




## Post Cyclone Gabrielle

Edgar Burns

Torrential rain when heaven opened; flooded catchments.  
Dammed rivers bursting like fire hoses; submerged houses.  
Everywhere broken bridges; rail lines snapped like plastic.  
Forests' worth of slash heaped all along the beaches.

One night, one storm, one metre of rain, one disaster.  
Animals washed away; parents, children stranded on roofs.  
Scout shipping container washed 15k, rests against a shelterbelt.  
A failed power substation had been built at river-level because...?

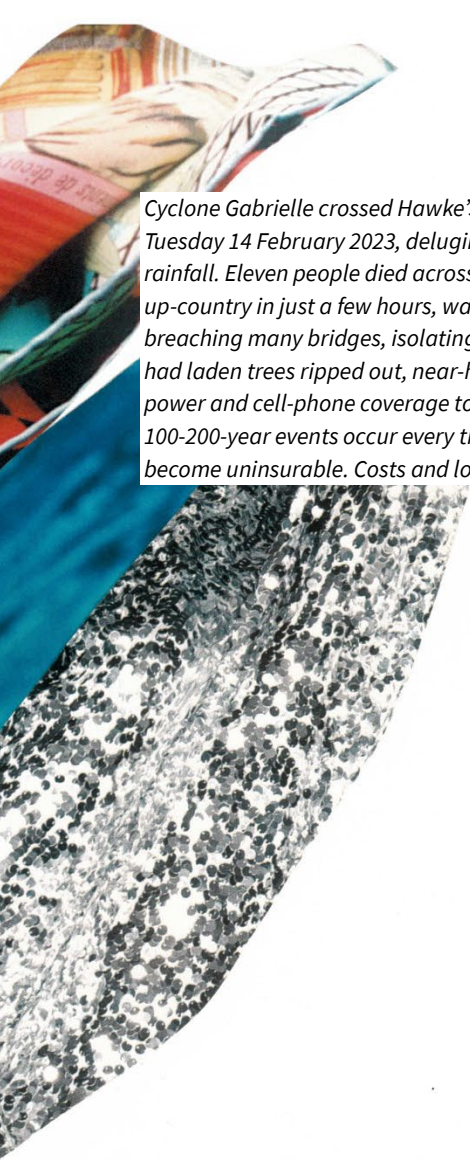


Giving away thawing food; cook outdoors; meals with neighbours, nice.  
No electricity. No phone. Do I exist; does my family? Do they know?  
Cupressus tree toppled against the house; chainsaws fly tomorrow.  
Helping neighbours dig out silt; woodworking tools all rusted.

Orchards uprooted, vineyards gone; no sell or buying this vintage.  
Cable hydras snaking out from generators; homeless huddled guests.  
Hillsides scarred with massive slips; 'Don't use the water'.  
Wanted: blankets, pumpkins, food, clothing, water, shovels, more food.

Is there a small **red** thread of connection to climate change?  
A few writers ask, is Gabrielle linked to global warming. Science—Yes:  
More severe, more often, more intense, more disastrous, more cost.  
Local councils focus practically—repair, restore, rebuild, replace.

Climate warming leads to extreme weather events; forget denial.  
Fossil fuel corporations, you are Faust, taking us to perdition.  
Governments, why be so servile: what about the common good?  
Mmmm. More severe, more often, more intense, more unstoppable.



*Cyclone Gabrielle crossed Hawke's Bay on New Zealand's east coast overnight, Tuesday 14 February 2023, deluging an already waterlogged landscape from record rainfall. Eleven people died across New Zealand. Three-quarters of a metre of rain fell up-country in just a few hours, washing down forest slash, damming and then breaching many bridges, isolating farming and Māori communities. Apple orchards had laden trees ripped out, near-harvest vineyards stripped and gone. Emergency power and cell-phone coverage took days to be restored. Industry insiders say if such 100-200-year events occur every thirty years, because of climate change, homes will become uninsurable. Costs and lost revenue estimated in billions.*