

## FISHING

In the beginning we were all fish! So says Mum stroking her forearm rather fondly in upward strokes to show how the hairs aided our swim, slicing like tiny blonde fins through green velvet swathes of oceans.

And on occasion we may have floated, gazing from dark liquid eyes at the day and night passing and one day dying peeling away like luminescent leaves from the moving school of us, swinging and swaying to land without fanfare on our quiet and empty seabed.

After we'd grown, whole generations of us sailed through a boom of years, ploughing in great canoes and ships over continents of ocean Southbound to land on a thousand lonely beaches. And then at last here on God's own big fish we reached down fins tidily tucked away to cradle a shell casually fingering the bony surface slipping it in a pocket or flax cloak to keep the sound and shape of our former selves as we stood on our windy foreshore.

Later feeling shored up at the mouth of a harbour we wee flying fish: Wendy, Linda, and Phillipa and I throw bodies sleek with sea endlessly off the wharf. We were just mad for it and all the chaps were there! Neptune, Njord, Tangaroa nibbling kina and cray ready for a kip on our soft seabed.

Now the family from Papatoetoe and us the thoroughly bached of Orere Pt, tread water down stream from a hapu weaving a river of silhouettes against searing heat. Flanked by the lush remembrance of a lost Pa; they move slowly laughing, children calling, collecting toward the open sea while we remain feet now firmly planted on the welcoming shore.

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