

Maraea Rakuraku

WHEN DOES IT START?

It's not waving a flag, holding a banner, knowing what postcolonial theory means and when to use it, memorising quotes and lining them up like soldiers that are sent out in waves of attacks,

It's not being polite, remaining open, listening fairly, vigilantly assessing your motivation, re-writing your carefully worded response, marvelling how the person who has cornered you on-line, at a party, work do or rugby game is not hearing how every word they are saying is offensive and they may as well be slicing through your heart, with the intent-sity of a scythe clearing long grass,

It isn't realising dressing up racist rhetoric in flash language is still just racist rhetoric in flash language and sniffing that out in the first, I'm not racist ... but,

It isn't recognising white privilege and entitlement, functioning under white privilege and entitlement, loving under white privilege and entitlement,

It doesn't start with the huge fucking disappointment when a brown brotha is worse than the worst redneck you've encountered in your life,

It doesn't start by standing up for your iwi, people, culture, colleague, son, daughter, lover, missus, Koro, Nan, cuddie, animals, Papatūānuku, or even yourself,

MŌ ĀHEA TĪMATA AI? KA TĪMATA ĀWHEA?

Ehara i te whakakakapa i te haki, i te pupuri ki te kara, i te mōhio ki te ariā pōhi koroniara me te wā e tika ana kia whakamahia, i te tuhi i ngā whakataukī ki te rae ka whakarārangi ai anō nei he hōia e tukuna putupututia ana ki te whawhai,

Ehara i te mānawanawa, i te noho areare, i te tōkeke o te whakarongo, i te mātai i ākinga ōu, i te whatatika i tō whakahoki kua āta tuhia, i te whakamīharo ki te tangata nāna koe i whakaiti i te ipurangi, i te pāti, i te kaupapa ā-mahi, i te kēmu whutupōro rānei me tana kore i rongo ki te hākiki o ia kupu āna, me e haehae ana i te ngākau, he rite tōna kaha ki te kotinga o te haira e whakawātea ana i te pātītī roa,

Ehara i te kitenga o te kōrero kaikiri kua whakareia ki te kupu whakaniko, me te mōhio tonu iho he kōrero kaikiri tonu kua whakareia ki te kupu whakaniko, ehara au i te kaikiri ... heoi anō,

Ehara i te whakamārama i te huanga me te āheinga kiritea, e mahi ana i raro i te huanga me te āheinga kiritea, e aroha ana i raro i te huanga me te āheinga kiritea,

Kāore e tīmata i te mutunga kē mai o te matekiri i te mea he kino noa ake te tūngāne kiriparauri i te kakī whero tino kino rawa atu kua tūpono i roto i ō rā,

Kāore e tīmata i tō tū tautoko i tō iwi, i ō tāngata, i tō ahurea, i tō kaīmahi, i tō tama, i tō kōtiro, i tō whaiāipo, i tō wahine, i tō koro, i tō kuia, i tō whanaunga, i ō mōkai, i a Papatūānuku, i a koe anō hoki,

It starts,
with that first step from the margins into the glare of light
and
opening
your
mouth,

that started
when the idea of you was born and took seed
that started
when the idea of you was born and took seed
that started
when the idea of you was born
that started
with the idea of you.

Ka tīmata,
i te tapuwae tuatahi i te paenga ki te kōnakonako o te tūrama
me te
hāmama
o tōu
waha,

i tīmata tērā
i te tinakutanga me te tupu o te whakaaro ki a koe
i tīmata
i te tinakutanga me te tupu o te whakaaro ki a koe
i tīmata
i te tinakutanga o te whakaaro ki a koe
i tīmata
i te whakaaro ki a koe.

Translated by Jamie Cowell

Alice Te Punga Somerville

RĀKAU

We know that carvers coax something or someone
Who's already there in the wood.
They remove small pieces of timber, one by one, until it's ready.

We both know a language is waiting inside my tongue.

Please put down the adze, the skillsaw, the file:
Speak gently to me so I can recognise what's there.

No, don't chip away at pink flesh and taste buds:
Oozing and swollen, I will choke on my blood before you're done.

The wood you're trying to carve is still a tree.

RĀKAU

Kei te mōhiohia ko te kaiwhakairo tērā ka kukume mai
i te mauri o roto rawa i te rākau.
Ka tangohia kōtirihia ngā kongakonga rākau, kia reru ai.

Kei te mōhio tāua, he reo kei tōku arero.

Waiho ki raro te toki, te kani, te whaiuru
Kōrerotia whakamāiretia kia kite ai au he aha rā kei reira.

Kāo, kaua e tope i te kiko māwhero, i ngā paerongo tāwera:
E totō ana pūpuhi nei kei rāoa au e aku toto i mua iho i tō otinga noa.

Ko te rākau e ngana ana koe ki te whakairo he rākau tonu.

Translated by Te Ataabia Huribanganui