

# Rototuna, 2024

## A response to 'Te Ohomauri o Matariki' by Dion Hitchens

Ammon Hāwea Apiata

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Kua whakamimitia ngā wai o Tunawhakapeke.

Ka whakahā te waha o Hine-i-te-repo,  
tukuna ana te hau i kūngia ai.

He mea whakamaroke ngā kūkūwai e te Pākehā  
kia raweke ai i te āhua o te whenua.

He mahi pāmu, he hanga whare.

Te rironga atu o te rohe kōreporepo.

Te manapou o te iwi,

he roto tuna, he manga iti.

Engari kua aukatia te hikuwai,

purutiti ana ngā uaua o Papa i te para tangata.

Pīereere ana te oko oranga taiao,

māturuturu noa atu te mauri o te wai.

Kua mau tātou i te rauwiri,

āmikumiku haere ana.

I riro repo atu, me hoki repo mai.

*This poem was originally written in te reo Māori. The English verse featured beside it is not so much a translation as it is a reimagining of the original ideas.*

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Tunawhakapeke is dry

and the land exhales.

Hine-i-te-repo sighs a century's old breath.

Wetness drained from soil—

Papa's veins bled dry.

Land dehydrated for

agricultural enterprise and suburban sprawl.

They call it reclamation but how do you

reclaim what never belonged to you?

Is this how you make nature submit?

Is this how you tame an atua?

We are trapped in the weir,

going round and round.

While mauri leaks from the ground and

we breathe in the consequences.

*Wetland back.*

*This poem was also partly inspired by Alice Te Punga Somerville's 'Wetland: Draining mana whenua'*

Dion Hitchens & James Ormsby, 'Te Ohomauri o Matariki', 2011, cedar, corten steel, aluminium and epoxy. Image courtesy of Tamsin Green.

