

Kei Te Pai

Te Korekore

Featuring:

Huni Mancini

essa may ranapiri

Vaughan Rapatahana

Ruby Solly

Ashleigh Taupaki

Stacey Teague

Arielle Walker and Emily Parr

Huni Mancini

Huni is an archivist, writer and creative born in Los Angeles, USA and based in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her heritage is Tongan (Mu'a, Tongatapu, Niuatoputapu) and Italian (Grillara, Monti). Her work collectively explores the nuances of Tongan experience today and builds on her 2017 MA thesis 'Mapping new terrain' which looked at indigenous self-determination through video game and app development. She works at the Archive of Maaori & Pacific Sound, University of Auckland.

essa may ranapiri

Essa May Ranapiri (Ngaati Wehi Wehi, Ngaati Takataapui, Clan Gunn) is a poet from Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa. Their river is full of shit and so they are angry about it. They have a book of poetry out now called ransack and that is a threat. They will write until they're dead. Give the land back.

Vaughan Rapatahana

Vaughan Rapatahana commutes between Hong Kong SAR, Philippines and Aotearoa New Zealand. He's widely published across several genres in Māori, English and other languages.

Ruby Solly

Ruby Solly is a writer, musician, taonga puoro practitioner, and music therapist from Kaai Tahu and Waitaha. She has been published in journals such as Poetry NZ, Starling, Landfall, Sport and Brief amongst others. As a musician and taonga puoro player she has performed with artists such as Yo-yo Ma, Whirimako Black, and Trinity Roots. Ruby is a researcher in the fields of mental health and taonga puoro. Her first book is being published by Victoria University Press in 2021

Ashleigh Taupaki

Ashleigh Taupaki creates abstract representations of existing places to portray the relationships between land, body, and identity. Taupaki explores Maaori ideas of place-making and spiritual interconnectedness through the casting and experimentation of hard materials such as wood, concrete, and metals. Her work is also heavily informed by indigenous politics and writings, as well as mythological stories and histories connected to place. These places include the Waitakere area where the artist currently resides, and the Hauraki region where her iwi, Ngaati Hako, originate from.

Stacey Teague

Stacey Teague (Ngaati Maniapoto/Ngaai Puhī) is a writer from Taamaki Makaurau, currently living in Te Whanganui-a-tara. She has a website: staceyteague.com

Arielle Walker and Emily Parr

Arielle Walker (Ngaaruahine, Taranaki, Ngaai Puhī, Paakehaa) is a Taamaki Makaurau-based contemporary artist, writer and maker. Currently completing a Master of Visual Arts at AUT University, her practice sits within the intersections and connections between language and craft, focusing on tactile storytelling and ancestral narratives.

Emily Parr (Ngaai te Rangi, Moana, Paakehaa) makes video art centred on specific ecologies: the relationships between people, whenua, and social and political frameworks. Her current research project (toward a Master of Visual Arts) is on settler-indigenous relationships of Te Moananui a Kiwa. Through activating her ancestral stories, her moving-image practice considers rootedness, belonging, and interconnection. She is also a part of Accompany Collective, who support community organisations and social movements through making posters, recording actions, and filming short documentaries.

We have shared a studio and worked alongside each other for the past year. Our practices have been influenced by this relationship: sometimes converging, always buoying. First conceptualised through St Paul St Gallery's Speaking Surfaces project, Whatuora is part of an ongoing conversation, a beginning point, from which reciprocal practices and shared haerenga unfold. Together, we reflect on the passing down of knowledge, the repairing of ruptures, and the bridging of time..

*The Waiting
Line**Huni**Mancini*

Te Korekore

Huni Mancini

Late one winter's night, when the veil between this world and Puluotu is thinned, Hina sat upon a cold bench in downtown Tāmaki-Makaurau. She'd missed the last ferry home and decided to wait for the next sailing at dawn. She was accompanied by a half-eaten box of Chicken McNuggets, a chocolate thickshake and her mobile phone. Frustrated and spent she resigned now to this place where the city meets the sea. Beneath the pavement Waihorotiu flowed out to the Waitematā harbour, as it's done for centuries. Hina imagined how it trickled now through a sewer pipe buried in the very spot beneath her. Sleepily her mind wandered.

Since midnight she'd been strolling up and down Queen St to keep warm, devouring 24/7 McDonalds, politely avoiding strange men who tried to flirt. She'd come across a busker known as King Homeboy. Sometimes he performed at Burger King, but on this night he was at the Gucci store. Hina found a place on the pavement while he beat-boxed for the drunken passerby's. A mother and son driving past spotted the busker and did a U-turn, parking their car along the curb. They were thrilled to meet him, for he was something of a celebrity. His hollow rhythms, born somewhere deep within his lungs, made the air swell with excitement. When it came time for them to leave, King Homeboy stopped to give pause. "In life, always do what you love," he said to the boy, catching the words before they could flee.

"When you do what you love, you will find that doors open for you."

They thanked him and went on their way.

Hina returned to this moment again and again on the cold bench, replaying it on loop in her mind's eye. Some say that moments are like beings. And like a being that has moved on, its memory can appear uninvited.

A young man appeared from out of nowhere and sat on the cold bench beside Hina, pulling her out of her sleepy thoughts.

Huni Mancini

Te Korekore

"What are you up to?" he asked, looking intently at Hina. His friends stood tentatively in the distance. "Waiting for my boat home," Hina reluctantly replied.

"Cool. I'll come sit with you."

"I think your friends are waiting for you?" she asked.

He glanced in their direction. "They'll be fine. I was getting bored of them anyway."

His friends got tired of waiting and continued on their way among the glow of city lights.

She asked where he was from, unsure of how to place him.

"I'm Rarotongan," he affirmed.

"Cool. I'm Tongan," she added.

They continued to talk, finding all the intricate ways their worlds overlapped and paralleled unexpectedly.

Then she confessed something she had been turning over in her mind all night.

"All my friendships feel so...transactional. I realised that I'm always hanging out with people from work. I'm tired of only knowing people in that way. In a customer service...context," she searched for the right words. She worried they were too heavy and in danger of sinking the conversation.

The guy fell silent, listening.

A security guard hovered, smoking a cigarette. The guy went over to him and asked for two cigarettes. He came back successful, and handed one to her. She lit her cigarette on the burning embers of his and inhaled the comforting smoke.

He took this as a cue to tell her a story, about a network of tunnels that lay beneath the ground where they sat. The tunnels weren't arranged in a grid like the streets above. Rather, they were a strategy of buried pathways that spiraled and forked in unexpected ways, leading towards a centre.

“The structure has numerous entry points,” he said, pointing to the roadworks that surrounded them.

Hina glanced at the temporary walls that concealed large pits of gravel and exposed earth. Barriers made of steel and mesh, bright orange and yellow, all arranged in a maze of shifting lanes – a floating metropolis. To the ordinary eye they controlled the flow of traffic. Whereas to the young man they presented something more permeable.

“Where there’s a wall, there’s the possibility of a door,” he propositioned. Secret doors could be found among the dug out pits, hidden behind facades designed to keep people out, protecting them from the perils of their own curiosity.

“I’ve heard that many who dared enter the underground structure have suffered from madness, leading it to become boarded up, and fall into ruin,” he explained.

Hina fell silent. She was reminded of her mother’s warnings about becoming fakamahaki, possessed by spirits. A kind of madness one gets from sliding down the razor’s edge between this world and the other.

Taking it as a cue to leave, the young man suggested they keep in touch on Facebook. Hina fumbled through her bag for something to write with and a library book she remembered having. Inside the front cover he left a note with her poppy-red lipstick. His name was Sinilau.

Returning to the warmth of her thoughts, Hina closed her eyes. Then an idea came to her. She’d explore the roadworks surrounding the ferry building in order to pass the time, and to be sure what Sinilau had said was true. Just as he’d described, the roadworks concealed a number of boarded-up passages. Pushing hard through a space between the steel and mesh barriers, Hina climbed into the pit and found herself standing before a door. Before she could think, a dark passage opened up and engulfed her.

Hina felt her way along the edges of a dark corridor. Blindly her fingers caressed the walls. Her senses were overlapping, misplaced. Staring at the darkness she sensed heat rising from within as she descended deeper into the earth.

“It’s probably just a derelict car park,” she said aloud.

The sound of trickling water drifted up from the hollow depths, amplified by her heightened senses. A faint light in the distance greeted her and she fixed her eyes to it.

Hina soon reached its source. Stepping into a pool of light she gazed longingly at the ceiling. A fluorescent halo hovered there, angelic and pure. On closer inspection it appeared to be a manhole illuminated by a street light, and Hina realised she was now beneath the streets. She resisted the burning feeling to return to the outside world, and continued on into the darkness.

Wandering deeper within, she recalled the foreboding way her mother used to speak of the nighttime as fakapo’uli, or being filled with darkness. Hina wondered if a person could become fakapo’uli if they’d lost all their memories? It frightened her to know that memories got consumed as they made room for new ones, eaten up by the cannibal of time. She continued to feel her way through the forbidden tunnel.

Eventually Hina came to a landing where appeared three iron doors fixed with orb-shaped handles. She intuited that either door could perhaps lead to a dead-end or worse. Without much hesitation she took a step towards the door on the right and with caution turned the handle.

Hina found herself inside a room fitted with pastel chairs and vertical blinds. It appeared to be a waiting room. Across the carpet there loomed a front desk and secretary who peered back at Hina with clinical eyes. She could see a circular clock on the wall with arms that stretched out like the horizon. It read 'quarter-to-three'.

Here the air was firm and still, stable like the lines of a desktop calendar. Hina recognised that such stability fixed her in place. Passwords, usernames, pin codes, security questions, confirmation emails, ID numbers. They all traced her movements like a benevolent shadow, but they never seemed to bring her any relief.

As Hina approached the desk, the distance between them grew wider. The lady called for her manager and a man in beige trousers and collared shirt rushed in.

"Excuse me...Where am I?" Hina asked.

Each time she spoke the man spoke over her, his words crashing like waves. They made no sense to Hina. He seemed to be refusing something in her hands. Glancing down she was surprised to see herself offering the poppy-red lipstick. The man grabbed her wrist and his head turned smiling in the direction of the clock running bright like water. Both hands had stopped at 12 o'clock. Hina released herself from his grasp and backed out of the room.

She found herself back on the landing, all shaken up. She considered leaving this strange world the way she came in, but she was curious to see what was beyond the other doors. Taking a deep breath, she entered the door on the left.

Stepping into the entrance of an ancient library, Hina gazed across the atrium and inhaled the fragrance of kauri and leather. A vast network of shelves consumed her periphery.

Hina moved aimlessly through the aisles, pulling numerous volumes off the shelves and leafed through their pages. They appeared written by authors as formidable as the covers she grasped and touched.

She puzzled over the way their words were marked and suspended on the page, giving basic shape to their complex thoughts.

"Traces of a life," Hina said to herself.

In a way traces were easier to grasp, like ice cubes. She'd become so used to holding traces that in her mind they'd taken on a life of their own. The traces were all she knew.

Hina thought she saw a dark figure move in the corner of her eye but when she turned to look there was nothing there.

Each of the volumes were bound in leather and buckram, and finished with gold or silver detail. There they sat upon unmarked shelves waiting for anyone who had the ability to find them.

It was then she noticed a large grid constructed of shelves formed the basis of the library. Each interlaying cube was arranged by subject, author, edition, and their derivatives – books about books, and books about the critics of those books.

Hina realised the library was host to a network of times which intersected, forked, broke off, or were unaware of one another. The library was therefore infinite, as it embraced all possibilities of time.

This was at the expense of its patrons who grappled with the infinite possibility of deception and of countless falsifications, and who suffered from chronic anxiety as a result.

In that moment a great force struck down on the reading table next to Hina's head and sent her flying across the marble floor. She gazed in horror to see a hooded figure with a steel fist lurching towards her. Hina scrambled for the door and swiftly made it through the exit.

Back in the corridor Hina panted heavily, her heart racing. She went for the third door and upon opening it she heard a voice calling in the distance. She decided to follow it.

Through a narrow passage she eventually came to a room made of exposed rock. There she saw a creature bathing among the shadows. The creature was singing in a language Hina understood,

*Tānaki ne mokulu e kakala
Pea te 'i he vai lolo kakala
Si'oto fonua nofo tokotaha
Tu'u ai hoto ki'i 'a lo papa
Tautau ai mo hoto pangai kafa
Mo hoto vaitafe ki moana
Ta na'e ha'u eni 'ia tama
Kene hu'ihu'i 'a hoto huafa—*

*I retrieved the fragrant fruits that fell
And floated on the flower-scented water
Alone in my lonely land
Where stood my humble shelter
Where hung my plain tapa-cloth
Where flowed my stream into the sea
Alas, this youth came along
To strip me of my dear name—*

Their singing halted at the sound of Hina's footsteps. They turned and slid into a pool of light so Hina could see their muscular build and small, cone-shaped breasts. Their skin glistened like obsidian. With each movement they radiated all angles of light, the way a lizard's scales shift and change. This was Hikule'o, goddess of the underworld.

"What is this place?" Hina asked.

"I will tell you only if you can guess the answer to my riddle," the goddess challenged.

"What does a fish stranded on the sand
have in common with water that grows?
And the sun darkening
with the moon becoming the colour of blood?"

Hina thought for a moment. "Abandon," she replied.

Hikule'o nodded, impressed.

"Since time immemorial I've lived here in lalofonua, the world of darkness, watching the ebb and flow of human life from my network of tunnels that stretch infinitely across the universe," she explained.

"The abandon of neglect and violence that came and then the abandon of passion, they all moved into these ruins," she lamented. The abandon had also become part of her.

"Over the centuries people have filed me away into the deep recesses of their minds. Eventually they had no need to remember I was here," she continued.

"But they had succumb to a different kind of void, one characterised by the blinding light of oblivion. The light is also a kind of demise. Its gods preside over the safety of protective measures and the certainty of confirmation," she scorned.

Embittered and alone, Hikule'o was thus confined to the darkness.

"Once in a while a human finds their way into my chambers, eager to

uncover its hidden secrets. But they soon realise this landscape is not solid, and entry to it lies further down behind thought. Thought comes in front of it and it closes like a door. They no longer have the power to access this place – unlike you,” she gestured towards Hina.

The sound of water reverberated across the walls.

Hikule’o raised a finger and pointed to the fourth and final door: a portal that led all the way to Puluotu. She invited Hina to pass through into the world of the spirits, but Hina hesitated. In that moment she realised she didn’t know how long she’d been down there; she didn’t remember much else beyond the caves or the city anymore. Worried that she was turning fakapo’uli, she asked Hikule’o if she could return to the human world of light, as she was not ready to pass into the afterlife. She vowed to visit Hikule’o often, and because of this kind gesture the goddess allowed her to return home. She released the exit door for Hina to leave. Hina performed a luluku before leaving and once that was done, she found her way back out of the underworld the same way she entered.

Hina awoke on the cold bench, wondering if it was all just a dream.

Inside her library book she saw Sinilau’s name still written in lipstick. An announcement to board the first ferry home sounded over the intercom and Hina got up to leave, hugging herself against the cold.

References:

Saane Moala, ‘Atanihea, in *Fananga: Fables from Tonga in Tongan and English Vol.1*. Ed. Richard Moyle. Nuku’alofa: Friendly Islands Bookshop. 1995.

Tupou Posesi Fanua, *Rainbow and Her Daughter*, in *Po Fananga: Folk Tales of Tonga*. Ed. Tupou Posesi Fanua. Nuku’alofa: Friendly Islands Bookshop. 1975.

Kei Te Pai

Te Korekore

essa may ranapiri

Exes on Stolen
Land

u r lying on ur side facing the wall
there is too much cotton here
i try and find something in the ceiling
what shadow
do i seek in the reclines of
upward what image can i set
with fly shit around the lightshade i can't
see and
there is only one duvet
only one duvet and why do people leave
no cover sheet

.....

i can't sleep my mind is running four ticks within the second
how do u hold onto anything does crossing out a line
mean it disappears or is it just closer to the earth
that way we'll never have to bury anything

and people come in and out of our lives
we begin to push words up into the scrunched dark
between makeshift attempts at silence and the breath
the sigh of cloth on cloth and the gentle give of the mattress

where is what it takes to
spill out inside of
contained i reach out

Kei Te Pai

essa may ranapiri

Te Korekore

the sun has found away getting away with pushing time into
the four corners of a timetable beautiful boy just put a money
frame
on the exhale and the inhale too erratic with heat and flash
it is charging through space

where does anything fit

.....

i don't know how we get onto it i think a bed is full of exes
always regardless of where u talk about abuse
u talk about a person u once loved u talk about how they
put ur life through a tinted glass shone enough light through
it that everything u saw looked how they said it was

i don't want to pull the duvet to one side
so used to pulling the duvet to one side i roll over often
in my sleep i try to be aware of my body

and i describe how i wasn't with someone
and how not being with them ruined it
and walks up hills and lying in grass remember the sound of
fingers scratching inside elbows a chisel
and others and moving on with quiet breath
and sitting in cars reading
poetry and skyping lovers from an empty room
suitcase as storage clothes piled into the container
and being late to class my orgasm not waiting for the bus
and fucking with shoes on but not really fucking at all

.....

here the curtains don't really stop the light
i tell u that it's fine if u move
i dnt want u to feel trapped in stillness

.....

and those someones already having other someones in their
lives
was lonely and i felt destructive in a windy city
wanted to tear down heteronormativity
was the joke i was making aside from the pain
there is a wind outside that moves through the water through the
grass

it mixes with the traffic the sound of it
i mean mixes with the sound of a vehicle propelled by
some thing

dead some one's dead ancestors

.....

u talk about how u moved in shortly after
falling into love
like a deadly kind of lottery being alone
of wanting to not be alone

when capital rules when capital ruins
the land where do we step when
the horizon has been taken from us
connection is a story we tell each other in the dark
(where is the sun when we don't see what it does without us?)
and maybe there was no wind after all it was a motor

.....

i try not to cry

.....

i carry myself away until
it's just a lying down
until i feel the sweat from my back soak into the mattress
slowly shift
and the kind of love in a poem that is attention and the kind
of movement that is careful not to disturb

.....

i don't want to roll over
i'm so used to stealing the duvet
i don't want to
i'm so used to living on something stolen

Te Korekore
Tonu

te korekore tonu

'By means of a thorough-going negativity, that which is negative proceeds beyond its limits and assumes the characteristics of the positive. While it does not entirely emancipate itself from the negative, it does become relatively positive.' Māori Marsden, *God, man and universe: a Māori view*, in *Te Ao Hurihuri Aspects of Maoritanga* p.134.

aae, maaori marsden,
ko te tino tika koe.
ko rua ngaa whakakaahore
kei mua te ao maarama,
kei mua he ao o whakaoratanga
moo ngaa taangata katoa.

ko taku mahi
kia tuhituhi moo te waamua
me nui ngaa mea kino,
kia tauaro teenei pootangotango;
te korekore tonu,
kia taea ai e taatau katoa
e mataara i te ata
o he ao hoou.

the void

yes, maaori marsden,
you are quite correct.
there is a double negative
before the world of light,
before a world of healing
for all people.

it is my job
to write about the past
and the many bad events;
to face this intense darkness:
the real void.

so that we can all
witness the dawn
of a new world.

Kei Te Pai

CW: Racism, violence.

Te Kore – Te Poo – Te Ao Maarama
a week of reflection after releasing an article about racism
and receiving racism in return

Sunday

There is a misunderstanding of things that happen within the body. I remember watching my brother about to be born and realising in that moment that my mother was the epicentre of the world. At first it was nothing to be seen, only felt. Then a hand emerged. We feel before we see. Before birth occurs pain is known. Time is a peculiar thing to hold. To waananga I send words into the world after forming and reforming them a thousand times. Some people weave with muka. Others weave with words. We are all weavers of something. My hands are soft and pliable. The room smells of sap.

Monday

White nigger. White nigger. Half caste bitch. I'm coming to cut you. Get over having Maaori blood. Racist. White hater. Liar. Brown cunt. White cunt. I'm coming for you bitch. Take it down. Take it down. Go back to the paa. Eyes closed I am back. Something they don't tell you about this place is how many stones there are. Each one perfectly shaped by an ocean too rough to be touched. This is the hand of Takaroa. Here he doesn't lap at the shore. Here he beats the wife he once had. He

Ruby
Solly

Kei Te Pai

beats her into a million perfectly formed pieces of herself. Resilience is a strange thing when it's thrust upon you. No one ever opens his hand and takes it for themselves. I tried to be polite. But it turned out all I said was please please beat me. Go outside and cut yourself a switch.

Tuesday

When I was small my father told me I needed to practice walking with quiet feet. I would take my shoes off and tiptoe towards him, while he looked out across the wetlands. I would grab him unsuspectingly and he would throw me onto his shoulders and run around as a reward for me being so quiet. I understand now that this was him training me to survive. I have been scared to leave my house since before I woke up. When I leave I run barefoot. There is nothing for me to leave at the door. I think of how I've spent years climbing this ladder. These steps. This mountain. Poutama. I'm not sure if I have fallen back down. I'm not sure if the rungs are breaking behind me. But what I do know is that if I fall they will say I jumped. Few will know I was pushed. Ka Aroha. They will say. Ka Aroha.

Wednesday

Another day under the world. I am too sick to speak to my ancestors. But I can speak to my cousins. I guess that's the same thing. One cousin has the bluest eyes I've ever seen. Mine are the darkest. Duality exists in every bloodline. Black blood and blue blood swirling. When I was born I had yellow skin and black hair. I tell my friends this and they say, "poor you." Poor you. I loved my black hair until this morning. Black is the place of potential. From nothing comes everything. How lucky am I. Today I go to meet my friends' new baby. He likes the taa on my hands. He Paakehaa ia. But he doesn't know that yet. All he knows is that his parents love him very much and that they are fine with a brown woman singing to him in his house. He giggles and traces his fingers over Aoraki on my hands. Maybe this boy will climb mountains. I hope so. I will carve him steps. I will replace the rungs.

Thursday

Yesterday I called myself brown and today I call myself white passing. Ko Maauī ahau. I change by the minute. I am related to Maauī and named after our tuupuna. His grandmother birthed the southern winds. I am named after air because I don't exist unless I am rattling things. How funny. How sad. The world is rattling me and I am just a gentle breeze shaking the air in my house. It recirculates again and again. Thoughts are koru. They pick a place to start and then spiral in and out of themselves. But they always start the same way. Te poo. Then we grow from there. We don't grow straight. We don't grow crooked. We grow around and around ourselves. Whakakoru ooku whakaaro. Whakatakoto te ara. E hurihuri ana au ia ra ia ra.

Friday

Friends take me to the ocean, so I can see home. We play our songs on the shore and I pray that the sound will travel there. Silently. I let myself cry. The Albatross spends most of its life away from its beloved. As a result he cries. As a result his bone is shaped like the teardrop. As a result when we sing through his bones he cries again. When I was thirteen I taught myself how to cry out of one eye. I would be able to stand at the side of the choir and cry without anybody noticing. This way when they asked why I was crying I wouldn't have to tell them I didn't know. I still cry like this now if I'm in public. I learnt to do it. But I can't learn to stop. How complicated we all are. How hard it is to admit. How hard it is to unlearn. We weave words in an instant. But we can't unsay them. They tattoo themselves in the cells. I feel them poking up. From under my skin.

Saturday

In my house I make cups of tea for the old people. I wash my hands at the back step. I shoo the cat away from the young birds, who do not understand someone wanting to hurt them. I ring my father and get the answer phone. I imagine what he would say. I clean the bench and remove the dead flowers from their vase. I press them into the dirt at the back door. The pink and the brown mix. At home I wake at 2am and look at myself in the mirror. This is the most sudden way to know yourself. Skin colour is a strange thing. Hello stranger. Hello self. I splash my face with cold water and remember that this street was once a river and that I grew up being more comfortable in water than on land, because no one could see my body. In water you couldn't hear questions if you were under there. One time a boy tried to hold my head under water and drown me. As he pulled my head up to let me take a torturous breath I said "Stop it I don't like it". He just laughed and kept going. Until I was red. Until I was blue. I don't remember what happened next. But I guess I must have lived.

Tiro

she swam here
in a crater of milk

i swim there
in the sludge of her womb

Tiro, Tiro

into the tunnel
oyster shells degloved our feet

souls stitched together
with the vein threads
in our wrists

Ashleigh
Taupaki

Tiro

Kei Te Pai

Summer

KAAINGA

Stacey

Teague

Every time I land in Auckland, I look down from the airplane window and check for markers.
There is only the colour green, radiating outwards.

Fern-green, honey-dew, tea-green.

Viridian, forest, electric.

WELCOME

It's Dad's job to pick me up from the airport, a job he seems to be vaguely put out by. On the way home we talk about the weather, how bad the traffic was on the way there and which high rise is getting built that he can't stand.

From the road, there is a long winding driveway to get to the house. Driving up, the cats who were lazing on the pebblecrete dart out of sight. Out back there is a big grassy area which slopes downhill. There is a peach tree where last summer Kristy and I collected the ripe fruit from its branches.

My sister Kristy greets me with a weak hug. We have never been huggers. She lives upstairs with her partner and their three kids. Mum's still at work. Her and Dad live downstairs in the smaller part of the house, which Mum always complains about.

I meet my one-month-old nephew Demi. I don't quite know how to hold him, but already he feels like a part of me. My niece Nova and older nephew, Dash, have made a sign that says 'Welcome Home Stacey' with love hearts drawn all around it.

Kristy has already cleared out the spare room and got the 'Stacey' box out of storage. In it is a sky blue dressing gown, which I immediately put on. There are photos ranging from childhood to a couple of years ago, letters from friends, old mix CDs from past lovers and various beloved mementos.

I shuffle through the photos and linger on a few. One of me and Dad on his La-Z-Boy. I'm about seven and have a small bucket on my head with the handle tucked under my chin. At age sixteen I'm standing in front of the ocean with my hands flung in the air and smiling wide on New Years Eve at Cooks Beach. On my twenty-sixth birthday when my friends surprised me with a trip to Norfolk. We're sitting in a circle with scraps of paper stuck to our foreheads, grinning at one another. My ex is in a graveyard with their tote bag slung over their shoulder, pretending not to know I'm taking the photo. In a pub in London with Laura, Nat, Ange and Ash. Our heads are together with our middle fingers up.

I sit on the floor reminiscing about everything that has led me to this point. From London to Sydney to Ireland to Auckland for the summer, and then _____?

Kei Te Pai

KOORERO

Mum twirls a lock of her thick, auburn hair repeatedly around her index finger. Her nails are long and painted red. She thinks about the question. Nobody in this family wants to dwell on the past. Mum is the only one of her seven siblings who could pass for white.

Of course I identify as Maaori, she says.

I tell her about the uneasiness I feel in trying to find a way into te ao Maaori, when I haven't grown up in it. There is a friction that it creates. A fire inside the house that no one acknowledges. She doesn't know what to say to that.

COMMUNE

Every morning I open the blinds and let the light in.

In The Lonely City, Olivia Laing writes,

We are fed the notion that difficult feelings are simply a consequence of unsettled chemistry; a problem to be fixed, rather than a response to structural injustice, or on the other hand, to the native texture of embodiment, of doing time in a rented body, with all the attendant grief and frustration that entails.

I think about the native texture and touch the smooth skin of my neck. Hello, attendant grief, as I check for my pulse. I spend all day reading. The light changes its position in the sky, falling yellow over different parts of my rented body as I sit cross-legged on the bed.

Somewhere in the trees outside are tuuii, kereruu, ruru, kootare. They commune with one another as the sun gets low and moves past the horizon. Is it bad to be 'in your feelings'? Dad always used to tell me not to think about things so much. Mum doesn't stop working. We all have our survival strategies.

The sun sets over the Waitaakere Ranges, making way for new kinds of light. We rely on artificial sources now.

Kei Te Pai

TUAAKANA

Kristy is a foot shorter than me, with brown medium-length hair that frames her long face, and pale skin. She got her features from our Paakehaa side. We’ve never discussed our Maaori identity, but when I talk to her about it now she doesn’t seem very fussed.

We are six years apart. My sister went to school before te reo was a part of our learning, while I grew up loving waiata and desperately wanting to be in the kapa haka group but being too shy. She never even got to experience that.

Because of our different features and complexion I used to wonder if we were related. Even though everyone said we looked alike, and even though I successfully used her learner’s ID to buy alcohol from ages 16-18. She studied fashion at university but now she only dresses in ‘Mum’ clothes, preferring to wear long flowing skirts or leggings, and ugg boots in public. She has no shame and I respect that. She has three children. Motherhood was instinctual for her.

We have always been close despite our age gap. I can remember a photo of us playing dress up, her as the princess in a pink gown and me as the pauper boy in a ripped blue vest. Growing up, I listened to music she listened to, watched movies she watched. Our favourite movies were Twister, Empire Records, The Mummy and Hackers. Our favourite music was Fiona Apple, Aaliyah, Destiny’s Child and Foo Fighters. We were eclectic.

Eventually, our tastes diverged, but we never seemed to.

RAARANGI

Eat kiwifruit with the skin on.
Draw the blinds down all the way.
Listen to the judder of the washing machine.
Fry an egg in the pan, sunny side down.
Sing One day a taniwha to my nephew.
Scrub chicken fat off the oven tray.
Hang the laundry out on the line.
Leave an open book face down on the table.

NOVA

Kei Te Pai

On a walk, my niece gives me yellow flowers and instructs me to put them in my pocket. I tell her they will get squashed and she says it doesn’t matter. But when we get home, she is upset when I remove the flowers from my pocket, broken and crumpled. She is strong-willed like all the women in our family. I take her to the playground and watch her swing on the monkey bars, a fearlessness in her as she goes and goes.

I sit at the kitchen table to help with her te reo homework—we are making a family tree. We trace the pencil lines all the way back to our tuupuna. I spell out the names of each one from memory.

Wait, you’re going too fast, she says.

I tell her that whakapapa also means ‘layers’, and there are many layers to each of us. She just colours the paper in rainbow. Afterwards, she carries her newborn brother around proudly, in her polka dot t-shirt and overalls. She’s her mother’s daughter.

STUNG

One afternoon, while I am picking spinach in the garden, I am stung by a honeybee. At first I think I have stepped on a thorn, or something like glass, but I look down and see the dead bee attached to my foot. I calmly flick it off, and remove the stinger. Enter the house, hopping on one foot. Rub lavender oil onto the wound. My foot turns bright red, then purple. It grows.

The only other time I was stung by a bee was on Christmas Day, 1999. We were at Narn’s house and us kids had been walking around the neighbourhood in no shoes, as we did. All I remember is running back to the house yowling. My aunty went to get the vinegar. More yowling.

I think that Narn’s house was our version of a marae, since we didn’t go on our own. There was a communal vibe to it, and always chores to be done. We had all the whaanau gatherings there. We were always running away from our Aunties, when they wanted to give us a chore, a growling, or the dreaded vinegar.

I still can’t stand the smell of vinegar, like at the netball courts on a Saturday morning—everyone’s hot chips swimming in it.

HAIRCUT

Kristy gives me a haircut in the backyard using blunt kitchen scissors. Tufts of hair fall onto the grass and drift into the garden, getting stuck amongst the tomato vines. When I was younger, my hair was brighter and curlier than it is now. My grandma used to ask for locks of it to put in a photo album. She would press it behind the clear plastic. When I was a baby my hair took a long time to start growing, so they called me The Boiled Egg.

In high school, Kristy would weave my hair into French braids. Sometimes she would straighten it with an iron, my head gently resting on the ironing board. Every now and again, you could smell the burning. I would colour it black, brown, bright red. Now, I leave it as it is. Thick, curly, auburn, unruly. I sometimes think that my hair is my life force. My hair holds memories. It has mana.

Now that she is a mother she does my niece's hair. It is always knotty so she puts her homemade detangler in—apple cider vinegar, jojoba oil and lavender oil—and brushes it all

out, before tying it up in a ponytail. She even brushes my baby nephew's hair with a small, green brush that looks like it's for a doll.

When Kristy is done with my haircut I examine my hair in the bathroom mirror. The good thing about having curly hair is that it doesn't need to be even. Regardless, she is naturally good at cutting hair, like she is at most things. She tends to it with care.

My sister is like Papatuaanuku. She brings life.

SOLIDS

There's a plan for the future, although I can't see it.

The baby is on solids now. We feed him spoonfuls of puréed kumara.

The colour of earth.

PIZ BUIN SUNSCREEN

Sitting with Mum while she is sunbathing, I ask about her father. He was an alcoholic, never saw him much. She rubs Piz Buin into her skin, darker than mine. She seems blasé, but I wonder how deep it goes.

In my notebook I had written under 'New Year's resolutions':
Be closer to parents this summer.
A hard task, but I persist.

His name was Jim Donaghy. I know so little about him that I always assumed he was Paakehaa. I only traced the matriarchal line. I look at the few photos we have of him. A handsome man, his hair slicked back. In one photo, he wears his army uniform. It's hard to get a sense of him from such little information. Mum is not much help. She is too busy on the sun lounge with her thriller, sucking on a slice of watermelon.

Later, my Auntie Robyn tells me more. He was born in 1924 in Ruakaka, of Ngaapuhi iwi. His parents died young and he had a hard childhood. Their oldest sister saved up all her money and put her siblings in the army, where they would be protected from the violence of their foster home. When I hear this, I wish I could have kept him safe somehow. He met my Narn after World War II. They had five children together.

I never met my koro, he died in 1986. They didn't find his body until six weeks after he passed. He lived alone and there was no one around to check on him. Maybe nobody cared to. Why is it so important to know anything about him?

His blood is my blood.

THE POOL

The only time I can think of trying to bond with my dad is during his afternoon swim. When I hear the splash I look out the window to see him in his goggles, his head bobbing up and down in the water. I leap up and put on my black swimsuit and join him in the pool.

I like this time with him, as we swim together and make harmless small talk. I alternate between breaststroke and freestyle without putting my head under. I get tired quickly and lounge on a large inflatable flamingo while Dad does freestyle, turning his head sideways out of the water to take breaths.

When I was a kid I had a recurring dream where I had to pick between my real dad and an imposter dad and I always picked the wrong one.

I still have that dream sometimes.

ANCHORS

In the mornings I sleep late. Kristy is always in the living room with the baby, watching Teen Mom. This is something I've come to depend upon. Every time I feel sad I pick up my nephew and take him into the garden. It is sunny outside and in the distance I can see the city skyline.

I count every maunga I can see: Mt. Albert, Mt. Eden, Mt. Roskill, One Tree Hill. Growing up, we never learnt their Maaori names: Oowairaka, Maungawhau, Puketaapapa, Maungakiekie. There is erasure in the naming and not-naming.

I catch my foot on the nail on the deck, again. Hop downstairs to see my parents, and slump down into their blue and yellow couch. When I left New Zealand in my early twenties, I couldn't wait to disappear. I didn't want to see my past in everything. Each time I came home I wanted to escape again.

This time, I have anchors.

SOUTH

I pick the Blu-Tack off the walls with my fingernails. Postcards, drawings from the kids, photographs of my friends, family members, dead pets.

The room becomes the spare room again. I put my folded clothes neatly into my suitcase. I am used to packing everything away. I keep things compact.

I keep moving my body through space as though it means something.
On this land, it finally does.

When I get off the plane in Wellington, I'll go walk around.
Might fuck around and fall in love with a place.

I move south.

Whatuora

*Arielle Walker
and Emily Parr*

The first place on Te Ika a Maui my ancestor John Lees Faulkner sailed to was Kororaareka. He was arrested for pickpocketing as a young teenager in Nottingham, sentenced to seven years imprisonment, and shipped to Australia as a convict. He was there for a decade finishing his sentence and learning to build boats. Faulkner arrived here around 1832 and began trading between Kororaareka and Tauranga Moana. On one of his trips he met Ruawahine, daughter of Taawaho and Parewhakarau of Ngaai Tukairangi, a hapuu of Ngaai Te Rangi. John and Ruawahine's eldest child was baptised in Kororaareka in 1835. That same year He Whakaputanga was signed at Waitangi. One of the signatories, Kiwikiwi, was the rangatira of Poomare's Paa, and John bought land from him. I was trying to locate where the Paa was, and found a painting from 1852 by a British officer called 'Half-castes of Poomare's pah'. One of the women in the painting is possibly Jane Gray, daughter of Kotiro Hinerangi and Alexander Gray. They are your tiipuna, right?

Ae! They are. It's funny, I was looking at an image of that painting a few days ago too. Jane (Heeni) Gray was one of three daughters of Kotiro Hinerangi and Alexander Gray, as was Te Paea Hinerangi, one of my tuupuna waahine. Alexander was a Scottish blacksmith from Aberdeen who jumped ship in 1826. Kotiro was Ngaaruahine, she had been taken up north from Taranaki about ten years earlier. In Kororaareka she met and married Alexander. Te Paea was born in Kororaareka in 1832 - the same year Faulkner arrived. I'm still learning the koorero around them, Kotiro and her daughters, and learning the history of waahine toa in all my whakapapa lines. I'm learning, always learning, how it all ties into my own story, and what parts of those stories I can tell.

I'm still amazed (and shouldn't be at this point) at how our conversations have led us to this place of realising that our tuupuna - none of whom whakapapa directly to Kororaareka - would have been there together, would have known each other almost two centuries before we met. Synchronicities, nee?!

Maybe our ancestors drew us together, so we could tautoko one another as we learn our stories, and our place in them. I remember in the first week we met, we whispered to each other about our whakapapa. We both felt so unsteady in claiming our whakapapa because of all the ways we didn't feel 'Maaori enough'. It seems there are many ways to be Maaori.

We are on this journey together, by learning our reo and learning to whatu together. I don't know if my ancestors wove. If they did, it wasn't something that carried through the generations. I'm very grateful to people like Whaea Rose, who can teach us these taonga. I feel a strong desire to regain the practices that were lost in my family through assimilation,

migration and colonisation.

That's exactly how it feels, everything being drawn together. And on those carried skills, traditions, he taonga tuku iho... nothing was passed down to me in the traditional way. I've always been surrounded by making, by fibre, by knitting and stitching and other forms of weaving. My mother and grandmama supported this, helped me, passed down fabric and yarn and old Scottish boxes of thread. My nana has always made the most incredible, intricate bobbin lace, knitting, and embroidery work. I learned through watching her too, but never any traditional patterns, or to work with harakeke, with muka, how to whatu. There was a moment in waananga last year, while working on kaakahu, where I talked a little about Nana's lace, and the kaiako told me "well, that's tuupuna teaching your nana to weave in any way she can". This feeling of tuupuna present-ness is something I've become so aware of.

It's so special to feel their awhi while working with fibre. I feel it when I'm in the water, and speaking our languages, too. Wrapping my mouth around their words feels like time travel magic. I'm lucky to have many of their photographs and stories held in archives, but there is no portrait of Ruawahine, and nothing written by or about her that I know of. I wish I knew what she looked like. Generally, I know much more about the lives of the settler men I descend from than their indigenous wives. We must find other ways of coming to know them instead. I've been using Te Whare Pora as a space in which I can be with my ancestors. When I closed my whatu with karakia recently, tears ran down my face and my whole body began to tingle. That night in my dream Ruawahine's face began to take shape.

That's such an incredible experience, meeting your tupuna through Te Whare Pora, in dream space. I keep coming across these words or works or stories that talk to how museums, archives so rarely hold the voices of our tuupuna waahine. We have to turn to other forms of memory to speak with them. I'm reminded of all the times I've stumbled only to find myself guided. Working with threads, there feels like... similar to muscle memory but deeper, my fingers seem to know how the fibres should move and twist and knot even when I've never done this mahi before. And it's so humbling, as soon as my brain or ego get in the way I lose it again, because it isn't just me working. It feels like the lines of tuupuna, generational memory working through me, histories of weaving all layered up in now. And it might last only a moment, that certainty, but it's a moment across time.

I can't help but think of how you said all of your ancestors came here on the ocean. Mine did too - even those as recent as fifty years ago, my mother and grandmama came by sea on their first arrivals. Looking out now across the water, seeing the same sea Kotiro and Alexander would have seen, that Ruawahine and John would have seen. It's that same odd time-skip, that time travel magic.

Yes! I've begun haerenga to the many places my ancestors are from. There are many points of departure and arrival, always by the sea. Going to their whenua, being in their waters, is how I can come to know my mothers. Space and time are so often thought of as vastly separated, but I can feel the intricate connections weaving through them. These threads tie me to my ancestors, my ancestors to yours, and you to me. This process of untangling our whakapapa feels so much like learning to whatu.

I weave, I make mistakes, I undo, and I weave again.
My fingers ache, as does my heart.

That ache - I know it too, feel it with every missed stitch, every mistake, and every reconnection. It's like a constant missing, maybe, a loss being slowly filled. I wonder all the time if my tuupuna missed their homelands.

I know that it took generations for my own whakapapa lines to return to Taranaki, and by then there were other places of belonging all tangled up too. None of my Paakehaa ancestors ever returned to live in their first homelands. For some, they were already the descendents of settlers in other places, those first places of belonging many times removed. My grandmama grew up on the prairie, the grasslands in Saskatchewan. She never quite got the hang of the trees here, or living surrounded by ocean and the particular shades of green that the bush and takutai moana have. Whereas it's those exact things, those colours, that let me know I'm home.

It's funny that we whatu beneath Norfolk Pines. Apparently they're two hundred years old, which means there's every chance our ancestors sat beneath them too. I had a similar experience visiting the Tauranga mission station when I realised John Lees Faulkner walked along the same shell paths and beneath the same Norfolk Pines as I did, only six generations later. I imagine they are the kinds of trees he was nostalgic for, not the bush greens we were talking about earlier, but the kind we ached for in a bone-deep way while we were away.

Ae, again, it's that ache of missing. When I went to Scotland for the first time, I felt my heart go out. I lost my heart to the land there. It's an ancestral homeland after all, and it did feel a little like coming home, but my bones still ached for this home, for here. When I went back to Taranaki and visited Koru Paa, walked among stones laid by tuupuna a thousand years ago... it's a different feeling again. So often the heart is talked about as though it's the most important thing, but it's the bones that shape us, that hold us together.

Bones are my anchors. I've been seeking my ancestors' burial places as part of my haerenga. It feels important to visit them where I can, have a koorero and leave them a flower. That reminds me, I went to the settlers' cemetery when we stayed at your whare in Tongaporutu. Graveyards can tell you a lot about a place. There were two older Paakehaa couples. I overheard one of their exchanges about the water left at the gate. The wife asked her husband if he wanted any (he didn't). She put some on her hands,

saying, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do." I spoke to the woman from the second pair when we left the cemetery. I knelt to use the water, and asked if she would like some. She said, "I didn't touch anything but alright." I explained that washing hands after being on an urupaa breaks the tapu, so that we may return to noa.

"When in Rome, do as the Roman's"... there's something almost so flippant about that statement, and yet clearly so well meant - when of course it's obvious, as people who live on and with this land, we should all be learning and honouring the tikanga of the hau kainga. I often feel so like a child in my learning, baby steps. Remember when we stumbled at the wrong moment into a powhiri a while ago, not immediately recognising it out of the context of the marae? The kaumatua responded sternly, but the waahine, the kuia shook their heads at him and gave us awahi in our shaking horror. They knew, they recognised it. That knowing or beginning to know the tikanga, the reo, it's fundamental to that relationship, that reconnecting and that re-belonging.

Ae, my stomach still drops when I remember that moment. I felt so ashamed for not recognising and following protocol. This process of decolonising ourselves is difficult, joyous, life-long work. I think my interest in my ancestors' relationships stems from my desire for good settler-indigenous relationships now. We must understand the context and relationships from which Te Tiriti emerged. I dream of an Aotearoa where Maaori flourish through mana motuhake and are no longer being separated from their whakapapa and tuurangawaewae. Where the Crown honours Te Tiriti and returns the land, where tauwi are committed to being in right relationship with this whenua.

Maybe that's naive, but there is strength in our imaginings. Maybe our imaginings give us a way to unravel and re-weave the threads that bind us to our mahi, threads that have brought us here, to Te Whare Pora. There has to be the unravelling first, the acknowledgment of what went wrong - and then we weave again.