, Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe) is a writer, musician, and music therapist living in Wellington, New Zealand. She has been published in New Zealand, America, and has had work featured in the first poetry exhibition in Antarctica. Ruby was a finalist for the Caselberg Poetry Prize in 2019 and has been published in over twenty journals in her home country of New Zealand. As a musician and player of taonga Puoro (traditional Māori musical instruments) she has played with artists such as Yo-yo Ma, Trinity Roots, and The New Zealand String Quarter. She is currently working as a researcher within the field of taonga Puoro and its benefits within the health care system.

SANJANA KHUSAL

Sanjana Khusal is a writer, based in South Auckland, New Zealand. She was born in Pukekohe to a beautiful European born Indian mother and New Zealand born Indian father. Her culture has always been obscure and mixed. She felt like a brown face with a white voice. As the years have gone by, she has learnt what it has meant to be born in an open space like Aotearoa. Sanjana is proud of her cultural heritage, trying to navigate her ethnic narrative. She is currently pursuing a BA at the University of Auckland, where she has recently appeared in Craccum Magazine. In her spare time, she is learning languages and writing about the life she knows.

STACEY TEAGUE

Stacey Teague (Ngāti Maniapoto/Ngāpuhi) is a writer from Tamaki Makaurau currently living in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. She is the poetry editor for Scum Mag, has her Masters in Creative Writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters, and has three chapbooks: Takahē (Scrambler Books, 2015), not a casual solitude (Ghost City Press, 2017) and hoki mai (If A Leaf Falls Press, 2020). She tweets @staceteague

TERINA KAIRE

My name is Terina Kaire, I'm half Māori and half Niuean. My iwi is Ngāpuhi and my Niuean fanau are originally from Alofi. I was born and raised in Tāmaki Makaurau in Aotearoa and have recently moved over to live with my partner in Hilo, Hawai'i. My Instagram handle is @rinasaurus and I honestly spend far too much time watching trash reality tv and treating Myers Briggs personality types like one treats astrological signs ("oh you're an ESFP? Suddenly you make a lot of sense").

VAUGHAN RAPATAHANA

Vaughan Rapatahana (Te Ātiawa) commutes between homes in Hong Kong, Philippines and Aotearoa New Zealand. He is widely published across several genre in both his main languages, te reo Māori and English and his work has been translated into Bahasa Malaysia, Italian, French, Mandarin.

Participated in World Poetry Recital Night, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in September 2019.

Participated in Poetry International, the Southbank Centre, London, U.K. in October 2019 – in the launch of Poems from the Edge of Extinction and in Incendiary Art: the power of disruptive poetry.

His poem tahi kupu anake included in the presentation by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas to the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva in November 2019.

His New Zealand Book Council Writers File - <https://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/rapatahana-vaughan/>