

Vaughan Rapatahana

Poem Notes

A personal reflection and poetic tribute to Koro Dewes, whom I knew – but who, far more importantly, was a vital figure in Maoridom and more specifically for Ngāti Porou.

This poem has a related paper in this issue ‘*A tribute to Te Kapunga Matemoana (Koro) Dewes.*’

Poet Notes

Vaughan Rapatahana lives and works in Hong Kong. His wife is from Philippines where they have a home, while his home in Aotearoa is Te Araroa – the same as Koro Dewes, of course. He has published extensively worldwide and was a semi-finalist of the Proverse Prize for Literature, 2009: a further collection of poems *Home Away Elsewhere* will be published by Proverse Press in June. He holds a PhD in Existential Literary Criticism from The University of Auckland, and has developed a bilingual poetry teaching resource for primary schools in Aotearoa, also due in 2011. Finally, here, he is Poetry Editor for *MAI Review*!

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Enter the ouroboros

well, Te Kapunga

you certainly
had me
pretty well
rused out,

with your foot-in-mouth
one-eyed rants

in full pirate mode,

dragooned behind
the dead formica
of
Kawakawa hotel

kei te aha koe e hoa?

kaore kei te pehea koe kei konei!

well, at least
you bellowed even more
in recognition
when
I marked down
your own grandpa
as a Somerset man,

another who
entered *Ngati Porou*
via the bedroom, eh.

kei te aha koe e hoa?

kaore kei te pehea koe kei konei!

hey, Koro,
been scanning your stuff
40 years later:

you hit the spot
b
a
c
k
then,

&
even more now
it's full-on vision.

those you abuse
abused us -
more cozened then -
than they do today,

but
those fellas' seedlings
still
yield
same ears filled with *tutae*

&

flypaper tongues
resilient
where this same shit sticks,

before they spit it out
in
gobs
of gobbledygook

kei te aha koe e hoa?

kaore kei te pehea koe kei konei!

wheel's ground full-circle
& that ain't no tail in your yaw,
everything you proclaimed
comes to pass,

ouroboros
rolling on
ad infinitum ad infinitum ad infinitum ad infinitum ad infinitum ad infinitum ad infinitum

ceaseless cycle
in an east coast ville.

kia kaha e hoa

when they gonna build
a statue
your *mokos*
can skateboard around
on the last gasp of *whenua*
up here
those fellas haven't yet

filched?

[for Te Kapunga Matemoana 'Koro' Dewes]