Blue Mother, Reddest Girl

Lately I haven’t been speaking to my mother

But I bounce on her shouting and screaming

Because she is my trampoline

I was lucky enough to see a kōtuku

In Ōkārito skiting over the lagoon, but not Keri

And I wasn’t speaking to my mother

Keri lived with her mother in Oamaru

Congratulations! I did not last long with my mother

When I lived with her in Hamilton

We spoke to each other too much

And now we are not speaking at all

I wonder if Keri and her mother had days like this

I really want to speak to my mother

And have her speak back to me

I want Papatūānuku to turn down the electric blanket

By running her thumb over the braille dots, I want her to turn

and sigh and tell the rain it is better now

Oi Rangi, the mist rising from me is the sound of no more shouting

I am not speaking to my mother

But I know exactly what she is thinking

And Keri is ochre and maybe she is singing mother, mother

I am using a brush to tug at my mother’s hair for knots

but we are not speaking

even though the land is humming

Like the pins her mother holds in her teeth

for the hem of my skirt

lifting off the clay

Mother we are speaking

even as we rise silent

and cut the whenua with a river that howls

from inside us and below us

in the chasm roaring beneath our rising

far too brightly to hear.