

Ockhams Sampler

Extracts from
the finalist books in the
General Non-Fiction Award
at the 2022 Ockham New Zealand
Book Awards

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NEW ZEALAND

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The General Non-Fiction Award

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The General Non-Fiction Award at the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards recognises excellence in primarily text-based non-fiction work from one or more authors. The winner of the 2022 award will receive \$10,000 in prize money.

Judging the category this year are poet and non-fiction author, book reviewer and blogger Nicholas Reid (convenor); award-winning journalist and photographer Aaron Smale (Ngāti Porou); and poet, historian, former diplomat and Fulbright alumna Leilani Tamu.

The judging panel says the four finalists' books stand out not only for their individual excellence in research, story-telling and deep insight, but also for their contribution to the ongoing narrative of what it means to be a New Zealander. "Each work brings deep insight and beautiful writing to their subjects, which included three very different autobiographies and a work of remarkable historical scholarship."

This Ockhams Sampler gives you a taste of the writing craft at play in each of this year's shortlisted books in the General Non-Fiction category. You can read the judges' comments about each finalist in pink at the start of that title's extract.

Look out for samplers of the finalists in the other three categories in the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards. As they are rolled out in the coming weeks, you will find them here:

www.issuu.com/nzbookawards

www.anzliterature.com

<https://www.nzbookawards.nz/new-zealand-book-awards/resources/>

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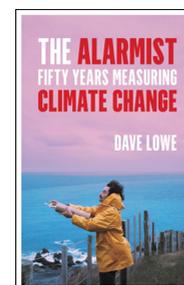


FROM THE CENTRE: A WRITER'S LIFE

Patricia Grace

Published by Penguin,
Penguin Random House

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THE ALARMIST: FIFTY YEARS MEASURING CLIMATE CHANGE

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Published by Te Herenga Waka
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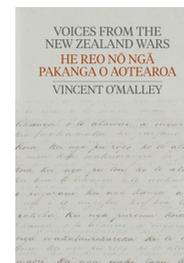


THE MIRROR BOOK: A MEMOIR

Charlotte Grimshaw

Published by Vintage,
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VOICES FROM THE NEW ZEALAND WARS | HE REO NŌ NGĀ PAKANGA O AOTEAROA

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Published by Bridget Williams Books



Patricia Grace

From the Centre

A writer's life

Published by Penguin, Penguin Random House

From the Centre: A Writer's Life

JUDGES' COMMENTS

On one level this is a personal memoir of love and of family—Patricia Grace writes of her husband, her children and her extended family, of being schooled and of teaching—but her life is also played out in the context of social history, the time when many Māori began to move from rural to urban environments; Grace is always aware that she lives within a much larger community. Hers is a rare literary memoir, free of egotism.

Extract from Chapter 4 overleaf

After all their accommodation troubles my parents became determined to own their own home. They saved and put together enough money to purchase a section, 'a piece of rock', on the side of a hill in Melrose. Every day after work my father worked there with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow, cutting out a building site. A Māori man in Melrose, or anywhere in the suburbs of Wellington, was a rare sight in those days. Local boys would come by, not too close, and do a mock haka behind him, stamping their feet and chanting mungy mungy typo (mangu, mangu, taipō), big black demon, before running off. One day my father turned as if to chase them. As they ran, one boy fell over and another wet himself. My father used to tell this story as a huge joke.

6 I don't know how my father managed to acquire a loan to build our Melrose house, as bank loans were not available to Māori at the time. A loan couldn't have been taken out by my mother, as women were not eligible to borrow money either. Many years later, after my father had died, I found out that an ex-28th Battalion friend of his was working in Wellington. This was Harry Dansey. I hadn't met Harry, but knew of him as a journalist and author of books concerning the lives and customs of Māori, and as the writer of a theatre play called *Te Raukura*. I was also aware of him as a judge of short stories for the Penwomen Competitions that I had entered over the years. I decided to introduce myself to him. He remembered my father well, telling me that he and his friends didn't know how Dad had managed to build a house. Many of them had tried to obtain loans for building and none had succeeded, even though they owned their own land.

But there, eventually, was our house on the side of a hill, taking in a panoramic view over Lyall Bay, Evans Bay, Kilbirnie and the Rongotai Aerodrome where Wellington Airport is now situated, and out to the far hills. It was after we'd moved into our new house that my brother Brian was born. When asked what I thought would be a nice name for this little brother, I believed I was being called on to invent one. I suppose I thought that that was how names came about. My contribution was 'Bigoni'.

From the house a path zigzagged down to a small lawn and from there down two more levels to vegetable gardens. In the early days, when we first moved in to the house, I would go with my father up the steep slopes behind our place to the hills which backed on to the Newtown Zoo, and were mainly covered in gorse and broom. There were some clear, grassed patches as well. My father took a spade and sack with him. Roaming here and there were old horses — 'lion tucker', my father said. They were destined for meals for lions, tigers and the one leopard which paced back and forth in their concrete cages. Once suitable grassed areas were found, my father sliced out even squares of turf and put them in his sack. When he had as much as he could carry, we made our way back down the slope to home, where he placed the day's collection on the piece of ground he had levelled out for a lawn. With plenty of watering, and several more trips to the hillsides, our lawn came to be — a small patch, not much wider on all sides than the spread of the revolving clothes line at its centre. We could play there, but not too boisterously because if we overstepped the outer edges we'd drop down the hillside in one direction or on to the garden in another.

I spent some time trying to fly from path to lawn, encouraged by my mother to keep trying. What made it seem possible were the terrific southerly busters that hit us full frontal and (it seemed to me) frequently. While I was trying to fly, my mother would be jamming extra pegs into the horizontal washing to keep it anchored.

8 Between our section and the neighbours was a rusty wire fence. It was not made of the usual number eight, but of a much lighter wire that had been joined in several places by twisting two strands together. These twists were at random intervals up and down the steep slope for the whole length of the fence. There was just enough space for me to walk up alongside it, and one morning, when I was about four years old, I was doing just that when it occurred to me that I should make a 'wireless' (which was what we called a radio in those days). So, I walked back and forth, 'turning on' all the little twists. When everything was ready, I sat down, put an arm each side of the wires and began plucking with my fingers. I was the player of the golden harp in the Jack and the Beanstalk story. When I did this a whole orchestra started up, the music swirling all around and above me, and went on and on. After a time, I went inside and told my mother about this great thing that had happened. She said it was all in my imagination. I remember feeling disappointed with this response.

Memories get put away, as this one did, for many years. Fifty years later, as a grandmother, I went to a gala organised by the school my two eldest grandchildren were attending. I went



Ready for my first day at school. A section of the musical fence in background. **Family Archives**

the usual rounds of stalls, bought a book, a few raffle tickets and probably something to eat. The highlight for me was the concert in one of the junior classrooms where my grandchildren took part in the class band, playing recorders and percussion. After that I was ready to go home, so I sat down and waited for those I had come with. Nearby was a booth, advertising tea-leaf readings. It was without customers, and had been that way for most of the day as far as I could tell. I thought this could be an interesting way to pass the time and to use up my remaining dollars in favour of the school.

I went in, remembering too late that I don't drink tea. When I sat down, the woman, draped in filmy colours, greeted me, took up the teapot and poured. I told her of my adverse reactions to both tea and coffee, and said I would like to take just a small sip. She said never mind that, I could just blow on it, which I did. She emptied the cup and turned it upside-down on the saucer, letting the tea leaves form themselves into a pattern on the bottom and lower sides of the cup. She mused over the leaves for a while. Then she said, 'You do believe, don't you, that I am going to tell you something worthwhile, something of significance to you?' I hadn't realised that the woman had a serious belief in what she was doing. I think I said something like, 'Er, I, um.' She said, 'Never mind. There's something here to do with harp music. Do you play the harp?' When I said that I did not, she went on to ask me more questions about harps and harp music, but I didn't find any connection at all to what she was asking me. I thought she might then look for a new direction among the tea leaves, but she didn't. She pondered for some time before going on to tell me

that a strong memory would come, that it would be important to me and that it was to do with harp music.

Once home, the memory of my DIY wireless came to me in a jolt, the turning of the twists, the plucking of the strings, the ethereal and all-enveloping music that I'd heard. From there came many other memories, over several days, to do with my pre-school self. Perhaps the time was right for a stocktake, time to get in touch with beginnings, a reminder of a time when I'd had an unshakeable self-confidence.

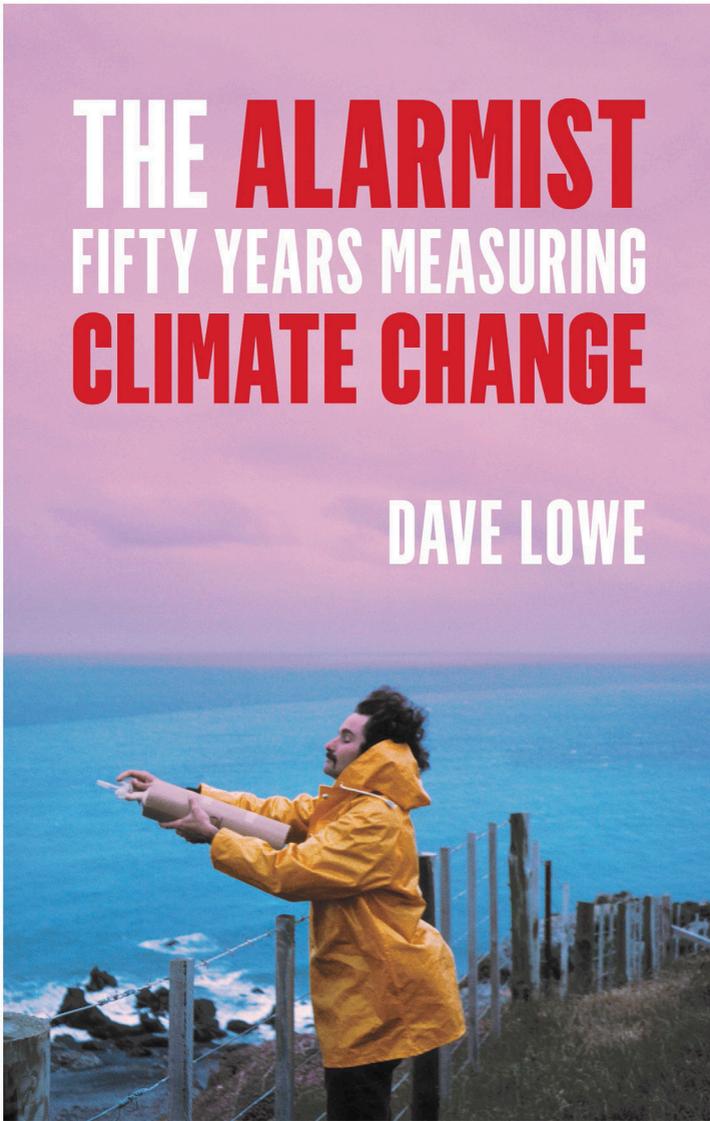
Sometime later I wrote a story called 'Harp Music'. I don't know that it's a particularly successful story, but writing it became a kind of exploration of self. As I wrote there was a sharp image I had in my mind of the joyful girl running towards me in a navy-blue coat. Had I been true to her, I wondered? Had I allowed 'imagination' to serve me well?

The music is all around walking, then running, swirling, climbing, and she is part of the playing. There is an eye of moon in the sky and a journey down to the sea walking on rocks in a dress that is yellow. One part of the music has the beat of the sea. There's smoke from a far chimney going to the eye in the sky. And she is lifting too, lifting to the moon-eye and looking down over water and rocks and trees and paddocks, but at the same time she is playing the music. There are people with faces like wide bowls, looking up at her. After a time she descends and the music is fading. Soon it has all gone but she knows it is her own. She walks beside the fence again turning the switches of her radio, and when everything is done she comes, leggy and laughing and pleased with herself, running towards me.

THE ALARMIST

FIFTY YEARS MEASURING CLIMATE CHANGE

DAVE LOWE



Published by Te Herenga Waka University Press

The Alarmist: Fifty Years Measuring Climate Change

JUDGES' COMMENTS

In this wide-ranging autobiography, Dave Lowe follows New Zealand's critical role in charting carbon emissions from the 1970s onwards. Writing of the methodical collection of critical data allows Lowe to convey major scientific concepts to the general reader in a very accessible way. *The Alarmist* has a rich texture of family and a clear awareness that members of the scientific community are not always in harmony. It is enlightening as well as very readable.

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Extract from '310-326 ppm' overleaf

After three years of misery and failure at high school I'd had enough. I was fifteen, the legal age for leaving school, and left for an entry-level job at the New Plymouth telephone exchange. My role there was making cups of tea for the senior technicians and cleaning grease off mechanical telephone equipment. It was filthy, boring work using dangerous solvents that left my hands raw and chafed, with grease packed under my fingernails. But no one picked on me.

I started meeting other young people, including the first to take up surfing on the Taranaki coast. There was Leftie, who lived in a clapped-out van with his surfboard and not much else. When he came out of the waves, without fail he would get stuck into banana sandwiches; that seemed to be all he survived on. And there was Rich, who was some sort of accountant able to get off work whenever the surf was running. He would sometimes ramble on about numbers, stop in mid-sentence, stare out to sea, then scramble into his suit to go back to work.

Surfing was a time of anticipation and elation. A bright blue sky and blazing sun overhead. Black iron sand burning your feet as you ran towards the sea, surfboard under your arm. Spray on your body as you dived into the waves clutching your surfboard, clean seawater flicking you around yet holding you in a fluid embrace. A billion or two years ago we came from the sea, didn't we?

It was during this time that I began to bond with an inspiring primary school teacher, Ray Jackson – the father of one of my best friends, Con. I could open up to Ray and talk to him in depth about my feelings in a way that seemed easy and natural. Ray always listened to me carefully and was never judgemental.

I remember feeling surprised when he asked me what I thought about books and maybe I'd like to look at a few. I'd read a lot of books when I was younger, but virtually gave up during the terrible years at high school. At the telephone exchange we read comics and magazines rather than books. I resisted Ray's suggestion at first. However, when he nudged me in the direction of the city library, I was amazed to discover books on surfing in Hawai'i and books about the environment, including on weather systems and the formation of ocean waves. Soon I found another world through the pages of library books. One I'll never forget was Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), a sobering account of the poisoning of the biosphere with DDT and other chemicals aimed at pest, disease and weed control. Learning and learning how to learn from the books in the library was mind-blowing. I discovered books on science, mathematics, engineering and electronics, among others, and vividly remember my excitement as I became more and more aware of the science behind the physical forces shaping our planet.

Through surfing I'd already developed an almost primal feeling for ocean waves. I'd discovered from my reading that these were often generated by storm events thousands of kilometres away as energy passed from the atmosphere into the sea. Soon I'd gone through dozens of books in the New Plymouth library – the entire science section – and was rapidly reaching the limit of what I could learn there. What was my next move?

To study physical science, I would have to go to university. But I was a high-school drop-out with only a basic school qualification. I'd barely scraped through School Certificate. In a provincial

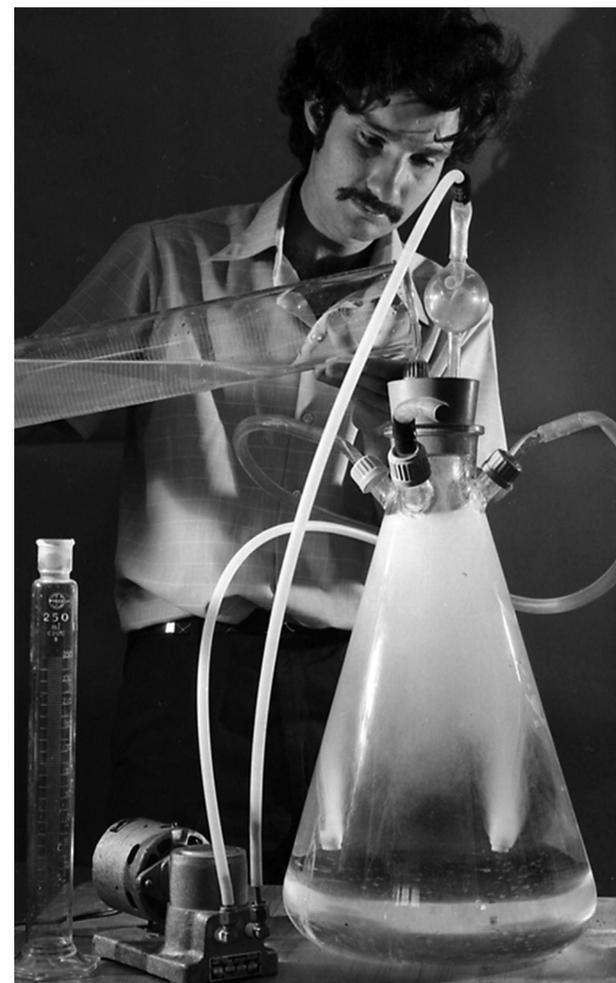
New Zealand town in the 1960s, getting to grips with subjects like physics, oceanography or atmospheric science seemed a far-fetched idea. Accounting or agricultural studies, perhaps, but fundamental science? How could that be useful, let alone provide a living? After discussion with Ray and my parents it was clear I would have to go back to school for another year. Without the University Entrance certificate, I could not enrol at a university.

My workmates at the telephone exchange shook their heads when I quit to go back to school. My parents had little money, and I had to buy a school uniform and sell my motorbike to help with the family finances. I went back to the same awful school but this time it was different: I was single-minded about getting University Entrance.

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When I re-enrolled in academic classes at the same school in 1964 after a year's absence, I was treated as a 'new boy'. However, I knew exactly what to expect. When told to enrol in the school military battalion, I deliberately did not. On military drill days I skipped school and went surfing instead. I did not exist in the military battalion records and was never caught, although teachers sometimes patrolled the surf beaches looking for truant boys.

In the academic school I enrolled in a mixture of science subjects, pure and applied mathematics as well as English. It was a huge challenge because my previous experiences at the school had left me poorly equipped to deal with the advanced subjects I had chosen. For the first month I struggled to keep up, but I was highly motivated and got on top of the work. My teachers were



'My master's thesis project: lab-based experiments measuring the uptake of CO₂ by seawater.'

somewhat diffident about having a boy with 'broken schooling' in their classes, but I made it clear that I was there to learn. The other boys, in what turned out to be the top science class, were mature and also wanted to learn. There was none of the bullying and mindlessness I'd previously experienced. Our science textbooks were based on inquiry and laboratory experiments rather than rote learning, and encouraged students to appreciate the elegant physical principles driving the phenomena we see in everyday life. Physics involved practical calculations and experiments on sound, water and radio waves, heat, light and radiation, as well as concepts behind launching rockets and

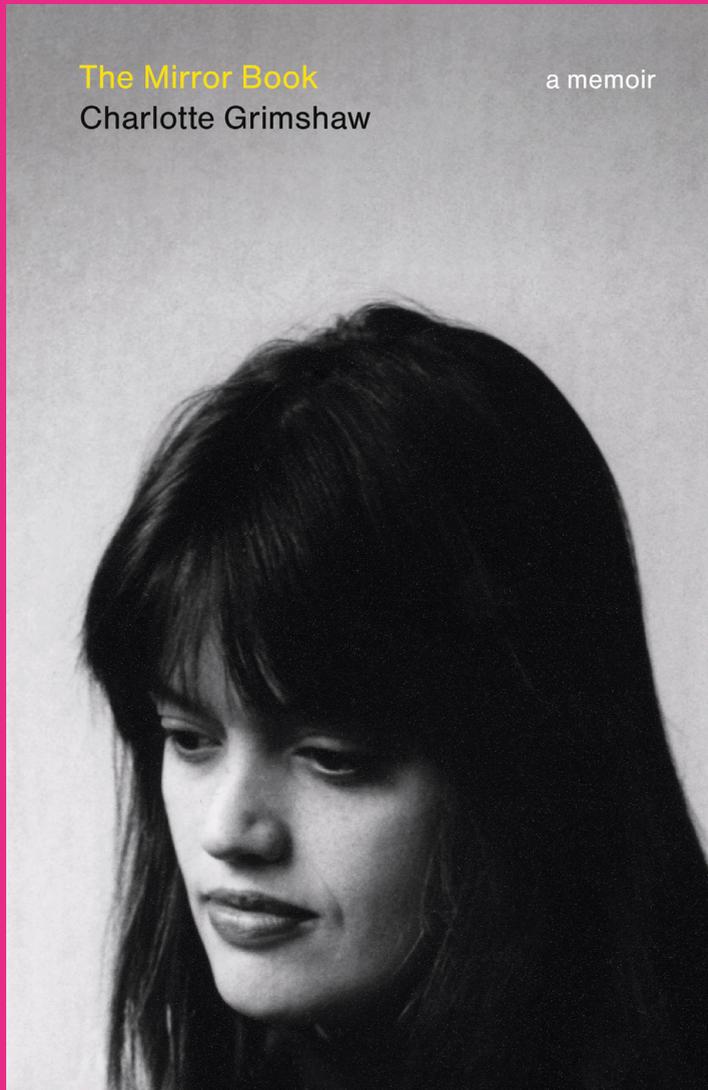


'Baring Head lighthouse station in the early 1970s. The small concrete building on the right is where Peter Guenther and I set up the equipment to make the first atmospheric CO₂ measurements at Baring Head. The station has since become an essential part of a network revealing a rapidly deteriorating atmosphere.'

spacecraft into Earth's orbit and beyond. I topped the school in physics that year.

Chemistry caught my imagination and I was soon developing ideas at home to make rocket fuels and explosives. This was initially done in my bedroom and the garage of my parents' home. After one explosion filled the house with smoke, I was told to take the experiments elsewhere. Ray Jackson's son, Con, a willing participant in the tests I'd designed, helped me move the equipment to the back garden of their house. After one particularly fun afternoon in which a small rocket ran amok, we noticed Ray's cucumbers were wilting. The next day it was obvious they had succumbed. Ray, always sanguine, suggested we should learn from the experience. I remember helping to replant the garden and buying him some apology tinned tomatoes from the local dairy.

Other chemistry experiments were potentially more dangerous. I developed a method for making hydrogen gas by dropping thin aluminium milk bottle tops into a concentrated caustic soda solution in the bottom of a quart beer bottle. The gas was collected in rubber balloons to which I tied labels marked 'Please contact Dave Lowe phone 88-390'. These were launched to try and track how far they flew. One day my brother Steve was helping me when, without warning, he decided to light the hydrogen coming out of a beer bottle. Momentarily his head was enveloped in a red flash of flame and, when he turned to me, he had no eyebrows and was deaf for a week. Mum, gentle but assertive, suggested that we might want to move on to other less dangerous experiments.



The Mirror Book
Charlotte Grimshaw

a memoir

Published by **Vintage, Penguin Random House**

The Mirror Book: A Memoir

JUDGES' COMMENTS

A writer of novels and short fiction turns to non-fiction with a memoir par excellence. In this book of trauma, recovery and self-discovery, the prose is exquisitely precise in its navigation of the complexity of the author's family dynamics and its interrogation of how it has shaped the construction of her identity and influenced her writing. *The Mirror Book* combines the personal and the literary with the sociological. It has been—and deserves to be—widely read.

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Extract from Chapter 1 overleaf

This was how the year began. I had been married for two decades. I was the mother of three children. I'd established a career as a writer, columnist and reviewer, and so far hadn't run short of new ideas for fiction. I was a dutiful daughter to my parents, who lived nearby, and who often called on me to look after the old house while they were away overseas. Although I'd been living in London when my first two children were small, Kay often minded our youngest child, Leo, after I and my husband Paul returned to Auckland, and looked after our three children if we needed. Outwardly we were a functional and stable extended family.

I had been loyal to my father all my life and had publicly praised and defended him when called upon. I'd always toed the line, more or less. He was still in Tohunga Crescent, still one of the country's most celebrated writers, a novelist, critic, poet and combative public intellectual who, the UK *Sunday Times* noted, 'looms like a cultural monument' in New Zealand.

Since I'd chosen, after starting a career in law, to change course and follow him into writing, I was often asked about our literary family. I always gave a standard public response, variations on *Lovely childhood, a house full of books*.

This was how it was, at the beginning of the year. And then it all fell apart.

In the course of one shocking, unexpected week my marriage seemed to have ended, and I found myself alone without a single close friend to call on. I was forced to confront the structure of my life, and for the first time I realised how strange, rigidly narrow and constricting it was. I'd spent a life avoiding

people, focusing solely on the family without making any other associations, and now, outside it, I had no support at all.

At first, dealing with the immediate crisis I floundered, blundered on, tried to get through the day. But after that period of bewilderment, I started to wonder. There was something unexplained about my life, as if I'd accepted a story on blind faith, without inquiring. It felt like a crisis of faith, that I was lapsing. But lapsing from what?

There was another oddity that added to my sense of unexplained mystery: just after my marriage crisis, my mother stopped speaking to me. No more coffees, no emails, no birthday phone call, no enquiry when I mentioned a health scare and surgery.

I got a call one day from Karl, who said, 'I'll put Kay on; you and she can have a coffee.' They were about to fly out to London, and needed to talk to me about taking care of their house.

There was a silence and then the noise of the phone hitting the floor, as if he'd put it in her hand and she'd dropped it.

He came back on and said he would meet me instead, which was unusual; he didn't like cafés. When we met, I asked, 'What's going on?' He shrugged, looked evasive and said it would pass. But it didn't. The silent treatment was one of Kay's tricks or tactics; she was open about the fact that she'd once given her sister the silent treatment for four years. It was a minor, petty detail, but the timing, just as I was groping my way out of a calamity, was so notable it made questioning unavoidable. It seemed to be a clue, or a signal. There couldn't be any more blind faith.

Finally, after much witless frowning and pondering

(and glazed staring and tearful drinking), I formed this solemn conclusion: there was something wrong with me. With the state of my social connections.

So, what to do about that?

My mind kept drifting back: back to Tohunga Crescent. Could my problems have begun in the past? Whatever it was that had caused my mind to grow into an unusual shape — one that was resistant to change and so restricting — must surely have happened long ago. It seemed logical: this state of affairs could only be explained by looking back.

My search for answers to this question — how did I end up so alone? — was not about self-pity. The drive was journalistic. It was a mystery. It began to be about writing, too. Writing was what I did and I wasn't much good at anything else; I did it compulsively, and so it was inevitable I would try to record this disastrous turn, either in novels or short stories or essays. Most of all, I was trying to save myself. It had been brutally demonstrated to me what it meant to feel completely abandoned. If I could learn to change, perhaps I could find my way to belonging.

Looking for clues in the past: this was where I started running into trouble. Trouble with my literary family, who were resistant to my questions.

'If you want to understand psychology read the Russian novels.' A psychologist told me this. I thought about it. Successful novels, the ones that work and endure, have to be informed by psychological accuracy. A squeamish refusal to confront messy human truths is not going to result in complex fiction. This then was part of the mystery: how had I emerged from a literary

family — a family that should theoretically have embraced, *relished*, the rich details of human life — with the sense that my own narrative history was poorly defined, shallowly rendered, strangely bowdlerised and obscured?

The chronological details were clear, but the emotional elements, truths about the family dynamic, 'how it was, how it felt, what we were like' were not only unclear but also, it seemed, the more I tried to find out and discuss and explore, off-limits. Forbidden.

Paul and I eventually reunited, but everything had changed. Like some slow, defensive creature, I'd spent years building layers of protection around myself: marriage, children, work, a whole new self. Now they had been ripped away, leaving me as raw and exposed as I'd been at the end of my young adulthood.

Everything had unravelled, the security was gone, and I was so wildly unnerved that the ensuing conflict threatened to wreck the marriage all over again. Any hint of a new threat, any reminder of Paul's sudden defection, sent me into desolation and pain. When conflict arose, I felt I was reaching out and catching nothing. To have the sense of being completely alone, as if spinning in space, was an intensely terrible and bleak experience.

So, the past. Previously, whenever asked, I'd sketched my experience of the literary family in a way that was positive and superficial, without consulting my memory. I'd spent my young life watching interactions, noticing what was hidden, what was subtext. But I'd sublimated and generalised the information, transforming it into fiction, acceptably disguised and stylised.



Charlotte Grimshaw. Jane Ussher

The family's response to experiences had always been: It's material. Go and write a story about it.

But there were designated roles in the family, and one didn't criticise, or step outside the official boundaries. It wasn't contemplated that one would *change*.

There was the rigidity of roles and there was a problem you could call generational, a clash between my parents' code, which was dominated by front and face, and the current fashion for 'openness', for talking about ourselves, for sharing, and casting off shame.

Now, firmly discouraged from looking back, I started searching my memories in earnest. The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there. What was it like?

The questioning gained its own momentum. It felt urgent and vital; I was trying to save myself. I had started an uprising in my own mind, and I wanted to write about it. I got preoccupied with the idea of a family living according to a repressive narrative that denies individuals their own truth.

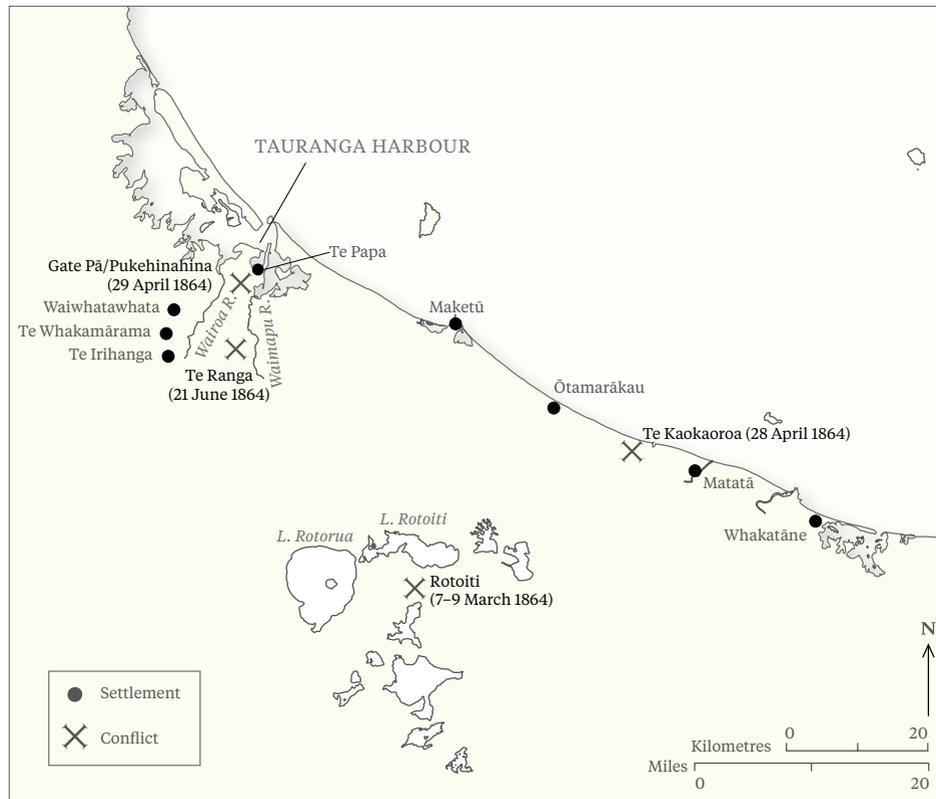
GATE PĀ/PUKEHINAHINA, 29 APRIL 1864

Hori Ngatai

Hori Ngatai of Ngāti Hē (Ngāi Te Rangi) was among those who fought at Gate Pā. Like many other young men from the district, he had previously gone to the aid of the Waikato tribes but returned home in time to help defend his own lands.¹ His colourful and detailed account of what took place was given to a select group of Pākehā in Wellington in 1903, in response to questions put to him by Gilbert Mair, and was later included in Mair's published account of the Gate Pā battle.² The version included here is the original manuscript, based on Mair's own translation of what Hori Ngatai told him.

THE WARRIOR SPEAKS

I was a young man of about twenty five when we fought the Pakeha at the Gate pa. I had already seen some service with my tupara (d. b. fowling piece). When the war began I and some of my people went to assist our kinsmen, and joined the Kingites at Meremere on the Waikato river. There we exchanged shots with the British gun-boats on the river, and were under rifle and shell fire. My second engagement was at Otahu.³ The Gate pa was my third fight, and then came our repulse at Te Ranga where over one hundred and



Localities and sites of major conflicts in the vicinity of Tauranga in 1864 are shown on this map.

- 1 Steven Oliver, 'Ngātai, Hōri', from *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1n8/ngatai-hori> (accessed 13 May 2020).
- 2 Gilbert Mair, *The Story of Gate Pa, April 29th, 1864*, Bay of Plenty Times, Tauranga, 1937.
- 3 Ōtau, near Te Wairoa (Clevedon), where a clash took place on 17 September 1863. The wahine toa Heni Te Kiri Karamu was also present on this occasion.



Lieutenant-General Duncan Cameron (sixth from right, with hands in pockets) and his men were photographed on 29 April 1864, the morning of their attack on Gate Pā. Soon after, they unleashed a massive artillery barrage on the pā.
PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES INGRAM MCDONALD, 29 APRIL 1864, ATL, PACOLL-3396-1

fifty of our people were slain by the Imperial and Colonial soldiers who stormed our unfinished position at the point of the bayonet. That was a black day for Ngaiterangi; but I will tell of that another time. I will now speak of the Gate pa engagement.

In that year many of our people had gone to assist the Waikato Natives. We were waiting to be attacked by the Imperial troops at Te Tiki-o-te Ihinga-rangi between Cambridge and Maungatautari, when news came that soldiers had been landed at Te Papa, Tauranga, so we hurried back across country to defend our own homes.

On arriving in our homeland, we decided to fortify pas and fight to the last against the Pakeha. The majority of Ngaiterangi selected a strong old pa at Waioku [Waoku] at upper Waimapu, which we strengthened, and waited to be attacked. Other sections took up positions at Kaimai, Poripori, and Wairoa, &c. on the main road leading from Tauranga to Waikato. My own people occupied Te Wairoa. There we were joined by two noted fighting men of the Whakatohea (Opotiki tribe) named Tamaki and Te Poihipi. Meetings were held, and a plan of action agreed upon.

Heni Te Kiri Karamu

One of the most famous incidents of the battle of Gate Pā was the taking of water to Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Booth as he lay dying. Hori Ngatai had observed that Te Ipu, to whom this act was often attributed, could not have been responsible as he had been wounded. Others suggested that it was Henare Taratoa, perhaps conflating the code of conduct he had drafted with the many acts of chivalry that reflected its ethos. Either way,

for many it was axiomatic that a man had carried the water. When the gesture was immortalised in a memorial unveiled on the fiftieth anniversary of the death of leading Ngāi Te Rangi rangatira Rawiri Puhirake in 1914, an unnamed male figure was depicted carrying a gourd of water.⁴

Yet the true story of what had taken place was already known. Among those inside the pā was the remarkable wahine toa Heni Te Kiri Karamu, also known as Jane Foley or Heni Pore.⁵ Although of Te Arawa ancestry, she had fought alongside Ngāti Koheriki during the Waikato War before making her way to Tauranga to join the defenders of Gate Pā. According to her account, it was she who had risked her life to take water to Booth. Although others may have made similar gestures, it seems clear that Heni Te Kiri Karamu had indeed been responsible for this particular act.

GIVING WATER TO THE WOUNDED

Some question has been raised as to who it was who gave water to the wounded soldiers at the fight at the Gate Pa in 1864. Mrs. Foley, who lives at Karangahake, and is a native interpreter, writes: –

‘It was I who gave water to the three wounded soldiers at the Gate Pa, and not Te Ipu. There were two pas. Though close together, they were separate. Te Ipu was in the larger pa among his people – Ngaiterangi, about 300. I was in the small one, with Te Koheriki, who numbered only about 30. It was in this pa that Colonel Booth

4 ‘Rawiri Puhirake NZ Wars Memorial’, NZ History, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/rawiri-puhirake-nz-wars-memorial> (accessed 22 July 2020).
5 Steven Oliver, ‘Te Kiri Karamū, Hēni’, from *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1143/te-kiri-karamu-heni> (accessed 22 July 2020).



This marble frieze on the memorial to Ngāi Te Rangi leader Rawiri Puhirake in Tauranga’s Mission Cemetery depicts a famous incident during the battle, when a Māori toa offered water to a gravely wounded British officer. In reality, however, it was not a man who carried the calabash of water, but the wahine toa Heni Te Kiri Karamu.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA TRUTTMAN

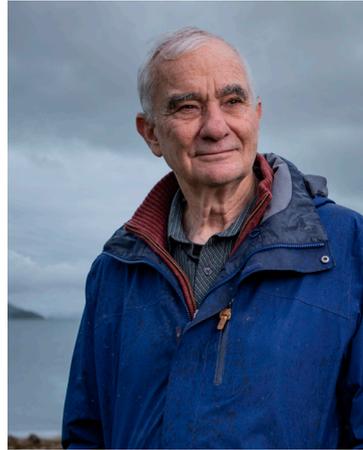
fell. I accompanied an only and much-devoted brother who, despite my entreaties, was determined to see a good fight. It was not that I loved fighting, but I desired to be with him to see him fall, or perchance fall side by side, as we were much attached to each other. Thus I accompanied him, much against his wish. On the morning of the engagement I assisted to prepare a breakfast (which we lost), and personally handled the cooking utensils. After our commander-in-chief (Rawiri Puhiraki) had dismissed the enemy's messenger we were called to prayers, as was our custom morning and evening. I was seated on the parapet, with our minister on one side and Patuiti on the other; my brother with our uncles below my feet in the trench rifle-pit. When our chaplain was concluding the service with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and –" I was pulled by a strong arm down into the rifle-pit, and at the same moment came a terrific crash, the bursting of the first (110-pounder Armstrong) shell fired at our pa, blowing our chaplain and Patuiti, my comrades, to atoms. Two more shells were fired at our pa, then general firing ensued. The storming of the pas commenced about midday, when we were ordered to "charge." We all rushed out, firing and striking with the guns. We were soon driven back into the pa. We repulsed the soldiers again, and the enemy lost some wounded men behind. Towards evening I heard a wounded man calling for water several times, and his repeated calls aroused my compassion. I slung my gun in front of me by means of a leather strap. I said to my brother, "I am going to give that pakeha water." He wondered at me. I sprang up from the trench, ran quickly in the direction of our hangi (oven), where we had left water in small tin cans, but found them gone. I then crossed to another direction where I knew a larger vessel was, an old nail can, with the top knocked in and no handle.

It was full of water; I seized it, poured out about half of the water, and with a silent prayer as I turned, ran towards the wounded man. The bullets were coming thick and fast. I soon reached him. He was rolling on his back and then on his side. I said, "Here is water; will you drink?" He said, "Oh, yes." I lifted his head on my knees and gave him drink. He drank twice, saying to me, "God bless you." This was Colonel Booth, as I judged from his uniform and appearance. I believed he was the superior officer. Afterwards Major [J. H. H.] St. John told me that when Colonel Booth was carried from the pa next day he related how a woman had given him drink and had spoken to him in English. While I was giving him the water I heard another wounded man begging of me to give him water also. I took the water to him and gave him drink, and another wounded man close by tried to crawl over for a drink. I gave him drink, took the can and placed it by Colonel Booth's side, and I sprang back to my brother, feeling thankful indeed at being again at his side. Space will not allow me to say more. This is the true story of how the wounded soldiers at the Gate Pa fight were supplied with water, and why Te Ipu should get the credit of my action is what I cannot understand.'

'The Fighting at the Gate Pa', *New Zealand Herald*,
12 February 1898, supplement, p.1.



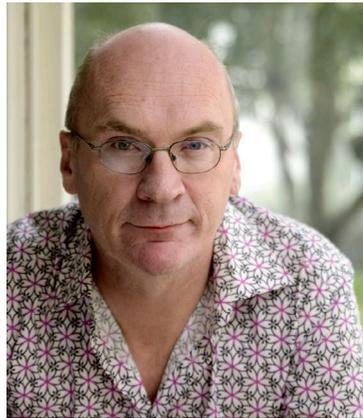
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