

clear as daylight. Old Uncle Kepa ends up taking his two whanaunga, Mereana and Lizzie, out fishing in the boat.

Uncle Kepa and Lizzie are catching fish but Mereana isn't even getting bites. They're packing up to head home when Mereana catches quite a big one. (All this is after some lovely writing about going fishing which makes you feel you're right there with them in the boat). You can taste Mereana's disappointment when, just as they are going to pull this good fish into the boat, the hook slips out.

It would be spoiling a lovely story to let on what Uncle Kepa does next but I've got to tell you how it ends. It gets mystical about the most unlikely thing you've ever imagined a writer could write about — and it works.

We sometimes forget that Patricia Grace is our only Maori woman novelist and the only Maori woman writer to have brought out a collection of short stories to date. This is her second.

In fact, our only Maori woman writer to bring out a collection of poems so far is Vernice Wineera Pere, who published *Mahanga* in Hawaii in 1978.

Quite aside from that significance it's really a good book — two good books in one, really — one of those rare books you'll want to reread straight away.

(And I can't finish without saying something about Patricia's style of writing. She makes you hear someone talking — reading her stories is like having someone else inside your body. I find it a bit uncanny.)

A lot of the poems in *Karanga* are like that, too. With them you hear talk in Maori and talk in English. More than talk really. What Barry Mitcalfe (who designed this book) calls "the singing word".

Not counting Alistair Campbell, who was born in the Cook Islands, Haare Williams is only the fourth Maori poet to bring out a volume of poetry.

The others are Hone Tuwhare, Vernice Wineera Pere and Apirana Taylor. (Though Keri Hulme shared with four other West Coasters *Coast Voices* in 1979, and her selection there speaks of a marvellous book to come.)

Yet *Karanga* is different. Five of the twenty-nine poems here are in Maori (many of the others contain much Maori) and we aren't asked to accept English translations.

*Karanga* is possibly our first truly bilingual collection of poems and that marks it out for me as an incredibly important event in New Zealand literature. Haare explains in the book's dedication how this came about:

"I write as I do, with simplicity — I hope — and with feeling, because I am my grandparents' child, brought up by them in a raupo house on the shores of Ohiwa Harbour, speaking Maori as my first language."

To hear these poems is to hear Maori and English being sung at once and that's a turning point for New Zealand writing.

"Ruia te taitea  
Kohia te kai rangatira"

Rei Hamon and Haare Williams have taken great care in placing certain drawings beside certain poems. There is illumination and we see the drawings afresh — the poems more vividly.

(Someday I hope the publishers have the money to do this again even more lavishly.)

The opening poem, "Koha", for instance, stands beside a 1977 drawing by Rei of a great tree stump reaching out into its landscape. Only after a while I realised that the poem was like a tree stump too.

The last few lines in their sadness are like the stump's drying roots giving their own koha back to the soil — the gift of new, richer soil itself.

"The year  
Nanny Wai went  
the trees grew old  
and died  
we didn't really know  
why"

Haare asks a lot of us as readers. You've got to listen to him say things and the way he says them and when you've got those two together you're given a kind of understanding I'd call messages carved upon the heartwood of emotions. He'll say something like:

"Koru designs  
Along rafters of the mind  
The seed uncurling  
The endless womb"

But you are meant to hear "Kei muri i te awe kapara he tangata ke, Mana te ao, he ma."

This must be so for the final stanza reads:

"Behind the curve  
Stands another  
Neither white nor brown  
But both"

For a long time I have thought that our poetry was being written by Maori and Pakeha yet it seemed to be untattooed. With Haare I see our poetry still wears a moko on its chin.

This speaking in two languages at once must be a source of much new poetry in the next few years and I think Haare wants us to see how difficult it is.

*Karanga* is a brave book because it wears its failures as proudly as its triumphs. I know how difficult it is to write well in one language — Haare shows us the courage of writing in two.

First books of poetry are usually kindly reviewed (poets often admit among themselves that their second collections are the ones to judge) but I'm trying to avoid that.

Each line of a poem has to bring us to the familiar in some new, unguarded way. We are helped to see the familiar afresh. We are shown that we want to cherish each thing pointed at by the poet.

A few times Haare gets away with just pointing but this is rare. To experience a stanza like:

"In praise of the flower  
the korimako sings  
bringing music  
like nectar  
to a confused day"

is to have the world recast. It's one of the basic reasons why we want to hear poetry. And all this is not even to touch upon the scars exposed ... the tears gently shed in these moving (often disturbing) songs.

For me both these books have been fun but much more than that — bright moments in a difficult autumn as the days begin to shorten and winter approaches. We need such books among us.

**D.S. Long, who wrote this review, is a teacher of deaf children in Wellington. He is also the editor with Witi Ihimaera, of a major new anthology of Maori literature called *In-to the World of Light*, to be published before Christmas.**