

“No Women, No Cry”

“You are charged with manslaughter and your sentence will be decided after an adjournment.”

Blankness, there's a blankness and sinking inside, a sobbing, but quite unexplainable. There's no pattern of reaction in the drawn faces around me.

The stories, elaborations, the uncertain truth, the belief, what judgements form in each mind is oblivious. My uncle stood briefly under the glare of guilt, the pain of aroha and anger of his family here to fight and release him. He, unlike myself had experienced the tension here in court. My emotions were mixed and confused as if I had been struck on the nose ... there was an urgency for me to be angry, yet the pain and sensations are beyond my limit of being able to judge my feelings. There is guilt as to what I deserved; sympathy for my opponent, and self pride ... how I look, how should I react?

Tough, unmoved

My uncle had been brought up his Granny away from younger children and was disciplined but spoilt. He'd grown up to take on the image of a tough, unmoved young man. Perhaps this had been the reason for the gap of mistrust he had with his other brothers and sisters. He was used to individual attention and was constantly in trouble for misbehaviour.

Rangi, my aunty had a similar background, but had grown up in a younger generation from uncle Bob. They were going together in her early teens and his early adulthood, and a family was early and perhaps too premature.

Their marriage was something expected of each other and they conveyed each others company as a duty.

Her man

But perhaps here is where I could percept deeper into their acceptance of each other. I saw the way they moved as one ... my aunty always spoke of “her man” with such pride.

Their relationship was very sensitive and private. I feel they both relied on their social life together as a hurried time of their teenage love missed whilst early adulthood filled the gap.

There was a devotion and responsibility bond for their protective care of the kids.

All this was illusive and disguised. The realistic view was an attitude of “not caring”. The kids were often left at home and were content to have learnt to understand and cope with

their parents' attempts to relive the youth passed into the kids themselves.

They grew to be tough, independent, mature and yet a need to be loved by their mum and dad. They had suffered the internal fear of the wild parties and destructive results that wounded them and their love for one parent. Fights and swearing, crying, and by the morning, Dad had gone to stay by Aunties for a while!

But they always came back. The aroha was stronger than their anger.

I always felt proud of my uncle and aunty, I can't really explain why. I think I loved watching a rare young Maori marriage that had survived and because I admired the “happy go lucky” attitude they had together like real mates ... my age. They didn't make you feel left out, there was no age gap to bridge.

Rare sight

To be honest, I felt they were a rare sight and an example of social misfit, though there were many others similar I knew. I think Rangi and Bob challenged life and were struggling to keep ahead, but obviously coping.

They had married young, had five kids, unemployed and happy to still be young and enjoy life to the full.

As she lay there was peacefulness in her eyes, and yet anger and a sordid expression from her lips. This was the only hint that could possibly explain her last feelings. It was a minor but frightening thought ... I asked her forgiveness of my uncle inside of me and cringed with a guilt that definitely marked and wounded my aroha.

Veil of tears

Yet I felt my closest moment with my aunty Rangi at her side. I could only close my eyes and see her round laughing face that I had often been afraid of, and opened my eyes again to see through my veil of tears her real, but lifeless beauty, as she lay.

My only anger that prevented my inside forgiving my uncle was the grey bruise on her cheek ... it pained me as much as she too must have felt it.

I was afraid before arriving at the tangi, of her family's reaction and attitude. As we approached I felt the glare and whisper of our names that was under consideration. Most strangely I was embarrassed in the presence of my uncle. But as the warmth of family aroha by her side closed around me, I wept as a part of her. I saw my uncle's guilt scarred him and he looked beyond their sympathetic faces and mourned with apologies.

Warm kiss

The maoritangi had overcome the tension and compassion floated and settled with each warm kiss received.

I have accepted her death, more in my mind than my soul. I believe that she

is no longer around, but I am not convinced. As with each tangi I experience, I can't believe until I see my loved one quietly laid in the wooden chest I fear. As the lid closes on my uncertainty and is lowered beneath the earth I weep with a loss and confusion inside me ... I wasn't there this time to secure my discontent of belief.

So there are still questions within me that only my dreams can fulfill and memories reveal ... never with complete satisfaction.

Although I question your death and departure deeply my Aunty, please find room in your heart for forgiveness Moe, moe ana. Haere ki te whenua ote rangimarie. Kia mau tonu ite aroha o to whanauake, ake, ake....

AROHA NUI

By K.H. Penetito (17) Wanganui. 

University seeks old Maori newspapers

Victoria University's Department of Maori Studies is anxious to find copies of old Maori newspapers to build up its Library resources for teaching and research. It says readers may be able to help them.

“Copies of these newspapers are rare and costly and they are treasures which we want to see carefully conserved and made accessible for study purposes,” said the professor of Maori Studies, Mr Sidney Mead.

“We are hoping that there might be people with copies of “Te Pake o Matariki”, “Te Toa Takitini”, “Te Pipiwharaua” or “Te Puke Ki Hikurangi” who may donate them to the Departments Library.

“Te Pipiwharaua” was produced 1898-1913. Printed by Herbert Williams and published in Gisborne at the Te Rau Press, then attached to Te Rau Kahikatea College, a theological college for the Anglican Church. It later became known as “Te Kopara” in 1913 and then resurrected as “Te Toa Takitini” in 1921 and lasted until late 1932.

The newspaper “Te Puke Ki Hikurangi” lasted from December 1877-1913. It was produced in the Wairarapa by the regular congregation of Maori high chiefs who met at Papawai Marae, Greytown.

This group held the intellectuals of the Maori world of the day. “Te Pu Ki Hikurangi” contains models of fine translations into Maori of Government legislation of that time.

“Te Pake o Matariki”, the King Movement publication, was printed from 1891-1924. The Maori Studies Department are interested in early copies of this publication. 