

# TAONGA TUKU IHO

POEMS THAT HEAL

Written by

**Maia Grace Pehi-Hannah**

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Illustrated by

**Ani Alana Kainamu**





This book is dedicated to our many whanau & friends who have supported and inspired us -  
most especially though for:

Richard Frost, Kerry Browne & Paradise Halkyard

Rest in Peace

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*“When ten-year-olds are becoming depressed, we have a problem that goes way beyond that household. Such children are reflecting Mommy and Daddy’s stress, which is reflecting relationship issues or economic issues or other factors that reflect humanity’s having mislaid its soul.*

*The suffering of our children should be an arrow that pierces the shield of our denial and alerts us to what is happening in the world. The depressed among us are like dead canaries in a coal mine, revealing a terrible toxin that will kill us all if we go down the shaft.*

*Yet we continue to go down, rarely questioning the toxicity of the mine. Why? Because an insane order of things tells us that there is nothing wrong with the mine; there’s simply something wrong with the canaries!*

*We do all this to avoid the pain of looking at our pain... Psychic pain, like physical pain, is there for a reason. It is not an illness; it is a messenger- a messenger we too often choose to ignore...”*

*“This is not a time in history for any of us to be numb. One of the reasons it’s so important that we become awake to our pain and the pain of others is because in the absence of people whose concern is aroused by the problems of the world, those problems will only get much worse, not better. We can’t afford to be numb to our own suffering or to the suffering of others.” [pp78-79]*

*“It would be a mistake to idealize suffering, but it would also be a mistake to diminish its relevance to the formation of character. In the words of poet Khalil Gibran, ‘Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars’.” [p139]*

*Tears of Triumph - Marianne Williamson*

## Ani Alana Kainamu

He maramara tēnei nō Rāhiri, he ururoa nō ngā moana o Kahukuraariki, he Pākehā nō Kotirana anō hoki.

Ko Ani Kainamu tōku ingoa, I am a māmā, environmental researcher and mahi toi tutu.

Creating the pieces within this book were a medium to escape the sometimes-harsh climate of the world we live in. Today, I draw as a way of connecting with our experiences in the natural world and telling this through pūrākau. Mahi toi has always been a place of healing, speaking words to experiences, that have not yet had the right words or the safe spaces to guide them. I hope that these pieces can guide healing and connection to others in their life journeys.

Arohanui.



## **Maia Grace Pehi-Hannah**

My name is Maia Grace Pehi-Hannah. I've struggled with mental health for the majority of my teen years. I've found plenty of things that help me find a little bit of happiness in normal day-to-day life. Whether it be writing, painting, hunting, horse-riding, walking or singing randomly. Just little things to help.

At 18 my mum and I walked Te Araroa to raise awareness for suicide prevention. At the end of this walk I felt the healthiest I've felt since I was a little kid. Six months later I found myself abused, beaten, homeless and feeling hopeless. Life is made of ups and downs and round and round.

I hope that someone can relate to these poems and then not feel so alone. It's not nice to feel alone.

## **Phillipa Pehi**

What an absolute joy to create a book of poetry with my daughter Maia.

And my girl makes me so very proud. To see her blossom. To read her powerful and oh so poignant and raw and honest words. To be moved by her courage and fierce loving spirit that no one has been able to quench. Ah now that is EVERYTHING.

Te Whetu Marama. A beautiful kuia at her kohanga gave Maia this name. And so she is.

The simple fact is: I wouldn't be here today to write these words had Maia not come into my life. I have felt a strong and unrelenting need to 'go home' ever since I can remember. I have experienced a lot of my life as painful and unbearable- a burning and unrelenting pain from within. I just wanted it to end. I have felt that I belong nowhere. I have felt that I am not good enough, never good enough... for anyone.

But then... I wouldn't be experiencing this time in my life. This time when mostly I feel at peace. In love with myself and with life. And this with a first-hand experience of some of the worst that life has to offer, and an awareness of the many challenges we face as humanity- many that we have brought upon ourselves.

And yet I have hope. I don't dare not to be hopeful. For our children's sake. And their children's sake.

My love for my daughter has been my bridge back to myself. Learning to love her, has helped me to learn how to love myself. What greater gift is there?



*Image by Ani Alana Kainamu and Kevin Pewhairangi*

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PART I: TRAUMA & MAMAE



Everything is heavy,  
It burns in my chest.  
The things I've kept to myself rattle around in my head.  
I would tell you.... But I know you're too busy.  
So, it keeps rattling.  
I'd like to think it wasn't all for nothing but that's starting to be outweighed by doubt.  
Sometimes the rattling gets deafening, and I just want to message.  
Just to talk.  
But I know you're busy  
And you don't want to talk to just me.  
And so, the empty rattling continues.

A PRAYER

Pip [1991, 18yrs]

Tears fall twice

diagonal

blinding

death thoughts stir

in her brain

banished

with a sigh

She is without need

yet riddled with

want

reaching

reaching

reaching

Oh Lord. reaching

will no-one meet her hand?

There are alcohols I will not drink...

Why?

They remind me of hands that to the touch burned my skin so that I still feel them there months after.

There are places I avoid.

Why?

Because the flashbacks of cold, hopeless nights where I could not move while my heart broke along with my dignity.

There are men whose names make my skin crawl and whose voices make me want to hide in the darkest of rooms.

I've stood in a shower for hours trying to get clean,  
But it is as if the Filth has sunk into my skin never to come out.

I crave human contact but flinch when anyone tries.

Rape is no different than being pushed down a flight of stairs, except all the wounds are inside the deepest corners of the mind.

Yet I assure you. They still bleed...

## REJECTION

Pip [1987, 13yrs]

Reach out your heart, let your soul float

And feel the pain in my pretence.

It burns your hand, so let your body  
dissipate

And find love in hidden corners of your  
mind.

Try to understand my furtive advances;

My eyes that search, forever without  
finding.

Twisted fate smiles crookedly on my  
floundering

Sense of right and wrong that blinds.

I may love, but it is like trying to romance

A shadow when I hide within.

It is like a river, flowing fast & strong  
underground

Running swiftly to a destination that

Is yet to be reached.

Is it so hard to love that I cannot relate to  
life?

Is it so easy to die that I can taste oblivion &  
death?

My emotions are debris flung on a river  
hidden.

I know what rejection is.

It is cold and uncompromising. It bites.

Lips clammy, close with the kiss of night

That makes you blind so you cannot see

The dawn shine in your eye.

It makes you deaf so that sweet music

Cannot wash over your mind with soothing  
sound.

It makes you dumb and stricken without  
speech.

I can feel life vibrate

Outside

These walls.

It affects you  
Every. Single. Day.  
There is no escape  
From the stinking albatross carcass  
Hung from your neck.

You cannot look at anyone  
The same way  
As you did  
The day before

No-one Can be trusted  
All want only one thing

To use you  
Then discard you  
Expecting silence in return  
For the pain & shame  
They gave you

No-one wants to know  
Everyone will turn their head

As if suddenly  
You have become unclean  
Abhorrent  
The stinky kid no-one wants to play with

And that's only at home

A home  
That is no longer a home  
Because you don't feel safe anywhere  
Count the hours  
The minutes  
While everyone else sleeps  
In case something wicked  
This way creeps

And  
'Out there'  
Where all things betray  
A battlefield  
Where no-thing and no-one makes sense  
Becomes a place you have to go  
Because to stay  
Is to live  
With still rotting carcasses  
Of all the screams & words unsaid  
Locked in the closet of the womb  
The unshared comfort & care  
You expected  
The tears & snot  
Secretly shed

Destined for  
Regardless of paths tread  
A lifetime  
Of secrecy  
Of self-loathing  
Of self-sabotage  
And ever-increasing  
Acts of desperation  
To. Make. It. Stop.

The internal Berating Voices  
The unrelenting Pain  
The Guilt. The Shame. The Fury.  
THE CRIPPLING FEAR.

Ever on high alert.  
Ever afraid.

Until you somehow forget  
With a needle  
With a blade



With a noose - if you are lucky...  
Or some survival mechanism  
Miraculously allows you  
To spiritually surgically remove  
Huge tracts of who you are  
Stuff them down so far  
Hide them away  
Until  
You cannot feel yourself  
Anymore

Allows you to begin to perform  
Amazing feats of Conformity  
And pleasing acts of Subservience  
In an attempt  
To be  
All that They want you to be

Yet somehow  
It all just keeps bubbling to the surface  
The 'Ugly' the 'Filthy' the 'Unclean'  
Even long after  
You have forgotten  
That you were not born this way

And no matter  
How many times you have scrubbed  
Yourself raw  
How many times you have flayed  
Yourself alive  
Or sat with that noose  
Around your neck  
Desperate to not be  
You  
Anymore

You never feel clean

Until  
If you are Blessed  
A miraculous day comes  
When after all those years

Of Suffering. Of Abuse. Of Pain.  
There is a sweet sweet sharing  
A hearing. A reckoning of the Soul.  
When Some One  
Hears your testimony  
Sees the rotted rags of your self-loathing  
Hears the clatter of cellar chains  
And does not turn away  
Takes a soft soft cloth  
And with Great Love  
Wipes years of Purgatory  
Away

Does not call you Liar  
Stays  
Does not  
Immediately treat you differently  
Walk/turn/run  
Away

Believes you  
When after all these years  
What was buried deep  
Surfaces

Believes you  
Even as the shock of Remembering  
Leaves you desperately  
Trying to forget  
Again

Loves you  
Even though a lifetime  
Of this  
Has led you to believe  
There is nothing there  
To Love

Gives you reason  
To not only  
Survive  
But to Live

There are scars that run down my arms, legs, hips...  
Like dried up springs that once ran red down my frozen fingertips and softly hitting the ground  
like crimson rain...  
Each has a story of dark nights with bright moons and empty silence, a winter breeze and broken  
hearts.

I feel like an autumn leaf slowly losing colour, slowly falling apart.  
Nobody notices me anymore, because leaves change colour and fall in autumn right?  
I feel as if I am trapped in a cage, but this one is not made of metal.  
This one consists of flesh and bone, I can't escape.

There is only one way to get free...

Let the rivers run red,  
Let the autumn leaves fall,  
Let the hearts break,  
Let it rain crimson.



Used as it is  
it is ruby-red  
moving like tomato juice  
in the glass

drip, drip  
panic grip  
on my heart  
a smart  
as the hole is re-opened  
life-force  
bleeding  
lost from the body

mesmerised  
silence - everyone sleeps  
except me  
sleepless eyes  
hypnotised  
by the

drip, drip  
no reason  
is given except habit  
of pain  
real or imagined  
all the same  
convinces me  
that I am not illusion  
that life still accepts  
me as one of her own

blood  
sweet smell  
forms a skin  
turns black where it dries  
on my arm

pretty sparkle as I hold  
it to the light...

When you think  
I cannot take anymore

There is  
More

When you think  
There is no more pain you can endure

There is  
In fact  
More

When you think there is no capacity  
No strength left

Any  
More

You find  
More

The next breath happens  
The next heartbeat beats  
The next day dawns

Though every part of you screams  
They should not

FOR HER SOUL

He held her face  
He held her down

He invaded every crevice  
of her being  
No matter where or how  
Far she retreated

He found her

Violated  
her

to  
her  
core

Repeatedly

His face, his voice  
his hands, his tongue  
his penis

Devoid of expression  
Emotion

Taking  
Taking  
Taking

And leaving nothing in return

Because he didn't have to

Each time  
tossing her aside  
sweat-stained  
come-stained  
blood-stained

Like a tissue  
A whore  
A snot-stained torn  
Delicate, intricate, lace-spun  
Tissue

To painfully  
Scrub herself clean  
Yet each time  
Coming back  
Coarser  
More stained  
darker  
more frayed  
Less whole  
more fragmented

Older  
less bright

Until  
One day  
He stopped  
Disappeared

She didn't even notice

So completely had she shattered  
Retreated within herself  
Every fibre numbed

Entirely

A robocon  
A shell  
A pretty empty imitation  
Remained

Enacting  
A performance  
A service  
An approximation of a human  
Slave woman  
Doll

For every person  
she encountered

To be  
Used  
Abused  
Discarded  
Again  
And again  
And again

Never knowing  
the ghostly entourage  
of ancestors  
birthing girl child  
upon girl child  
upon girl  
upon

girl

seeds of rape & hate  
passed  
from one generation to the next

never healed

a gaping, seething, boiling  
roiling  
wound  
from which  
humanity  
was now being birthed

only feeling the  
RAGE  
screaming forth  
in tides of blood  
frothing pink waves advancing, advancing  
tsunamis of discarded dreams  
aborted hopes & loves  
abandoned, broken bodies  
heaved heavenward  
from the darkest depths

leaving behind  
destruction [distraction]  
fodder for the scavengers  
When the waters recede  
washing clean  
the carnage of centuries

and silence

time & sun & decay & nature  
picking clean the remains  
until bleached bones  
only remain

Then dust-  
dust to dust  
ashes to ashes

To be blown away  
with a sigh



Surrounded by midnight.  
Emotions fragile.  
Gripping bottles,  
And mixing decisions.  
Your constant distance  
Is casting shade  
In the wandering moonlight,  
And I found direction  
In this intoxicating loneliness,  
It crushes,  
But somehow,  
Just somehow,  
It heals.



NO USE

Pip [1987, 13yrs]

No use fighting

no use struggling -

The more I do

The more I sink and flounder

In the way of life.

Where is the love

That is supposed to

Surround us?

I look up

and shining far above

The chaos that swirls around

Is a light.

It shines bright and full

On my upturned face.

A ray of hope

Falling on me.

Looks of pity

rain down like drops of ice

Freezing my antipathy firmly

In place.

Others ignore

As if I am a leper or outcast

When all I do

Is to try and help them.

I wonder what Jesus thought

when those he loved

Turned against him

Scorning his company

And disgracing his name.

Did hate ever cross his mind

Or did his sorrow

Swamp his anger?

Tears sliding down furrows

much used by shame or sadness

Burnt holes in my soul.

Feeling the pain of emotion.

Sobs racked my body-

Chest heaving with need

For a reason

To answer my reaction.

What was wrong!?!

Nothing really.

Only that everything seemed to close

In on my space;

The space I need to expand.



So where was the problem?

Just push them out of the way -

Get on with it.

No pushing

no use -

Suffocating, dying

Spiralling rapidly down

The path of self-destruction.

Please...

What was I going to ask?

What use would it have been?

To be seen  
To be heard

Is all you desperately wanted  
All you ever craved

Yet  
The thought of it  
Caves you in

To be reached  
Oh so gently  
To be held  
Oh so dearly

And yet the touch of human hand  
Burns  
Flinching, involuntarily, if any tries

Rather  
Rough meaningless assignments in the dark  
All you allow yourself

To be adored  
To be cherished

Is all you know you can never have  
Rather choosing those who use, abuse &  
abase

You

Hide  
Retreat  
Cower  
Appease  
Plead

So long in the dark  
So long staring into the Void  
Only your nightmares for company  
That you come to believe  
This is your reflection

This is

You

Cry out in pain  
With the first ray of sunlight  
As dawn  
Crests the hill of your soul

Love feels like torture  
When you've grown in the shadow  
Of its absence

Yet  
You

Arch towards  
Rise towards  
All that was never

You

Burning  
Searing  
Ripping  
Tearing

Away

Then after  
What seems  
An Eternity  
Healing  
Crises & Pain

There comes  
The close, heart-beating, safe  
Cocooning-type of Dark

You

Wonder if you have died  
Or are dying

For it feels like the Goddess Womb

You

Know the day when it comes  
To Re-birth into  
Te Ao Marama  
And yet

You

Are afraid  
Of the world of light & humans  
Te Ao Hurihuri  
That world of ever-changing  
uncertainty  
Dark & light  
Sorrow & Joy

Struggle to believe it could be any  
different  
Daren't believe  
There could be Love  
In abundance for

You

Take a deep breath  
Hear the words being sung to you  
On this side of the Veil  
As well as  
Out there

You

Step out  
Step up

Not as the Monster  
You had thought You were  
Rather

As  
Beautiful  
You



\*Whakamā is a psychosocial and behavioural construct in the New Zealand Maori which does not have any exact equivalent in Western societies although shame, self-abasement, feeling inferior, inadequate and with self-doubt, shyness, excessive modesty and withdrawal describe some aspects of the concept (Sachdev, 1990)

Burned into my soul,  
Burned into my mind.  
Bruises and cuts burned into my skin, although they have long healed.  
I felt myself slip into the turmoil of your life.  
A verbal raging sea, I am but a damaged vessel drowning beneath the waves spat from a mouth  
full of denial.  
Brainwashed, confused, lost, worthless.  
Now I feel all temporary structure falling away, as I collapse.  
I've lost my mind.  
Desperately clinging to pieces... desperately trying to glue myself together.  
All efforts are in vain... you stole strips from me, ran off with parts of my mind, body and soul.  
Slut, whore, slag, bitch, hood rat, thief, cunt, cock-tease, hussey, liar, rank, flirt, asshole and  
disgusting.  
All bullets aimed at an already frail heart.  
Dragged from peaceful slumber, to broken glass, yelling accusations, blood and tears.  
Hands stronger than I remembered as grip tightens around supple, bare skin.  
Accusations of change made afterwards.  
I am different  
I am flawed  
I am desperate  
I am alone.  
I am also a fucking fire, and I will burn you if you continue to stand too close.  
From an unpredictable raging fire with emerald eyes.  
To a churning sea with cold blue eyes.  
Two elements which should have never been mixed into a beautiful disaster.

## ANGER

Pip [1988, 14yrs]

Shaking like leaves  
before a violent wind,  
my hands  
try to contain my anger.  
My back tenses;  
threatens to break  
under the tension.  
The tears run  
In quick succession,  
trying desperately  
to cool the furnace  
of my rage,  
the flames of my ire.

Red!  
Brilliant red blazes  
across my vision,  
the tears adding to

the confusion,  
eyes weeping like those  
of the diseased.  
Adrenaline pumping,  
an amazing drug which  
only serves as fuel.  
The explosion!  
An ecstasy of violence,  
of force that must surely  
match the heat of the sun!

And then the anti-climax,  
the extinguishing of emotion  
that leaves the body,  
- the vessel  
dry and empty.  
Tears now -  
only in self-pity.

O!  
Lo and Behold!  
He who once was  
Resplendent in Charm & Wit  
is rendered  
Obsolete  
Teethless  
Harmless

Time's Steady  
Inexorable  
Hand  
With chisel & hammer  
Has whittled away  
Any Veneer  
Civil or Otherwise

A Living Breathing  
Cliché  
Perfect Counterpoint  
To your Lolita  
Carefully  
Oh so carefully!  
Selected

Restless Ruthless Pursuit  
of Cliff Richard's  
crying, walking, talking  
Living Doll  
Brought to its Rude End  
by nothing more  
Glamorous  
Than age spots  
And a face  
Increasingly  
Unable  
To cover the Ugly in your  
Soul

All the while  
Ye thought ye had  
Cheated  
Manipulated

'Gotten Away With It'  
Guffaw, guffaw  
Telling yourself  
'She Wanted It'  
Telling yourself  
You  
Couldn't  
Help  
Yourself

While helping yourself

Yet  
In those  
Still  
Quiet  
Insomnia Moments  
Faces & Voices  
of Time Past  
Don't lie

She Meanwhile  
Trapped in a Living Hell  
The  
Oh so many instances  
she plotted to take her  
Own  
Life

Because of what you did

Clawing Her way back to  
Living

To awake  
One Day  
Free! Oh my Lord!  
Free!  
Gazing upon whatever Sunrises  
Father Time  
may still kindly allow her  
seeing them  
Fill with Joy & Gold

Treasures  
Held in Perpetuity

Reward  
For refusing to  
Give  
Up

Glance Back  
see you  
Diminished  
Repertoire & Repartee  
Stripped  
Your Empty Words  
Leeched  
No Youthful Vigour  
to  
Beguile & Beseech

Turn Away  
Leaving you  
Forsooth!  
Faceless  
Nameless  
Nothing

Yet  
There is still a small Matter of  
Recompense  
Owed  
Against your Earnings  
Taxation on your Soul  
If you like

An Eternity in  
Pain & Misery  
Awaiting  
A Mantle  
Shrugged off  
Shame & Guilt  
Returned to Sender  
An ill-fitting Coat  
No longer  
Required





## PART II: HEALING BEGINS



Do you feel weak?  
Cold?  
Broken?  
As if life is too hard.  
Are you scared of the darkness that effortlessly swallows you whole?  
Lost between a place of light and dark.  
The thing most forget is...  
Because of this pain,  
Your cold turns to untameable fire.  
Your weakness teaches strength.  
You can never be brave without first being scared.  
The broken and lost through struggles and pain have grown hearts of gold and a mind as strong  
as steel.

So long restricted

so long held

by walls of black

encased

trapped within my diseased soul.

Yet spring calls

sets my blood on fire

turning the darkness into  
grey

Will my wings be strong enough  
to push away the chrysalis?

A crack appears

and I breathe the air

simultaneously

sweet and sour

but fresh

giving me relief from the

cloying mustiness

that has bred in my moroseness

It fed on my pain.

As the bonds fall away

my breathing eases  
lungs no longer cramped-  
my pain eases.

I can see the world of life -

will I stay here, dead in birth  
secure in my pain and loneliness

Or will I emerge uncertain

yet free- free to live  
free into life?

I can remember  
 the moment I realised  
 the colours  
 had drained out of my life  
 when they once again  
 came flooding back  
  
 surmising  
 they had imperceptibly drained  
 away  
 over time  
 a bath tub of colour  
 slowly leaking  
 through an imperfectly sealed  
 plug  
  
 hadn't noticed  
 the grey creeping back  
 the lethargy  
 insidious soul leprosy  
 spreading like a dark stain  
 into my world  
  
 until that moment  
 wasn't conscious  
 numbness masking  
 suppressing feeling  
 my interior life  
 a vast lack-lustre  
 emotion ocean  
  
 your little face  
 I can see  
 white pale  
 watching my every move  
 silently  
  
 I'm so sorry my darling

realised only today  
 the inheritance I passed on  
 as you absorbed all  
 I couldn't feel  
 and all  
 I couldn't say  
  
 hiding behind a smile  
 surface-deep  
  
 removed so far  
 from my body  
 only an automaton mind  
 in control  
  
 my heart  
 guarded more closely  
 than state secrets  
 my soul  
 absent wandering hills  
 beyond this world  
  
 a shadow of who I was meant to be  
 going through motions I truly thought  
 were the right sequence of moves  
 in this dance of life  
  
 because I didn't know  
 I didn't know  
 my darling wee girl  
  
 that I was showing you  
 how to be unhappy  
 how to settle for anything less than the best  
 how to not know yourself  
  
 how to not be

Like a storm  
depression comes in fury  
then leaves me:

In an empty field  
the rain has washed clean.  
The clouds are muddy  
but puddles reflect them falsely  
in shades of cream.  
A mirror echoes my face  
but loses my loneliness somewhere  
in the transition.  
The grass is chrome green  
birds' voices quiet under a weight  
of silence,  
the only sound a humming in the ears...

Or surrounded by darkness  
a familiar hysteria gnawing at my  
composure  
imaginary creatures sliding across  
my vision, half-felt claws  
closing around my neck-  
and the moon, distant,  
shedding no light;  
  
I'm alone in the dark with the moon.  
  
But like spring to a long, mouldy winter  
or sun to a tiring night,  
a warm sensation slips into my emptiness  
for which I have no name except perhaps:  
  
a love of life.

This numbness feels like a mould spreading through my body,  
Each breath I take dampens my thoughts, feeds this illness inside me.

Is there a cure?

Maybe it's the way the sunlight filters through oak trees on a warm summer day while the birds  
sing without a care in the world.

Maybe it's the way the mist from a waterfall glitters with rainbows.

Or maybe it's the smell of water drying on hot tar seal, sweet yet so bitter.

Like life...

Sweet yet so bitter.

It is hard to see the beauty when the mould has clouded your vision...

Like a dark cloud over the world

Like someone has turned the lights out when you are trying to find your way.

But there is a faint glitter through the dark abyss.

I am slowly being pulled from the filthy, cold, dark that has been piled on top of me as to bury  
me alive.

Is there a cure?





I see you  
My girl  
Defeated  
Feeling alone  
Head bowed  
Tears flowing  
Hands clenched

I know it  
Don't feel right  
It ain't fair  
That's why you sit there  
In my chair

But darling girl  
Beautiful One  
Life is only  
Such a fleeting moment  
Of terrible all mixed in with the wonderful

A convincing mirage  
Floating on the never-ending desert  
An albatross alight  
But only a moment  
On the endless ocean

So get up  
Stand up  
My girl

Your life  
Is not destined  
For sitting in  
Your  
Mama's chair

As comfortable  
As that space may be

It is not yours  
In which to dwell

Come visit  
By all means  
Sit a while  
Smile  
Remembering those rare tender moments  
Stroking your forehead  
The times  
I managed to comfort you well

Then  
My Baby  
Rise Up  
Go forth into the world  
Do battle  
Make love  
Run free & wild  
Laughing  
At all that seeks  
To hold you  
Down

Those who dare to condemn you  
From the safety  
Of their mama's chair

Howl at the moon  
Drift naked down the river  
Run barefoot on the sand

For before you know it  
My Love  
Your baby will be sitting there  
In your chair

While you & I  
Sit here  
Remembering  
Wistful-like  
All the times  
We lingered too long  
In our own  
Mama's chair



### PART III: INTERGENERATIONAL HEALING



REMINDER\*

Author unknown

Oh my darling,  
It's true.  
Beautiful things  
Can have dents  
And scratches too.

\*A FaceBook meme that resonated with Maia

Your trunk  
so strong and firm  
holding your waving limbs.  
Standing there for a thousand years  
held up by roots  
    down deep.

It seems you hold a secret  
whispered by your leaves  
picked up by the grass  
    which answers you back.

Silently sleeping  
rocking in the crook  
of your arm  
is a tui dreaming of nectar and  
    soaring through the air.

Awaking suddenly,  
  
you hear the sickening thud  
of an axe cutting deep  
into your soul.

The precious bird  
    flies away in fright.

Pain pierces the serene heart  
of your being  
as your mighty trunk  
slowly creaks as it falls  
to collapse.

    Instantly earthbound.

But a seed, the size of a fly  
though as precious  
as a gem,  
buries itself in the ground  
to become as majestic  
    as you were.

DREAM TO BE GOD

Pip [1988, 16yrs]

My hand;  
fingernails, knuckles, wrinkles -  
dark shadow  
against the sky;  
grasping the clouds  
in one broad sweep.

My tongue  
caresses the curves  
of the mountains,  
consuming  
ice cold of snow  
in a burst of flaming  
red.

My eyes flash beacons  
into the night.  
Like a candle within  
frosted pane.  
Signalling the wearied  
traveller of the  
universe.



Vast oceans and foreign lands call my name.

Dangerous forests,

Stormy seas,

Soldering desserts,

And deep lakes.

I cannot be content with a “normal life”

I have no limits

I have no stopping point

My goals will never end.

I will travel the world,

Meet strange, new people.

I’ll never stop taking risks.

I’ll never fit into society’s boxes or follow that thin white line

I will be free

I will dance in the rain while others seek shelter

I will be my own person

I refuse to be controlled

I will spend my life feeling the earth beneath my feet, the wind in my hair and the sea breeze on  
my lips.

Where my fire cannot be dulled by how “I should be”

I’ll be forever free



PART IV: MOTHER LOVE SONGS FOR HER DAUGHTER



And now  
You've planted your heart  
In the whenua

She runs rings around you all day  
Every day  
And curls up by your side  
Every night

Pou Tokomanawa  
Forever more  
Grounding Light

Centre  
Of your  
Universe

Kahukura  
Tupuna  
Papatuanuku

Calling you back

Awa  
Maunga  
Whenua

Calling you home

Kaitiaki you are

Poppa's vision passed  
To me  
To you

Kaitiaki we are

Collective Vision  
Moemoea

Caring for the world  
That has never stopped caring

For us

Taku kotiro  
No lack of trying  
Kept us from home  
Before you

We climbed mountains  
Carrying the dream of you  
Within our hearts  
Always

Defeated  
Exiled  
Homeless

Searching for  
Our Place  
To Belong

Stolen  
Ripped away  
So many generations back

No-one thought to  
Remembered to  
Tell us

Be still  
Be quiet  
Hear them  
Calling to you

Here they are always  
Calling to you

Karanga mai  
Karanga mai

Calling us all

Home



Tomorrow is not a promise

We never know what is next around the  
corner

However this I know  
You and I belong together  
Forever

The thousand million  
More  
Images  
I have  
Of you  
Within my mind's eye  
Everlasting

And that is only THIS lifetime

Each precious moment  
Etched upon my soul  
Yet

I will forever  
Be hungry  
For more

Those we have loved  
Moving on  
Beyond the veil  
Likewise  
Remain tattooed on our hearts

We carry them  
Wherever and forever  
We go

Each loss making me  
To hug you tighter  
Each time we part

Reminding me  
There is NOWHERE you can go  
That I would not follow

Into the abyss  
Over mountains  
Deepest ocean  
Beyond the veil  
Beyond the stars

The highest heaven  
Into  
Forever

Do you know just how precious You are?  
Do you know how Magnificent You are?  
Do you know how deeply infinitely Loved  
You are?

You are the reason I stayed/stay  
Even when  
All I want is  
To go home  
Just want to close my eyes  
And rest  
Forever

My Muse  
My Bridge Back to Self  
My Inspiration  
My Reflection  
My Better 'New Improved' Version  
My Everything

My Forever

I am ever grateful for You

My only wish  
Is that you  
BE YOU

So as others come and go  
In this lifetime  
And into the next  
You remain  
Forever

And even though  
The mere thought  
Of losing you from sight in this life  
Brings me to my knees  
Starts a wail deep within my soul

I know  
Neither Death nor Life  
Can ever separate me from your side  
I am with You  
Forever

## Afterword from Pip

It is a hard thing to see yourself. Not as others see you, or as you would like to be - but as you ARE. It is hard to stop blaming. Wanting it to be someone else's fault. Harder still is to forgive yourself for not knowing, not being *better* somehow. Hardest yet is to love yourself, just as you ARE.

All these things I have endeavoured to do because I could see the harm I was passing on to the most important person in my life because I couldn't do these things. My daughter. Pre-Maia, my poetry saved my life more than once. Giving me a voice when I felt like I had none.

I share this, because I hope to encourage others to find theirs.

The book of poetry has been a lifetime in the making. It has taken many forms. I have written it since I was a child. I have been trying to share it since I was 27 years old. My dear friend Ani created images that accompany our writing many years ago. She gave up ever thinking this would come to be.

But I had to be a mother first. I had to know what it is like to see my daughter struggle in a similar way I have struggled DESPITE my EVERY effort for it to be different for her. For life to be a joy from the start. To protect her from the pain of betrayal, abandonment, heartbreak, loss, abuse and more. I failed. And as I have listened to her over the years; to her, I have been the source of many of these sufferings. I had to know what it feels like to watch someone you love more than you can love yourself, hurting and wanting to die, attempting to die, hurting herself in the most horrible of ways... the unique suffering and helplessness that only a mother can feel when she can do nothing to stop it...

Face the long, seemingly endless nights afraid. Alone. Feel that heartache deep in your soul when you hug your baby goodbye and wonder if you will ever see them again... So you do what you can do. You heal herself. Examine the deepest darkest wounds. Tread where angels would fear to tread. And then do it all over again. Because wait... there's more... And because wait... she's worth it... because YOU'RE worth it. Get up every day to be there for your child. Even if your best is not good enough for them. Even if they tell you they hate you. Even if others judge you to be a 'bad mother'. Knowing that perhaps this is the greatest gift YOU can give. To keep rising every day, to be born again. Be given another chance to *do the very best you can*. Because I have learnt, this is all we can do. To eventually show up for YOURSELF.

THIS is how we heal the world.

*Be the very best you can be - your story is not over yet...*

*Arohanui xx*

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Maia and Pip are mother and daughter from Aotearoa, New Zealand. Both call Hokianga, Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) home. Of Ngāpuhi and Celtic descent, Maia and Pip are both very passionate about healing from intergenerational trauma and continue to walk their own journeys towards peace and fulfilment, sharing what they learn with others through their poetry and art.

*“He kākano ahau i ruia mai i Rangiātea”*

