

Mixed emotions

Waikaremoana

The heavy mist clung to the dark forest and lake, its tendrils slowly floating towards me. Standing on the edge I slip off my dusty sneakers, as they blister my feet. I dip my toes in the surface of the lake; it ripples disturbing the flat glass. The icy water bites my toes, as the vast blackness of the lake seems to almost swallow me. Its weed reaching towards my foot tugging me, begging me to fall into its murky embrace. Before it envelops me I escape and begin to retreat slowly away from the eerie lake.

I don't belong here, I want to leave, right this moment. My home, the place where my ancestors are from, feels unwelcoming, foreign. My fair hair and skin makes me stand out, I don't fit in. The sadness from the tangi seeps down to the lake. I feel like the expectations weigh down on me, take away any enjoyment I get from meeting my cousins. But then again there is no joy at a tangi.

I hate it here. Attending tangi is the only time we come to this gloomy lake, this eerie lake. Emotions flying around my mind and heart, the confusion, grief, sadness, discomfort, and just an unsettling feeling. The hopeful feeling I can go and hide away from the sadness, this place, and these people, my cousins, aunties, uncles. People and places I don't know, I feel like I will never know.



Hicks Bay

Morning sun pours through the window and casts a bright light onto my closed eyes. I hear the quiet rustling of others getting up. I open my eyes to the familiar sight of the patterned heke overhead. When I sit up I'm greeted by smiling faces and hushed good mornings. Because there's no privacy in the whare I have to grab my clothes and blindly get changed in my sleeping bag. As soon as I'm changed I stumble to the wharekai for breakfast. I'm soon seated with my steaming bowl of baked beans and I watch as familiar, and not so familiar faces, come stumbling in one by one. All with half awake looks on their faces. So many of the faces I only get to see once a year, when I come here. To the place I love, to the Hicks Bay local marae, Hinemaurea. Working with others, serving, meeting new people and spending time with old friends. That's what I love and that's why I feel so connected here. I have a whanau that I know and love. A place where I love to spend my time.