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Layers

Hāwea Apiata

Kei ngā whakapapa tonu ngā whakautu.

Ka pā aku ringaringa ki te whenua,
ka ā ki raro,
kia toro iho mā te kirinuku,
kia hutihuti ake ai i ngā mahara
e takoto ana kei tua i te kiri o Papa.

taku tua-kiri

Ka wherawhera au i ngā whakapaparanga
kia kite ai i ngā mōmōhanga o aku iwi,
ngā kura e huna ana i ngā paparanga oneone.

Mā te kaha o taku arero nei
e ara mai anō ai ngā mea mate.
Koinei te karanga ki taku reo tupuna,
kia tōia mai ngā kupu kua ngaro atu ki te pō,
kia hahū ake anō i te whakaaro māori
e rere ai te wai o te puna a Tū ki te puna a Moko.

Kei ngā whakapapa tonu ngā whakautu.

All of the answers are in the layers.

I place my hands on the whenua*
and press downward
stretching through dirt and rock,
grasping memories to pull back to the surface.

My tongue raises dead things.
I draw up words through the Holocene
and resurrect the sound of my own flesh and blood.
I speak myself back into existence.

We live and die on our mother's body—
we are the thickening of her skin,
additions to the layers,
soil and cells turned over,
re-generation after re-generation.

All of the answers are in the layers.

**Whenua* translates to *Land*.