

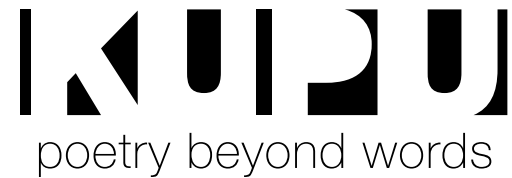
catch and release:

poems from Manawatū



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*Any inconsistencies with the use of macrons in the text
are intentional.*

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FOREWORD

**This book is not a book, it's a capsule.
A pātaka. A vessel.**

It holds our poets, our place. Manawatū – ‘still heart’, could be interpreted as ‘the heart to be still, to stay, to put down roots and love where you are’. The intention of this book is to contemplate all that is and could be ‘Manawatū / Heart.’ Not just our physical location, but all that ‘giving heart to place’ can mean.

Each of the ten poems presented here was chosen for artfulness in style, awareness of craft, but most of all for strength of voice and rich imagery. Place is evoked beautifully in Paula King's masterful evocation of biography and geography through taut, moving recollections in ‘*Biography of a local girl*’, again in her wry depiction of small town life in ‘*ash hurts*’. Megan Norris captures a very Palmerston North scene in her delightful, vivid ‘*Memorial Park Christmas Eve 2014*’. Some of these poems have opinions, ask questions, ponder identity as seen in Marge Mitcalfe's delicate and deft poem ‘*Puanga*’, Deborah Thompson's strong ‘*The mihi I couldn't finish because I'm too Pākehā*’ and Joy Green's witty, acerbic ‘*Candy from a baby*’. Then there are the poems which show character beautifully, letting us in to other worlds and experiences: ‘*Haere ki te taha mauī / Go to the left*’ by Christopher Tuffley, is a powerful poem of grief, Lynne Kohen's ‘*Jake's got a soundtrack*’ is triumphant and darkly funny, ‘*Blue Night*’, by Nicola Easthope conveys a quietly moving family portrait and ‘*Last Period*’ by David Fountain sensitively evokes a moment in a multicultural classroom.

KUPU is an ongoing poetry project, manifesting in many different forms, on and off pages, in installations, performance and workshops. This is our first KUPU publication and we are thrilled with it. It was a privilege to work on this project, we were deeply impressed by the talent and scope of our local writing community.

We've ‘caught’ these poems and now we ‘release’ them, out into the world, this pataka of heart + place. We hope you enjoy the poems and see something of yourself in them.

Helen Lehndorf, Genny Vella, Janet Ellery.
KUPU



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To Poetry!

Biography of a local girl

By Paula King
(Competition winner.)

Ruahine is 1968.
Newhaven's a blue Place, with more than two storeys.

Camerons a Line with outside loo and baby lambs.
Tremaine is an Avenue where we don't belong.

'Woodfield is floral and warm.'

Fitzroy is mice traps and smelly rooms.
College is dhal, rice and stolen bikes.

Russell's mould and a shower hose.
Cuba is drunks, reheated pasta.

Ruahine is morphine, dolls' clothes and sterile wipes.
Vogel's housing-corp and a black eye.

'Woodfield is floral and warm.'

Heretaunga always thought you were gay.
Woodfield is an Avenue, floral and warm.

Rongopai is an ugly façade.
Worcester is uplifting, non-borated rimu boards.

'Woodfield is floral and warm.'

Memorial Park Christmas Eve 2014

By Megan Norris

(Competition, second place.)

Wild watering hole
teaming
Probably not the virgin Mary
is burning her shoulders
cooling her feet
guarding probably not the son of God
in her belly
from sharp limbs and flutter boards
A graceful pink toggled
child casually cartwheels through the shallows
a friend or brother
belly flopping along behind
through the biomass of
sweaty adults
and shrieking chlorinated
children

Remote control car
enthusiast sets up
in the oval
his monster truck greets and plays tag
with child powered scooters
Laughing Buddha strums
his guitar in the shade

Stern Granny counts sandals
and entices her charges
into critical sun cream
application range
employing
catch and release
tagging each child
with an ice block

Puanga

By Margi Mitcalfe
(Competition, third place.)

next door the tamariki
are sparking the air
with their glittering reo

their mothers' laughter rises
scattering their crochets quavers minims
even higher over the hedge

overhead I see their sounds poised
in the sky as stars start

while my pākehā constellations my fixed
phrases: Tēna koe Kā pai and Kia ora
champ mud in my throat

The Mihi I couldn't finish because I'm too Pākehā

By Deborah Thompson

Waka rererangi is my canoe.
It cuts through the sky, then
BAM, Aotearoa
under me.

These are my ranges:
Tararua and Ruahine, poking out –
fish spine,
pulsed up land,
still heart of the river,
Manawa tū.

If I could stretch myself
like water around the earth
I would be every tribe,
speak every tongue.

My marae is

Haere ki te taha mauī / Go to the left

By Christopher Tuffley

Haere ki te taha mauī

He waiata tangi mō Stefanie von Büren

E whitu karaka
Kei runga paihikara
Pīata ana mai te whero me te kahurangi
I te kokonga
Tētahi pirihimana
Ko tana mahi ko te kati i te huarahi

“Haere ki te taha mauī” ko tana ki ahau nei
“Haere ki te taha mauī”
“Haere ki te taha mauī” ko tana ki ahau nei
“Haere ki te taha mauī”

Kore aku mahara
Mō wai te pīataata
He aha pirihimana kati ai te huarahi
I huri whakamaui
I haere whakamua
Kīhai i taro ngaro atu taku maumahara

“Haere ki te taha mauī” ko tana ki ahau nei
“Haere ki te taha mauī”
“Haere ki te taha mauī” ko tana ki ahau nei
“Haere ki te taha mauī”

Ngahuru karaka
Kei runga arawhata
E tangi ana mai te reo o taku wa-e-a ha
I te waea mai
Tētahi hoa tata
Ko tana kōrero te pōuritanga mōu

“Kua haere ki te taha tua” ko tana ki ahau nei
“I haere ki te taha tua”
“Kua haere ki te taha tua” ko tana ki ahau nei
“I haere ki te taha tua”

(Translation) Go to the left

For Stefanie von Büren

Seven o'clock
On my bike
Red and blue shining at me
On the corner
A policeman
His task, to close the road

“Go to the left hand side” were his words to me
“Go to the left hand side”
“Go to the left hand side” were his words to me
“Go to the left hand side”

I gave no thought
To who the lights were for
Or why the police had closed the road
I turned to the left
I went straight ahead
Before long the memory slipped away

“Go to the left hand side” were his words to me
“Go to the left hand side”
“Go to the left hand side” were his words to me
“Go to the left hand side”

Ten o'clock
On the stairs
The voice of my phone comes ringing
On the line
A close friend
Her message of great sadness of you

“She’s gone to the other side” were her words to me
“Gone to the other side”
“She’s gone to the other side” were her words to me
“Gone to the other side”

I muri tata iho
E hoki atu ana
Pā mai te mōhio ko tēnei ko te wāhi tonu
Mōu te pīataata
Mōu te pirihimana
Mōu te kati o te ara i te ahiahi

“Haere ki te taha mauī” ko tana ki ahau nei
“Haere ki te taha mauī”
“Kua haere ki te taha tua” ko tana ki ahau nei
“I haere ki te taha tua”

I tērā Pipiri
Kei runga Ruapehu
Pīata ana mai te rangi me te hukarere
I tō kanohi
Maha ngā menemene
Te whakamōhio ko tēnei ko te wāhi tonu

“Haere ki te maunga anō” ko taū ki a tātou
“Haere ki te maunga anō”
“Haere ki te maunga anō” ko taū ki a tātou
“Haere ki te maunga anō”

I te Pōhina
Te papa kanikani
E tangi ana mai te rangi o te wa-i-a-ta
I huri whakamaui
I huri whakamataui
I huri haere tāua i te papa kanikani

“Haere ki te kanikani” ko taū ki a tātou
“Haere ki te kanikani”
“Haere ki te kanikani” ko taū ki a tātou
“Haere ki te kanikani”

“Haere ki te taha mauī” ko tana ki ahau nei
“Haere ki te taha mauī”
“Kua haere ki te taha tua” ko tana ki ahau nei
“I haere ki te taha tua”

Shortly after
Heading home
The knowledge strikes that this is the very place
The lights were for you
The policeman was for you
The road was closed for you that evening

“Go to the left hand side” were his words to me
“Go to the left hand side”
“She’s gone to the other side” were his words to me
“Gone to the other side”

That June
On Ruapehu
The sky and snow shining at us
On your face
So many smiles
Telling us that this is the very place

“Let’s go to the mountain again” were your words to us
“Let’s go to the mountain again”
“Let’s go to the mountain again” were your words to us
“Let’s go to the mountain again”

On Monday night
The dance floor
The tune of a song comes ringing
We turned to the left
We turned to the right
We turned around the dance floor

“Let’s go dancing” were your words to us
“Let’s go dancing”
“Let’s go dancing” were your words to us
“Let’s go dancing”

“Go to the left hand side” were his words to me
“Go to the left hand side”
“She’s gone to the other side” were his words to me
“Gone to the other side”

Candy from a Baby

By Joy Green

We are lullabied
with fish and flags,
distracted with a rattle of
workhouse rhetoric
and xenophobia
to draw our angry attention.

'Lest We Forget'
is blazoned, bannered,
prettily poppied,
saluted by the brassy notes
of mournful bugles,
and bowed political heads.

Lest we wake
lest we remember
and turn our eyes
on their feathered nests
and see in them
our plucked populace.

Jake's got a Soundtrack

By Lynne Kohen

Jake's got a soundtrack
in his head
playing on continuous loop,
enough to make a man mad
but not him.
He's a rock star in his mouth,
directing songs with the teeth,
grinding and tapping tunes out.
Drum beats on back molars,
guitar trills on the front.
The enamel's long gone,
teeth nubbed down flat.
His dentist told him
they can't be saved.
Sure, he misses
the chewing foods,
apples, steak,
blends all his meals
into baby mush.
But overall, he says,
it's better than letting
silence
eat his mind away.

Blue night

(after 'Dirge' by Kelly Joseph)

By Nicola Easthope

Out of the frame is the baby.
Beyond the door is the sea.
Its white noise is not working.
The black out is not working.

The mother is not in the frame.
She brings him to her breast.
She rests her head on the sill.
Her head part goes to sleep.

The mother's body, like a whale's
mind, half insentient, half on
depth watch. The milk draws
blue and baby sleeps.

Here in the painting is a man.
At four he sends her back.
Her neck clicks in the pillow.
The baby whistles awake.

Though it is full and fully burped.
The mother jolts and palpitates.
She begins to rise but the father.
The father is in the picture.

On a wooden chair under damp
green light, he shifts from buttock
to buttock pumping and pressing
the red piano accordion.

Tendrils sling off the lampshade.
Sea grass hums. A harmonic
vamp of frond and must and
tears become his cheek.

Her fingers free the water
His fingers free the wind -
breath is the chord is the base tone
small pod of falling whales.

Last Period

By David Fountain

Akiro

Surveys the empty page
his title ‘Manawatū my Home’
He’s all alone but in comfort, his kiwi mates and school.
He writes of the wave, the reactor, beached vessels,
of loss, his family and home and of rubble.
Now all is abundance, freedom, friendship, his new home.
And hope, it hovers, he writes ... *like a bubble*.

Banjo

Takes up his pen and stops, smiles, he loves his name
made by his classmates from Ben and Joe.
Everyone knows him now.
As kiwi as them he writes.
Born here but taken for a new arrival
he writes of minority race and stereotype.
His theme is ‘skin deep’ and ‘survival’.

Satya

He said to write about ‘home’, he thinks, and ‘hope’
A few words spring to mind
He stabs his pen awaiting connecting bits.
Sentences tumble now, of lunchtime games,
of good mates, of a bully: a dope
of the lust of first love;
of Palmy life, of home and family and hope.

Hemi

Crap, where to start? He said ‘anything at all.
Anything you’re passionate about’
He writes ‘*Koura*’ and then: of darkness,
the trickling Kahuturawa stream, torchlight beams.
Deep gravelled pools and gutters,
the crayfish catch, the boiling pot and home,
cress, white bread and butter.

Pauline

Well, I hate my name, for a start I wish I was Emma, she thinks,
and to fold my gorgeous legs and show my ankles and my red shoes.
Thinks of home with a frown, then of Mr Harris again.
She writes of wishes, of hope, of her Manawatu.
Now with flash of genius and of guile,
she writes with quick glances up front and down,
of the hope that’s in a smile.

Mr Harris

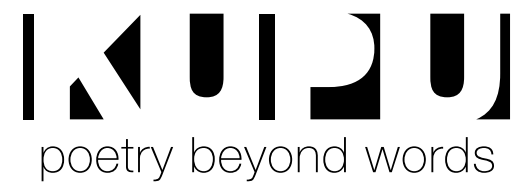
Crosses his legs, a fond glance here, a faint smile there.
The classroom heavy with thought, even fear.
But now there’s a lightness as passion is penned.
Last period, he muses. Such a fitting end.

ash hurts

By Paula King

i stare out at the giant white clocks
as they do their rounds unveiling
the grey on a year partially swallowed
you see it - s been a time of slips,
closed roads winding detours
they closed the Gorge, where
the Taniwha lives while we gave
way to trucks on bypass little men
hung from rope worked like spiders
up and down the slippery face
trying to get the rhythm of this
mist – eery. For some it's a sleepy town.





ABOUT KUPU

In 2013, with the blessing of Anthony Lewis, General Manager of Palmerston North Libraries and Community Services, two staff members teamed up with two local poets. This quickly turned into four friends armed only with great ideas and a ton of optimism about how to take poetry from the confines of the page, and into the consciousness of a community with the potential and will to nurture it. Thus KUPU was born.

It began with the KUPU SIX, three pieces of work each from Helen Lehndorf, and Leonel Alvarado, presented in large scale on the walls, floors and windows of the Central Library building in Palmerston North. Three years on, KUPU continues to present a smorgasbord of participation initiatives. Thanks to the revolution in self-publishing, this book is one such initiative that comes to life as a result of the generosity of the poetry community, and the desire of a literary institution to give voice and form to this beautiful, rich expression of local literary cultural heritage.

We remain committed to bringing poetry to life for people to participate in, and enjoy. We are eternally grateful to Helen and Leonel for their enduring generosity and support for KUPU, to the increasing number of poets choosing to contribute, to an encouraging community who motivate us forwards, and to the many talented designers, publishers, photographers, artists, signwriters and fabricators who have helped us along the way.

Genny Vella – *City Cultural Coordinator*

Janet Ellery – *Manager Planning and Performance*

Palmerston North Libraries and Community Services



