

An abstract black and white artwork featuring two faces. The face on the right is more defined, with visible features like eyes, nose, and mouth, though partially obscured by textures and paint. The face on the left is more ethereal, appearing as a negative space or a lighter form against the darker background. The entire composition is heavily textured with thick, expressive brushstrokes, splatters, and drips of paint, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

queer the pitch

poetry from lgbtqia+ people across Aotearoa

edited by
essa may ranapiri

Cover art by Calla Knudson-Hollebon.

Back-cover art by Tyla Jane Armstrong.

Find more of their work at

<https://www.facebook.com/callarebeccaart/>

<https://www.facebook.com/tylajaneillustration/>
respectively.

‘Queerness necessitates a radicalized language’

Cody-Rose Clevidence

‘E uruhia ana te reo whakawhana e te takatāpuitanga’

trans. by Anna Tashkoff

When I sent out an open call for poetry from queer writers across Aotearoa I didn't know what to expect and I've been so impressed with the diverse and rich pieces that I have received.

The quote that opens this collection is from the American nonbinary poet Cody-Rose Clevidence whose work has greatly influenced mine. The idea that queerness necessitates a radicalized language is reflected so well in these works. In setting up an open call without any focus on theme, I wanted to get to the truth about what it means to be a queer person. And the truth of it is *there is no one truth*, we are all different. This might sound obvious but within a heteronormative society we do get boxed into certain stereotypes that represent no such reality. And the poems here, about the body, about nature, about love, about love lost, about identity, about purpose, show us who we are.

Continuing on with the idea of radicalizing, the process of writing from a queer experience is a process of rewriting or unwriting certain expected norms. This idea brings me to the title of the collection; *queer the pitch* historically what does it mean to queer the pitch?

These wanderers, and those who are still seen occasionally in the back streets of the metropolis, are said to 'go a-pitching'; the spot they select for their performance is their 'pitch,' and any interruption of their feats, such as an accident, or the interference of a policeman, is said to 'queer the pitch,'--in other words, to spoil it. [Thomas Frost, "Circus Life and Circus Celebrities," London, 1875]

This example shows the idea of queerness unsettling an environment, and that is what I think "queer" writing does. To *queer the pitch* in this instance means to make a noise about our bodies to make a noise to destruct, to "spoil" the hegemonic structures of the systems we exist in that try to put us into boxes.

Every poem here has something different to say, expresses a different experience of the world but they all demand attention in their beauty and in their rawness.

To everyone who contributed to this collection, thank you from the bottom of my heart, your words mean the world to me.

Aroha nui,
Essa May Ranapiri

Sugartown

Having sex with a new body is an exercise in trust.

Untouched by The Veronicas plays softly

Porous / Sexless

Like a virgin touched for the very first time

The city of love / Sugartown

They
told
me
Paris
was
their
favourite
European
city

Ladyhawke's Paris is burning plays softly in the background

Flying to Paris /
3 Manhattans later /
they said it was a 'stiff' drink /
I thought of British people scowling /
and /
loveless hetero sex /
I don't want to be like you/

biological processes that display an endogenous, entrainable oscillation of the body over
24 hours

I hate feeling like I'm difficult

chronic jet-lag having profound consequences on the circadian and metabolic events in
the body.

I only sleep with a woman and it frightens me. Its like her body is my body.

YOUR VOICE ECHOES IN MY HEAD

“You aren't really queer, because you are with me”

A Virgo

I am not graceful but it does not matter
A taniwha lurks in my skin and u say u can feel it
Hands swimming over my stomach
Transactions of history
If you are from Taranaki does that mean your ancestors burnt Parihaka to the ground?
You don't know
Tracing the cycles of beginnings
A sly smile
My body rests into you but I don't give it all away
I feel tuna swimming through my chest
Taku aroha e te tau; taku aroha
My perfume like Raukawa leaves
I'm Māhinaarangi calling for you in the middle of the night
I want you to see me but not too much of me
I don't want you to see the fucked up parts yet
greasy
and
leaky
and
Corroding
and
rusting
and
dying
You asked if I'd been hurt
I just bit my lip
Megan Fox says that the sign in your tenth house is your soulmate
My tenth house is in virgo
& you are a virgo

Cancer Sun / Pisces Moon

1: I have a body. I want it to be treated with kindness and love. I want to be reminded that it is beautiful simply for existing. I want to feel able to see beauty without getting my tits out for me to be celebrated. that said, I also want my tits to be celebrated. learning it's okay to want to feel psychically appreciated.

2: I want my kindness to be acknowledged. We all know I over look after people because I worry that no one else will, and I get many thanks, but rather than thanks, I want some care in return. Surprisingly I'm a v depressed and insecure person, esp with relationships to others. I love the people I support, but I need to be supported back. Thank you to those who make a conscious effort to do so. I am learning that the love and care I willingly give can change lives and that I need to ask for and accept that help in return.

3: I just wanna b fuckin loved and loved in return. whatever form that may take.

Infinity

My body and being require food and rest, try to teach me how to be, I require shelter

Teach me

Maybe money, by the constant accumulation, depreciation and regeneration

Teach me

I despise, I detest and reject the inconsistency of being

My body and being get bored, un-able to appreciate or sustain stability or fulfilment,
contentment

Resent and fragment me the fuck up, whatever, who needs whole when you can have
consensual sexual autoerotic asphyxiation

Teach me

Sex, maybe you, maybe me, maybe us, maybe Monday, every day, ever

I mean, I must be(come) more than a constant striving to continue to be(come)

Where satisfaction is a fizzing uprising, before words can recognise, describe and destroy
it

I carry you, with the idea of time passing and tomorrow around like a pack of matches in
my pocket

Next week, nowhere, maybe never

For want of a better word, I will never hate you

Exist in infinity, not above judgement

I must be alone and above a constant state of shock

I did not come here to (be) consume(d) carelessly

I must be above it all by now

Content at a moment's notice

COURTNEY ROSE BROWN

the only right way to say i love you is to not say it at all

Your eyes are green
and hold the waves of the ocean
they reflect the rays of the sun
in the softness of your smile

My cheeks are sore
from smiling
there's only so much happiness
I can stuff inside of them

I hold my breath
so I don't cry on these streets
when I let go of your hand

There's a lot of worry
that my mind likes to hold
but with you
most of that evaporates
like the sun
on water after rain

When my mind realises
there's room to fill
with rambling sentences
of false imaginings

the reoccurrence
of the intake of breath
makes me dizzy

your words are soothing
and your touch kind
at the same time
my heart is both slower
and faster with you

today it is raining sporadically
and we're in different cities

missing you
is an odd feeling
that I don't want to own
the skies are only grey
and the sun tries so hard to be seen

she has greenery outside her window
which wears no curtains
I lie on her bed
and try to figure out
if you just told me if you loved me
or not

either way
I swallow back the truth
by smiling into your collar bone

True Stories

██████████ & eyebrow arch the envy of all the local drag queens
After he left I googled hot Indians & went to bed for a while
FELLAHS

it's a lonely pill but it's constant as hell & that's something

When a dog tore the back off of one of his chooks T took that chook &
plopped it down & backed his car right over it Beethoven
in the tapedeck this retelling may have got out of hand

Truth a kereru flew through the doorway I looked square into his
little red eyes before he spun around that kereru flew straight
through my door broke a cup frightened the dog so what so what
if I don't have a dog

I'm my own wishy washy media machine a falsehood of
R-rated whimsy & carefully selected naturalist beats I tell my friends
from the city that artists live in this town & that's true too

The first time K climbed into my bed I said dude we've been here before
I've lain with you a hundred times I've been to the opera
in Sydney with H I've wrestled a whale on Eastbourne beach
I remember these dreams

At the holocaust memorial service we listened to a man recall dinner in
the ghetto potato peelings from the gutter The man cried &
we all stood up proclaimed that we'd Never Forget & D leaned over
& whispered to me

but memory's a funny thing

██

great flocks of kereru block out the midday sun

Balance

We are now officially middle aged & want our shoes to be
comfortable & our coats to be practical *I buy my clothes from*
Kathmandu said my ex boyfriend before he turned forty one
We go swimming at Balaena Bay We have taken up
smoking again We lie on our towels & smoke

To err, etc

Here they come the chap lipped playboy wanderers of my timeline

Jungle city jungle razed jungle of upstate

Shining cuckoos from the islands come to drop a couple bombshells
then rack off back to paradise we forgive them pretty song

The times they break their necks on kitchen windows
we forgive them

Bad Kids

When I ran fast across the field
J said hey bro you're fast

They'd laugh they weren't mean
they had a lot of friends

all the same S put his
fist through a window one day

We'd cross paths in the park . . .
everyone escaping

We'd cross paths in detention . . .
everyone caught

They were the bad kids I wasn't
very bad but

a boy can't help his crushes

Womad Jams

Around the maze of tents
We slink
My violin, myself and I
Within the still
We strain to decipher
A twist of tune
A glimpse of notes
An absent-minded pluck
A patter of hands
A smatter of voices
Yet...

All remains
Still and silent
Heavy in sleep.

I take a breath
I take up my bow
Feel my soul pour *smooth*
From fingertips:
A vessel
A pathway
And quickly
Like a magnet
A circle is forming
Guitar twang
Saxophone flutter
Ukelele ping
Harmonica rasp
Pot drum clatter
Claps and shrieks
And voices
All voices.

We mingle in darkness
Melodic chaotic harmony
Twirling circling dancing
I giggle
As we dance
Souls in interplay
We are beings *being*

I giggle
And dance an actual circle
Feet joining hands and voices

The moment is
Ebbing
And one by twos
Slip into the abyss of night
They slip into the still
‘Til it’s just me and you,
Dear violin,
And the stars
I could play a haunting melody
For the moon
I could
And it would last until sunrise

I bathe in the still
A canvas of potential
Possibility endless
I bathe in the potential
Until a ruru takes the opportunity
And crickets join in
And it’s sleeptime now,
I think.

SOFTCORE BUSHWALK

bearded clematis begging to be stroked
& damp black fur where the crux of a fern unfurls
into rainforest wet & stinking with green
bodies shifting anonymous against each other

grappling roots arched & horopito leaf buds
bruising for a sip of slant light yet shaded by you
bipedal tourist a voyeur to unabashed botany
masticating your apple til nibbled down to corseted ovules

& so the tossed core bears its cyanide pips
a new exotic ready to root in the panting sphagnum moss
hothouse dicot infiltrating a feral macrocosm where even the deadwood gushes
gleeful spores ever ecstatic in the throes of rot & bloom

00:44 musing

I wonder

when was the last time you've been kissed

have you ever kissed a Sagittarius?

do you want to?

look at us

we are doing the dance of predator and prey in front of our peers

stagnant is the crustacean

heavy footed is the hunter

self preservation of the heart looks like hunting

self preservation of the heart looks like hiding

the desperation to survive arrives in a stampede

retreat

I am clumsy in my destruction

all Sagittarius knows is to hunt

de-shell you

mount you to my wall

call this a prospect of love

have you ever kissed a Sagittarius?

do you want to?

Green Light

My life is indecisive.
It's a fast car packed with passion, but a gps on the dashboard leading in a hundred
different directions.

I'm unsure which way I'm going,
if I'll ever have someone in my passenger seat. But I've been waiting at the lights and
they've just turned green.

Maybe it's cold feet, my bags are always half packed, my internet history is full of flight
searches and descriptions of towns far away that I may never travel to.

But the thought of leaving, the thought of being somewhere new is in a constant battle
with my will to stay.

My will to grow old in a place of familiar, of childhood haircuts gone wrong and old
friends I never speak to.

This war will never end, my mind will forever be changing, my passion for more will
never rest. The phrase, 'to be fulfilled' will never be ticked off my list.

I'm still driving, the lights are still green and I'm just enjoying the ride.

REBEKAH LAURENCE

Thank you for this beautiful life.

I come from coffee and cigarettes
no sleep since last week
days without a shower
cut last night
hoped to die this morning.

I've been in psych wards and police interviews.

I've had psychiatrists
and psychologists
and counsellors
and nurses.

I've lived at the bottom of swimming pools
in flashbacks
locked in closets.

And I feel like I could never articulate
just
how
fucking
gracious
You are, G-d,
for every gift
You give me today.

I couldn't ever say
how sweet the crisp morning tastes
or how laughter tickles my tongue
or how tears warm my cheek.

I love every phone call
and message
and lunch date
and hug.
Cucumber skin under lemon breath
sunshine through forest canopy
nestled in the crook of a neck.

having always already said yes

sometimes i want to step outside my body
when it feels like i am watching the world from behind a pane of glass

we are all dressed for winter today because today the weather is changing
i don't feel anything but today the weather is changing.

hypothesia is the reduced sense of touch or sensation, or a partial loss of sensitivity
while it is difficult to explain the cause, the rapid ascent into the lack of feeling can be a
response to psychological and physical factors.

it is why we feel like parts of our bodies are not attached to us somehow, or when you
feel like you have lived in that moment, at the exact same time

she asked me something like, when did this symptom begin? is there anything that causes
or worsens it?

i thought that if she excised my flesh i would feel better.
if i eat this will it make me feel better?

i have never been taught to love, so i act like an accountant. i can only love if you love me
more, i always suspect that i give more than i receive

is this a hole i have dug for myself?
you want. what? nothing, it's nothing.

because everything is devoid of consequence, nothing is a big deal.
all books and writing are just snow melting.

JIAQIAO LIU

coming to terms with inhabiting a physical form by taking selfies with someone i
love (while wearing an eye necklace and a jumper that says
DON'T EVEN LOOK AT ME)

lies incised from lily lips, a
 love loaming in permission for
i love a person of loam, a
person i love lies, loaming perfection in
a person i love lies in loam
in a person i love lies
permanence
in a corridor of camellias
in the knife-edge of rain
 & into its grey grain
 the sweep
 of your cheek –

'Familiarity'

It's 3 in the afternoon
and the sun is glinting off of buildings
in a way that doesn't happen at home.
There's a girl on the other side of the street.
She's got long legs and a shaved head
and she looks over when I do.

There's an unspoken solidarity in
seeing someone on the street
and picking up a vibe.

It's not the shaved head that does it,
or anything she's wearing.
Sometimes you look at someone
and you just know.

It feels like kinship, almost:
that flash of recognition,
of comfort, like being in a foreign country
and overhearing someone speak in your mother tongue.
It feels like this, almost: *Hello,*
me too.

Our eyes meet and stick
as we head in opposite directions,
our gaze turning knowing and warm
like friends sharing an inside joke.

Neither of us slow down
but our smiles come at the same time:
strangers in a foreign country
speaking the same language.

Get Out And Good Riddance

And when you look at me,
what do you see?
A broken-hearted lover –
 A squandering fool –
 An eloquent excuse for a wandering **FUCK YOU**.
If there was ever a time which I knew myself more...
Please ignore
 everything
 from before.
Love that which I am,

 Or,
 don't.

Get out and good riddance.

As if you matter,
as if I care,
as if I really want to rest my head upon your ear,
your opinions are weak, and yet here I stare.
Alone.
Empty.
A bottomless fear.
Let's just pretend I never said or did anything to offend,
I'll be a boring little girl,
a sigh with no end,
If that's
 Really
 REALLY
 what you want me to pretend.
So goodbye, farewell, adieu, and good riddance,
and remember me not as a fine or a penance,
for your shame and your guilt and your just acquisition,
of a friendship that was nothing less than a pathetic narcissism.

And
 Don't
 Come
 Back.

Leave your judgment at the door,
or with all those used condoms on the floor.

Get out and good riddance.

The Things In My Chest

A black box that varies in shape and size. Sometimes so small that I forget it exists, sometimes stretching infinitely from horizon to horizon without ever leaving the confines of my body.

A sock that doesn't even belong to me. I don't know where it came from. It just turned up one day. Clean. Sky-blue.

A dull yet pulsing ache.

A snake, filling every available space and still growing, squirming as it tries to shed me like a layer of its own skin.

A wet cardboard box, so warped it looks exactly like a Scottish Terrier.

A field of shattered glass, untraversable.

The moon of a distant planet, hovering in an empty chamber. Its gravity pulls my blood toward it.

The possibility of breasts.

The corpse of an invisible being, floating slightly off the floor, definitely there but difficult to identify.

A pyramid of voice boxes.

An enormous triangular blade, suspended in place by its three corners, each slightly piercing my flesh. Whenever my heart beats, or I breathe in or out, or make any other movement, the corners dig in further causing my chest to tense in pain.

Endless fields of buttery popcorn as far as the eye can see, stretching out in all directions like an immense edible ballpit.

A party. (I hate parties.)

A vibration held inside a liquidmetal safe. If released it would spread through my entire body and out into the universe until everything in existence was vibrating on the same frequency.

So many empty Coke bottles.

A tiny version of me wandering in spirals and figure eights, aimless and lost, with a hole in their chest.

An extra brain, not hooked up to anything, just sitting on a cold stone platform, thinking abstract thoughts to itself.

Rot, spreading like feathery ashes on the wind, eating me slow.

Blue light.

A cave which becomes a tunnel which becomes a hallway which becomes a waterslide which becomes a wormhole which becomes a sewer which becomes a maze which becomes a hiding place which becomes a stage which becomes a cage which becomes a home which becomes a heart which murmurs something too quiet to make out.

Skinsmith

On Sunday afternoon we wrestled on my
Bed and you declared war on my competitive streak, I surrendered to the
Slick heat of you that caught beneath my rings
The base thrum of need

/

Opulence

The way you enter me
As knife and I fall apart as yam
On the chopping board
And if you raised your head to look at the moon that night you would have changed your
mind
The moon it was bigger than god

/

You Wanted To Protect Me Until The Day I Stopped Breathing.

I would blink at my screen's glow long after you had fallen asleep and hardened to my
back like a mollusc.
Ours was a house of borer and chiaroscuro tempers,
Of woodlice and routines and wet sex and when you had finally
Left,
It was a house that strangled.
Dead skin soot plumes seeped from our bed of sex and commitment to the ceiling cavity.
The mice had fled a week prior, like Pliny foretold.
The garden spiders had abandoned their webs, side-stepping with gossamer tails,
They knew the collapse of our frantic polyamorous empire was pending.

New Age

All the witches

Pray to Mammon

Whose oaths and signs

are many

They wash his feet

In liquid gold

And dry them with

The seeker's robe.

[an instrument]

There are two bodies sitting at the back of the bus. One is hunching. The other is trying to recline back into the wall. One is wearing jeans and a band t-shirt that says *sue me* in flaking plastic on its body. The other is wearing a dress covered in pictures of fruit. The closer you look the less distinguishable the fruit is from thread. The thread is unspooling. And they are moving. It seems sudden but they were always moving. They are methodical in their pulling. The soft tension of the fibre as it slides over fingertips. It must have an end soon. They will not whip the side of their hand into the taut line to snap it. They must get to the bottom of this. It creates a pooling. I feel it. Assemblage. The air weight fibre resting on itself. Hands keep pulling at. Until two bodies look like one or no body at all. When the bus stops they get off. They become rope then rope becomes wound. Spin. Me too tight. Function pushing leg in front of leg. Terrified the wind will upset their whole stringed form. They are strummed down the street by stranger's fingers. A glance, a chord struck. What an awful mistake. On the pavement. The yellow lines fade flat.

what is it about a line –

she is singing the song but falters when she forgets the last two words

what is it / a line

or something you put in between your tongue and your cheek

what is outside a line?

the uncategorized specie that slips from abundance to extinction
without amber light refracting through a microscope onto their
bodies

a colony of microbes on the underside of a rock 1000000 light years
away

could we grow arms so long as to reach it?

i lie find n sample size of what a
mean ing

when the light hits the edge of my palm

or the lines that cross it

the silver scar of birth

the simple code of this is me

this is what i mean to the world

and what if I woke up just a minute too late

what if I got the bus times all wrong

what is more boring than leaving your bus card in your bag at home

what the fuck is home when you

have no connection to it?

put the when? in whenua

the and? in land

I have stretched myself out for you

return to the metaphor I constructed well at the

start

play a power chord on this fretless frame I dear u because I am a powerful ~~woman-man~~
nobody

no body resting in bed

no body

no arms no legs no head no

just dust floating upwards into the sun

I FUCKING WISH!!!

Well it was a hot day yeah. The windows were all rolled down. Yeah. And he was crossing the road. Well I thought he was crossing the road eh. Was a funny looking fella. No well I couldn't see him. But I could see what he was wearing. Yeah. Strange. Like in one of those short dresses. The ones you see on birds in town. So he's wearing this dress. Got long hair. Well yeah. Fuck didn't think of that. Could have been one of them trannies. Well. Yeah fuck. He- umm she. It hab. He was crossing the road I thought he was crossing the road. Just before the turn off to the motorway. Then he's standing there on the hot tarmac. Barefeet. Did I mention that? Is it important? He stops. Motherfucker stops in the middle of the road. I couldn't stop. Too quick. Happened too quick eh. He's got his arms out like he's Jesus. Like on a cross. He wanted to go I think. Not gonna be able to sleep for bit.
Haunting.

There are two bodies – there are none.

Expensive soil rolled in dust sinking into a lake.

Person A gets on bus and Person B gets off. And I should have just left it.

At that.

L. E. ROCKETRYDER

WANTED FOR RETURN: *Dimensional soul*
REWARD: *Will trade for satchel and Starbucks gift card*

One day I'll stop putting food colouring in my baths.
I'll stop drinking organic tea and
reading the Bukowski books my lover gave me.
I'll stop listening to indie.

I'll stop buying rain parkas from the 90's off trade me.
I'll stop sitting in Starbucks when it's raining.

I'll stop telling everyone I always carry a red leather notebook in my satchel.
I'll stop carrying a fucking satchel.

One day I'll stop being a vegetarian.
One day I'll stop loving knit blankets, snacking on carrots and taking photos of dead things.
I'll stop buying Apple products.
I'll stop wearing pocket watches that don't work.
I'll stop reading philosophy books
and I'll stop pretending to understand them
so those who are cooler than me
think that I'm cool.

I'll stop masturbating to fluorescent thoughts and macrocosms.
I'll stop using words like *macrocosm*.

One day I'll stop thinking that Van Gogh, Dali and Vermeer are trying to talk to me,
and I'll stop treating the moon like it's a cookie.
My darling,
one day I'll stop saying *my darling*.
I'll stop staring out of car windows,
and one day I'll stop thinking about working at some funky restaurant.
I'll stop wanting to be a waitress with tattoos.

I'll stop consuming capitalist products, nicknacks and ideals,
and I'll stop being such a punk arse phoney who gets it on with other punk arse phoneys.

I'll stop being a
hipster I fucking swear.

I just need to find myself through all the clutter.

#Deep

Hana Pera Aoake (Ngāti Raukawa, Tainui) is a writer and artist trapped in Te Whanganui-a-tara, Aotearoa. They are currently drowning in debt they will never be able to repay completing an MFA at Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa (Massey University). Hana works primarily within the Māori art collective, *Fresh and Fruity* with Mya Morrison-Middleton (Ngāi Tahu). Hana mostly writes about their feelings online and cries.

Kate Aschoff is a 19-year-old queer artist from Ponake, Wellington. You can learn everything you need to know about them at kateaschoff.tumblr.com

Jordana Bragg is a contemporary multidisciplinary artist based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. Co-founder of two Artist Run Initiatives; *MEANWHILE* Gallery (Wellington NZ) and *Friends are Artists / Freunde sind Künstler* (Leipzig Germany DE). Bragg's writing, curation, performance based video and photographic observations have reached national acclaim as well as international success in both Australia and Europe, working to progress notions of inclusion and fluidity, in relation to contemporary gender identity politics.

Courtney Rose Brown writes a lot because she'd rather write you compliments in poems than say them to your face.

Sam Duckor-Jones is a sculptor and poet who lives in Featherston. He won the *Biggs Poetry Prize* from *Victoria University of Wellington* in 2017. *People from the Pit Stand Up* his first book of poetry is to be released this year from *Victoria University Press*.

Macaila Eve Pixie of 'the Goth and the Pixie', music'n'poetry to tide you over, Kirikiriroa Aotearoa. // eveofthepixie.com

Rebecca Hawkes is an artist, among other things. You can find more of her work in *Starling*, *Sport*, *Mayhem*, and elsewhere via www.rebeccahawkesart.com.

Lim Kado 林 (24) Non-binary performance artist and poet of Tongan, Fijian and SE/EAsian decent. Scorpio Rising/Sagittarius Sun/Virgo Moon.

Chrystal Kanara is a twenty three year old empath and metaphor enthusiast. With a passion for child development, excellent plant based food and slam poetry.

Rebekah Laurence is a postgraduate psychology student at the University of Waikato. Her work has appeared in *Tearaway* and she hopes to share more work with the world in future. She's grateful to all the people who keep her company as she trudges the road of happy destiny.

Jiaqiao Liu is a Chinese nonbinary poet living in Auckland/Tāmaki-makaurau. Their work has been included in *brief*, *Atlanta Review* and *Takahē*.

Jessica Lim is a poet, book nerd, and prison abolitionist. She is currently doing her Masters in Sociology at the *University of Auckland*, New Zealand.

Isabelle McNeur studies at Victoria University, where she has completed several *IIML* courses. In 2015 she won the *Margaret Mahy Award for Best Folio* at the *Hagley Writers' Institute*, in 2017 she won the *Prize for Original Composition* at the *IIML*, and in 2018 she will be completing the *Hachette Mentorship Program*.

Mia Nelson is a 27-year-old polyamorous pansexual cis female creature with well-functioning hands. These hands are sometimes helpful, but often useless. Sometimes they make art, but more often they make coffee and form fists that shake angrily at passing clouds in the sky.

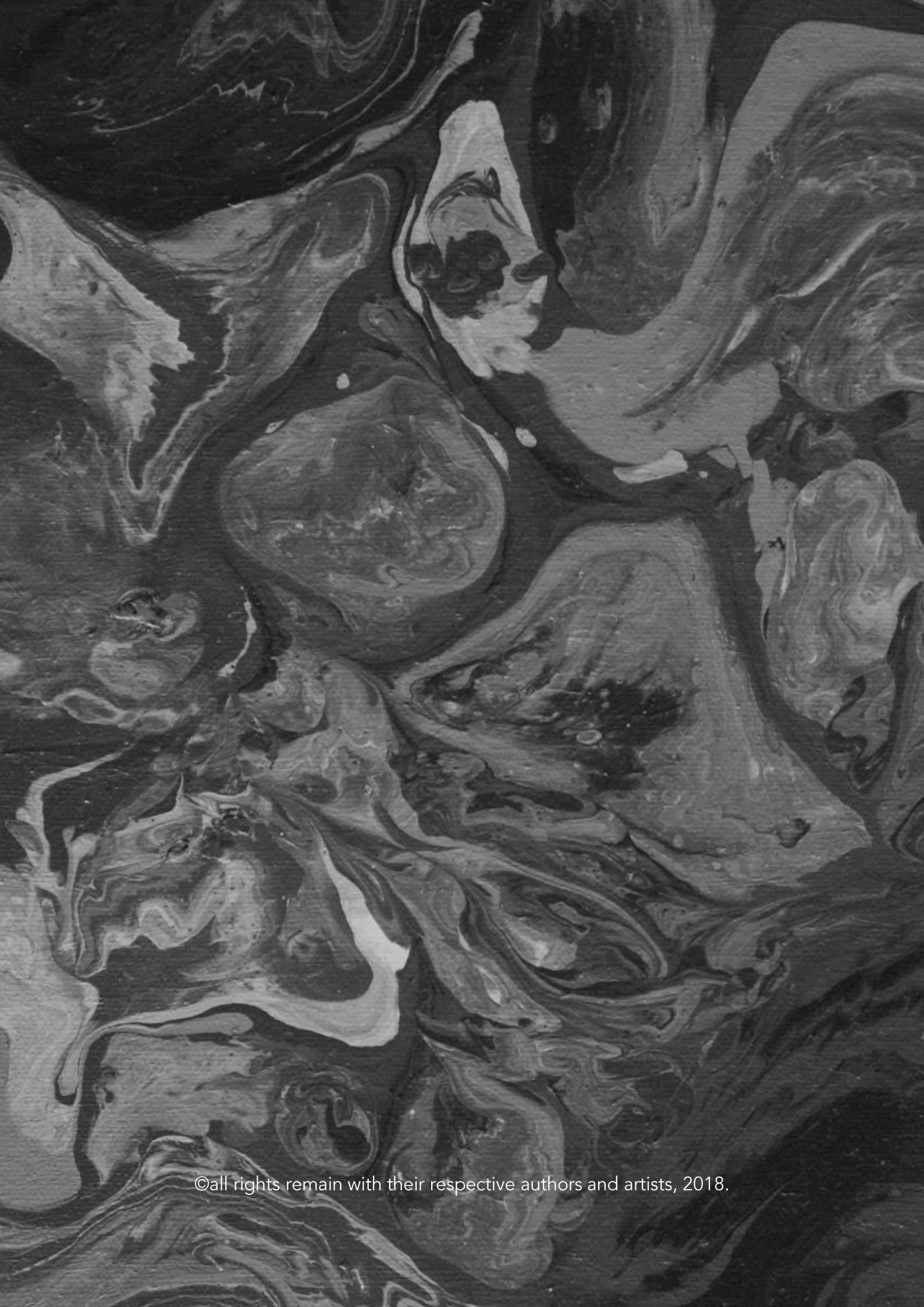
Jackson Nieuwland just wants to be loved.

Cathy-Ellen Paul moonlights as *Miss Paul* onstage, and tends to her menagerie of house plants, advocates for sexuality and gender education, and freelances as producer for festival events offstage. She can't seem to shake the monikers 'cute' and 'innocent,' so delights in milking this guise by slipping in some spice that makes you sweat behind your knees.

Ravi Prasad, a sometimes poet.

Essa May Ranapiri (Ngāti Raukawa, Tainui) is a poet from Kirikiriroa, Aotearoa / they are part of the local writing group *Puku.riri / Liv.id* & edit for Mayhem literary journal / they graduated with an MA in Creative Writing from the IIML in 2018 / they have words in *Mayhem*, *Poetry NZ*, *Brief*, *Starling*, *THEM* and *POETRY Magazine* / they never grew out of their emo phase and will write until they're dead.

L. E. RocketRyder like most other hipsters, has been writing poetry since she was a small child. When she's not feeling anxious about what she is gonna do with her life, she is walking her dog, trying to get good grades, eating porridge and feeling depressed about not writing poems anymore.



©all rights remain with their respective authors and artists, 2018.