

TAROT

poetry for Aotearoa





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Cover art is part of Donald Patten's "Master Artworks in COVID Times" series. Donald Patten is an artist and cartoonist from Belfast, Maine. He creates oil paintings, illustrations, ceramics and graphic novels. His art has been exhibited in galleries throughout Maine. To view his online portfolio, visit his Instagram:

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TAROT



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Nature's Vow

Stephanie Hurley

Plumes of gold
slump against evening's hush,
heads bowed,
holding the sky's last ember.

Time folds in on itself,
as shadows gather
the day's remains—
world between thoughts.

In the silence,
toetoe wait
for dawn's bright breath
to rouse them from slumber,
murmuring new light
into being.

Full Moon and Lilac Sky

Hannah Griffin

You're so sweet
looking at me with those generous eyes
my fullness
somehow expanding further
overflowing somehow

You're singing
in my living room heart
I want more of it
your song you
your hands
on my keyboard
making music of me

You're resting
in my bedsheets mind
I don't know whether to wake you
I didn't know
the moon and the sky were a game until now
we play
lilac and gold dreaming
as we too
change
colours

room for a rainbow

Lisa Stanley

after the tears you notice my eyelids
& ask why the colour

i tell you it's eye shadow
something a bit different

you tell me you like my eyes normal,
& i guess “normal” works for me,

but now & then, son, i add the colour
just to show you what you can do

A passing calm

Grant Shimmin

The wind has finally found its peace
when dawn etches the sky
Birds sing sweet, urgent psalms
to the fleeting stillness
before the rowdy rush of day

A young spring

Ek. A. Butakova

A young spring spilled a cinnabar-coloured sunset across
the sky,
And the first violet flowers bloomed in the meadows. You
know
That violet and violent sound so alike, and I know.

The golden moon floats among the stars, as if on a
Kuindzhi canvas.
The artist set down his tired brush, leaving aside
mountains
and shores, Orion's smiles, lilacs, Eurus's flows.

His muse rang a gong and flew away
A thousand crows.

It carries

Prue King

tools to the worksite
branches for the bonfire
raked leaves to feed garden beds
young trees, stakes and spade for planting
soapy water for rancid dogs
fresh earth for the veggie plot
wood for nights by the fire
old bricks for new paths

I love my red barrow, a friend
for my natural burial.

Did you sleep like a log?

Gail Zing

Did you record the movement of insect wings,
a feather falling through the air, a cradle
in a giant's care, did you
hear the chewing worms sorting dirt,
the sooty scale showing honey to the bark, honey,
did you feel the sway and grow and hum
of mycelium lines sending out messages
for you and me and the short-tailed bat, it's time,
darling, for the wood rose
to flute its tune, rise up, rise
from the underworld, meet this fern,
this lily, this orchid sharing our space
like lovers, entwined, did you, my love,
did you dream the dream of a tree?

Listening to Mountains

Jinnette Oliver

I hear the mountains
making sounds
ancient sun scripts
casting shadows
that dance
moving with time
speaking to me
in a river that runs
through the valley
a concert of nature
faces in the cliff
eyes shining emotions
reflecting weather
across the water
telling stories
from the gods
telling me I am my
heart chamber
it has life in the
sounds of the river

It begins

Jackson

I arrange my shirts on the empty hangers
in my mother's side of the wardrobe.

The rail is a flange at the front of the shelf,
not a rod below it. I wonder if this

is a New Zealand thing. I drag shut
the wardrobe's bifold doors, scraping

the carpet. Above them, there's a gap.
That must let in dust, I mutter.

I unpack the favourite books I lugged
across the Tasman, set them up

on the shelf where my father kept
the stereo he bought after my mother died

and he really needed good sound.
The stereo's gone to his rest home room

with the other things his friends
(thank God for them!) decided he'd want:

the TV, some of his clothes, a few
of the photos and knick-knacks.

Since the call—Your dad's in hospital ...
helicopter ... a stroke ... we thought he was dead—

it's taken me three months to get here.
A doctor's letter to prove

compassionate reasons. Permission
to leave Australia. A visa. Flights to ghostly

international terminals. A fortnight's
isolation in Auckland. Three buses north ...

I sluice out the jug, boil it,
rinse a cup, find a teabag, sit

at the white plastic outdoor table
in the little living room,

make a list. Bread, salad, muesli,
oat milk, a tin of beans.

Nothing that has to be cooked—
not until I've scrubbed the pans.

In the carport, I gingerly start
my father's new red Swift,

with its crouched-cat shape
and high-winged name,

slowly back it out
of the awkward driveway.

I muff the hill start twice—
two stalls on the slippery gravel—

but eventually
I get going,

get up to speed

mycelial bodies

Elliot Harley McKenzie

for Jo

locked in the warm, dark closet of the womb
our splitting happens with an agonising tug,
like two silvery droplets pulled apart by
magnetic forces. Our mitosis begins in
tandem, so precisely mirrored at first until
we burrow separately and grow suspended
and rotating in rich fluid with our twin life
lines, twin cords binding us to her & bent
toward her hot rush of blood. our carbon
dioxide & our shit flows over the divide. our
fingers separate, our palms come together,
limbs brushing and tangling until the basin
of our urine spills, amniotic fluid draining to
earth. We are expelled one after another.
You witness the bright explosion of our slick
dancing bodies—faces twisted with the
displeasure of awakening.

But tell me how it tastes

Jessica Arcus

it looks like a bowing cactus on the sill
and an assortment of treasure-trash
strewn across the woollen rug
it looks like a swollen eye from the beak of a chicken
because I was actually inside the cage
and the big dog lolling on the sun-stained couch
despite it being against the rules
it looks like pink gin straight from the can
and making biscuits shaped like bones with the little at 5pm
it looks like a landslide of scree finally being released
and tumbling without grabbing for anything
it looks like my shoulders sitting lower
my fingers taken from all the pies
and being licked clean instead
and God it tastes good.

soup

Lauren Mae

soup is a pensive food
and i have been
thinking
up to my elbows
in french onion
roast tomato
chicken noodle

a wholesome activity
fulfills
(if you believe in placebo)

look at this bulb of garlic
the cloves are all friends
cuddling
i put them in the oven

the pot warps my reflection
chunks of pumpkin smile up at me
sweetly
i turn on the blender

no one is here to help me
break bread
mouldy sourdough
spews spores when it thuds into the bin

soup is a pensive food
and i have been
hoping
i haven't made too much

A Modern God

Kieran Haslett-Moore

I unload the dishes, carefully like a forensic pathologist,
each item is smeared with the earthly filth of its neighbours.
Pork fat and chili have found spiritual union
with muesli and custard.
I diligently rinse and scrub,
each arc of the Steelo a crown of roses.
Clean and dry, clean and serene,
I savour this moment of order.
A new dawn and I load the next soiled and scarred dishes
into the white box of faith.
I pray this time will be different.
This time the sins of the crockery
will be washed in the river of Jordan.
This time we will witness the miracle, just like in the adverts.
Cleanliness is after all, next to godliness.
But then again,
I am reminded,
here Satan reigns.

Once more over the sacred hill

Keith Nunes

Ascending Puketapu
Glide down the other side
Ribbon of black-lipstick road
Laid out in linear form
Divides grapes from hops
Riverside from hillside,
Glazed autumnal afternoon leaks into
Freezer-chill evening shot through with stars and bars alight,
Turbo under the hood,
Flecks of song,
Stare and smile, look away, look again,
Hand tucked inside heater-hot hand,
Arrhythmic beat in the chest.

Hospital suite

Tony Beyer

drip stands
nose tubes
gut bags
pressure stockings
the entire
mobile population
of Ward 4
excluding staff
is in the patients' lounge
watching *Shortland Street*

hospital is high drama
to them
the competition
for attention
the complaints about
unimportant matters
the being out of danger
for a while
also the possibility
of love

Across the reserve

Megan Clayton

Several of my dogs I named for ancestors.
I meant to confer love and dignity,
though concede this might not easily
be perceived. Dignity does not lick, hump

or urinate where forbidden. However,
dignity might wait outside to let the
breeze feather its ruff, or bob down
gently to receive head pats from an

excited child. And though my departed and
warmly eulogised might in a pinch
prefer the kindness of an aeon's rest to
the fuzzy duffers standing by the creek,

barking at reeds, they might not. Lord
knows I need them at the edges
of my days, and again in the
wandering slipstream of things that

are okay. It's me, I guess, calling the name
across the reserve of the ones who were
loved, of the new and silly ones now loved
so dearly. Look at this life, that in your

absence I make daily in your image.
Look at its ears. Look at its little tail.

Predawn, Bus Stop

Bee Trudgeon

Deep in dark-morning cauldron,
early birds are reduced to hunched figures,
bubbles of light.

In summer, we nod, smile, or even talk.
In winter, that's too intimate.
Our phones are our blankets.

I've been toughened
by memories of when alone
really meant that.

These days are like cream,
dripping from jabbing fingers and slack jaws.
I am overwhelmed by sweetness.

Subzero winter with underfloor heating

Jackson

This morning I tell myself:
you don't have to wish. Just notice.

There is the window I tried to seal with rags:
double glazing, warped metal frame.

There is the air purifier my housemate,
real name Song, helped me buy online.

There is the table: spider plant I'm watering,
desert dirt in a plastic pot.

There is the living-room wall: flower tapestry,
map of the 'Republic', red star, circumscribed territories.

There is the tiled floor,
warm under my feet where the pipes go.

Here are the membranes in my nose:
smell of burnt petroleum. Don't wish.

Yínchuān, China, February 2019

Tiny circles

Jessica Arcus

To be a child is to
put things in your pocket
without forethought
of possible staining;
I have scrubbed at the legs
but the blue of post-wash
wet collected confetti
remains.

I imagine it was worth it—
each tiny circle becoming
transcendent in your
little fingers, so how
could I begrudge this redemption?

I recall the story of
a woman/mother/wife
given an electric washing machine—
save her time, no more hand wringing,
but she said: no, I'm not
hand-wringing, worry has no place

here, what I am doing as I
thread each piece of baptised clothing
through the tight lips of the wringer is
to open mine, transform the washing into
a rosary of wet fabric
as long as my family

And now I'm thinking
how we are always trying
to save time
but for what?

Linger

Amy Johnstone

You walk a little out of your way,
Wait for the water to evaporate from our skin,
You leave a little coffee in your cup,
We linger.
I sit a little longer in your car,
I'm not quite ready to go,
You don't hurry me along,
You make another joke,
And we linger.
We wait until our last stretch to prod the unspoken,
We dance around our truths nervously,
Then abruptly we run out of street,
I have to go my way,
You pull into the intersection,
We linger one last time.

*A poem that was supposed to
be about moving out is brutally
overpowered by Jenny Bornholdt*

Jay Lee-Guard

Long skirts and cigarettes on someone's balcony,
accessed via the window.

A lack of proper chairs—leading to
beanbags in the sun, before suddenly
too many chairs and no tables.

Reading Jenny Bornholdt and writing like her,
just to try.

Realising how subtle her writing is, meaning
hidden by simplicity and words about road trips.

Nouns and verbs cognate in the sun
or something like that.

\$50 grocery shops, and always
back up the hill before bedtime.

A sea view without a salt breeze:
citrus sparks in the air,
complacency slowly creeping in.

Trying to push on, but taking the wind
out of my own sails.

The hill is more difficult to climb
than I give it credit for.

Living going on elsewhere too,
but being here now.

It's Nice Outside

Allan J. Manson

I looked out the window and there I saw it
A day so fine you couldn't dream it
I almost got up from the couch
to wake you

almost

Breaking the morning
with the frost between us
seemed a cold, cruel thing,

when it's nice outside.

Heartwood Services

Lee Fraser

Green tea, marmalade toast,
Robert Plant and Kate Bush's duet.
Briefcase—wide hat, knee mat,
clipboard, pamphlets, tissues.
Nametag—Lea Fraiser, Tree Psychologist.

First stop: surface roots on saplings
at Central Otago dry stack build site.
It may be stone fragments in the soil.
If this anti-schistamine doesn't work,
do reach out again; could be a fear of depths.

Phil Chloro, landscaper,
can't stop trunk sprouts.
See the bamboo over there?
This tree's got competitive.
Find its strongest branch; attach a swing.

Neighbour rings. While away,
her bonsai conifer moved itself
to lean against the window.
It's a pine thing.
Try spruce; been known to do light dusting.

Last stop: office privacy hedge
still grows only sideways.
Nothing I can do;
it's that rosemary.
Replace the hedge or address the affair.

At dinner, friend ponders their preschool's feijoa tree
fruit round, fuzzy, brown.
New ABC poster at nearby window?
They're jealous plants. Move the chart
so 'K for Kiwifruit' is out of sight.

Fill in work log, more loose-leaf green.
Job requests for tomorrow:
a dogwood with coarse bark.
A fir, needles all turned brown near a grooming salon.
A lancewood that tilts at night.

Bridle Path

Grant Shimmin

Port Hills, Christchurch

Walking back the footsteps of the colonists before breakfast
up the nearest thing I have to a maunga
The Bridle Path... to the Summit Road
to the bird's-eye-viewed natural harbour below
There's a concert in full swing
The bellbird and highway concerto
Korimako and rolling cargo
Pitch-perfect notes and throaty roars
Nature's subtle artistry, humankind's blunt industry

The pīwakawaka, tail fanned
like a feathered poker hand
is the triangle player in this improv ensemble
high-pitched pings punctuating the score's humming baseline
The bellbird is on lead violin
stringing out tunefulness above the piston-pumped discord
and I'm in the orchestra too
blood drumming in major ...
vessels, as the scale ascends

Now the warbler plays a stirring flute solo
that runs, and trills, and floats
on the dawn's gentle air
It's virtuoso from the riroriro
that transcends accompaniment
Though the magpies slide in briefly on viola
alongside appreciative bleats
from watching sheep in front row seats

There's a breathless lull now
less the climb than the view
The settlers stood here, or near enough
but from their colonial perspective
there was no highway hum, distant but persistent
or the deeper parallel track, going subterranean
not even bleats from the expensive seats
Bar the wind and rain, the horses' harrumphs
and their children's exhausted cries
all they heard was this avian a cappella arrangement
Astounding

Card Shark

Jim Murdoch

You have to play with the hand you're dealt.
but in my experience

Life often deals from the bottom of the pack
and uses marked cards

so, I watched her like a hawk as she tossed me

- The Hanged Man
- The Five of Pentacles
- The Three of Swords and
- The Eight of Cups.

Fair dues. Trouble is we were supposed to be
playing gin rummy.

Gain

Jim Murdoch

...from Old French *gain, gaaigne* “gain, profit, advantage; work, business; booty”

I thought he liked playing games.

Not so much, he countered.

Winning’s what I enjoy.

*Games are merely
a means to an end.*

So, what’s winning? I asked.

*Technically, it’s only winning—
it only counts as winning—
if you play by the rules;
otherwise, it’s simply booty.*

A rose by any other name then?

It fills a hole.

Form’s not substance,

but substance

can take on many forms—

some more substantial than others.

Farm Girl

Sadie Yetton

My father took me to a farm
to make a son out of me. I
could not run as fast as the
lambs and he frowned. I
could not watch them being
shot and he shouted. When
he handed me a gun I was
sickened. When I pulled the
trigger he saw me shrink.
Because it was never in my
nature to wield a weapon
against it. He sent me to sleep
in a one-bedroom barn, but
I was not one child—I was
a thousand different daughters.

To Kill an Agapanthus

Kieran Haslett-Moore

Sweet Lilly of the Nile,
agent provocateur,
red flag scourge,
immortal warrior of empire,
or so it seems,
your death will not be easy.
They say cockroaches
in an aggie bush
will be the last survivors
of nuclear winter...
Thou shall be vanquished,
thou shall die.
This is garlic around my neck,
and is this a hammer and stake
I see before me?
The blood will run green,
across the berm,
and the righteous shall rejoice,
and sacred toasts will be raised
to your demise. Forever
we will remember the day,
the agapanthus died.

Parihaka in the rain

Timothy J Martin

Mountains
Always look taller
Half shrouded in mist
You
Just look a little broken
As a tear
Slips down your cheek

Rain falls on the just
And the unjust
They say
Well I say it comes in a torrent
Enraged
And
Without discrimination
Washes it all away

And sometimes
Just sometimes
I see through the murk
With clarity
And know what comes next

But most of the time
I'm just swimming
To reach the far bank
To stop for breath
Before the rain clouds came

Waitangi Day

Lee Fraser

A found poem in Kiwi song titles

Slice Of Heaven
Out Of Love

The Queen's English
A Thing Well Made
History Never Repeats

Pressure Man
Bursting Through
Into Temptation
Persuasion
Be Mine Tonight
Not Given Lightly?
No Way To Decide

It's Only Natural
Wandering Eye
Silver and Gold
Machine Talk
Cruise Control
Now We're Getting Somewhere
One Step Ahead
Can't Get Enough

Problems
Fraction Too Much Friction
Whispers and Moans
How Bizarre
Sweet Disorder
Take It Easy
Pacifier?

World Where You Live
Fade Away
Locked Out
Distant Sun
Hole In the River
Wild Wind
Misty Frequencies
Can't Carry On

Dark Days
Chains
Something So Strong
I See Red
Don't Dream It's Over
Good In My Head
Loyal
Sorry
I Hope I Never
Roll Into One
Without You

Share the Info
Breakthrough
Touch the Floor
Anchor Me
Beside You
Love You Like I Should?
Don't Give It Up

Kaitiakitanga

Lee Fraser

Control,
how you hold
our clout, our want.

Roll out, crank out, count on
the luck of
one cut, one road, one crow,
touting a loaned crown;
routing a cloaked law;
talking a hollow lot of *know*.
What of the whole role, all
the old unnoted?

Now the rot:
clock run out of luck.
Our looking, acting out
on unknown,
not counting on
the turn, the crack of rock
a knock: the croak of one who
woke—low, hot—to haul the toll owed.

Woe cannot halt the knot, no
atoning on our own; locked out
of control.

Relevant Silk Road¹ Statistics

Lee Jane Taylor

Autoimmune symptoms are not eligible for public
healthcare without a specific diagnosis—
a cocoon is made up of a single thread of silk
300–900 m long—
GPs are often unable to diagnose autoimmune
disease due to the complexity
of multi-system illness presentations—
88% is the survival rate of metamorphosing silk
worms -
8 years is the average time from onset of
symptoms to diagnosis—
adult Bombyx do not eat or drink having emerged
white and ghostlike from
liquification they live a kind of afterlife in which
wingbeats
 x quicken soft as radio frequency radiation
measured in hertz—
3-4 days is the lifespan of an adult Bombyx
moth—
1hertz equals 1 event per sec—
autoimmune disorders predominantly affect
women of childbearing age—
computer speeds, musical tones and the energy of
a photon
can be measured in hertz—
bombyx larvae live for around one lunar cycle
before pupating—
the appropriate measurement for hurts is
unknown—

y

*where x equals duration of symptoms and y equals impact adjusted
by vulnerability.*

(Figure 1:) Relative Difficulty

¹ “Old Silk Road Disease” refers to a group of autoimmune conditions first encountered by Europeans on the historical trading route.

Inside a room

Amanda Faye Martin

Before, the whole world was mine
& I moved through it
Quickly
& hungrily
Things took on meaning fast
& lost meaning
Fast
Like air moving through my skirt
On a warm night
In India
Off to meet friends
I no longer remember their names
& now
I remember everything
Today his eyes are blue & grey
Steel
He is slowly flaking off his lizard skin
He smells like my breast milk
(or maybe my breasts smell like him)
I am fine
& then suddenly flooded with anxiety
I put him on my naked chest
& his breathing slows
With mine
His father sits beside us
& holds my hand
My whole self has expanded into
These 2 other bodies
Everything is different
Especially the things that were always true
The whole world is mine
It just now fits
Inside in a room

Things I hate now

Amanda Faye Martin

Pumping

Pumping

Pumping

Pump parts

Cleaning (& drying) said parts

Pumping

Getting like 4 drops from said

Pumping

Actually

Everything else is fine

In the palm of a hand

Brooke Soulsby

before you, I had guts—
the walk across the room | the greeting |
sheepish flirt | then | the onset
of yearning | the side-eye | the *go cry*
in the bathroom | there's laughing |
I hear it | but it's caught in the throat

I ask the mirror | the screen plugged
into my irises burning | the screen
fused to my melting fingertips | it seems
I've slipped | into the void
of your pixel glare

what we talk about | you hear
an ad | you send me
people I don't know
are performing away | you have
captured | a generation

try to log out—

but where are my hands? | don't
have guts | and what about
parts? | where are you
storing us? | these fists are full |
of others | who are *you*? |

Germ

Prue King

She veered, the beech tree glen deep green.

Hell, he heckled.

He'd rendered her better.

He remembered when they met,
the beery September weekend.

She, cheery: her nerve, her verve,
her freshness, her cherry
red dress. Her teeth.

Feck, sexy.

She tempted, he delved her,
embedded her; they neglected sense.

He remembered her text, then
the recent letter, the news, the theme.

Hey, here's hemp, here. He knelt.

Wrecked, she wept.

He leered, deemed her extremely less.

Her egg, her jewel;
the member, the pecker,
the helmet he'd lent her.

Men felt less. Nevertheless,
he'd been netted, hemmed,
cemented even.

He merely sees me.

He regretted her.

Lend less, he jeered.

He seethed. He resented her.

He rejected her.

He referred her needless, ethered, fevered mess
between the tweezers.

Wretched, she'd never mend.

FAT WORDS

Amanda Faye Martin

i used to say fat words
sloppy naked things
like love & soul & god

i handed them over like we were playing hot potato
i said oh god, please, my hands are burning
take these from me
relieve me of them
i watched them slip out of your hands
i watched them crack & leak
& become clichéd shells of what they were
nothing but wordswordswords
maybe they were too big to hold
and it was cruel of me to ask you to take them

so i learned to use other kinds of words
i buy them at the clown store
i buy the cheapest ones i can find
i pass around jack-in-the-box toys
tiny ghosts of myself
hidden inside their plastic walls

& i'm happier like this
i swear
like i used to be sad
when i'd feel *bigness* at my fingertips
& have no way to grasp the bounty before me
when i'd try to open myself to divinity & let it cry its truths
through me
but—
how can i speak when i am constantly learning new things
 not to say?
Oedipus didn't continue to sleep with his mum
after he learned the truth
so just
gouge my fucking eyes out
i'm happier like this
or at least
i don't dream about you
anymore.

Summary Table of Pupation

Lee Jane Taylor

(qualitative Silk Rd Disease¹ progression data)

Adrift, our divorced	— —	mana mislays us	— —	in empty wells our
friendships fraying	— —	so slow drained and	— —	cognitive breakages
decry lucidities	— —	scooped from scope	— —	of relational flakery
in security untied	— —	tides of me, you, us	— —	in bio-sabotage lie—
wait patiently please	— —	dis-occupy roles	— —	be ever compliant
uncivilise in private	— —	re-wild, bewildered	— —	in symptom cocoons
submit, submit, submit	— —	to regimented habit	— —	a critical unspooling
—you sense its rip—	— —	bodily liquid-fiction	— —	has now begun—
cell by cell undoing	— —	on the Silk Way—	— —	Do not hold on.

(Figure 2:) Prognosis Is Dependent on Accepting Change.

¹ “Old Silk Road Disease” refers to a group of autoimmune conditions first encountered by Europeans on the historical trading route.



At Hikuwai Beach Carpark

Hannah Griffin

The ocean wind shook her car
it was as if she were in the waves

she wished to be taken away with them
her heart an enclosed vessel

she longed
to be swayed
and shaken

over and under the whitewater

disintegrated and
rearranged

and to wake up
whole
in a different world

Beeswax

Yael Thomas Cameron

The scent of honey in the air mingled with smoke
Shifting bodies with their weight of warmth
there's no light in between
just darkness simulating the birth of the world

Sound, hushed and dampened
inseparable from the trailing glance of thread and nails
the brush of skin, heated, melted wax on paper
the fullness that time falls into—
A hazy abyss brimming with wants and can't have
the years pass here
yet, it has only been a moment since her lips spoke
divine commandments against my neck

My dry vagina

Jinnette Oliver

My dry vagina
is like a tin can
of orgasms
that I can't cut through
the bureaucracy
and exponent of
its function.

Pavlova with cream?
lost in the reeds.
Sunday morning
peacock dress.

I read a 434-page book
on the energy field
of an orgasm
organising facts on the
petal of potence.

Washing it in tropical flowers
yellow, white, and green
absorbing their lingering buds
from my head to my feet.

Watching within like frogs eyes
from another universe
seeing heated energy fields
swimming out loud.

Charles Bukowski melody
in chimes of metal
incense smoke
scratching my brain
decoding mantras
five times a day
building my own temple.

An ancient script
beats into me its chant
a timeless raw of
unity in every nerve,
nucleus and cell.

Among the collective
eusocial creatures
blindly sucking nectar
from the flowers you
forbid breeding when
I am their queen.

want

Lauren Mae

i.

i want to lick the sweat from between your shoulder blades
i will my tongue to reach
from under you / over you / between your thighs

we've quit scissors and blades
growing wild between legs and in damp armpits
and stealing breath from each other's mouths
until we crash into sleep

ii.

last night i dreamt that you let me
peel your sunburnt skin with my teeth
i collected the cobweb thin layers
left them to harden in a jar on the mantle

there are hearts in my desk drawer
i am always Mary
and i have to feed my monster
though hope should not be fed to wild things
or writer things
or things with pupils the size of Jupiter

i am not on drugs i just love you
and everyone else (according to my pupils)

iii.

yes i dream of you
my mind can't imagine new faces
and yours was the last one i thought of
not because i love you
because i want to wear your skin
carry your fleshy carcass to the seaside
so that you may feel the waves
unencumbered
by external organs.

Subtle

Jessica Arcus

As if it could finally
burn away this want,
I make subtle passes
at the hot, pulsing sun.

Subtle like my body is
unzipped and flapping
in a gust.

Subtle like taking forty
selfies in search of an
(in)accurate reflection and
someone is catching me in
real-time.

I am practically levitating,
pulsing *take me*
with all the non-chalance
of a dog who has spied her best
friend lacing up running shoes.

I am only human after all
born to worship something—
desire etched from skull to
ribs to heel and back again,

every hair on my body
that has been left long
is tasting something,
like tiny snake tongues
flicking.

Some Kind of Sensation

Chantelle Van Vuuren

In a wild state she runs untamed,
barefaced and on guard
barefoot in the backyard beneath the sycamore trees
barely a scratch on her knees
bares teeth at rustling leaves
to show she's not fearful
she's ready for just about anything

except limitation

expect push back on conversation

accept she's unfazed by agitation

would fight tooth and nail
for some kind of sensation
sometimes she sinks teeth into the feeling that maybe
a life of abandon has slowly escaped her
just slipped out of reach

every moment of aging

weighs something monumental

place hand on heart racing
and feel body failing
that soft light is fading
watch oceans outpace
and then waste your time wading and wading and wading
and waiting.

Everywhere

Devon Webb

I'm at the movies & the end credits song moves through me
I linger as I listen then realise when it ends
that the internet exists & I can look it up
I loop it as I leave & take an unnecessary detour down Cuba Street
& on towards the grocery store & I'm so
stoned my whimsy's at odds with the fluorescence
& there are angel numbers everywhere
on my chicken tenderloins & I think of you
I think of you as I pull peppermint tea from the shelves
I think of you like you are everywhere like God
I think of you as the song loops & loops & loops like I've always known it
& as I stand on the step outside putting on my winter coat
I'm a sensed movement & you're the automatic door ever-opening

danny

Amelia Kirkness

it was the year of loneliness and video calls.
everyone was doing it back then.

my world shrank so i deconstructed
the concept of friendship
remade it in a way that included him,
got halfway to remaking myself.

it feels gauche to name what he did to me
so i don't. easier, or funnier, instead, to mythologise:
dead husband lost at sea. evil penpal. big bad wolf.

when he was good, i found him endlessly endearing:
wonky painter, bedroom dancer,
tall boy walking a very small dog.
boy, i say. 21 was not a boy.
in the years since we've spoken,
i've turned his age. he'll have become 26.

now all i have to show for it is
fun facts about the country of Finland and
half of year 12 barely remembered and
the fact that i have seen Donnie Darko. lol.
i blocked him one week after moving cities.
i live out his fears.
there's nothing more to be done.

Witch suit

Megan Clayton

When I was very young
and my mother told me
not to lie,

I thought this novel
spell I'd cast
was something unique to me.

So when my little friend
Eloise
said how when we grew up

she was going to get a
witch suit
and she was going to

kill me,
never for a moment
did I think this wasn't true.

It's been a while now,
Eloise,
and the leaves are falling.

My hair is frizzy
and my hands are chapped.
I think this might be

our season.
The calendar says
the moon is in Korekore,

and to go slow, old friend.
We can do this
how we want.

We can do this
on the page
or in the forest.

The Omen and Incantation

Kieran Haslett-Moore

There have been pīwakawaka inside all week.
fluttering around with a bright happy nonchalant air,
oblivious to the dark tidings they impart on the world
down below.

I dreamt I was on the edge holding on for dear life.
He dreamt he killed Simon with a forklift gone rogue.
When I awoke my hand hurt like hell
from holding myself up in the world.
It's getting worse, swelling and becoming less mobile.
Ill omens made flesh, my flesh and creaky bones.

* * *

In Wī Parata Reserve, along a cool path beneath the
widow makers
and Ruru nests, a pīwakawaka alighted between me and
the dog.

The bird sang a prayer to me in a language I did not know,
sweet but haunting. Its deep black eyes sparkled wise
and calming under the forest ceiling.

The nature of the hunt was momentarily quelled
by the bird's ancient lullaby,
irrepressible bloody desire forgotten in the moment of
calm.

An incantation that paused the world, my world and the
kuri's fire.

The Lake

Timothy J Martin

The lake shore has a hard L-bend here
An ochre bank scarred by excavator talons
A topographical broken bone
Where the embankment
That dammed the Waiarohia
Met the hillside
And drowned this stream-cut forest valley
Regimented grassy banks
Holding back
Its waters

This lake breathes
Inhaling through the winter wet
Waters rising
To almost meet
A palisade of kanuka
Flaky-barked trunks guarding the terrestrial realm
Khaki-feathered reflections jostling for space
Manuka petals drift down and alight
Joining a drift of a thousand white boats
Pushed by a needly southerly to where water meets soil
And casts them up to alight on green-velvet cushions of
Campylopus

Exhaling through parched summers
When its waters feed faucets and cisterns
In the town below
Exposing silty banks
Blackened rotting stumps
Exposed radial roots
Once buried boulders
Miniscule swords of *Glossostigma*
Adrift with mauve constellations
A muddy gap traversed by a water snail
Leaving silty drunken pathways in its wake.

Piopio

Sarah Kessell

An old friend
Waits by the concrete steps
We start talking
Her small brown eyes sparkle
A little bird
Stops by my feet
Beak too thick
To be a thrush
We watch as
One piopio became many
They took flight
Blocking the sun in seconds
The sight inspires
A hokioi's ambition within
They quickly vanished
Into the swirling grey clouds
And we're reminded
Of the piopio's doomed fate.

I wake up
The dream repeating itself
The hokioi's ambition
Merges with the pouakai's rage
My friend passed
She departed like the piopio
For their sake
I will continue the fight
In hopes history
Shall not imitate the dream.

The selfishness of children

Gail Zing

Mother,
once
you held
my body inside
your belly, a fluttering cocoon.
I grew and grew and grew and grew,
absorbing your bread and honey, little fingers clutching
your long cord, my life.
You had to let me go, shedding me with 1000 tears and kisses,
to face a different mother than you—shrunk.
She loved me well, until
I flew away
and left
her
too.

Riverside

Allan J. Manson

Upon this river I shall build my
home
for me and my kid
or no kid
or kids
or one-day-kid

or maybe it'll just be us
me and you
sitting on stones and pebbles
as water rushes around us
and it gets cold.
Cold.
Cold.
Cold.

Or maybe not
maybe it's just me
with frostbitten fingers wrapped around
what's left of our
usness.
or oneness.
or twoness.
now
noneness.

Maybe I'll stand up;
dust the water off my coat
go down to the pub
looking for happiness

or something to make me the happiest
or something to make me smile
like drugs
or the way we used to be
but we both know that none of that comes
for free
so I'll stay broke

close my eyes and never be
awake in the river-lands
at least, I guess, that's a plan.

or maybe I should make a plan
to grow the fuck up and be a man
to quit bitching
and quit writing
about my dead kid
I'll curl my knees to my chest
and try my goddamn best
to be a man
drink till the feelings die
living life on the riverside.

Inertia

Loredana Podolska-Kint

Sometimes, I have to remind myself
that there is poetry in the brain,
but that coral-white on your glass-grey scan
doesn't tickle metaphor,
nor does seeing you, prawn-like,
in linen swells.

Tides shift, shifts change, but you're still
parched and powerless,
clinging to life like a barnacle,
defying educated guesses.

Where is your poetry? Who
distills your pearly essence
who will chart your syringe driver,
watch for the dawn of a half-smile beyond curtains deep,
poetry? I'll write it, if you show me how to sleep.

Weathering, with two vignettes

Brooke Soulsby

Thinking back, I mostly recall the humidity—
that steady stream of reverse-rain defusing
over the whenua, frizzing my thick
Celtic mane; the sodden, yellowing armpits
of my school uniform.

I see football practice at seventeen—
drops falling like a parallelogram, heavy,
defining and re-defining in the high-beams,
funnelling down the neck of my top,
straight into my boots.

*

These days I rely on chilblained extremities
to runically predict the onslaught. Yielding
more accuracy than the weather app—
and despite all that, I am back at the bus stop
backpack heaving—a six-year-old again.

July's effervescence paints my skin
blue to purple; beneath stretched shirtsleeves
and corduroy trousers left too long on the line
during odd three-day spells of all wind no rain—
muscles taut and groaning; kneecaps newly tender;
eyelids crisping pink; hair going grey, or white—
oh god, how we love to complain.

A last last word

Mary Cresswell

real or imagined, don't leave me regrets
at the end of the day, there should be no regrets

smooth over the rough bits, iron them out
forget both the big and the little upsets

the harsh light of reason outlines us all
our best-designed figures are mere silhouettes

when sooner or later we get tired of games
we see there's no point in hedging our bets

it's a farce to pull strings in a world full of frets
remember that each of us deserves what she gets

Stroke

Mary Cresswell

little Bo Peep
has her sheep
and where
to them
them alone
and they'll
their tails
home
behind them

Raindrops or Everything is impermanent if you look closely enough

Baxter Kamana-Williams

The pane is crowded
with the first drops
of golden rain
in the angled twilight
of a fading summer day.

The pain of knowing
all this is just
a fleeting spark
in the empty nothing
of the endless cosmic dark.

Blood rites

Elliot Harley McKenzie

Under the sun, through the dry wrinkled streambed,
a dead rabbit is nestled so sweetly in the grass. Dried
blood, exposed ribs, an explosion of fur, missing eyes,
maggots writhing in the cavity where its organs would
have rested. The hot scrunch of gravel & the soft bend of
stems, seeded pink heads bumping in the wind. My cup
is overflowing already & we're only part way through the
morning. I slick the earth with my blood. Wild clover,
delicate mosses. The forest is loamy and lonely. We walk
down to the river. Strip to our underwear. Frolic in the
fast flowing current. Rinse dinner dishes to lazy birdsong.
A weka picks her way through the long grass towards
us. The next morning, I leave a long streak of blood on
the inside of the long drop. Clouds bear down on the
mountains. Framed by incessant blue, recession at the
peak. The mourning mists roll down like a tide in reverse.

Purification

Elena Philp

A storm lashes at the pool of my being—
sediment stirred from turgid depths
hail, stabbing a once blue surface to
a boiling brown mess

All was well before you came!
tranquil surfaces undisturbed
but on you beat and strike
relentless shower of aqueous spears
—for quite some time
Hours and years
water spilling everywhere
to nourish other fields

Now the rhythm softens, quietens—
soft pitter-pattering taps on the
emerging surface
golden rays peek over lightening clouds
All is quiet and calm

The pool is still—
surface once more blue
restored it seems but
there's more

The murky depths are purged—
stagnation driven out
Impurities unseen before
washed clean

Crystalline waters shimmer
above and below the oasis
—where love may show

Slow Boat

Bee Trudgeon

I'm drunk, I'm high, I'm shooting smack.
Take my rare pressing of 'Jean Genie'.
I don't want my records back.

No more *Blue Lines*, Massive Attack.
Take Kristin Hersh, blues in 'Houdini'.
I'm drunk, I'm high, I'm shooting smack,

Kurt's ashes in a bear backpack,
rip off my 'Rebel Girl' Bikini.
I don't want my records back.

Keep *Songs About Fucking*, Big Black,
In Utero, Dry, Steve Albini.
I'm drunk, I'm high, I'm shooting smack,

'Pavement Saw' gives me heart attacks,
recycle my '50-Foot Queenie'.
I don't want my records back.

Soundgarden, Sonic Youth, Shellac,
Chills, Cult, Cure, Pink Martini.
I'm drunk, I'm high, I'm shooting smack.
I don't want my records back.

6 weeks

Amanda Faye Martin

for hōhepa te tuaono (poem #1)

it's the particular green of it
against a particular blue
covered by a semi-permanent haze
you could show me a photo of anywhere in Aotearoa
& it's the same—
a green & blue
that immediately feels like home

i whakapapa to people who would not know the name of
their maunga
who could not point in the direction of any awa
perhaps if they had been able to stay in their
tūrangawaewae
they might have been able to
or perhaps if they had been less afraid
had fewer reasons to be afraid
they would have let their feet sink in somewhere new
& let other maunga stir their hearts & become known.
perhaps they would have been able to point to more than
a few people & think “whānau”

here, i do not share blood but i am “auntie”

i never knew what people meant when they said they
loved a child before they were born
i thought maybe they were actually loving an idea
of something that could be
but i think it's more about
loving them, those few cells
as they are, now

& the more i think about it
the more i know it's true
that no matter how small your life or short
i will be able to say that i loved you
not just for what you will be or could have been
but for showing me what i had seen before
but never felt so deeply to be true—
which is that the life i built was made to be shared.
that the love & support & joy expressed at the very fact of
your existence

are the very circumstances that made me want you in the
first place
i did not want you in a nucleus
but in a wide network of blood and not-blood

yes—it's clear to me now
i designed this life for me
but want nothing more than to give it to you
& nothing more than for you to see
this green & blue
your aunties & uncles
& how much you are already part
of the whānau

Dawn

Baxter Kamana-Williams

Rosy fingers grip the Eastern edge
of the grey Pacific sky,
their grip first tentative, then stronger,
as the last stars retreat
from the colouring heavens.

Waves glimpse the pink-and-gold ensemble
for brief foaming moments,
before spilling
onto a cold canvas of damp sand.

Above the waters,
the edges of windows
glow with the first electric light,
switched on by fumbling hands
still warm with the dregs of sleep.

Bodies roll out of beds and onto cold floors;
rooms fill with light and sound
as steam rises from showers
and the smell of coffee fills the heavy air.

A door slams
and an engine sputters to life;
soon the roads are thick
with throbbing hunks of metal,
each slicing the dawn
with twin sabres of light.

This is how a city wakes:
first slowly,
then all at once.

Kids these days

Jan Pihama

It's raining, the sky is black
and she's walking around the library on her lunch break,
not really looking for anything
just something to do.

It makes her think of her 20s,
when she worked split shifts
and would nap in the library on her breaks.

Which makes her think of the time it snowed in the city—
the tiniest white flakes falling from the sky,
screaming and giggling with her flatmate
sticking out her tongue.

Which makes her think of the nights out—
the boys,
and the girls.
The kisses and the arguments.
The night thirty people sat outside a bar on Devon Street
and cheered on a couple rooting in the
apartment across the road.
Like it was Broadway
her heels flying in the air.

And the kids these days are just butterflies with their
wings clipped
with love apps,
and basement podcasts,
and PTSD.

God damn.
God damn.
God damn.

Déjà vu

Jan Pihama

Like a magnet finding an attraction—
you could find me anywhere.

You find me in the darkest grottos of my mind
and dive into the depths of me.

You find me with force and thunder,
blow down my walls like you're the wolf in that story.

You find me when I don't want to be found,
twist me like a roll-up around your index finger.

You find me, and time is suspended—
for two eternities
then speeds up like déjà vu
just to make sure I'm not late for work.

You find me like roots find soil.
Like it's not just a want but a need.

Like I'm the food and you're the hunger.
Like I'm joy and you're yellow.
Like I'm life—
and you think it's worth living.

Poet Biographies

Jessica Arcus Jessica Arcus is a poet from Ōtautahi who is compelled to give voice to the quiet and overlooked things—watching for divine presence in the day-to-dayness of life. She has been published widely and has recently released her debut poetry chapbook *Counterweight*. Find her @jessica.arcus

Tony Beyer continues his writing life in Taranaki.

Ek. A. Butakova (Ekaterina Butakova) is a Russian writer and poet who currently resides in Rome, Italy, where she enjoys the culture, architecture, and pasta. Several times a year, she takes selfies at the Colosseum—it's a tradition.

Yael Thomas Cameron is a poet and educator based in Aotearoa. Her work explores longing, memory within the mythic undercurrent of language. Her poetry has been published in journals: *Meniscus*, *Stylus*, *French Literary Review*, *Swamp* and *Tarot*. She teaches at AUT and writes between pedagogy, ritual, and resistance.

Megan Clayton (she/they) writes and performs from Sockburn, Ōtautahi and works in higher education. Poems and essays by Megan have been published in journals and collections in Aotearoa and Australia.

Mary Cresswell is a retired science editor (natural history) who turned to poetry in self-defense. She has had poems published in NZ, Australian, UK, US and Canadian journals, and she lives in Waikanae Beach.

Lee Fraser is from Aotearoa New Zealand and uses poetry for nerding out about life's fascinating details, for emotional archaeology, and comic relief, sometimes simultaneously. In 2024-2025 she's had 45 pieces published, including in *Meniscus*, *Micro Madness* and *Poetry Aotearoa Yearbook*. She placed fourth in the 2024 NZ poetry slam.

Hannah Griffin is a poet who lives in Pōneke Wellington. She draws inspiration from her relationships with people and with place.

Kieran Haslett-Moore is a poet, writer and brewer who hails from South Wellington, New Zealand. Descended from migrants from the South and West Country of England, he lives in Waikanae on the Kāpiti Coast with a terrier named Ruby.

Stephanie Hurley is a writer and English teacher based in Manawatū, New Zealand. She is passionate about all things creative—in particular, using writing to examine the world around her. Her work has been published in *Tarot*, *Mote*, *Chortle*, and *fiftywordstories.com*.

Gail Zing is an award-winning writer and author of three collections, including *Some Bird*, selected for Best NZ Books 2024 by *The NZ Listener*. Published widely in Aotearoa and overseas, when she's not dreaming up poems, she's editing them at the kitchen table or teaching them at Write On School for Young Writers in Ōtautahi.

Jackson lives in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Their fourth collection, *A coat of ashes* (Recent Work Press), is based on their award-winning PhD thesis. In 2021, they moved to Aotearoa from Australia, where they are well known as a poet and performer. They were born in Cumbria, England. writerjackson.com; facebook.com/writerjackson; Instagram: [@thewriterjackson](https://www.instagram.com/thewriterjackson)

Lee Jane Taylor Lee is a poet, mother and former psychologist, of Scots-Māori/Pākehā ancestry (Kāi Tahu, Polish), who lives with health disability. She is currently studying literature at Massey. See more at *Tarot Poetry*, *Aotearoa Yearbook*, or SkyHousePoetry.com

Amy Johnstone (she/her) lives in Te Whanganui-a-Tara and likes to be outside, on her bike or in the sea as much as possible. She writes policy by day and is exploring writing personal essays and poetry by night.

Baxter Kamana-Williams (he/him) reads and writes poetry in Ōtautahi. You can find his poems in *a fine line* and *Tarot*. He also works at the University of Canterbury | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, where he researches and teaches about sustainable energy systems. [@b_xt_r](https://www.instagram.com/b_xt_r) on instagram

Sarah Kessell is a beginner author and poet from Wellington Te Whanganui-a-Tara. She often writes whenever she's not at her part time job or thrifting. She's the mother of two rambunctious cats who like getting into trouble. She has poems published under *New Zealand Poetry Magazine/Poetry World* and *Neon Origami*. Her short story 'The Waimanu's Ghost' is included in issue 11 of *Suburban Witchcraft*.

Prue King is published in many poetry anthologies, most recently *London Grip*, *Kokako* and *Fast Fibres*. She's also written flash, stage plays and a parenting book for new dads. Prue lives in the luxuriant far north of New Zealand where she's edited an anthology of local writers' work. Read more at bywordsnet.wordpress.com

Amelia Kirkness is a Pōneke-based writer, bookseller, and English Literature student. Her work has been featured in publications like *Starling*, *The Spinoff*, *bad apple*, and *a fine line*. She is one of the editors of *Symposia*, and in 2025 is co-editing the New Zealand Poetry Society's international anthology.

Jay Lee-Guard lives in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara where they write sporadically about what they see out the window. She currently studies psychology at Te Herenga Waka, and her current favourite drink is cheap Moscato—or anything sugary from the bar.

Lauren Mae (they/she) is a student and poet currently residing in Pōneke. They have taken several creative writing courses at the International Institute of Modern Letters, and received the Michael King 'Signals' Young Writer's Prize for Poetry in 2023. Their work has been published in various literary magazines, including *Tarot*, *circular*, *Overcom*, and *Nine Lives*. She has recently become a co-editor of the poetry journal *free body problem*. Lauren primarily writes about 'what-ifs' and is prone to daydreaming.

Amanda Faye Martin is an Ōtepoti-based playwright and poet. Her poetry has been featured in *The Spinoff*, *Bad Apple Gay*, *Gasher Press*, *Oddball Magazine* and other online and print outlets. She is also a Senior Teaching Fellow in Theatre Studies at the University of Otago. You can follow her on Instagram @amandafayemartin.

Timothy J Martin lives in Whangārei with his wife, three kids, seven frogs, and, due to a fit of madness, a pound rescue whippet called Gypsy. Timothy works as an environmental scientist who loves the arts, so poetry is a much-needed creative outlet.

Allan J. Manson is a Wairoa-based poet and journalist for the Wairoa Star. His work explores whenua, family, work, and river towns, favouring plain speech and precise image. Previous publications include *Kiss Me Hardy*, *Mayhem Literary Magazine*, *Stonecorp Literary Magazine*, and *InkNest Literary Journal*.

Elliot Harley McKenzie is a poet living in Tāmaki Makaurau | Auckland. Other places they have been published include *Starling*, *NZ Poetry Shelf*, *Takahē*, *Turbine*, *Tarot* and *Ōrongohau* | *Best New Zealand Poems*.

Jim Murdoch is a Scot, gatophile, honorary woman, classical music aficionado, novelist, Whovian and producer of half-to-three-quarter-(and-occasionally-actually-fully)-decent poems for over half a century.

Keith Nunes (Aotearoa-New Zealand) has had poetry, fiction, haiku and visuals published around the globe. He creates ethereal manifestations as a way of communicating with the outside world.

Jinnette Oliver, born in Dunedin (1980), teaches creative writing online and has recently travelled through 15 countries as solo female writing poetry. She is influenced by the works of Tracey Emin and Sylvia Plath and explores the blurring boundaries of intimate and public life, using poetry as a container for the heart and the subconscious mind.

Jan Pihama (Taranaki, Te atiawa, Ngaruahine, Tainui) is a mother of two from Ngāmotu/New Plymouth. She has just been named a finalist for the Pikihuia awards in the Poetry in English section, and will be published alongside the other finalists in the Huia short stories 16 anthology.

Elena Philp's heritage includes Rakahanga, Atiu, Aitutaki and Scotland. The rhythm of relatives speaking on life in the Cook Islands in the reo, and her Grandpa Murray's library of poetry, instilled in her a lifelong love of language. Her work is imprinted by the cultures in her DNA.

Loredana Podolska-Kint writes about her experiences as a young female doctor navigating the heartbreaks and hopes of working in medicine. Her piece 'five cents' won the 2025 New Zealand Poetry Society International Poetry Competition. She has been published in *circular* and *a fine line*, and she has three self-published books. Find her on Instagram: @loredana_poetry.

Grant Shimmin Grant Shimmin is a South African-born poet living in Ōtautahi Christchurch. His work is widely published, most recently in *a fine line*, *Raw Lit*, *Fuego*, *Catalyst*, *Tiger Leaping Review*, *Backstory Journal* and soon, *North Dakota Quarterly*.

Brooke Soulsby is a writer and publishing professional from Whāngarei, currently based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. She wears her heart on her sleeve, literally. Brooke is one of three founding co-editors of *circular*. Her writing has appeared in such places as *Tarot*, *4th Floor Journal*, *Mote*, *bad apple*, and elsewhere.

Lisa Stanley (samoan/pākehā) is an emerging poet in Tāmaki Makaurau. Some journals in which her poems appear include *Yellow Lamp Poetry*, *Takahē*, and *Landfall Tauraka*. Her poem, 'afakasi māmā', was selected for October 2024 Poem of the Month by New Zealand Poetry Society Te Rōpū Toikupu o Aotearoa. Find her at @lisastanley.bsky.social and @lisastanleywrites

Bee Trudgeon is a writer and children's librarian, published in *RipItUp*, *The Sapling*, *The Spinoff*, *Audioculture*, *Muzic.NZ*, *NZ Poetry Box*, *NZ Poetry Shelf*, *a fine line*, and the NZ Poetry Society 2024 and 2025 anthologies. Read more on the Patreon page of her alter ego, Grace Beaster.

Chantelle Van Vuuren (she/her) grew up in Tāmaki Makaurau and daydreams about being a full-time writer in her law lectures. You can find her work in *circular*, *The Quick Brown Dog* and *The Free Body Problem*.

Devon Webb (she/her) is an autistic writer & editor based in Aotearoa with award-winning work published extensively worldwide across a range of genres. She is currently working on her debut poetry manuscript & a publishing initiative advocating for grassroots community consciousness. She can be found online at @devonwebbnz.

Sadie Yetton is a student interested in pursuing creative writing. She adores literature and fiction writing. Her output consists mainly of poetry and short stories, although she also hopes to publish a novel.

