

LINES FROM WITHIN

Rachel Dibble



Eight months later, Taranaki is still there, Mataniki rising. Nine stars, not seven, will be indicating a time to regenerate. Stretchlines of Waingorongoro meander to Ōhawe Beach, flowing out into te Tai o Rēhua. The Mother's lines from within, become inked across and in her skin. Listen as the waves crash, her tūpuna call forth the ancient karanga.

Come closer tamariki, breathe in, breathe out.

~~Tihei Mauri Ora~~

There are many ways to journey.

In September 2018, a much talked about, planned and thought through journey became *#inreallife*. As a result of how the trip was funded, I knew that I would write about the journey. So it was, from inception, ka mua, ka muri - looking behind to see forward, to move ahead, to remember what has been, to see what might become. As the planned journey with my tamariki became a reality, the shifting, the weaving of the past, present and future became almost tangible. The memories, more than the 20 gigabytes of photos attached, will be remembered as a once in a lifetime journey.

Becoming an educator in a tertiary institution has been a journey that is so entwined with my *#roadtripwiththekids*, and specifically, to this part of the world, where I became several layers within myself. I am tangata whenua. Taranaki is the mountain where my ancestors' bones are in the ground, of the ground. The story of Parihaka, specifically, *The Art of Passive Resistance*¹ toured around the country. In 2003, I found myself so heart-wrenched from grief that while standing in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, tears trickled freely down my face. I had nowhere to go, and no small children to navigate. As my heart and eyes moved around the exhibition, I found myself face-to-face with the 'our-story'.² The mamae brought me into the Polytechnic, to connect and reconnect. Deciding to learn te reo Māori, I met with Whaea Theresa Boyd Te Kawa, the Programme Leader of the Kaupapa Tangata Whenua Diploma in Te Ao Māori. On that initial enquiry (ending in enrollment) Whaea Theresa said something to me that day that has stayed with me. As I struggled for words to explain who I was, why I was there, and how I have questioned my authenticity as others have questioned, or been oblivious to my whakapapa, she held my hand and said "You say this to them... Ko wai koe he pātai taku whakapapa? ... Ko wai koe he pātai taku whakapapa?"³ The lines from within became stronger over the years as those words have given me roots, like harakeke, to bury deep into the earth and stand strong against the elements of colonisation, one might say.

The slam poem, 'Lines from Within', was born of this journey of entering into a tertiary institution. Working for Emeritus Professor Khyla Russell gave me another perspective of authenticity and the strength of mana whenua.

Over the four years of working in the Kaitohutohu Office and birthing my two babies (not in the job description!), I found myself being of this place as tangata whenua, and yet not, but still connected. Taranaki maunga bringing me closer.

The first class I taught as an educator was focused on trying to talk about Te Tiriti o Waitangi from a depersonalised perspective. This was frustrating to say the least, and difficult for me to do. The story I was most easily able to relate to the learners was that of my own whakapapa and that of the connection with Ōtepoti and Taranaki. The pātai I asked of myself was “kei hea tāku whakapapa” – where is my whakapapa?

As my tamariki grew, with the names of their tūpuna waiting to be stories, their whenua was still in the freezer on a separate shelf. Tapu and noa in a contemporary setting. These whenua survived two burglaries of food and I knew that I had to journey with the whenua and take my tamariki to their mountain, so their pepeha would be realised for them, as not just words on a page, but the outline of a mountain, river and whare, from within.

It is difficult to write that I won an award which funded that trip with my children and compelled me to present something back to the Polytechnic whānau. I have recently discovered the power in the spoken word, or slam poem, so decided to challenge myself and to compose a mash up of 20/20, twenty slides in twenty seconds, put to a spoken word poem.

Ellis and Bochner (2000)⁴ give voice to the researcher as subject, allowing a space for “I” in writing and researching. As a Feminist Studies graduate, situating myself in my writing aligns with this research perspective. Whitinui (2014)⁵ writes from an Aotearoa perspective on autoethnography exploring and legitimising the ‘self’ as separate from ‘other’. I stand in front of learners and I find myself talking about “how Māori...” and “how we [as Māori]...” I try not to trip over these words, these descriptions of myself as an inclusive other, and I watch the other tangata whenua in the room travel on their own journey as they also learn about ‘Self’, ‘Other’ and ‘Othering’.

To write about this journey as research, to speak in my own voice, can be daunting. The subsequent vulnerability often leads me back to the room where whaea Kura gave me the words that gave strength to the words of my grandmother and mothers and aunts. I share this with the learners, and significantly, when my tamariki and I were standing in the urupā, with their namesakes’ headstones to the left and the right, the words “*It’s where your bones lie that gives you your whakapapa*” came to me. Koro Taranaki, visible the whole time, from Hāwera, to Parihaka, to New Plymouth and back. We are the maunga. That is our whakapapa.

This poem happened as a result of a journey into an Art Gallery, and many awesome people have given me tautoko/ support for the journey. I would like to mihi to them all, especially my whānau, and also to my work colleagues. There is a special place for Auntie Maata and Uncle Cousin⁶ Te Ahu Rei, for opening their whare to my tamariki and I.

LINES FROM WITHIN.

1. Normally I begin with pepeha, however the lines from within, the kupu on the page, have drawn their own story, scattered with the images of the superstars of my heart, my tamariki. I have been strategically guided, a framework if you will, has been integral in giving space to explore these
2. Lines from within becoming lines on a map connecting pepeha to place. Kanohi kitea, whenua ki te whenua. The pictures you see, were originally sourced online, hopefully compliantly. Delightfully, a roadtrip with the kids in September just passed, gave the chance to authenticate and illuminate, To be actually seen and, who knows – run on Ōhawe beach with sand between the toes.
3. This is the start of the a journey I I and 7 years in the making
With these tamariki ātaahua, the nowstory of theirstory
How their DNA of tūpuna Māori was
Starwoven; a timewarp with a weft of tartan.
With wings of steel we flew, with a Kia ora to Whataitai and Ngāke, the taniwha of Wellington Harbour jumping over Matiu Island.
4. And we went down to the river....
(And dropped the h) From Whanganui to Wanganui on the muddy banks, I identified
That teaching outside my rohe means I try
To integrate
Articulate and gesticulate
Encouraging te reo Kāi Tahu, but my tongue continues to korero to the home where my
Grandmother lies, Her truth though is in the earth, and on the earth, where she birthed my
māmā and six others.



5. We three cruise along coast,
 Bathing in Anika, Boh, Hollie, and feeling quite jolly
 as we talked about bones where our ancestors lie, I look out and I spy the
 maunga, in cloudless glory appearing closer than I expect and I reflect
 on a dream in the night of where we are from and who I might be?
 What am I teaching them, is love enough -
 And knowing it takes experience to be tough as a concrete waka...



6. TE POI! PATUA TAKU POI PATUA KIA RITE PA-PARA PATUA TAKU POI E
 We stop.
 The birds sing.
 Ko Aotea te waka, Ko Turi te rangatira,
 And there in the waka, is a pepi – and a mama, Rongorongo I wonder?
 We're off again.



7. At the iwi office in Hāwera we find, a generous uncle cousin, inside.
 He gives us his house key and simultaneously – a call from The Aunty sets the wheels in motion.
 Driving up to gates, wairua a-shiver, causing a commotion
 getting lost in the a wifi-less ocean
 then marvellously, found, at a marae waiting for we three and preparing for a hui!
8. The 18th in the marae of Te Whiti, Nanny keeps the moko close by
 Welcomed on welcomed in, the photos inside of ancestors long passed
 Keep stories well, and somehow shared in the eyes as the cry (as I cry).
 the afternoon: children at the river; the cries are over eels... but I get the feels as I look to these
 pictures and know that from the start, they have taken Koro TARANAKI into their heart.

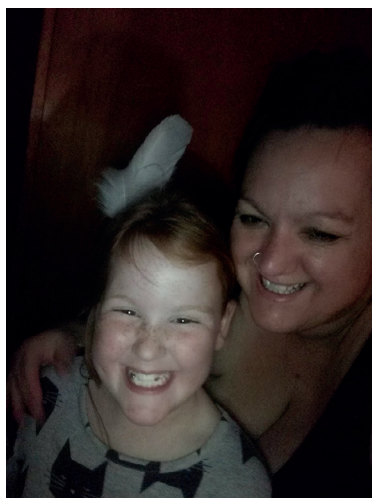


9. as the outside changes from sunlight to night,
The Waiata starts and the name Tītikowaru brings smiles to the faces in unfamiliar places.
As the stories of our tupuna are shared,
the grief is powerful,
And I remember on the 5th of November;
it's about the legislated, confiscated, deliberated, loss.
lines are connecting from without and within.

10. So jump around jump up jump up and get down
and remember these days when you jumped
so high you nearly touched the sky,
and you walked with your head held high on the ground he once walked.
Remember Purepo –with the view from innocent eyes, and not through the site of a constabulary rifle.



11. A girl, 'wearing the white plume'
 Like Hineteiwaia, weaving love and a future into your hair. The feathers of peace, ngā raukura e!
 As we talk of this once in a life time journey, your eyes grow a little wiser
 A mama calls to the lines not yet on your skin, don't stay within.



12. Our time in Parihaka connected cousin to cousin, from young to old
 Our truth is our history, a monument to peace in a very raw world.
 Yet from the harakeke the tangi of the bellbirds are clear
 We are here! We will not die!

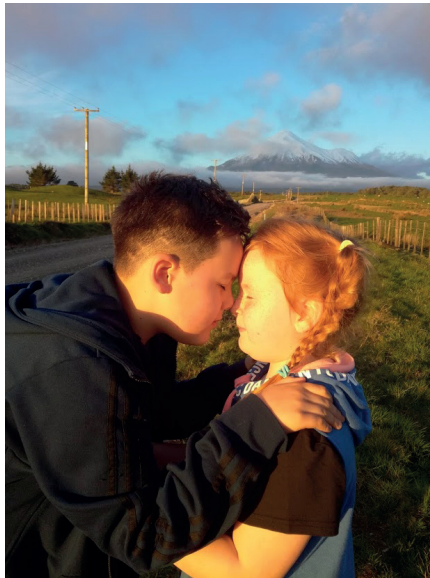
13. From the glass enclosures we see
Our history
Weathered and on display
the stories from māi rā nō tangibly handed on
the tohorā and the tongue, combined into one
A taonga of fierceness and a carving of art



18 July, the date you died, I was born.

Tītōkōwaru, you are in our heart.

14. Returning from Ngā Motu, gorgeously along the coast
The turnoff shows
Ararawhata road,
long and straight
I search for a memory from 0 to 7
Nothing but the mountain reveals itself and so we dance, entranced as the sunlight
Shines bright and a new memory is created, sadness eliminated.



15. Opunake Beach becomes a new favourite place
As we race to embrace all the light the evening has to offer,
I feel free from the trauma that has disconnected me to this childhood playground
The waves wash over our feet... this means... sand in the rental car
16. Near our wharenui in Okaiawa is a Great Grandmother so very missed.
Tears in Taranaki, tears in Ōtepoti as we read lines on a page, creating this story
so much untold to her she could not share
and my Grandmothers lines were invisible on her chin
but her breath is the breath of the wāhine toa, past, present and future.
This is a story of love from the whenua to the whenua

17. In a red chilly bin and lots of ice
Two whenua waited
For 5 days and nights
To find the resting place that called to me
for my tamariki and mokopuna to be,
Making sense of a kawa, a tikanga for today
Together we created a place to lay
Whenua ki te whenua
Ko Waingongoro te awa – I te taha o te Tai-o-Rēhua
Lines of whakapapa on sandy skin



18. Ko Aotearoa te marae the kupu I was taught
Returning to the maunga, the tamariki I have brought
A hongī, a Waiata, an Auntie and Uncle bring us
Closer, closer...

19. And still Waingongoro snores, Taranaki stands, the kaumātua whisper
Haere mai, bring your babies home,
to their place to stand, their tūrangawaewae
In this space and time
haere mai haere mai haere mai
You are star conception: earth woven.



20. Ko Taranaki te maunga
Ko Waingongoro te awa
Ko Aotea te waka
Ko Turi te rangitira
Ko Ngati Ruanui te iwi, Ko Nga Ruahine te hapū, Ko Aotearoa me Te Ngākaunui ngā Marae
Ko Haddon te whānau
Ko Kere tōku Kuia
Ko Warren tōku Koro
Ko Roseanne tōku Māmā
Ko Roger tōku Tāne
Ko James rāua ko Tallulah āku tamariki
Ko Rachel ahau



PLAYLIST

The bold, bracketed number () aligns a stanza of the poem to an excerpt of songs or references to songs that I discuss in teaching, or that have been significant to me on this journey.

- (3) "Time Warp", from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, 1975.
- (4) "The River", from *The River* by Bruce Springsteen, 1980.
- (5) "Bathe in the River (Live)", from their *Acoustic Church Tour*, by Anika, Boh, and Hollie, 2012.
- (6) Poi E, from *Poi E*, by Pātea Māori Club, 1983.
- (10) "Jump Around", from *House of Pain*, by House of Pain, 1992.
- (11) "Parihaka", single by Tim Finn and Herbs, 1989.
- (12) "Hutia (Hiirini Melbourne cover)", by Mons & Hooks, 2018.
- (14) "They Dance Alone (Cueca Solo)", from *Nothing Like the Sun*, by Sting, 1988.
- (18) "Closer (acoustic version)", by Six60 (for MTV), 2018.

Rachel Dibble was born and lived around her tūrangawaewae under Taranaki maunga until the age of seven. After a brief time in Australia, she essentially grew up in Ōtautahi (those influential High School years!) After two years in Japan she completed a Bachelor of Education (Primary). This amused her as initially papers (1992) were in Feminist Studies, however by graduation (2001) it had morphed to Gender Studies. During this time, Rachel was able to participate in a Tiriti o Waitangi Education course where taura Māori were in hui separate from taura Pākehā. The course was facilitated by Irihapeti Ramsden (Ngāi Tahu) and allowed Rachel to experience Mana wāhine and Mana Māori from an institutional perspective. Rachel has continued to utilise the learning from this hui in her teaching.

After training, Rachel moved to Dunedin and eventually to Otago Polytechnic as a student, a Student President, as an Executive Assistant the Kaitohutohu office working for Emeritus Professor Khyla Russell and as a Lecturer.

Influenced by her whānau, the readers, writers, lovers and dreamers they are, Rachel recalls the words of her grandmother, her Taranaki kuia, that being Māori is not "an amount" but "knowing where the bones of your tūpuna lay". As she has read and researched, Rachel has been further influenced by the words of Leonie Pihama, the slam poetry of Te Kahu Rolleston, the art of Robyn Kahukiwa, her aunts and uncles, her own mother and the growing of her own babies, who were able to fully experience putting their whenua into the whenua.

Rachel Dibble (Ngāti Ruanui, Ngā Ruahine • BEd, DipTeaching & Learning (Canterbury University and Christchurch College of Education), Grad Dip Tertiary Ed., Cert Mata A Ao Māori)

ENDNOTES

- 1 Hohaia, T. M., O'Brien, G., Strongman, L., City Gallery Wellington, Parihaka Pa Trustees. (2001). *Parihaka: The art of passive resistance*. Wellington: City Gallery Wellington/Victoria University Press/Parihaka Pa Trustees.
- 2 Jackson, M. (2019, June 2). James Cook and our monuments to colonisation. *E-Tangata*. Retrieved from <https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/james-cook-and-our-monuments-to-colonisation/>
- 3 Boyd Te Kawa, T. (2003). Personal communication.
- 4 Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject. In *Communication Faculty Publications*. 91. Retrieved from http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/spe_facpub/91
- 5 Whitinui, P. (2014) Indigenous Autoethnography: Exploring, Engaging, and Experiencing "Self" as a Native Method of Inquiry. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 43(4):456-487. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241613508148>
- 6 The term 'uncle cousin' is a term we use within my whānau, with a sense of humour and always aroha.

