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From Aspiring to ‘Paradise’:
the South Island myth and its enemies

A critical and creative investigation into
the (de)construction of Aotearoa’s Lakes District
presented in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters in Creative Writing
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Abstract

Poetry and film are artistic modes for representing, interpreting and evaluating our environment. Aotearoa's poets have distilled the meanings we place on 'places of the heart' since the first oral histories and lyrics were composed. Kiwi filmmakers have also fixed their gaze on places layered with cultural significance, selecting Edens at various stages of the Fall as settings for their protagonists to mess about in. With New Zealand's unique position as the last place on earth to be populated, the human response to this landscape is a significant aspect of the nation's psyche, and the relationship between people and place remains an enduring motif in local writing and cinema. My research stems from an exploration of the poetic and on-screen representations of the Central Otago region as a cultural landscape generated by a variety of spectators.

This paper takes an excursion into the high country of Te Wai Pounamu to see how two key places have been sighted in terms of the South Island myth. The first place to be framed is deep in the Matukituki valley. Here, the gaze of the nationalist era is epitomised by the ill-fated *Aspiring* film project masterminded by Brian Brake and scripted by James K. Baxter. The antithesis of their gaze can be seen in the 'Paradise' of Jane Campion's post-feminist television mini-series *Top of the Lake* (2013). My interest is in the swing from Brake and Baxter's romanticizing of Aotearoa's 'Lakes District' to Campion's brutalizing of it. How has the mythical South Island landscape been established and then fractured by these artists?

These issues are also explored in my creative component, which draws upon my critical report in order to devise my own response to the South Island myth through a fictionalized journal / scrapbook entitled 'Aspiring Daybook'.

Preface

No country upon earth can appear with a more rugged and barren aspect than this doth from the sea as far as the eye can reach nothing is to be seen but the summits of these Rocky mountains which seem to lay so near to one another so as not to admit any Vallies between them.

- Captain James Cook's log, 23 March 1770

An early gaze upon Aotearoa as a symbolic place in collective memory is not a gaze on the land, but the gaze upon the kuaka migrating south for summer through Central Polynesia. The flightpath of these godwits gave the first explorers a clue, around 800 years ago, that there was land beyond the horizon. So Aotearoa was in the first instance a place not seen, but imagined. It began as a construction, the dreamed-of region the kuaka flew towards which was waiting to be 'discovered'.

When Captain James Cook trained his telescopic lens on the dinosaur-spine mountains he sighted from the Endeavour, he cast a colonist's gaze onto the Southern Alps and in his journal began to scribe the first of the written mytho-poetics that still surround them.

Many poets and directors have looked upon this landscape and positioned themselves at different angles in relation to it. For some, Central Otago's dramatic vistas cause an annihilation of self. For others, they bring about affirmation of existence. Certain artists oscillate between the boundaries of this binary opposition, sometimes within a single piece of work. At issue is how to authentically represent a land that is so loaded with connotation, prior narratives and inscription. Is the artist always the Other? Or is this Heartland the Other *place*? To what extent have responses to the landscape generated or obliterated the South Island myth?

Research Objectives

In a place that readily shifts into the symbolic, where is the author (or auteur) situated? Which voices have been suppressed? My Masters project seeks to address the problem of how to ‘authentically’ represent the Aspiring region as a New Zealand writer or director.

My investigation is comprised of both exegesis and eisegesis:

1. The Critical Report

My report tracks the representation of New Zealand’s Southern Lakes from Brake to Campion, and how it has shifted from a pure, lofty manifestation of the divine to a disturbing and disturbed fallen Eden. My tracking looks specifically at the relationship between artists and place; firstly in the poetry written of and within the Matukituki valley and secondly at the filmmaker’s dystopian ‘Paradise’ setting at Moke Lake. Both locations are found within Mt Aspiring National Park, in the heart of the place popularly known as ‘Central’.

2. The Daybook

After (re)visiting the physical places referenced within selected Central Otago poems by James K. Baxter, Basil Dowling, Liz Breslin, David Eggleton, Denis Glover, Bernadette Hall, Emma Neale, Jack Ross and Laura Williamson I have responded to them through my own writing. The resulting text is collated as a fictionalised diary called the ‘Aspiring Daybook’: an eclectic and ephemeral journal of an ex-pat narrator who returns to her rural hometown to take care of her terminally ill father.

Through the experience of ‘coming home’ to live and write in Wanaka, I am interested in finding out how this area has been represented in literature and on screen and what this says about our relationship with ‘Central’ as a cultural landscape, then and now. I see this mythical Heartland as being inscribed with layers of meaning that can be read through a variety of lenses which are always translating *space* into

mediated *place*. Lakes District inhabitants and visitors are constantly framing a projected image; the most accessible of which is the reliably conical Mt Aspiring – an icon of the South Island myth. This paper examines ways in which a sense of place (or placelessness) is established through the representation of and about the Aspiring region. My critical report traverses the arc of the myth, following its trajectory from Heimatic construction towards shattered allegory. Finally, my research informs my own creative response to living in this landscape.

Dedication

This research report is dedicated to my parents Robert and Prue,
who first took me into the mountains and helped me understand their mana.

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i. Aspiring: the A in the Apex of Myth



Figure 1 Storyboard still by James Drawbridge

Frame 1 Establishing wide angle shot in Kodachrome colour: snowclad Aspiring. Deep focus, high key lighting emphasizes swirling stormclouds, and the mountain's regal presence.

The apex of the South Island myth culminated during the period when the young Baxter (23) spent six weeks in the Matukituki valley from early January 1949 with his friends the director Brian Brake (22), composer Douglas Lillburn (34) and painter John Drawbridge (19) in order to fulfill Brake's intention of creating a "cinematic poem"[*Aspiring*]. The filmmaker's vision was never achieved but instead points to the romantic, nationalistic and problematic construction of the South Island's high country as a Heideggerian *Heimat* (the untranslatable German term which references both 'home' and 'homeland', along with birthplace or 'blood' land).

The philosopher Martin Heidegger's chief concern was with Being as in being-in-the-world, an awareness of which he said was brought forth by a return to the homeland, or *die Heimat* – a problematic idea which still has residues of the scholar's national socialist leanings. Without aligning the New Zealand filmmaker under that troublesome banner, it could still be said that in some ways Brian Brake was attempting to capture this sense of authenticity through positioning his selected artists away from the confines of society and instead within the awe-inspiring landscape of

Aspiring, then crafting their journey through cinematography. He captured their masculine being-in-the-world at a unique point in time, a time and place which could be inscribed as a beginning.

A sense of belonging was generated from the cultural landscape of Aspiring while Brake's film project was rolling. In "The Origin of the Work of Art", Heidegger suggested that language always brings about Being (*Ereignis*) through a journey from and return to *die Heimat*. Using *Heimat* in a philosophical manner, Heidegger proposed that through art, an "other beginning" or *Anfang* [*Contributions* 53] emerges, which is part of an oscillating ontological event, a moment of openness / poiesis / *puta noa*. Heidegger proposed that "place places man in such a way that it reveals the external bonds of his existence and at the same time the depths of his freedom and reality" [1958, p19]. So the *place* of Aspiring and the Matukituki valley positioned the men as individuals in a geographic location, whilst also generating a sense of self, existentialism and veracity. The place located the artists both externally and internally which Brake then constructed via the gaze of his camera.

In Central Otago - the geographic centre of Te Waipounamu - the predominant vistas are mountain and lake. These topographical features are often employed as motifs in the writing and films of and within this place. To gain insight into the significance of the region in New Zealand poetry and film, it is of interest to look at two of our most pertinent platforms for metaphor – Mt Aspiring (the highest mountain) and Wakatipu (the deepest lake). Written and cinematic interactions with these sites tend to convey a sense of transience as opposed to inhabitation. There's a sense of camping on the edges of these foreboding places. Here in the heart of the Heartland, Nature will always have the final say; its jagged peaks and haunted waterways serving as reminders of the impermanence of humanity. Two camps, the first on the banks of the Matukituki river and the second at Moke Lake, provide the scope for this research.

As in a *mihi*¹, this report begins with Mt Aspiring as symbolic landscape and addresses how the mountain has been represented and linked with a sense of identity

by key players in the manifestation of the South Island myth. The latter part of the report tilts down to focus on Wakatipu, examining the significance of the lake camp at Jane Campion's 'Paradise' in *Top of the Lake* (2013).

Firstly, we visit Tititea (Mt Aspiring).

“As with all principal maunga (mountains), Tititea is imbued with the spiritual elements of Raki and Papa, in tradition and practice regarded as an important link to the primeval parents. Tititea is a prominent and majestic peak, clearly visible from a number of vantage points in the south, and its role in Ngāi Tahu's creation stories gives rise to its tapu status” [*Poutini Ngāi Tahu*].

Spanning back to early oral traditions, mountains have served as symbols of the Sublime; as primordial reminders of mortality; as signs which lead the beholder both into the realm of myth and towards reflection on the here and now of existentialism. Brake intentionally drew upon this enduring relationship between artists and mountains. His purpose in shooting the footage for *Aspiring* was to create a docu-drama which embodied the nationalist concerns of artists of the era, a self-conscious return to one of the most wild regions of the South Island, a symbolic place deep in the Heartland.

Described by Drawbridge as “a point of artistic origin” [*Aspiring*] for him, Brake's project can be read as a nationalistic collage, steeped in mystery for as long as it was lost in the archives; a journey that has returned to the public eye only when Yvonne Mackay's documentary about the ill-fated film was shown as part of the “Artsville” television series in 2006 – a media representation which provides a further fetishisation of the South Island high country.

Gregory O'Brien describes the meeting of minds that occurred during the 1949 *Aspiring* trip as being like when James Joyce and Marcel Proust met at a Parisian party in the 1920s [*High Country Weather*]. The foursome (according to Drawbridge's narration on Mackay's documentary) felt like they were the vanguard as they struck camp at *Aspiring* hut and set their sights on going above the snowline to shoot the film's apogee on French Ridge. Theirs was a distinctly nationalistic, masculine collaboration in the wilderness of aspirant artists of the New Zealand scene

at the time.

The fact that the project was fraught with difficulty reflects the tenuous task of narrating this particular landscape, which continues to be a loaded metaphor today. Nick Bryant in his review of *Top of the Lake* notes “of all the main characters, perhaps the most evocative is the landscape itself. At once welcoming and threatening, it becomes a refuge and also the most hostile of environments. For all its vastness, it can be strangely claustrophobic” [*Lake drama vies*]. These themes echo throughout the quartet’s respective work. In Baxter’s poetry, Brake’s cinematography, Lilburn’s symphonies and Drawbridge’s art, Central Otago’s distinctive and spectacular landscapes are a recurring concern. As Drawbridge explains, the continuity of the men’s relationships influenced each artist’s opus. The bodies of work by Brake, Baxter, Drawbridge and Lilburn will always be connected to Mt Aspiring. Their contribution to the art world “can also be considered as mountains, as peaks in New Zealand’s culture. Perhaps then, you could say that Brian Brake’s project... was successful beyond his wildest expectations” [*Aspiring*]. Ghosts of the lost film still exist in Brake’s colour footage; in the soaring splendor Lilburn’s second symphony (composed shortly after his time on Aspiring), and in Baxter’s lost verse commentary which appears as handwritten verse across the film stock in the resolution of Mackay’s documentary. Here, the poet describes and mythologizes Tititea as “the tallest peak: half enemy, and half a mother’s breast ... But from the level lakeshore now, the yet unconquered mountain stands pure and remote... Aspiring” [*Aspiring*].

In Central Otago, the mountains and lakes seem to bounce notions of selfhood and place back at the beholder and in terms of human geography, the process of invention of place is reflexive. Eggleton says the Lakes District is “this landscape we invent, as it invents us” [*Waipounamu*]. The underlying aim of the project for these four men was indeed both in the invention of place and self-invention.

During this “notoriously stormy” [O’Brien] summer Brake had previously directed

the NZ Film Unit's newsreel adventure documentary *Prelude to Aspiring* which was released in early 1949 to pay tribute to the newly constructed Aspiring hut. As his first motion picture for the NFU, the film achieved the photographer's intention of showcasing the dramatic scenery around Aspiring and capturing the cavalier spirit of Aotearoa's frontier men driving around the pastoral shores of Lake Wanaka, advancing through the West Matukituki valley then climbing up French Ridge to fix a shelter that had been flattened in a storm. Like the heroes of an American Western, they traversed the line away from civilization and into the wild 'west' – establishing a pioneer's shack from which they could explore the wilderness further. It was a romanticised promotional narrative intended to target a war-weary public and showcase the splendor of the South Island high country. The success of this black and white project spurred his desire to go back to the region again, this time with a colour camera and a view to myth-making.

With three guides and himself as expedition leader, Lilburn as composer, Drawbridge as painter and Baxter as scriptwriter, Brake returned to the mountain with his new Kodachrome camera and a "much grander vision" [*Aspiring*] in mind, to record a creative collaboration between four friends with the goal being "to crack open the surface of the world" [*Aspiring*]. He directed a deliberate 'bringing back'; a return to the origin of the work of art in order to channel a 'truthful' existence; Heidegger's *Dasein* or 'being-there' in the authentic mode.

Truth, as the clearing and concealing of beings, happens in being composed. *All art*, as the letting happen of the advent of truth of beings, is as such, in essence, poetry. The essence of art, on which both the artwork and the artist depend, is the setting-itself-into-work of truth. It is due to art's poetic essence that, in the midst of beings, art breaks open an open place, in whose openness everything is other than usual [Heidegger, *Basic Writings* 197]."

During this idealised trip across the fabled valley, Baxter further immortalised the mountain by scribing the first lines of his famed 'Poem in the Matukituki Valley' in the lyrical commentary intended to provide a vocal score the film. Like many experiences in the changeable mountains, the expedition did not go as planned and

veered away from the storyboard stills Drawbridge had painted according to Brake's instruction. At the first river crossing, the climbers who accompanied the artists and crew threw a rope to the neighbouring bank to keep the party safe but "Jim lost his footing and fell in the river – he lost his pack and the typewriter that was in it... amongst these... were typewritten pages that he'd already written that floated down the river" [Drawbridge, *Aspiring*]. Trampers salvaged some of the sodden poems they found stuck to rocks for weeks after, then Baxter happily reclaimed them when fellow randonneurs at the hut made enquiries as to whom they belonged to.

Much of this mission was linked with loss; indeed "no footage of the artistic crew survives" [*Aspiring*] and the long forgotten raw film was found in a Dunedin basement in 2004. Drawbridge's original sketches only re-surfaced when his widow gifted them to the Alexander Turnbull in November 2012 [*Doomed climbing film sketches*]. Similarly, Baxter's filmscript was lost for many years.

Camera shy, the foursome preferred to carry out their philosophical discussions away from the gaze of the lens. Only one photograph survives of Baxter on the *Aspiring* journey. He is leaning on a farm cart, probably writing a poem which could have been lines such as these from 'Prospector' (which was later to become 'Jack Winter's Dream'):

... Green briar like a thief
Clambering stone by stone
Forces the broken door
And sprawls upon the floor
With pale bloom, ragged leaf.
Hut and matted garden
Stand yet, the bare emblem
Of some great love forgotten,
Soothing a traveller's grief.
[*Collected Poems* 91]

For Baxter, the mission saw the inspiration, impetus and first drafts of this and seminal poems such as ‘After Rain’, ‘At Raspberry Hut’ ‘High Country Weather’ and ‘Poem in the Matukituki Valley’ which later consolidated his place in national consciousness as a celebrated New Zealand poet. Phrases including “the smoking cataract”, “the mitred peak” and “ice cold and clear” were written at *Aspiring*, and comprise the nuggets within some of his most anthologized works. His writing style deliberately romanticised the South Island high country as a manifestation of the divine, an all-powerful force that overrode personal issues like love affairs or alcoholism; a refuge within which he could escape the confines of mainstream society and consider the questions about what it means to be *here*, both in terms of this distinctly New Zealand setting and in a broader ontological sense.

A month prior to the expedition, Baxter had joined the Anglican church, so “he was clearly a man who was looking for answers”[*Aspiring*]. Through the trip and the script he wrote during it, Baxter was engaged in a self re-orientation, deliberately locating his own *Heimat*, positioning himself alongside other ‘New Zealand’ poets who “had a higher aspiration... of developing a national identity” (Millar). At this time, Baxter’s work was in the midst of a turn: *die Kehre* [Carman x] towards the ‘New Zealandness’ the Caxton poets (Curnow, Glover, Fairburn, Hyde) had been compelling him to write with. As Dr Paul Millar explains in the *Aspiring* documentary, “he had been thinking of himself as an English poet... but Allen Curnow, Denis Glover and others were pushing him to think of himself as a New Zealand poet... He was trying to come up with something that creatively represented this country and what it meant to identify with it, to be part of it and to draw your inspiration from.” The verses he wrote on the trip have a particular significance in the way they capture the South Island landscape he saw as omnipotent. In his deliberate use of New Zealand motifs such as “standing beeches”, “taloned kea” “bush orchid” and “carrion parrot”, he was consciously injecting a new sense of Antipodean identity into his writing; and drawing on what is now known as the South Island myth.

ii. Baxter and the Mountain



Figure 2 Baxter seen jotting verse for the *Aspiring* film at Aspinall Homestead.

Photo: Barry Woods, reproduced with permission from the Alexander Turnbull Library.

Brake's project facilitated a return to the Matukituki valley for Baxter, which was a place the poet was both haunted by and at home in. The area, with its "surging abstract forms, a sense of nature, timelessness and permanence" [*Aspiring*] left a lasting impression on Baxter that is present in much of his poetry. Both written five years prior to the *Aspiring* art trip, two of his earliest titles ('Hill-Country' and 'The Mountains') demonstrate the poet's affinity for the Heartland. 'Hill-Country' is a spare, rhyme-rich poem, making use of enjambed rhymes and short lines. It reads as an earthy, sensory, elemental and hypnotic incantation. Here, the reader encounters a sweeping glance at the mountainous Central Otago landscape from the "white sky" of the opening line, panning down to "black bouldered" hills, the "yellow broom", "mountain flower", bees, grass and wind of the plain before giving way to "Sun clay,

water-clay / Gouged-out, gaping clay / Clay (*Collected Poems* 8)” of *terra firma*, or Charles Brasch’s *terra nullius* [Kennedy 105].

Similarly, ‘The Mountains’ is a meditation that positions the speaker in the scene of “this scarred country” where the mountains are overwhelming and oppressive in their relentless menace, shown through the recurring anthropomorphism “the mountains crouch like tigers”. The final line illustrates one of Baxter’s dominant themes – the devastating impact that a wild landscape can have on the human spirit: “They are but stone yet the seeking eyes grow blind [*Collected Poems* 9].”

Baxter spent a lot of time with his parents exploring the places ‘up Central’ which are imbued with an allure of escape and remembered in the collective conscious for their sky-dominated landscapes bordered by natural margins. These boundaries, defined by mountains and waterways, can be read as Heidegger’s ”external bonds” [1958, 19]. Baxter’s poetry often sprang from his memories of a lifetime’s reflections and adventure in places like Naseby, where “Unchanging mountain scars / Carry their mane of snow” [CP 49]; Tarras, where the moon becomes “Queen Death” who “glowered from a rift / Of cloudwrack above the mountain, *Walking on wild air*” [CP 112]; Clutha where “the hawks fly up at dawn / And each bright eye glares down” [CP 270] and “whose musical coils, / Older than Charybdis, wrap / Boulders, bodies, and blue eels” [CP 229]; Haast Pass where “In the dense bush all leaves and bark exude / The odour of mortality” [CP 62]; and Wanaka where “nothing happens yet / Between the bought cribs and the lake outlet / To ease in us what lives, groans, yet turns to rock” [CP 347].

First drafted during the Aspiring trip, ‘High Country Weather’ is now one of Baxter’s most well-known works. The poem has an existential bent, with the speaker positioned as part of humanity being born and dying ‘alone’, but somewhere in between finding solace or transcendence in nature. The reader is directly addressed as the ‘stranger’ on horseback, instructed to ‘ride easy’ on the uphill journey of life. Much has been read into these eight pithy lines which echo with a reverence for the

rural hinterland Baxter called home:

Alone we are born
And die alone
Yet see the red-gold cirrus
Over snow-mountain shine

Upon the upland road
Ride easy, stranger
Surrender to the sky
Your heart of anger.

Like the ‘stranger’ in Baxter’s poem, Brake’s team were required to yield to the whims of nature when bad weather saw them stranded for most of a month at Aspiring Hut. In Mackay’s documentary, Drawbridge recalls the excitement of camp chat, with “young Baxter reciting everything from his own poetry to bawdy pub verse”, which offended some of the other trampers. During the long days and nights confined to the small alpine hut, they talked about art, religion, life.



Figure 3: The Northern view from the current French Ridge Hut

“During a patch of good weather, Brake and his team went above the snowline ... as far as the French Ridge Hut” [*Aspiring*]. The ridge was to meant be the climax of the film’s narrative arc. From here, the looming, aptly-named peaks Baxter was so fond of - Stargazer and Moonraker – can be sighted. The crew carved a snowcave into the edge of the mountain in order to shoot Brake’s thunderstorm scene which was to be a spectacular interplay of light and space – the world outside rumbling and flashing while the artists huddled inside watching as the storm cast moving shadows on the walls - a Plato’s cave of sorts intended to hint at the relationship between mountaineering and philosophy.

With the onset of dubious weather, Brake made the call for the artists to return to the valley floor, while their guides continued on a different route to the peak the next day. Ed Cotter (one of Sir Edmund Hillary’s climbing friends) along with Geoff Milne and Christopher Johnston, summited Mt Aspiring – a rare event in those days. The artists went back to Wanaka and the film was never completed. But as Cotter explains, “it’s the old adage – the journey is the destination” [*Aspiring*]. Brake held on to the dream of completing the project and wanted to return the following summer. However, in the interim Johnston was killed when looking for missing climbers on Aspiring in his light aircraft. Brake cut the raw footage together and gave it to Johnston’s widow.

Although the cinematic poem was eventually abandoned, the trip was to have a lasting impression on the men. For Drawbridge, the six weeks spent in the Matukituki Valley was “an experience that stayed with me forever” [*Aspiring*]. In Mackay’s documentary, he returns to the area and recounts the events of that summer, explaining that “it was a dreamlike experience in that I’d been there and I’d seen it before. In another way it was an entirely new experience ... it was the most extraordinary experience of my life” [*Aspiring*].

The timing of *The Ascent of Aspiring* film project is of significance because it could be seen as a gauge of the nationalistic sentiment of both the mountaineering and

literary communities in Aotearoa during this period. As Newton has noted, “The heyday of New Zealand mountaineering coincides exactly with the heroic age of Pākehā literary nationalism, the two sharing not just their southern locality but also an image-stock and a cultural mission – the conquest of an inimical landscape in the service of inventing a national identity” [93]. The film exemplifies the ways both writers and climbers sought to establish a sense of place and self *on* the landscape and *through* their explorations (whether physical or via the pen or a combination of both). This driving force is what Newton calls “an imperative of the settler imaginary which saw Pākehā mountaineers, not to mention Pākehā poets, claiming footholds in the unpeopled wasteland of the South Island myth [93].” With the end of World War II, a surge in nationalism saw that “like the New Zealand troops at war, the New Zealand writers, meeting people from other nations, became more aware of being New Zealanders” [Sinclair 246]. The establishment of Aspiring hut saw the first of the hordes of hikers on a mission to ‘conquer’ the mountain, which became Aotearoa’s tenth National Park on December 10 1964 when 19,220 hectares were set aside “to achieve a balance between preservation and recreation and between development and restraint” [Roxburgh 32].

Using additional interviews with Drawbridge and accompanied by some of Baxter’s script and Lilburn’s music, Mackay’s homage to Brake’s original plans for *Aspiring* in a sense lives up to its name, the project being re-invented fifty seven years later. *Aspiring / Tititea*, the mountain and the National Park, has always been a complicated place. Perhaps then the fractured nature of Brake’s “cinematic poem” captured its complexities with unintentional acuity. The ‘capturing’ of the journey remains ongoing, open-ended, and the wilderness will always have her say. We are but viewers, visitors, Others; continuously seeking to define it in our own ways, shifting its meaning from *space* into *place* of significance. In this way, Tititea, the heart of the Heartland, sentinel of the subverted Lakes District, becomes a cultural landscape, and remains (since its first naming) been irrevocably linked with myth.

iii. Tititea as Cultural Landscape – a ‘Lost and Found’ of the self

Before it can ever be the repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock.

[Schama, Simon 7-8]

Through the rise of poststructuralist theory in cultural studies, human geography and semiotics, landscapes are now seen as narrated places with dynamic intertextual connections and multiple authors, within which the role of the reader/spectator is a major influence in the construction of meaning [Armstrong 16]. Thus, Central Otago’s Lakes District can be considered a narrated landscape, within which a web of connections between Māori and Pākehā viewpoints are employed by both local and visiting spectators, continuously constructing a sense of place.

The narrative of Aspiring and its significance can be read in several ways. Kaumatua tell of atua, legends and actions; naming sacred pathways and lifelines around Tititea and his surrounds that became part of the collective conscious long before Pākehā arrived. Geologists, historians and archaeologists have added their layers of meaning by interpreting the shape of the land and the processes that formed it; by carbon-dating fossilised remains and artefacts found intact in clefts of cliffs or caves, preserved by the dry Central Otago climate. Climbers, farmers, hunters and skiers have also claimed their footholds on the mountain. Ecologists speak of ways to conserve Tititea’s diverse primordial wilderness whilst keeping it accessible for visitors. Filmmakers and government departments, writers and poets also cast their gaze upon the glistening peak. All of these spectators have valid filters through which the cultural landscape of Aspiring is constructed, but within this report the poetic representation of place is of primary concern.

Through oral traditions, the earliest known forms of poetry which refer to Tititea were passed down from the times of the Rapuwai and Waitaha. Finally, Ngai Tahu iwi instilled a reverence for the mountain as Aoraki’s brother, an ancestor and the mighty wedge which carved the southern landscape into the fiords, rivers and lakes we know

today [*Poutini Ngāi Tahu*]. On an individual level, Tititea continues to figure in the pepeha or mihihi of those who live here and is thereby an enduring emblem of the collective conscious. This icon can be ‘found’ in its relatively ‘natural’ state and read both “in the moment of its beholding” [Mitchell 14] and also as a many-layered narrative as represented in pakiwaitara, poetry, photography, postcards, film, government documents and on digital platforms. Within the *space* of the Mt Aspiring region, the spectator is continuously translating into *place*, as William John Thomas Mitchell reminds us, “landscape ... always greets us as ... that within which “we” (figured as ‘the figures’ in the landscape) find - or lose - ourselves” [2]. The mountain itself is of such stature that it can be thought of as a source of both ‘finding’ and ‘losing’ oneself.

iv. Myth-making in the Matukituki valley

*Some few yards from the hut the standing beeches
Let fall their dead limbs, overgrown
With feathered moss and filigree of bracken.
The rotted wood splits clean and hard
Close-grained to the driven axe, with sound of water
Sibilant falling and high nested birds.*

*In winter blind with snow; but in full summer
The forest blanket sheds its cloudy pollen
And cloaks a range in undevouring fire.
Remote the land's heart...*

[Baxter, James K. 'Poem in the Matukituki Valley', *Collected Poems*]

Written off the back of Brake's project, Baxter's 'Poem in the Matukituki Valley' can be read as a navigation between the lines of loss and return, annihilation versus affirmation. Here, the speaker writes of how "we" must turn away from "that too blinding glass" of nature's divine purity to inhabit the safer, civilized worlds of work, home and city. The majesty and unknowable spirituality which for Baxter was found within a landscape that is "matrix and destroyer / Resentful, darkly known" becomes so intimidating that the explorer must "daydream" of his family in "the lawful city / Where man may live, and no wild trespass / Of what's eternal shake his grave of time". Venturing into the hinterland of the mountains is dangerous both physically and psychologically, leading the explorer too close to "what's eternal" – the Sublime. Culminating in a lifestyle few embrace, Baxter chose a non-conforming existence on the margins, distanced from society's rules and regulations and instead in the arms of nature's rhythms and whims.

In his meditation on the 'place' of the Matukituki, the landscape is aloof and looming. The beech trees have "dead limbs" and "rotted wood". The boulders are god's "dice". The sun is a "smoking / Cataract". The "deathly summits" are cloaked in "undevouring fire", swirling snow and wind. His Central Otago is both daunting and deified. In the plethora of poems that traverse the cultural landscape he knew empirically and responded to within his writing, Baxter's mountains and rivers are laden with symbolism. For him, the Heartland was a rich, sometimes Wordsworthian

manifestation of the divine. Mountains appear repeatedly as motifs in his poems, at turns represented as horses or women; symbols of menace, mana, mortality or god. For Baxter, Mt Aspiring in particular was a figure who had the power to destroy or nurture: “half enemy, half mother’s breast” [*Aspiring*]. The jagged peaks of the physical landscape can be read: “Expressing in the nouns of a buried language... A female eloquence, the coin of death / Turned over” [*CP* 86].

Within the turns of Baxter’s ‘Poem in the Matukituki Valley’, the speaker is both ‘found’ as an individual and reminded of his own insignificance in the shadow of Tititea. While for Blanche Baughan and Charles Brasch there were “no dead” (Sinclair, *Destiny* 252) in the land, for Baxter the “buried language” was here first, found deep. His allusion to the classical practice of placing a coin on the deceased’s mouth to pay Chiron / Charon, that is “Turned over”, reveals how for him, landscape is the space between life and death, a boundary between one realm and the next. (Charon appears in *Campion’s Top of the Lake* too, in the hooded figure of Jamie – the best friend of runaway Tui - rowing across Moke Lake to deliver food for her. But we’ll get to that lake later.)

Mountains for Baxter recur as emblems of the big questions, often loaded with allusions linked irreducibly with loss and death. For Baxter they are part of the conscious of wider society too, serving as reminders “to those who dare not love or die” [*Towards Te Anau*]. Beneath their often snow-dazzled surfaces, the blackness and bleakness of the mountains in Baxter’s poems are an unsettling image for most humans to behold. There is a juxtaposition in the symbolism of his mountains as he explores the interplay between the pure, white albescent peaks and the darkness of their crouching, claustrophobia-inducing bodies.

v. The Lakes District and the South Island myth

There, framed by the arch of ice, rose the Silver Cone – all that pure curve of snow, with its every rock, every purple shadow, sharp and distinct against a blue so intense, it seemed dark against the snow.

[Moreland, Maud 'Through South Westland']

When Baxter wrote the lines for 'Poem in the Matukituki Valley' during the Aspiring trip, he unconsciously contributed to the construction of the South Island myth.

Today, to live in the Lakes District is to live inside that myth. To write or make movies here is to develop that myth, to scribe one's own myth over the pre-existing narrative or to negate the myth. The first reference to the 'South Island myth' was made by the historian Keith Sinclair in *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*. The dominant presumption prior to that was that Te Wai Pounamu was ostensibly a blank slate skittered across by indigenous peoples before the establishment of Pākehā surveys, maps and settlements. Within his examination, Sinclair surmises that many Southern Pākehā writers described the southern island as an "empty land", which was "unpopulated" with "no history" [253]. Their poetry tended to construct a previously un-narrated landscape, which they then proceeded to people, plot and portray as undiscovered prior to their penning it. This sentiment was still prevalent in the time when Sinclair first argued his point; an example being the type of text apparent in *Aspiring Settlers – European Settlement in the Hawea and Wanaka region to 1914* by John Angus. A staple on many Wanaka household shelves, the prologue begins "In 1850 the Upper Clutha basin was uninhabited. The Maoris who had first settled its lakeshores and riverbanks had departed. The Europeans who were to stock its extensive pastureland, mine its gold and cultivate its plains and river terraces had not yet arrived. The land lay empty" [9]. It is now known the land was not empty; it was rich in resources that three successive tribes had sought out and relied on for extended periods of time. (This image of the virginal emptiness of the land awaiting the blood, sweat and tears of settlers here echoes Brasch's image of Aotearoa requiring "first blood" [*Silent Land* 133] to be sewn in the land.) Sinclair

postulates that this was a typically colonial viewpoint of the South Island, because there were not large pa sites evident as physical reminders of pre-European habitation as there were in the North Island [253]. A display at the Otago Museum notes that tekoteko (carving at the top of a meeting house) were not found in the South Island, which suggests that there were few, if any, “permanent settlements” here:

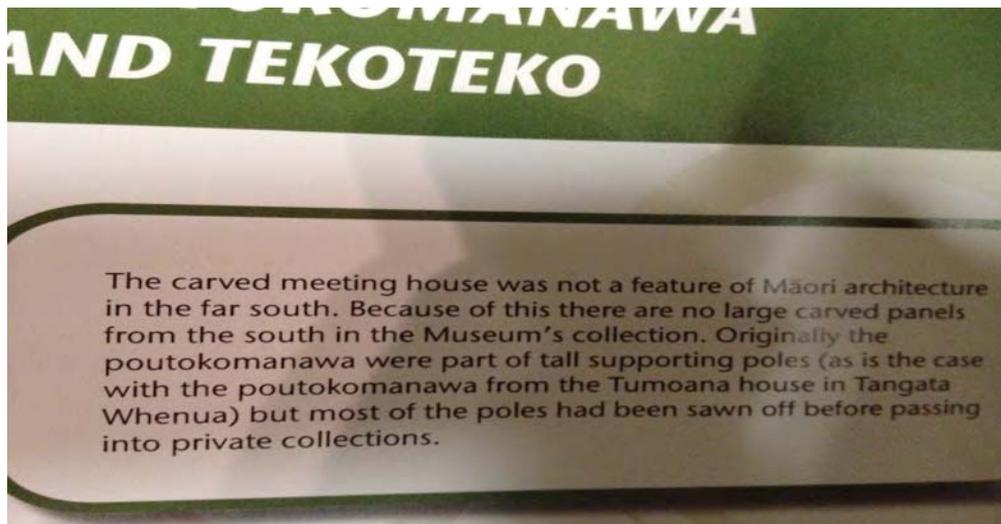


Figure 4 Southern People display, Otago Museum

The notion of a *terra nullius* that lay in wait to be populated and ‘filled in’ like a blank colouring book infiltrated the successive colonial and nationalist poetry waves that demarcate New Zealand’s literature of that period. Newton explains the “discovery” of the South Island by the nationalist poets as merely mytho-poetics:

“ This local actuality which the nationalists discover, then, is mythical. And it is also indispensably parochial. New Zealand is constructed on the model of the South Island, whose regional topography is deployed in a rationalization of regional history. In styling that landscape as bare and inimical ... the Caxton poets rewrite as geographical destiny the comparative ease and efficiency with which settler domination was achieved in the South. A smaller indigenous population, a costly period of warfare in the 1820s (both inter-tribal and intra-tribal), and the overwhelming European deluge generated by the southern goldrush, were among a combination of factors leading to a Pākehā ascendancy won without military conflict. But to read for this history in the South Island Myth is to find it quite literally sublimated in the frozen silence of an inhuman landscape, uninhabited because uninhabitable” [91].

In his discussion of this myth at a poetry symposium in Bluff in 2006, Richard Reeve contends, after Sinclair and Newton, that the term was a “wrong-headed” colonial

posturing of writers within an edge-of-the-world, marginal land in which the depth of prior narratives associated with this place were omitted. For Reeve, the South Island myth “originally described a concept of New Zealand as a geo-physical frontier that was literally cultureless before the arrival of Europeans, an upturned tecton now bearing immemorial forests, bare rocks and vacant seas, superficially settled by Māori but in essence remote from the concerns of man” [Bluff06]. Expounding this myth were early writers such as David Mckee Wright who balladeered “often with blokey humour and an in-built nostalgia, a partly imaginary masculine world of hardship and mateship, prospecting, rabbiting, mustering...” [Ricketts 21]. This Man Alone, pioneering folklore presents questionable ellipsis by missing out references to the significance of the area for tangata whenua. These gaps instilled a South Island myth that may have served to ease the conscience of colonial settlers as the area was carved into gold mining sites, then farms, then adventure and ‘eco’ tourism destinations and latterly film locations: “This was how the first European settlers found it... as they struggled inland from the coastal settlements of colonial Otago to seek out the resources of the interior. Those who ventured farthest west reached the margins of Lake Hawea and Wanaka, and returned excited by the new region they had found. It was, they said, a land of great variety and beauty – the mountain and plain, lake and stream, forest and tussock” [Angus 9].

The South Island myth has remained a pervasive component of the collective imaginary about the Central Otago region. However, residents such as Richie Hewitt have challenged the notion that Māori merely passed through the area on a transitory basis, pointing to Kāi Tahu evidence of six known pa sites in the Wanaka area, which have recently been referenced in a collection of published sources exploring pre-European habitation of the Upper Clutha. As Hewitt explains, “The myth seems to have been perpetuated by the community, but I think we have irrefutable evidence that Māori did live here”[Harker 4]. The settler sentiment largely ignored the importance tangata whenua placed on this area. Colonial understanding and interpretation of the landscape was at odds with the existing attitude of local iwi.

As Philip L. Barton [1998] and Jan Kelly [1999] have noted, the maps drawn by Huruuru, Rakiraki and Reko indicate an extensive geographical and mythological knowledge of the area by local hapu. Much of this knowledge is tapu, which could be a reason it is not accessible to the poets and filmmakers who continue to write and inscribe the South Island in particular ways which are more often than not, troubled.

vi. Self, meaning, place

For Edward Relph, *genius loci* or a sense of place is critical to a person's identity. Relph summarises this in his proposal that "identity of place is comprised of three interrelated components, each irreducible to the other - physical features or appearance, observable activities and functions, and meaning or symbols" [61].

'Identity' of Place

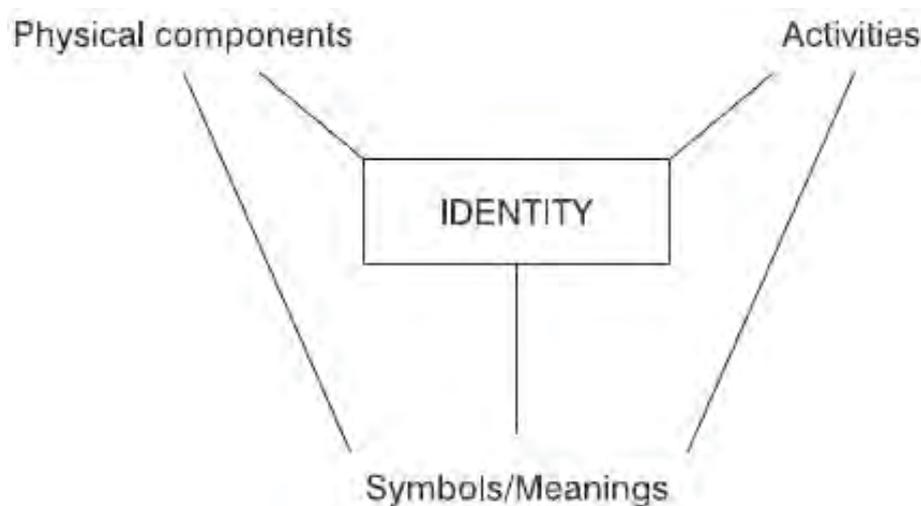


Figure 5 Place identity and its components (after Relph, 1976)

The Lakes District as a cultural landscape is an example of living history and heritage within which we can see the interconnection of self, meaning and place. The symbolism associated with mountains and the physical region they reign over form reflexive motifs which echo a certain cadence for the communities, past and present, that surround it. Engaging with the landscape whether physically, or constructing its representation in waiata, poetry or film involves a Lacanian lookⁱⁱ, there and back, at the mountain and at ourselves. The Central Otago landscape remains a dominant, often personified character in both spoken and written poetry scribed in, of, and in some senses upon, this region. Critics including Newton have examined some of the different ways writers have looked at the South Island landscape, with the emergence

of a “dominant settler imaginary” [1999] characterizing the early writing about the area from the shanties of the sealers and prospectors of the mid 1800s to the Caxton Club of the 1930s and post-World War II poets (Brasch, Baxter). These writers have mined the area for its metaphors with contrasting results. Each poem of place is reflective of the culture and context from which it sprang, as well as the writer’s style and school of thought.

The “colonizing look” has been explored by Newton in his article, “Colonialism above the Snowline: Baughan, Ruskin and the South Island Myth”. Within his critique, he uses Ruskin’s theory of the Pathetic Fallacy (the projection of human emotions onto non-human entities) to establish the positions of Baughan, Brasch and Curnow in their poetry of the South Island high country. Baughan, he proposes, writes from an often ecstatic romantic perspective. She examines the flipside of the Sublime which is “not awful; chilling, desolating, not at all; but only and always glorious”[100]. Influenced by Eastern philosophy, the Southern Alps’ chieftain status reminds the spectator of the life force which is “everywhere alive and active” [101]. For her, Ka - Tiritiri-o-te-Moana provide a mystical insight into the self and our interconnectedness with the universe:

“... To some of us it seems as though their separateness, their emphasized aloofness, from his world may constitute to Man at once their chief attraction and their greatest value. For it widely instructs him; it enlarges immensely the horizons of his understanding. In presenting to him Nature – that other half of what Fechner calls the Earth-Soul, at any rate the co-sharer with him of this planet – thus isolated and distinct from his occasions, it reveals her to him as an integral whole, a true-existence, a Something in terms of her own self... It is to gain a new world, because a new view of the world. Scarcely morally, perhaps, not precisely intellectually, but spiritually, vitally, we seem among these soaring snows to ascend, out of the warm, babbling coverts of humanity, to certain regal and mid-air peaks of our own being; serene, solitary heights, standing veiless and voiceless before the presence of the primal unspeakable Forces, and offering vast new breaths of vision that enable us to discern ... That the universe is nowhere dead matter ... but ... bright Spirit throughout”[101].

Here, Baughan reminds her reader that through exploring the mountains, we are able to be in the present moment, or what Eckhart Tolle has called *The Power of Now* – the spiritual dimension: “The reason why some people love to engage in dangerous

activities, such as mountain climbing... although they may not be aware of it, is that it forces them into the Now – that intensely alive state that is free of time, free of problems, free of thinking, free of the burden of the personality”[51]. This is the mystic speaker Newton saw in Baughan’s writing; a spectator who was able to find self and spirituality when in communion with the mountains.

Brasch perpetuates the South Island myth in ‘The Estate’. Recognising Aotearoa as separate from, but related to, its neighbours as well as the Commonwealth, he could be described as a ‘Heartland’ man, heavy-handed in his myth-making. As longtime *Landfall* editor (which he started in 1947), he wrote within a group of staunchly self-defined ‘New Zealand’ poets, lived in Dunedin and often turned to Central Otago for inspiration. As Newton has noted, Brasch’s long poem, ‘The Estate’ is “a classic articulation of the vision that will come to be known as the South Island Myth” (*Colonialism* 3). The addressee of the poem is Brasch’s friend, T.H. Scott (Harry Scott), a mountaineer through whom Brasch projects a sense of the limit-pushing self-discovery that exploring the mountains - the outer boundaries of earthly existence - provides. Through his dialogue between poet and protagonist, Brasch is able to impart a feeling of a journey into the “blind altars of rock”, moving upwards, out and away from ‘normal’ urban existence, navigating the terrifying space between life and death, wherein Eckhart Tolle would say the addictive ‘now’ exists. Here again we see the recurring theme of an investigation of the space between ‘earth and sky’. The mountaineer replies that the meaning of life is “to extend life, press its limits farther”. Here, the meaning of mountains is an embodiment and totem of the “pain and madness and annihilation” of the human condition. Lofty ideas of what it means to be here, on earth, are explained through symbols of the landscape which ‘man’ continues to try to comprehend by conquering:

What have you seen on the summits, the peaks that plunge their
Icy heads into space? What draws you trembling
To blind altars of rock where man cannot linger
Even in death, where body grows light, and vision
Ranging those uninhabitable stations
Dazzled and emulous among the rage of summoning
Shadows and clouds, may lead you in an instant

Out from all footing?
 What thread of music, what word in
 That frozen silence that drowns the noise of our living?
 What is life, you answer,
 But to extend life,
 press its limits farther
 Into the uncolonized nothing we must prey on
 For every hard-won thought, all new creation
 Of stone bronze music words; only at life's limit
 Can man reach through necessity and custom
 And move self by self into the province
 Of that unrealized nature that awaits him,
 His own to enter. But there are none to
 guide him
 Across the threshold, interpret the saying of perilous
 Music or word struck from that quivering climate,
 Whose white inquisitors in close attendance
 Are pain and madness and annihilation.

[Brasch, Charles. 'The Estate', *The Estate, and Other Poems*]



Figure 6 Mount Aspiring from Wanaka Lake. Ca. 1863 Buchanan, John, 1819 - 1898.
Hocken Pictorial Collection.

For Brasch, the task of the “vanguard mission” [Newton 92] was in “Sowing in the wilderness / Heart’s blood [48]”. Here, the dutiful nationalist poet proceeds to plant the seed of a new beginning, echoing Heidegger’s notion of a point of origin or *Heimat* – but in this case the blood is not *from* the land, but forced into and onto it because it was apparently lacking in *sang/lifeblood* beforehand. This is a violent and

somewhat priapic image which is at odds with Baughan's writing; evoking a sense of a aggressive colonizing force as opposed to a 'oneness' with life force. Although Baughan's writing is still through a colonizing lens, hers is a more peaceful 'zenned out' one, as she finds a giddy foothold on the high country landscape in her declaration "Ah Ruskin never saw our Southern Alps!" [100].

Conversely Curnow, bristling against the 'myth' label as "a curious term for what is simply a way of looking at history" [Newton 90], writes with a determined lack of romanticism in his poetry. In the defining 'House and Land', his stalwart "insistence on fracture, fallenness, gloom" [Newton 91] constructs a nationalist landscape which insists on hauntedness and homesickness. In this poem, Curnow seems to denote a 'space' rather than 'place', choosing the title 'House and Land' because there is in his "land of settlers"... "never a soul at home".

Newton's perspective on Curnow's work could also be applied to Campion's, which as discussed in the latter part of the report is also insistent on the pall of dread and placelessness so pervasive in classic *Cinema of Unease* [Sam Neill, Judy Rymer] screen representations of the South Island landscape.

vii. Sampling the Sublime in Central Otago

These days, the Lakes District remains a rough, wild, remote hinterland; tough country, largely untouched – however at places like the Clyde dam on the Matau (Clutha river) or the sprawling gated subdivisions of Queenstown and Wanaka, irrevocably torn. Many recent poetic representations of this place still focus on a lack of habitation - imbuing the mountains, rivers and wide-open spaces with the symbolism of purity; protection; menace or majesty. The Heartland is now often inscribed with a sense of stewardship rather than sovereignty. For Brian Turner, his beloved Central Otago is a neo-Romantic environment where “Up there on a fine day is like being surrounded by fields of gold that fortify and fuel the spirit” [340]. As Elizabeth Smither has noted, the landscape for Turner is soul food: “It’s a dependency; it’s almost as if the hills were made of bread and he’s getting his daily sustenance from them” [Wijland].

The Lakes District is the ‘timeless land’ Turner describes as phenomenological. For him, as a longtime fisherman/poet/tramper/eco-warrior “You have to be here, you / have to feel the deep slow surge of the hills, / the cloak of before, the wrench / of beyond” [354] in the way that eighteenth century writers Byron, Shelley, Keats and Browning mythologized the European Alps and the Mediterranean in their musings about the Grand Tour – a space within which the poet or speaker will often experience a connection with the what the philosopher Edmund Burke in 1757 called the “delightful horror” [*On the Sublime*] of the ‘Sublime’.

For Burke, the terrifying beauty of primeval and dramatic landscapes incites a sense of astonishment, awe and wonder within the travellers, artists, tourists and observers who visit these wilderness areas. He was interested in the effect of the experience of the Sublime on the self. As Ryan notes: “The sublime experience is seen as leading, on the one hand, to an overpowering of the self and, on the other hand, to an intense self-presence and exaltation, sometimes even to self-transcendence. The central

question is thus not to what extent the sublime is located in the subject, but in what way the experience of the sublime affects the perceiving subject: Does the sublime enlarge us, or diminish us? Does the sublime annihilate our sense of self, or does it affirm and heighten our sense of identity?" [266]. This juxtaposition of annihilation versus affirmation echoes the viewpoint that we either lose or gain our sense of self when beholding an awe-inspiring natural landscape. These two opposing effects of the sublime on the self can be seen in the positioning of the speaker within a variety of Aspiring works. According to the poets and filmmakers I have researched, Aspiring as a cultural landscape is a place that has the capacity to disturb or diminish us because of its vastness, or conversely to create a sense of peace.

viii. Subverting the South Island myth

Since Baughan, Brasch, Curnow and Baxter, the myth has taken a beating by a new vanguard of poets. In contrast to Baxter's hallmark poem, Bernadette Hall's 'Poem in the Matukituki Valley' makes fun of neo-Romanticism, mocking the significance often placed on this area through her italicized "*what a fuss about nothing!*" In this piece, the speaker also uses classical allusion in her reference to Caesar's deification but here, humanity, not nature, is revered, as the valley becomes the platform for a meditation on the speaker's mother who is "far too reliable to be a god". There is a sense of awe generated in "coming down from the mountains" as the speaker lists the "grandeur, the excess" of the water, paddocks and peaks. Hall in this poem is more concerned with descending the mountains rather than scaling or conquering them. Instead of instilling a sense of smallness and vulnerability, the landscape reminds the speaker of her mother "hair streaming, running with a baby in her arms, / saving me again and again from the burning house": her strength, tenacity and endurance. In a sense, the people in the poem are more important than place. Here the valley is a site where human connection and relationships are foregrounded, rather than used as a platform for the investigation of the relationships between nature, god and man. Thus Hall's Matukituki Valley clashes with Baxter's, and is a feisty reply to his 1949 poem.

In Eggleton's poem, 'Descent from Mt Aspiring', the mountain as a Kiwiana icon joins a post postmodern mash up of cultural cringe until it is almost erased. The figure in the landscape of this work is the 'New Zealandian' searching for a sense of identity when bombarded by history and the rampant consumption of place:

This is a descent from Mount Aspiring,
this is a descent from all desiring,
from toehold ridges, from quarrels over rocks,
from the crystal bloom of clouded lakes.
This is a descent from soapsuds, whitewash,
Granny Smiths, from Hairdressers & Tobacconists,

From meat-safes, and rifles and spades at Gallipoli.

[Eggleton, David 'Descent from Mount Aspiring', *Rhyming Planet*.]

Reeve has noted that within Eggleton's 'punk rant', the mountain has 'disappeared'. The speaker has smudged out the symbol of Aspiring by refusing to embellish the mountain with the over-used South Island myth. After the first few opening lines, the traditional motifs of "toehold ridges", "quarrels over rocks" and "the crystal bloom of clouded lakes" are erased in the "soapsuds, whitewash" of a satirized cultural landscape where "What could be odder than to be in New Zealand?" In this poem, the squeaky clean landscape is obfuscated by the hype of a prior colonising look. The speaker mocks the clichéd comparisons the settlers gave to Kā Tiritiri-o-te-Moana; calling them "lakes' Arcadian Alps", subverting them figuratively through their inversion – here, they are their reflection, a mirror image as the reader enters Baudrillard's realm of the hyperreal [81]. From the outset, the rhythm of the poem reads like the beat of feet rushing downhill towards what the poet perhaps sees as the potential doom of Roel Wijland's "poetic brandscapes" [2008]. In Eggleton's poem the identity of the 'New Zealander' morphs towards a plethora of superficial meanings. This is indeed a dissent, a movement away from a more authentic past towards a 'sold out' future. The speaker then continues a breakneck, broken-beat sprung rhythm tirade at the consumerism now rife on these isles. He employs the sibilant hiss to evoke the scars of "the abused past" where "there's an old ache burning": the "exorcism of scapegoats and xenophobia". As in much of Baxter's work, there is a nod here to both classical and religious allusion. We see this when Eggleton invites the reader via the second person 'you' into the piece as "Atlas expands his boundaries and you're in clover" – generating an image of the more open spaces of the Matukituki valley floor. Later in "the laying on of many hands may you / manipulate the eugenics of the selfish gene" the speaker subverts the Christian ethos of giving and selflessness into a taking, of land-grabbing and snatching snippets of 'Aotearoa', something that the reader is requested to 'pardon'.

The list of imperatives implore the reader to “quibble into frivolity on closed circuit imagery” and “block the view” as billboards are “put in front” in parallel with the exposition of Lee Tamahori’s 1994 film *Once Were Warriors*ⁱⁱⁱ.

In Eggleton’s poem there is an awareness of impermanence, of the ‘shaky isles’ in phrases such as “seismic bracing” and “Seismographs chatter with whiffs of sulphur”, building to a soiled “coagulated grime” in which the hills are no longer ‘dun’ but flattened by “dirty money”.

God appears in this poem too. This time not found in the landscape as in Baxter or removed as in Hall but instead “an angry god” that the addressee of the poem falls towards after tumbling “through the pitch-black jetstream” at the “speed of auto-dialling”. Down, down the speaker leads ‘you’ until the reader emerges “where cow drool hangs on the breeze, / from where the cloud-piercing lode of Mount Aspiring / leaps like the stuck-out tongue of a kapa haka dancer.” The climax of the poem is sensuous, sweaty; the spit and the stuck out tongue are a challenge to the reader – a confrontation about the ‘100% Pure New Zealand’ myth that is marketed to the world and gobbled up by both residents and visitors. Thus, in Eggleton’s postmodern query into the representation of a landscape that can now be seen as what Baudrillard would call hyperreal: “more real than real, that is how the real is abolished [81].” In his work, the South Island myth is ridiculed, which challenges the traditional viewpoints of earlier writers engaging with Te Wai Pounamu.

ix. 'Paradise' Lost

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.

[Yeats, William Butler. 'The Second Coming', *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats.*]

Frame 2 Wide establishing shot – stark Glenorchy landscape – mountains dominate half the frame, which is split in two by the lake where “no one could survive in that water”. At the lake’s edge, a cluster of containers indicate a small settlement. Lower half of frame dominated by cross-mesh farmgate upon which the viewer reads the metal letters of ‘Paradise’ in reverse. This is indeed Paradise backwards – a dystopian wilderness.



Figure 7 The camp for 'post menopausal women' at Moke Lake.

As Jane Campion opens the gate on 'Paradise', the audience enters yet another South Island place of finding and losing; a many-layered landscape; a beginning and an end at the edge of the world. In terms of the series' narrative, it is the place where lost and abused women come to 'find' themselves under the guidance of their spiritual leader, GJ (Holly Hunter).

Squatting in shipping containers strewn across a far corner of Matt Mitcham (Peter Mullan)'s land, they've retreated from a backwater “in which men do as they please,

the police look the other way (when they are not openly complicit), criminality and violence simply comprise the public sphere, and women understand that they must either make nice or suffer untold misery and humiliation” [Sicinski].



Figure 8 Women on the margins, "at the edge of the world" - Campion

This is one of the key settings selected by Campion for her cult mini-series, a crime drama in which detective Robin Griffin (Elisabeth Moss), as a kind of foil to David Lynch's Agent Cooper in *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991) returns to a problematic homeplace and finds herself embroiled in a search for answers surrounding the disappearance of a local girl. Whilst searching for the missing child, the protagonist is forced to confront her own troubled past, and therefore becomes engaged in a finding and losing of self which will, as the character GJ (Holly Hunter) exclaims "bring you to your knees".

The mountains and lake are no reflection of the divine here, nor any benevolent force. Like Brad McGann's *In My Father's Den* (2004), Campion's *Top of the Lake* landscape is the haunted (Heart)land harbouring sinister secrets. The film's groundbreaking twist on a 'whodunnit' plot relies on what is hidden under the surface of the town of Laketop: a sickening truth which is later revealed with sledgehammer realism, rather than romanticism.

While Brake and Baxter set out to “crack open the surface of the world” [*Aspiring*], Campion seeks to delve into the fissures and gaps she sees as already in existence in the Lakes District’s “emotional landscapes”(Björk)^{iv}. Her characters are a far cry from the four idealists who gained inspiration from an isolated mountain valley and are instead flawed, disturbed, depraved and/or deranged.

There is little sense of anyone re-inventing themselves in the landscape of Laketop, and instead an overriding sense of disappearance and loss pervades within an entrenched gender warfare. Filmed in Glenorchy (an hour’s drive down the road from Brake and Baxter’s Matukituki), even the name of the fictional township ‘Laketop’ implies a superficial veneer which shrouds hidden depths. The Lakes District becomes the vehicle for dark themes from the first episode, in which twelve year old Tui Mitcham (Jacqueline Joe) walks into the freezing lake in what seems to be a suicide attempt. The shores and waters of Moke Lake are locations for some of the series most pivotal moments, and much is made of the metaphoric potential of its deep, gloomy grey waters. This can be seen in scenes such as the gritty murder by drowning of the real estate agent Bob Platt and the drinking-into-oblivion that Robin indulges in on the lakeshore after the tragic death of Jamie (Luke Buchanan).

Tui is rescued by Griffin - who discovers the girl is pregnant - and then goes missing. Like the disappearance of Celia in *In My Father’s Den*, the search for Tui is the catalyst for the rise in narrative tension, which increases as the backstories of the townspeople are gradually revealed. The police are corrupt, the women all work for drug dealer Matt Mitcham (Tui’s father) and *there’s something wrong with the children*. In the landscape that overwhelms, the innocent are the children who are like ghosts that get neglected, forgotten or taken advantage of.

In a typical Campion binary opposition of expression versus repression, a lot rests on what is not said. Jamie - like Ada in *The Piano* (1993) - is an elective mute, choosing not to talk to adults. Here Campion is using her actors to articulate the inarticulate as Jamie is haunted by the town’s harrowing secret, yet cannot or will not share it.

The international audience watching the series are confronted with the sheer scale of the New Zealand landscape which this time is not employed in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* (2001 - 2003) style as the dramatic backdrop to a drawn-out quest but is instead a place of "majestic menace" which shifts the overused glorified image of "Lakes' Arcadian Alps" [Eggleton] to depict a harrowing "state of isolation at the bottom of the world" [Patterson].

In Champion's depiction of Laketop, the South Island myth explodes, exposing violence, vice, misogyny, power games and corruption. The only escape from the haunted backwater is to live on the margins in a halfway community where washed-up women band together to find authenticity. Like Brake's blokes in *Aspiring*, her characters are also searching for truth. Unlike in his project, what they find is not aligned with inspiration but severely maligned. Champion's project is thereby the antithesis of *Aspiring*.

xi. Conclusions

In a landscape that is personified, deified, fetishized, has been burnt more than once in Great Fires, now somewhat harnessed into farms and parks yet still frequently claims lives, there is often darkness in the poems and films which meditate upon the South Island's 'Heartland'. Wilderness areas traditionally provide scope for metaphor, pathetic fallacy and transference, and the Lakes District has provided several markers for poets both recent and historic to reflect on the human condition.

Sinclair has stated that Blanche Baughan "supposed this land had 'no dust of the dead'" and that Brasch agreed: "There are no dead in this land", believing a connection between Nature and Man in New Zealand was yet to come: "Man must lie with the gaunt hills like a lover / Earning their intimacy" [252]. Have writers and filmmakers who represent Southern Aotearoa on the page and onscreen earned their intimacy now? Have poets, like the "we" in Tuwhare's poem been "stroking, caressing the spine / of the land" because "we love her"? Are we in the afterglow of an embrace with Papatūānuku or are we feeling the awkwardness of postmodern post-post colonial coitus? It seems poets such as Turner are still embracing the Southern land in awe of its proximity to the Sublime as Baxter was, while others including Hall and Eggleton respond in a more fractured manner. Champion has now taken this skeptical gaze to a new level; shattering the South Island myth.

Who then is at home in the Heartland? Many representations of dwelling within the cultural landscape have been constructed in the poetry and films of the past, but as Newton suggests, it is the "spaces between habitations" [94] that are increasingly worthy of interest. The idea of locating 'home' is less important, and the navigation of the pathways that roam 'between' is now more so.

The 'South Island myth', built on an idea of emptiness, has in *Top of the Lake* had the emptiness filled in not with "life's blood" but the blood of sacrificial lambs slaughtered by misogynists. Champion's project is very different to Brake's. The bright glorious colours of Drawbridge's storyboard stills are replaced in this instance by a

bleak and washed out palette. And yet in the resolution of the final episode, there is still a sense of endurance, of moving on and moving through, the landscape.

Tui and her new baby don't need Robin as much as she had thought. Experience leads to acceptance and responsibility. But it's an uneasy responsibility, as the role of representing the Lakes District continues to be. The last shot of the series looks out across the lake, following the gaze of the characters themselves. As Robin's lover explains, a Māori legend claims that that lake has a taniwha sleeping in it. When he breathes in, the water levels drop, and when he breathes out, they rise. On still, clear days at Punatapu, you can watch the rise and fall before your very eyes.

Perhaps this place is inseparable from myth, and poets and filmmakers in the current mode have just shifted from one construction of the South Island heimat to a self-reflexive engagement within a divergent (de)construction of place.

Footnotes

ⁱ In Māori protocol, any hui or meeting will be preceded with a pōwhiri (formal welcome) and a round of introductions or mihimihi. This is when people share a bit about where they come from and who they are in relation to this. During this time, people usually stand to share their pepeha (tribal ties with geographic features) and whakapapa (genealogy).

ⁱⁱ A student of Sigmund Freud's, Jacques Lacan suggested in his Parisian seminar *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* that the human Gaze gives the uncanny sense that the subject of an individual's glance is also looking back at us, and is thereby linked with our sense of identity, reminding us of our own lack. Using Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors* as his example, he said that our seeing the hidden skull within the smudge at the base of the canvas "reflects our own nothingness" [92].

ⁱⁱⁱ In the opening sequence, the first shot appears to be a placid pastoral scene but pans out to show it is actually a roadside advertisement for an electricity company. Here the director has chosen to deliberately subvert the 'clean, green' New Zealand myth by utilising the framed advertisement to manipulate the audience through firstly masking, then revealing the reality of the film's gritty setting: a state house next to the screaming traffic of the Auckland motorway.

^{iv} This track is covered by Georgi Kay who plays the role of Melissa (the lake camp's minstrel) in the series, and comprises the non-diegetic soundscape to the cathartic memorial for Jamie in episode five.

Glossary of Māori terms

Aotearoa – The land of the long white cloud, New Zealand
Aoraki – Mt Cook, Aotearoa’s highest mountain
Arai-te-uru – canoe that was wrecked at Moeraki
ariki – chief
aruhe – fern root
Atawhenua – shadowland, Fiordland
atua – god
Awarua – Haast River, Two rivers
bureirei - tussock
hapū – subtribe
Hau-mai-tike-tike – Mt Brewster, wind blowing from heights
Hāwea – said to mean ‘doubt’ [Taylor]
Hāwea I te Raki – high princess of Hāwea
hinaki – eel traps
Hine-Makawe – Mt Castor, Granddaughter of Pohaitaka
Heretaunga – Hastings
He noti – low saddle between Oanaka and Hawea
Hotumamoe / Whatuamamoe – founding ancestor of Ngati Mamoe
Hukairoroa Tā Parekiore – Bonar Glacier
Ingarangi – England
Kahukura – Mt Alba, mokopuna of Hine-makawe
kaika / kainga – seasonal village
Kaikoura Whakatau – Ngai Tahu leader of the Kaikoura district
kakapo – night parrot
Kapakapa-tete / Kapakapa-teitei – Haast Range, trembling mountains
Kapakitua – waka the Hāwea people arrived on (or the ceremonial adze on the Ururao)
Kā Tiritiri-o-Te-Moana – the Southern Alps
kuaka - godwit
Kawarau – carrier of leaves
kereru /kukupu – New Zealand pigeon
Kirikiri Katata – grandfather of Aoraki
korero – conversation, discussion
Kuhamakaia- Glacier Dome, Son of Pohaitaka
kumara – sweet potato
Kupe – legendary Polynesian voyager said to have discovered the islands of Aotearoa
kura – school
Mahoru – Mt Tyndall, exposed to view
mākahi – adze / wedge
Makarore / Makarora – snaring birds
mana – status, significance, strength
Matakitaki / Matukituki – To admire, gaze, watch, inspect, examine, observe.
Manuhaea – The Neck
māunga / mauka – mountain
mihimihi – introductory speeches which take place at the beginning of a gathering

Ngahue – legendary contemporary of Kupe, said to have accompanied him on his voyage to New Zealand from Polynesia and meant to have been the first to kill a moa.
 Ngati Hāwea – Hāwea tribe
 Ngai Tahu Whanui – largest tribe of the South Island
 Oanaka – Place of learning
 Okuru – settlement 12 km south of Haast
 Otapara – Lake Gunn
 Otanenui – Young River, the name of an ariki
 Otitaha – Wilkin River, place of the axe
 Oturu – Olivine Range, place of Turu
 pa – fortified settlement
 pakiwaitara – ancestral myths and legends
 Papa-tū-a-nuku - Earth mother and wife of Rangi-nui. All living things originate from them.
 pepeha – introduction
 Pohaitaka – Mt Pollux, the name of an ariki
 pounamu – greenstone
 Poutini – the West Coast of the South Island
 puta noa – openness
 Punatapu – bay on Lake Wakatipu where the ‘tide’ is most pronounced
 Raki / Rangi – atua of the sky, husband of Papa-tū-a-nuku.
 Rakihiia - a prominent Ngāti Mamoe chief from the vicinity of the Maitara River
 Rakiraki - duck
 Rakiura – Land of the glowing skies
 Roukawa Moana – Cook Strait
 Takaroa – large taniwha from Cook Strait
 Taiehu – principal chief of the Hāwea people
 taniwha – water monster
 tangata whenua – people of the land
 Tapara – a Waitaha ancestor
 tapu – sacred
 Tarahaka-Whakatipu – Harris Saddle
 taua – war party
 tauparapara – incantation
 Te Awa Whakatipu – Dart river, River of Whakatipu
 tekoteko – carved three dimensional figure
 Te Maakahi o Tuterakiwhanoa – Mt Aspiring, the wedge of Tuterakiwhanoa
 Te Puna o Maru – early name for Oamaru
 Te Tai Rāwhiti - Hawke’s Bay / the east side
 Te Wai Pounamu – Place of Greenstone: the South Island
 Te Wai o Heu – drinking place / waters of Heu
 Te Waka o Aoraki – The canoe of Aoraki: ancient name for Te Wai Pounamu
 tikumu – mountain daisy
 Tiori-patea – Haast Pass, way ahead is clear
 Tititea – Aspiring, Glistening Peak
 tītī - muttonbirds
 Tū Te Rakiwhēnoa – son of Aoraki
 tohunga - priest

topuni - ancestor
tupua / tipua – demon / goblin
turahuka – abode of a demon
tūrangawaewae – a place to stand
Tura and Whiro – legendary founders of the Taranaki tribes Ngati Wairakei and Patea
Waimate – South Canterbury town named after Waimatemate: slow moving waters
Waiariki – water of the gods, Stevenson’s Arm
Waipeto – West Matukituki
Waitaki – weeping river
Waitahu – Blue River
Wairau – many waters
wāngaga – place of learning
Wānaka – said to mean ‘legend’ (Taylor)
whakapapa – family, geneology, identity
Whaturiki – Red Hills, small stone
wharekura – schoolhouse

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Appendices:

A. Connections between tangata whenua and Tititea

Tauparapara

Ko te Tititea te mauka *Mt Aspiring is the peak*

Ko Nga Tiri Tiri o Te Moana te tahuu *The Southern Alps are the roof*

Ko Hawea, Wanaka me Whakatipu- wai-maori nga roto *Hawea, Wanaka and Whakatipu-wai-maori are the water bodies*

Ko Mataau te awa *Mataau is the river*

Ko Te Kopuwai te taniwha *Kopuwai is the guardian*

Ko Araiteuru te tai *Araiteuru is the tide*

Ko Moana nui a kiwa te moana *Moana-nui-a-kiwa is the ocean*

Ko Kai Tahu whānui te iwi *Kai Tahu, Kati Mamoe and Waitaha are the people*

[*Kai Tahu Ki Otago*]

Forerunners

Not by us was the unrecorded stillness

Broken, and in their monumental dawn

The rocks, the leaves unveiled;

Those who were before us trod first the soil

And named the bays and mountains; while round them spread

The indefinable currents of the human,

That still about their chosen places

Trouble the poignant air.

- Charles Brasch

A. (i) Brief Chronology of Southern Māori Occupation

The narrative of people inhabiting this region pre-dates Māori settlement, as earlier migrations to and from the legendary Hawaiki in East Polynesia have been said to have begun within the last 1000 years when

“Polynesians were making extraordinarily widespread return voyages throughout the Central and South Pacific”[King 33]. There is also evidence that people from the islands of Polynesia would visit Te Wai Pounamu – the land of greenstone (and moa), on foraging trips of up to a year before returning home. The landscape has been personified as significant places and features were given the names and stories of the ancestors. It has been suggested that around 400AD Hui-te-Rangiora circumnavigated Te Ika a Māui and Te Waka a Aoraki before taking knowledge of pounamu and moa back to Tawhiti. Half a century later, Taiehu established the peaceful colony of what is now known as the Moriori or Rabuva’i/Rapuwai (Rabuva’i meaning to explore places).

Some say that they did not arrive on a waka, but that they were always here [van Riel]. Between 450 and 500AD Roko-i-tua ‘discovered’ Te Wai Pounamu and met the ‘local iwi’, to whom he offered kumara which had originally been sourced from South America during the Polynesian expeditions of the Pacific and beyond.

The iwi now collectively known as Kai Tahu is comprised of three major lines of whakapapa: Waitaha, Kati Mamoe and Kai Tahu.

Waitaha Period

Around 550 AD ariki Rakaihautu and Waitaha arrived in Te Wai Pounamu, landing firstly in Whakatū on the waka Uruao, and establishing the Waitaha tribe in the south. Rakaihautu is also said to be a key leader in Rarotongan traditions. They named the Mata-Au (surface current) after their landing point at the mouth of the Clutha [van Riel].

About the same time, the Hawea people, led by their principal chief Taiehu, arrived on the waka Kapakitua. Some say Kapakitua was not a waka but a ceremonial adze on the Uruao, and that the Hawea people were a sub-tribe of Waitaha. They were also said to be a strong, intelligent iwi who were selected to take part in a voyage of exploration. Around 900AD Hawea I te Raki became high princess of her people who took her name for their iwi 'Ngati Hawea' and the lake where they settled.

650AD is suggested as the time when Arai-te-uru was wrecked at Moeraki. The survivors scrambled ashore and explored the land, naming the hills and mountains to memorialize those who died and celebrate those who lived. According to South Island canoe traditions, the kumara that washed overboard became petrified on the beach and formed the famous boulders [Taonui]. On board the waka was a huge man named Kilikili Katata who carried his grandson Aoraki safely ashore on his shoulders. To Kaitahu, Aoraki is tapu; the most sacred of the ancestors, the chief from whom the iwi descend, and Tititea is his brother. Around 750-800 Whiro and Tura are said to have landed in New Zealand and found a tribe of people who lived in trees and who give birth only via Caesarian section. They established the Ngati Wairakei and Patea people.

However, as Professor David J Lowe has stated, “The latest chronology of the Wairau Bar artefacts was published in a paper in 1999, and further support for late settlement (ie late in the 13th century) was published in various key papers, including in 2000, 2003, 2004 and 2008. These papers, and another in 2010, firmly established the timing of the earliest Polynesian settlement at around 1280AD, starting the clock for the development of Māori culture...” [*Listener*].

Waitaha/Katimomoe Period (from 1575 AD)

A small group of people, descended from the matriarch Hotumamoe arrived from Te Tai Rawhiti, Hawke’s Bay. They inter-married and lived peacefully with the Waitaha in the Wairau district, hunting, fishing and gathering natural resources. As time passed, they eventually became known as Katimoemoe [van Riel].

School Journal folklore (read by my 1980s New Zealand primary school cohort) has it that the navigator Kupe discovered Aotearoa in 950AD before returning to his point of departure and oral traditions recall the story of Ngahue (or Ngake) who reached Aotearoa after studying the migration patterns of the kuaka. He is said to have discovered a huge block of pounamu at Akurua which he took back to Polynesia, inciting others to make the voyage. King’s *History of New Zealand* makes “an informed guess” at “a thirteenth century date for the initial settlement” [38].

Waitaha/Katimamoe/Kaitahu Period (from 1750 AD)

The Kaitahu iwi migrated southward from Heretaunga, Te Tai Rawhitio Te Ika a Maui over successive generations. Closely related to the Katimamoe, they crossed Raukawa Moana (the Cook Strait) in the mid to late 17th century, and began an offensive to wrest control from the Waitaha/Katimamoe alliance. “By the late 1700s, the unrest had ceased through the wise council of Rakihia and Hautapunui-o-Tu, and through tribal inter-marriage. The tribes of the South Island, Kai Tahu, Kati Mamoe and Waitaha are now so intimately intertwined they are collectively known as Kaitahu (Otago Museum display)”.

Perpetuating the ‘South Island myth’, Irvine Roxburgh’s *Wanaka and Surrounding Districts* notes “It is difficult to know how the lake was regarded by the aboriginal Maori people. Chief Huruhuru drew a sketch of the lake and its environs for Shortland, and we can be fairly certain of one thing. Huruhuru, who lived at Waimate... was thinking of the lake as part of a route that passed through on the way from the east coast to the west” [3]. However, Lake Wanaka, its contiguous landscape and waterways were of more significance than just a stopover on the way to Poutini, the West Coast. In earlier times Māori from Foveaux Strait and coastal Otago would visit the whenua ki uta throughout the warmer months of the year collecting kakapo, kaka, kereru and tui from the forest and birds’ eggs from the river valleys. Aruhe (fern root) was a staple food, and ti rakau (cabbage tree) was prized for its stems – when broken open, the stems secrete a liquid like golden syrup – and its leaves were used, along with

that of tikumu (mountain daisy) for weaving garments and sandals. At night, with torches made of bundled mānuka, swathes of eels would be caught in woven hinaki – eel traps. Sacred stones such as pounamu, silcrete, porcellanite and schist were gathered from the interior then taken back to the coast – an important factor in Kai Tahu economy. For the first 200 years of settlement, Māori would also have hunted moa along the forest edges. As Barton explains, Shortland garnered valuable information from the Ngai Tahu ariki Huruhuru when he stayed with him on the banks of the Waitaki at the kainga Te Puna a Maru for six days in the new year of 1844 [95].

Barton, Kelly and Hakopa have noted the way in which ancestral geographical knowledge was part of the “human landscape” [Kelly] passed on via oral traditions, whereby significant places had stories, kōrero and chants attached to them that were conveyed to the listeners of the next generation or later listeners from the ‘European Encounter’ [Barton]. As a listener, Shortland recorded what Huruhuru drew and spoke to him of, which was then published by Standige & Co, Lithographers [Barton 96]. The map drawn by Te Huruhuru of lakes Wanaka, Hawea and Wakatipu, which was then re-drawn by Shortland and titled ‘Map of Lakes in the Interior of Middle Island from a Drawing by Huruhuru’ demonstrates the depth of indigenous knowledge of the area, as landscape features (both geographical and symbolic), travel times and important historical and food-gathering sites are explicated in great detail, as described by Barton:

“ Map L which was copied from the map drawn by Te Huruhuru

shows a large and wide Oanaka (Lake Wanaka) which is wider at the top end than the bottom. There is a greatly enlarged Waiariki Arm which is part of Oanaka and not a separate lake. Five islands are shown on Oanaka but there are seven. Three islands in the Waiariki Arm are not shown. Five of the islands in the lake have names. Hawea (Lake Hawea) is much smaller than Oanaka – both lakes are actually about the same size. Whether Hawea was regarded as of lesser importance than Oanaka or if it was not so well known by Te Huruhuru is uncertain. Wakatipua (Lake Wakatipu) is grossly distorted and is not recognizable and again may be due to either a lack of importance or lack of knowledge on Te Huruhuru's part. The Matau and Kawarau Rivers which have their sources at the three lakes appear on the map. Rapids are shown on the Matau which is a very swift river. The hachuring representing mountains is certainly by Edward Shortland or by Standige & Co., Lithographers. The published map is two stages later than the original. Te Huruhuru would probably have shown mountains by some means on his map and has given the names for some of the mountain ranges. The three lakes are surrounded by mountain ranges.

Pakihi is the word for the open grass land which exists in the form of tussock covered land in the area between Oanaka, Hawea and Wakatipua. *He noti* refers to the low saddle between Oanaka and Hawea (The Neck – Manuhaiha) and a route from these lakes up the Orau (place of leaves) (Cardrona) River and over a saddle in the Crown Range to Wakatipua. Several place names appear on the map including the one of Te Raki's abode...

As the ancestors' names became so interconnected with placenames it is often uncertain which was named after which, as demonstrated in

Barton's recount of Taki-karara:

Two further aspects of Te Huruhuru's map need consideration. These are 'Turahuka (abode of a Tipua)' and 'Here is a floating Id. Shifting its position with the wind.' A tupua or tipua is defined as a "goblin, demon, object of terror..." It is also similar to a taniwha which is defined as "a fabulous monster supposed to reside in deep water". Often the tupa, tipua and taniwha were said to have taken the form of a large lizard... James Herries Beattie has recorded a myth in connection with the tipua mentioned on Te Huruhuru's map. He states:

A man named Taki-karara is also associated with both lakes. He was at Hawea and was standing on a clump of vegetation on a

point of land fishing, when all of a sudden the point floated away with a noise like a squattering bird, and under the influence of a stiff breeze 'put out to sea' bearing a startled and disturbed Maori. Taki eventually got off his floating home, and is said to have abandoned the locality as being too uncanny for him. Unknown to him a demon was under it, a big taniwha known as Takaroa; its usual habitat was Foveaux Strait, but it had come up the Clutha River to inspect the interior of the country. While in Lake Hawea it got under the point that Taki stood on, separated that bit of land from the shore, set it adrift, and then returned to its more natural element, the salt water. The drifting mass of soil and vegetation was Te Taumanu o Taki-karara (the fishing place of Taki), and down on the sea coast the white man (probably John Wallis Barnicoat and Frederick Tuckett) was told about this freak of Nature... while on the map that Huruhuru drew for Dr Shortland in January, 1844 there is written in the outline of Hawea, 'Here is a floating island shifting its position with the wind'. On the east side of the same lake is written "Turahuka (abode of Tipua)". I was told nothing about this tipua, but the man Taki-karara shifted to Wanaka, where an island in the lake is named after him, or perhaps he was named after the island. The name seems to denote the squeaky little voice of a lizard, and near it is another island which Huruhuru marked as Te Pae-karara (the lizard's perch). Originally the karara, or ngarara, was a large reptile in far Hawaiki, but in southern New Zealand it was adopted as a general name for all lizards" [98]. . . .

The dominant settler imagery in early 'Central Otago' poems echoed Brasch's vision of an "unrecorded stillness" to sideline the rich history of pre-European habitation and suggest there were never permanent settlements in the area. Although this sentiment became part of popular myth about the beginnings of Wanaka as a settlement, oral traditions along with extensive placenames within the region and artefacts found around the lake suggest otherwise. The area was well-known and traversed; the land was navigated, narrated and remembered in terms of lifelines which were recited and passed down through the generations at the kura such as the one at Takikarara. Later these places of significance were mapped and marked for their importance to tangata whenua during

a meeting in Christchurch of ariki and kaumatua as part of Beattie's major field study for the Otago Museum Ethnological Project in 1920. The density of names around the Wanaka and Hawea area are - as Anderson, Quinn, Kelly, van Riel, Harker and others have contended - testament to the cultural, economic, spiritual and ethnological significance of the landscape.

B – Mt Aspiring National Park Vital Statistics

Area

355,543ha.

(192,876ha east of the main divide;

162,676ha west of main divide)

Dimensions

140km long, 40 km wide (max)

Highest Peaks

Mt Aspiring 3027m

Mt Earnslaw 2819m

Pope's Nose 2671m

Sir William Peak 2612m

Rob Roy 2606m

Mt Avalanche 2590m

Mt Edward 2586m

Mt Head 2579m

Mt Maoriri 2568m

Leary Peak 2566m

Mt Pollux 2542m

Mt Castor 2523m

Mt Maori 2507m

Major Glaciers

Bonar

Volta

Therma

Dart

Olivine Ice Plateau

Major Rivers

Makarora

Wilkin

Matukituki

Rees

Dart

Haast

Okuru

Turnbull

Waiatoto

Arawhata

Cascade

Pyke

Mt Aeolous, Greek God of the Wind; also known as oblong peak.

Andy Glacier – Andy Williamson, 1860s gold prospector in Arawhata

Beans Burn – Suburb of Kilmarnock, birthplace in Scotland of James McKerrow

Birley Glacier – Harry Birley, of Glenorchy, first to climb Mt Earnslaw.

Bonar Glacier – James A. Bonar, Westland Provincial Superintendent.

Mt Brewster – Sir David Brewster (scientist).

Burke River – Burke and Wills, ill-fated explorers of Australian desert.

Cascade Saddle – Names for waterfall by Major Bernard Head.

C – Mt Aspiring National Park Timeline

- Tradition tells of an exploratory journey by Rakaihautu, commander of the Uruao canoe who dug the southern lakes and decorated the land with his ko.
- c. 550** The Hawea people, led by their principal chief Taiehu, arrive in the region.
- 1250 – 1350** The Dart River kaika is occupied by transalpine parties and seasonal visitors.
- 1500 – 1650** Carbon dating indicates a return of settlement to the Dart River kaika.
- 1600s** Final extinction of all 11 species of moa.
- 1770** Joseph Banks provides the first written observations of the area, from the sea.
- 1836** Te Puoho and his warriors cross the mountains of the park from east to west in a raiding party on the southern peoples and their resources.
- 1853** Guided by Reko, Nathaniel Chalmers travels from Southland to become the first Pakeha to see Lakes Wakatipu, Wanaka and Hawea and the Alps beyond them. At Hawea, Chalmers turns back, too sick and exhausted to continue. Reko is given a three legged iron pot for his troubles.
- 1857** Mt Aspiring is given its European name when surveyor John Turnbull Thompson arrives to take his bearings from Mt Grandview.
- 1861** An Act is passed to “encourage the importation of those animals and birds, not native to New Zealand, which would contribute to the pleasure and profit of the inhabitants (Yerek, 18).”
- Gold is discovered in Gabriel’s Gully, near Lawrence.
- 1862** John Goldie explores the Matukituki valley with James Hector.
- 1863** James McKerrow completes his three year survey of the mapping started by Thompson.
- James Hector, accompanied by J.W Sullivan and I. Rayer

cross Hector Col from the Matukituki Valley to the Waipara – the first recorded alpine crossing by Pakea in the region.

A.J. Barrington begins a series of epic journeys prospecting westwards from his Queenstown base.

Julius von Haast leads a group over the Haast past to the coast from Wanaka. The journey takes them 30 days. Whether or not he was the first white person to do so is debated by historians who argue it could also have been Charles Cameron or John Holland Baker.

- 1864** Explorers led by Barrington make their way up the Olivine Ice Plateau.
- William O’Leary, immortalized as Arawhata Bill, is born in Lawrence.
- 1865** A hapu of 30 men, women and children, originally from Moeraki, are described as living at Makarora, living off eels and fern root (Peat, 81).
- 1870** Richard and Mary Bryant establish a hotel at Kinloch, beginning tourist operations into the Routeburn.
- 1871** The first red deer are released at Morven Hills Station, which would become the nucleus of the Hawea herd that spread to the Hunter, Makarora and Haast valleys.
- 1876** Brown trout are introduced into Lake Wanaka.
- 1880** The bridle track between Otago and the West Coast is completed.
- 1891** Charlie Douglas makes an epic traverse of the northern Olivine Range, and travels up the Waiatoto River.
- 1906 – 7** Maude Moreland travels through South Westland over the Haast Pass to Mt Aspiring.
- 1908** Ebenezer Teichelmann, joined by Alec Graham and Dennis Nolan makes a failed attempt to summit Mt Aspiring.
- 1909** Graham, accompanied by Bernard Head and Jack Clarke, reach the peak from the western side.
- 1913** Dunedinites Jack Murrell, Harold Hodgkinson and George Robertson, along with the Englishman Samuel Turner, achieve the second ascent of the mountain.

Lilian Familton, with guide Frank Alack and station manager Jack Aspinall, becomes the first Pakeha woman to climb Mt Aspiring.

- 1920** Herries Beattie publishes information on the Southern Maori, as told to him by Kai Tahu and Kati Mamoe kaumatua.
- 1929** Trophy deerheads obtained by 14 deer stalkers in the region are ferried across Lake Wanaka.
- 1930** The Otago section of the NZ Alpine Club is formed.
- 1933** The first air drop of supplies to climbers is bungled, with the contents of the failed parachute splattered over Kitchener Glacier.
- 1934** First ascent of Oblong (now Mt Aelous).
- 1935** A flurry of first ascents including Eros, Maori, Rob Roy, Avalanche and Stargazer.
- 1937** First ascent of Mt Castor.
- 1934 - 38** Explorer Jack Holloway visits the area, adding much detail (and many evocative names) to the maps of the area in his summer expeditions.
- 1939** First ascent of Mt Alba.
- 1951** Paul Powell reports the first crossing of Moncrieff Col.
- 1954** A “sea of moving antlers” is reported on Daley’s Flat.
- 1960** The motor road from Wanaka to Haast is opened.
- 1961** A party of climbers counts up to 300 deer on the flats and shrublands of the Siberia Valley
- 1963** Wattie Cameron, Tim Wallis and Robert Wilson hire a Bell 47 helicopter to recover wild venison from McGill’s Basin in the Matukituki Valley.
- 1964** Mt Aspiring National Park is created.
- 1970** 88 permanent photo points are set up to test the impact of deer grazing in the National Park.

Peter Childs begins a six year study of birdlife in the Park.

- 1975** Scientific study of the Dart glacier begins.
- 1978** Major landslide at Gloomy Gorge: an estimated 1 million tonnes of rock falls off the West Matukituki Peak of Rob Roy.
- 1980** A survey in the upper Dart valley turns up several new mountain weta species and new cave weta.
- 1981** Part of a steep face below Stargazer peak falls off the western side of Mt Aspiring.
- 1990** The red hills are added to Mt Aspiring National Park and the park becomes part of Te Wahi Pounamu – a World Heritage “superpark.”
- 1993** Recreational climbers discover human remains and a Māori cloak in the cleft in a rock at Hospital Flat.
- 1994** The storm of the century hits Mt Aspiring National Park, on January 6 – 8.
- 2005** Alex Winter-Billington begins her study of the hydrological system and surface motion of Brewster Glacier.
- 2012** Top of the Lake filmed at Glenorchy and Queenstown
- 2013** Top of the Lake debuts at Sundance Film Festival

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Foreword

The first poem of Baxter's I encountered and subsequently learnt by heart was 'A Christmas Wish', which appeared in the weighty moss-green volume of *James K. Baxter – A Biography* I had issued from the school library. The substitution of the European Christmas rites and traditions for a more 'Kiwi' holiday experience appealed to my Form One self: 'Not mistletoe or holly / to ward off melancholy / Carols in the chapel / Plum pudding and crab apple / but to camp for a week / by a mountain creek / with new-taken trout / and tinned pears to eat.' Here is the deliberate New Zealandness found in much of Baxter and the Caxton poets' work. The poem had been written as a sort of *Season's Greetings* note to some of his friends and the book included an image of the handwritten poem and the card it was inscribed in. For me this was a first awakening into the currency of poetry, its value as firstly something which could reflect the collective experience of a group and then be written as a tribute to those who had shared the experience, and secondly as a piece of commentary on life. With this in mind, I've collected the scraps of my reflections about the Mt Aspiring / Lakes District region, having explored some of the area and lived here for much of my childhood and now returning to notice both abrupt changes and a deep stillness in what Graeme Sydney called this "timeless land¹".

The scraps have morphed and developed into the *Aspiring Daybook* that follows. The fictionalised diary also takes another cue from Baxter. He always dated his poems, keeping a series of diaries and Manuscript Books from the age of eleven, when he inscribed

Book 1

Original Poetry

J.K. Baxter

Born 29th June 1926

Will die when he and Nature sees fit

in his first notebook (*Collected Poems xxv*). The quinti-Central mystic poet described his writing process to his friend and biographer J.E. Weir as a sort of rough copy to good copy method, whereby all completed poems were included in his final Manuscript publication, which usually reflected a year of work:

“Normally I take notes on pieces of paper, later destroy these drafts and copy the final version into a Manuscript Book. But from time to time, when I am dissatisfied with a final version, I may make further drafts, usually on paper, but occasionally in the Manuscript Book. Often I do make some minor changes to the poem in the Manuscript Book – a word or two here and there. It takes me roughly a year to fill a Manuscript Book. I include everything I bring to any kind of final shape, even if I am aware that the poem is entirely a failure” [*Collected Poems xxv*].

So the collated text which forms my *Aspiring Daybook* reflects a year of writing, as well as a year in the life of the first person narrator “give or take an afternoon” [Dessa] as she grapples with her father’s terminal illness, unfinished business with her first love as well as a new crush and what being an aspirant writer in this place means to her.

Aspiring Daybook

- Elsie Winslow

*O immobile crag, round which winds swing,
stake out a place for the New Zealander.*

- David Eggleton, Descent from Mt Aspiring

*nothing happens yet
Between the bought cribs and the lake outlet
To ease in us what lives, groans, yet turns to rock.*

- James K. Baxter, At Wanaka



Kohitatea / January

Fruits are now ripe, and man eats of the new food of the season.

1 Sunday

Measure the mountains

Rainfall Snowfall Windchill Sunshine hours

Distances. Those who go beyond

patrolled boundary

do so at own risk. Always

write your intentions. If

A phone call in the middle of the night. Not a good sign. Out of context, the wrong time, too early or too late. Malevolent omen. So often the sound of bad news.

I'm on a plane, going forward in time, back into the past. My brother phoned.

Said they'd thought I'd be home for Christmas and when it became apparent I

wasn't, Dad got worse. Only now, it's not just his depression, it's something else.

Staring at the Skype screen I heard the hiss in *diagnosis, prognosis*. The crackle in the gaps

Everyone is asleep. I'm watching movie after movie. A swim in the rooftop pool

at Changi did nothing to ease the tightness in my shoulders, rusty nail taste in my

mouth. Nor did an overpriced Tanqueray. I called the house, heard my brother's

voice catch on certain words: *chemotherapy, hereditary*.

We've been traversing the blackness for hours. Waiting for that golden line to

creep across the crack at the base of the window shade. Today is New Year's Day,

and it's getting erased

Could use some of those strong sleeping pills Nabokov described as "... only for

great sleepless artists who had to die for a few hours in order to live for

centuries.” Something to knock me out until I get there. To take so I wake up to find this is all over. I’m indulging in the childish need to shut my eyes against the mess that affects most of us in the end. One in five will be touched by cancer, will feel the hand of death tap us on the shoulder. I wish

to be absent, not here, away. I guess it was too often that way.

That’s what a plane trip is – absence. Is nothingness infinite? An air-controlled cabin can be soothing. Although we go from Point A to B, we’re also Nowhere: navigating the inbetween, Now here. Fort/da: gone/there. Cloudlayer stretches for ages, and we’re in stasis

2 Monday

Now Here

The biggest sellers at airports are sunglasses, perfume and booze. People travel hopefully, in love with the escape. Under the snowglow of fluorescent lights at Sydney airport, I trawl Duty Free. It’s always the right time for a Bloody Mary. From a faux leather booth, I stir Worcester sauce into the sanguine drink, watch passengers flit within this holding pen. Buying things buying things, biding time between flights. Our lives are punctuated by a series of greetings and goodbyes. I’m not ready for this return. You’re meant to come back with a fabulous career, a ring on your finger - at least a great new body or hair. Having none of the above, I’m cloaked in failure. I finish the glass. Order another.

4 Wednesday

I had boxes and boxes, all the stuff people at home had told me I should need. I saw a sign in the station saying Consigne. I put them all under it and went to Ibiza with nothing. I watched the people struggling with their luggage and felt marvellous. I missed it later. I thought the word meant what it said and that I had consigned my luggage to Spain. Life is full of surprises. Auden said poetry couldn't make things happen. I don't agree.

- Janet Frame, Interview with *Harpers & Queen*, London March 1985

The lake today: the blue of a bruise.

Sam collected me from Queenstown. Didn't need to tell me I looked like shit – cadaverous: puffy eyes, sticky skin, needed a shower. He looked grey, older. A man I didn't know anymore. Not my brother. My suitcase has gone missing so I filled out a form at the sporadically attended Lost Luggage counter. All my other stuff is getting shipped back and will take months to get here. Leaving always seems sudden, arrival happens slowly

All that was left

And then all that was left was the leaving.
I'd delayed it for days, years really. You
came to collect me. All sympathy-shirted,
piano-key teeth. Sun in our eyes in that sad traffic jam,
you knew to offer a cigarette. I trained my glance
on the fading snowline; you kept your eyes on
the road. Each couldn't look at the Other -

Stopped on the Italian side for pizza, cafe latte,
Chianti, Bloody Marys. You handed me a triptych
of scripted questions: How long have you known?
What's the prognosis? Are you close? Like
this was a talkshow, you were the host. Me,
the nervous guest, ill-prepared for the jokes. I lost
my napkin to the Aostan wind: watched it get swept
away to flirt like butterfly wings with the spear-like spires
of the quiet afternoon.

6 Friday

The lake today: gin-clear.

Met with Paul Gomez who explained Dad has Stage IV Bronchoalveolar carcinoma - non smokers' lung cancer. There aren't any more stages. He has six months to a year.

10 Tuesday

The lake today: abysmal.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Winslow Family](#)

To: paul.gomez@southerndhb.govt.nz

Cc: [Winslow SAM \(Work\)](#)

Sent: Tuesday, January 10, 2012 8:29 AM

Subject: Simon's Treatment

Hi Paul

Thank you very much for your time and care last Friday. We really appreciated having someone explain all this in plain English, and I'm glad you and I have the Otago Uni connection having both studied Psyc 111 together.

Trust Dad to get a rare form of cancer. He's nothing if not original. Which is little consolation for an invasive terminal cancer prevalent in Asian women!

Dad, after some consideration, would like to commence treatment with the Moderate Strength Chemo - Carboplatin, Gemcitabine option.

If it could be arranged for some time this week in Dunedin or Dunstan, that would be great, as we would like to go to the Matukituki valley late next month for a family fishing trip.

By then, hopefully Dad would have had two cycles of treatment so it's something he can look forward to.

Some questions: if this first option doesn't effect the tumour - and the target drugs aren't an option either - would the Pemetrexed still be an option?

Or are we being unrealistic?

What are your thoughts on alternative treatments?

Better for Dad to have quality of life, for as long as possible.

All this makes us feel very sad, as we have lots of things still to do together.

We do appreciate your ongoing support and advice.

Regards

Elsie & Sam

11 Wednesday

The lake today: broken

----- Original Message -----

From: Paul Gomez

To: [Winslow Family](#)

Cc: [Joan Tui](#)

Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2012 5:03 PM

Subject: RE: Simon's Treatment

Hi Elsie and Sam – we have arranged for an appointment with me at 3:30pm on Jan 16 followed by an education session with Joan Tui at 4pm. Chemo will start at 11:30am on the 17th then the day 8 gemcitabine can be given at Dunstan on Jan 24. Simon will have 2 cycles completed by 24th February.

Pemetrexed later will still be a possibility and in fact is less toxic than the other drugs.

I can also show you some literature on holistic healing that some of my patients speak quite highly of.

Regards,
Paul.

Paul Gomez,
Medical Oncologist,
Dunedin Hospital,
Private Bag 1291, Dunedin,
Associate Dean and Director,
Early Learning in Medicine,
University of Otago Medical School,
PO Box 931, Dunedin

14 Saturday

Aspiring Contributing School, Wanaka

14 January 2012 School profile

U6, Decile 10. Readvertised. This is a **fixed-term, full-time relieving teaching** position opening a Year 7 class. The position commences Monday 23 January and concludes 18 December. We are seeking an enthusiastic, reflective professional with a passion for teaching. Literacy knowledge and experience along with the ability to build and maintain effective relationships with students and their families essential.

Applications close 9am, Friday 20 January. Please send your CV and the names of 3 current referees to Luke Miller, Principal, 45 Plantation Rd, Wanaka. Electronic applications to l.miller@aspiring.school.nz

15 Sunday

It's so quiet here, it's disturbing.

Meniscus

Surface tension & the comforting science of water's skin



Sloshed

The blue room again. Everyone here has fallen
out of love. The first
nurses a Matisse bruise. Watch it smart
as sunlight catches and shatters on his
twelfth rib. He tells you this:

A glass
half- filled with red
wine will float freely
in the bath.

Toss

Sterile lake, the operating table in a blue
hospital room. We stare, laugh at the way we seem
on its gunmetal surface. You can't see our bruises.
Hold on to each other's ribs,
Let's get a photo of this!
We look good together,
no?

17 Tuesday

We're all at sea.
Dad's first treatment.

Nobody likes to watch the needle go in. *You'll just feel a scratch* says the
magician. Now lie back and let the poison seep in. This is what they call burning
down the house to get the mouse in the basement.

18 Wednesday

Hows yr Dad doing? Srry - Impossible to convey tone in txt.
He's ok.
Want 2 meet up? I'm off the ice 4 a cple wks.

We lie around in hospitals. Time measured in injections and pills.

19 Thursday

“as blue as blue can be” – Brian Turner

Everybody knows.

21 Saturday

The lake today: *written on*



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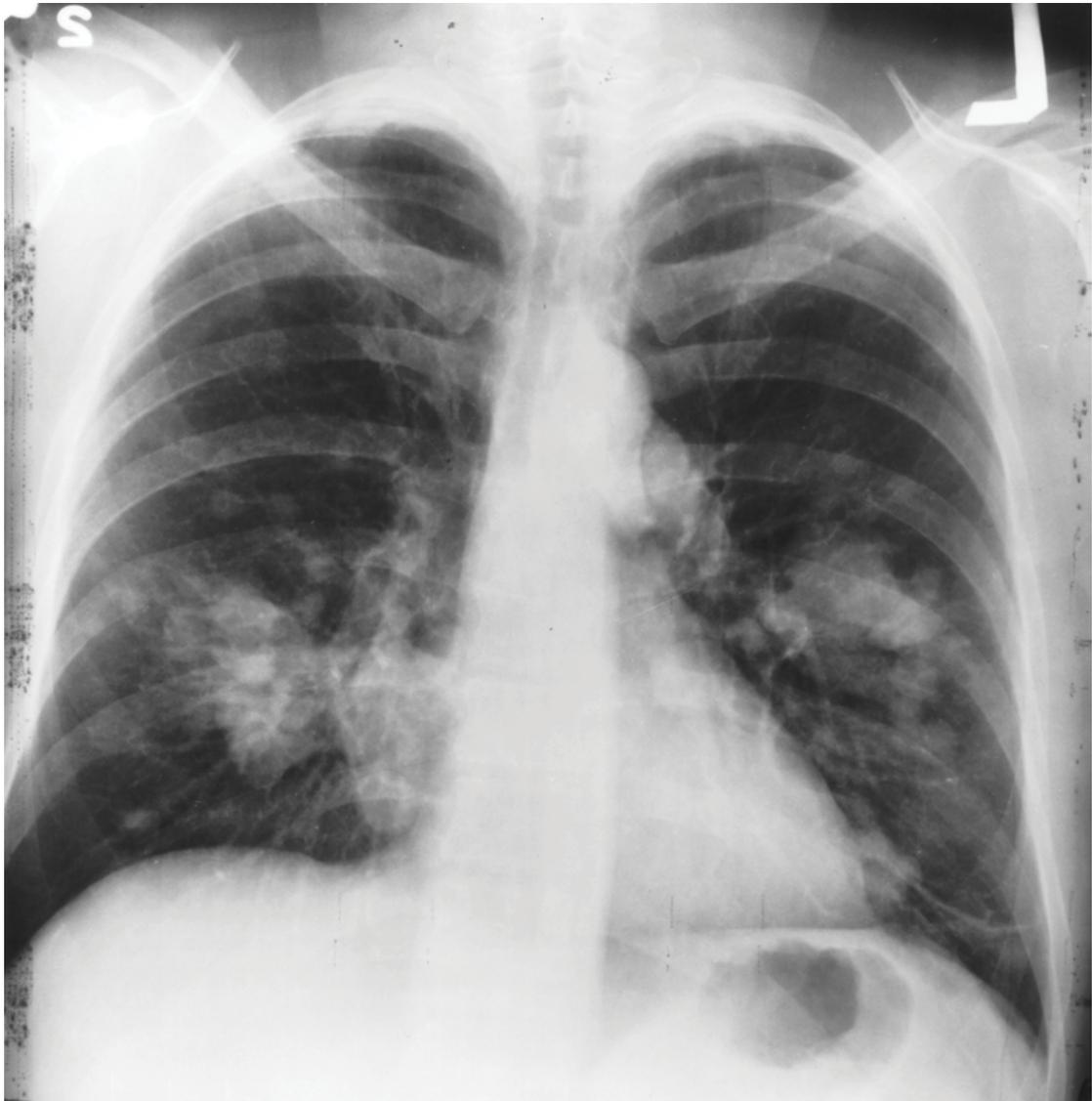
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23 Monday



Lung cancer looks like:

lattice / lacework / lettuce / Dakron /

lichen / spores / mushroom

cloud / avalanche

Atom bomb.

24 Tuesday

The
lake

today:
damage
d



26 Thursday

The lake today: an apparition

QUESTION

My father is on chemotherapy consisting of carboplatin and gemcitabine and has ordered a Chinese herbal product online.

The Chinese ingredients are: glossy ganoderma, poria cocos, matrimony vine, Gorgon fruit, Chinese date, maythorn, radix codonopsis pilosulae, cordyceps sinensis, placenta hominis, liquorice, bezoar, rosehip.

ANSWER

The main factors that could potentially affect chemotherapy are: antioxidant, anticoagulant or procoagulant, immunosuppressive or immunomodulating or hormonal properties, safety issues and drug interactions.

The Natural Medicines Database lists most of the products in this medicine but doesn't report any potential interaction between these and chemotherapy. I have copied the information it gives on mechanism of action (see under Search below) to show that there are potentially some effects that could interfere with the chemotherapy e.g. antioxidant, immunostimulant, but there is no clinical evidence that they have actually had an adverse effect on the outcome of chemotherapy.

Carboplatin is listed in one reference as a drug that relies on reactive oxygen species for activity so could potentially be affected by antioxidants.

I can find no evidence of any direct interaction or safety issue.

SEARCH

27 Friday

An intense few days at my new job at the school. A year Long Term Relief position suits me considering the circumstances. I've been given a contact for Joel Kovak, the local mental health expert, for a chat. I don't need that. Dad has another treatment next week and I have to take him to Dunedin, because Sam's too busy trying to keep the business afloat. Haven't been there since Varsity days. The Chemo Day Unit is just across the road from where we watched movies in the MEDRED lecture theatre for Film 101. I used to meet Frank there on Fridays and we'd sit stoned on the couches at the back, engrossed in *Breathless*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Heimat*. We'd discuss the films after, downstairs at Metro. Its beatnik basement bar, appropriately dark, encroached on what I thought of as Dunedin's catacombs – crumbling brick and concrete piles. An ancient storage space from back in the days when the Edinburgh of the South was New Zealand's first capital and the first Johnny Winslow – Dad's great grandfather - stepped ashore with just a crown in his pocket and lofty aspirations.

28 Saturday

Socks dance like flamenco couples against the litmus blue backdrop of the Mediterranean sea.

He always manages to infiltrate my thoughts during moments of solitude. As practical and reliable as his much-loved Leatherman, Frank recommends pegging socks from the toe to allow for faster drippage. *It's science*, he says. *Gravity*. In Ibiza's afternoon heat and island breeze, my laundry dried in half an hour. I got a job there one summer, then went back for four more. Luxury

conciierge was straightforward - bleaching bathrooms, babysitting and lying on the beach - a total contrast to teaching in inner-city London. When I arrived, my watch stopped. I never got it fixed. The island is known as one of the most magnetic places on earth.

*

Washing took forever to dry in Dunedin. It rained constantly that autumn I was on section teaching. The season I met Frank. Sometimes our socks hung out on the line for days, his sodden Goldtops like a row of wet kittens, my black tights like pairs of dead eels hanging limp at the edge of the garden. I liked to pin our underwear next to each other, his AUTHENTIC boxer shorts and my Elle Macphersons joined neatly on the line, a brace of colourful, deliberate pairings.

Weary after a late night marking, I'd hurry across a muddy front lawn that never saw the sun, duck under the washing wire and let myself in. I'd always gasp internally at the thrill of having the key to my new boyfriend's flat. I felt so grown up, with a cluster of keys and an A4 sized handbag, *just like a real teacher*. I'd clamber into the kingsize bed Frank made out of beer crates, he'd pull me close and complain about the coldness of my toes.

He'd tease me about not listening properly when he spoke about glaciology and called me Elsie Elsewhere. I hassled him about Being Frank. Somehow my brother found out about it and the nickname has morphed into an accusation marring the last nine years. *When are you coming home? You're always Elsewhere. Elsie Elsewhere*. But Frank never asked me to come back. He was meant to meet

me in Chamonix, so he could study the Mer de Glace - one of the most butchered glaciers in existence - but he cancelled his ticket.

With ablation, calving and sublimation rumbling through my dreams, I thought I'd be content in those rock-strong arms for ages. On Sundays, he'd bring me coffee -sweet and blonde- the Listener and the papers. He disagreed with toast in bed because he couldn't stand the crumbs. I'd be coaxed out for Vogels and Marmite at his kitchen table and never got enough sleep when I stayed there. Then like my classmates I signed up with a recruitment agency in London and applied for French and UK working holiday visas. Frank moved to Piha to surf for the summer.

I dosed on the couch at a mate's Hackney flat and asked him to meet me in the Alps for Christmas. We Skyped and chatted on Facebook. But it's hard to say what you mean on those mediums, when you're so far away and the time is always wrong: the other person is usually half asleep, half drunk or in a hurry. We were young and had separate Five Year Plans. I think he met someone up North.

High places like that rooftop always remind me of Frank. I'll be barefoot, alone, staring at the horizon and I'll start thinking of him. Shaking out singlets and headscarves, I'll dismiss gnawing thoughts about his studied stubble and sensible advice about the administrative aspects of life like retirement schemes and organising my i-pod by genre. Electroclash, glitch-pop, indie-rock... everything could be neatly sorted into types, categorised. That's how he feels about life. For him, it was all easily sorted. JIC - Just In Case, NBD - No Big Deal.

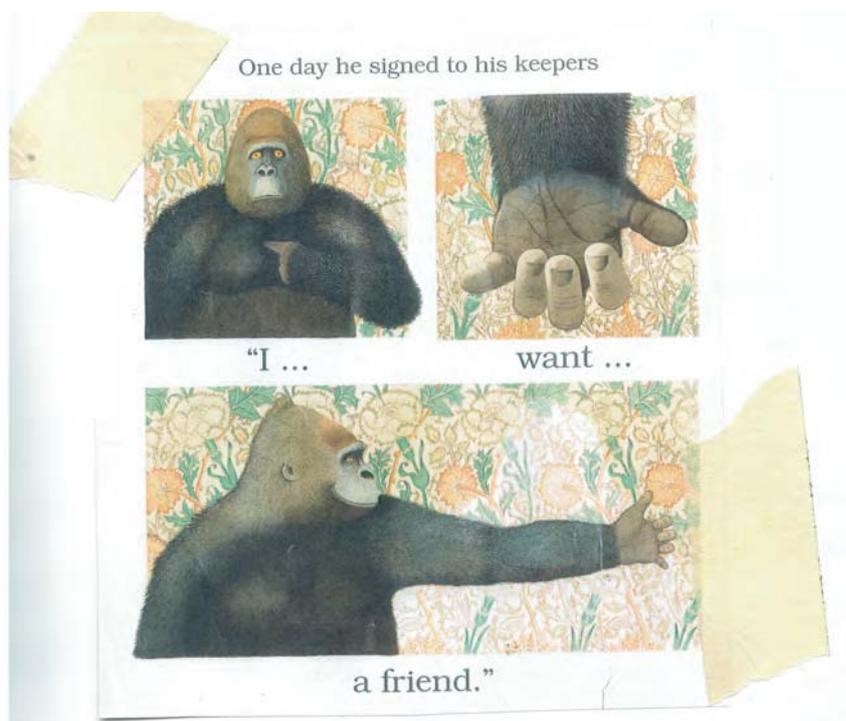
I hear Frank is assessing the affects of climate change on the Bonar glacier. He'll be out doing fieldwork in the height of summer, not phased by the weather. Once he's worn all the flannel workshirts and thermals in his pack, he'll wash them in the Matukituki.

*

I just clicked *Search Friends* for Frank Martene. There is only one - he lives in Wanaka, and works for Geotech. His Relationship Status says It's Complicated.

29 Sunday

In whanau this morning Felix signed a whole sentence: I ... want ... phone. We're teaching his classmates to sign so we all rushed around having fake phone conversations in the air. It was mad, and perfect.



Poutū-te-rangi / February
The crops are now harvested



Up in the clear air and bright light – the places we rarely go: our aspirations

Reach for the Sky, Southern Alps. Oil on canvas
- Ian Hamlin

1 Wednesday

The lake today: a shiny blade

The music teacher introduced me to Joel. His office is called UrSpace – where kids (and staff) can go to talk. He said *Hey what's up?* I thought where do I start?

2 Thursday

The lake today: *ribbed for your pleasure*

The seasons themselves were marked. Harsh winters with heavy frosts and snow on the hills; the spring floods, hills patched with melting snow; the summer, hot, dusty and with prevailing northerlies; and then the autumn turning the land golden brown (Angus 10).

Here, the seasons are pronounced. Summers are long and hot, punctuated by dusty, unsettled and unsettling days with a persistent Fohn wind setting many on edge like it does in Canterbury and Chamonix. In winter, water pipes freeze,

frosted corners of the lawn never thaw and conversations revolve around the probability of snow and the perplexing Inversion layer. Spring and autumn are shoulder seasons, the 'Interseason' when retailers get worried about sales and there is a hunkering down in preparation for the more lucrative months.

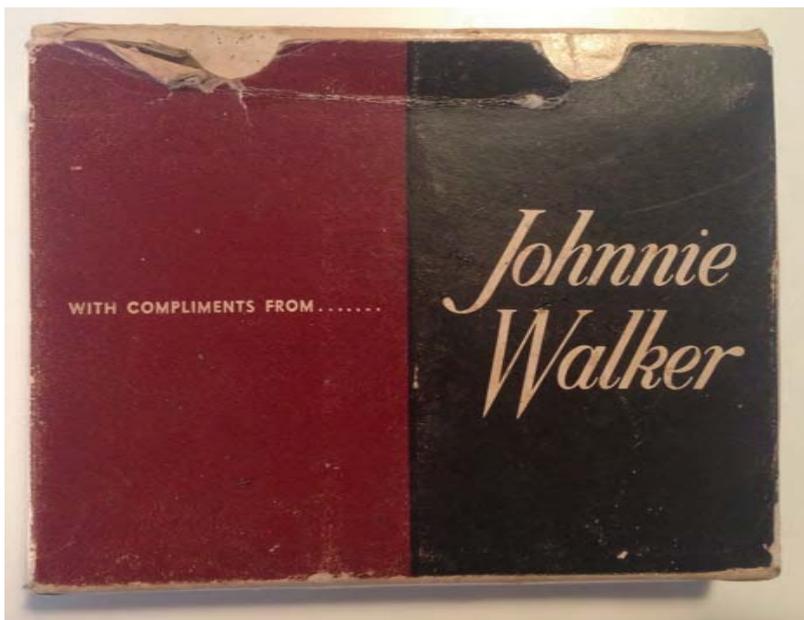
Everyone else goes to Noosa.

3 Friday

The lake today: battered

4 Saturday

The lake today: blistered



I used to think my grandfather was Johnny Walker. When I was a kid we had Johnnie Walker posters in wooden frames all around the house, and John Winslow died before I had a chance to get to know him, so I presumed they were the same person. He was an alcoholic, apparently – with the paradoxical qualities of a sharp tongue and a soft heart. He used to tap the glass on the weather vane,

my brother says, willing it to change. He helped to build Aspiring Hut before he served in the Home Guard; wasn't sent to Egypt because he had flat feet.

We drove to the end of the road then walked to Raspberry Hut.

Scattering the ashes

Put your hand inside the box. This is just grit and dust, like pumice. *On a horse to the stars travel well my friend.* At the end of the road, we hold and hold and hold and then

it looks like snow.



An early photograph of Baxter as scriptwriter for Brake's Aspiring project

Photo: Gibson Group

5 Sunday

The lake today: hallucinatory

Rippon Festival



Let's hang out here, by the speakers.

I like your socks, I like your sneakers.

Kept seeing Joel Kovak. In the line for drinks, on the dancefloor. He was wearing a visor he'd made out of flax. He was with a group of female friends. He kept waving, smiling his broad piano-key grin and asking me join them. I said I was happy to hang out with my brother, had to stick near the sound desk, our meeting point.

But I enjoyed dancing *near* him. I noticed he has a tattoo on his calf, but I couldn't make it out. It was half covered by a white tennis sock, which he kept pulling up. He bought me a beer, said Happy Waitangi Day. I wondered aloud if that was an oxymoron considering Aotearoa's colonial past, but he just laughed. I felt like a prat, trying to be smart.

I lost Sam for a long time, but didn't mind. It felt right to be alone, on the outside, the observer. Dancing in my own space, on sloping grass that soon turned to dust, clutching a plastic cup. One of many in a Corybantic frenzy. Hands in the air. Tanned wrists lassoed with luminous bracelet. Guys with T-shirts tucked into their shorts. A thousand pairs of feet stomped to distinctive Pacific beats *dub*

roots reggae. People kept losing their jandals. When it got dark there was a dj. People put on hoodies and jackets, apart from the drugfucked who happily shivered in next to nothing. Electroclash stretched across the lake, bounced off the blackening mountains; *fort/da* there and back. Someone said *I'm here* and I thought it was Sam but I turned around and it was Joel, his voice a reassuring bassline, *if you ever need to talk*.

My jandal had broken so he fixed it with a bread tag. *You need extra support*.



6 Monday
Waitangi Day

The lake today: corrugated iron

Dad had never heard of a Bucket List. But now he gets it. After his treatment, if he gets the all-clear, he wants to take us to Bali, to Ubud: the 'last paradise', where

he met our mother. Sam reckons it's going to be hard for him to get travel insurance.

12 Sunday

The lake today: *douce bleue*

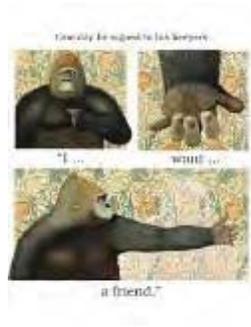


14 Tuesday

Anti Valentine's Poetry Slam

Love is ...
A hill start
in a Kingswood
on a green light
with a fucked clutch.

20 Monday



The lake today: oily

Felix became agitated, refusing to do PE. Preferred to sit and read Little Beauty with me. It's about a gorilla who learns sign language and is given a pet kitten.

22 Wednesday

Dark Guitar

I wake up thinking of Dunedin

Nobility and dilapidation, spires

snow, literati. Proximity of hill

and sea. Hospital and university, dual

kingdoms: Speight's and Cadbury's

Hangovers versus higher learning. Spirals

on vinyl, the turntable of memory.

And what I would do for a feijoa wine

at Arc Café. An afternoon at Murderer's

beach. A picnic among swooping

seagulls, daisies. A bottle of red clad

in brown paper bag

& a flat-warming in North East Valley.

24 Friday

LAKE WANAKA BURIAL CLOAK PROVIDES CLUES TO MAORI HISTORY

Scientists believe the burial cloak found last year by recreational rock climbers at Glendhu Bay, Wanaka holds important clues into early Māori settlement of the area. Glaciologist Frank Martene discovered the human remains wrapped in the cloak in a cleft in the rock whilst climbing with friends near Hospital Flat in December 2011. Police uplifted the remains from the rock shelter and sent them to the Pathology Department at the University of Otago. A cultural adviser for Kai Tahu, Peter Knox, states that the most significant find relating to the skeletal remains was the cloak, which was made of numerous rare and extinct bird skins. Many of these skins and feathers are yet to be identified as DNA testing and analysis is currently being carried out. Estimated to be between 350-400 years old, the cloak has been preserved due to its protection from the elements within an airy and dry environment. Councillor Philip Trevathan is enthusiastic about the find, stating: "This is a significant artifact that will enable us to have a richer understanding of the first people of this region."

Wanaka Witness, 24 February 2012

We drove back along the dead end dirt road, past Treble Cone, Nehenehe, along the river bank, to the start of the track. Dad wanted to go to Aspiring Hut, to see John Winslow's name carved into the old wooden table. He'd forgotten we tried to go there only a few weeks ago. His brain's gone to mush with the drugs.

25 Saturday

Seeking eyes grow blind

Our father, who art sick and tired

Caught four. Three brown and a rainbow. Sam hooked them all, let Dad and I play one each. After I reeled my fish in and bashed its head with a rock, I gutted it then watched from the opposite bank as Sam, like an actor, mimed all the actions he'd been taught by our father. Tie the fly. Whip the rod over your shoulder, release the line in a loop behind you, cast. Let the reel sing, watch the nymph drift with the rustflake beech leaves like on the meniscus. Wait. Do it again. Have

patience. Stay quiet. Dark shapes move below the surface. Aim to land the fly just above them. Pace the bank. Wait. Before I left, Dad took us fishing, religiously, every year, because his own father never took him. John Winslow organized a fishing tutor to take his son hunting along these rivers because he was always too busy in the city, doing business.

26 Sunday

Alert: West Matukituki Track

There is avalanche danger during winter and spring on the Pearl Flat to the head of the valley section.

You can get pretty fancy maps from DOC now. My map of the Mt Aspiring region shows the contours in 3D, but it's too green. Too much green, not enough sepia and grey. But it does have all the names. Peaks, rivers, valleys with loaded labels like Ten Hour Gorge Creek, Rolling Pin, Siberia, Mt Repulse.

29 Wednesday

Leap Day

~~The day when traditionally women could ask men to marry them.~~ A pity I don't believe in marriage. I'd like to believe that love is inevitable. At least I think I know that love isn't (the same as) social conditioning. It's a chemical thing; it's *science*.

Paenga-whāwhā / March

All straw is now stacked at the borders of the plantations

1 Thursday

When I travelled to Ibiza for the first time, I went the same way as Frame did in 1956. From London to Paris then Barcelona on an overnight train I didn't sleep on because I'd heard thieves preyed on slumbering passengers. Finally a ferry across the Med to the port of Dalt Villa. I was immediately intrigued by the contrasts of the white isle. Meandering dusty roads clinging to cliffs. Shiny superyachts basking in the harbour. Pink flowers. Bar after bar, small dark and hot with gutless ceiling fans, salty tapas in terracotta plates, where San Miguel beer is served any time of day. The gay district where people walk around with perfect teeth and hardly any clothes on, talking loudly about last night's villa party. The citrus orchards and red soil of the farms in the north. Snorkelling but not seeing anything because the Med is dead. Tourists with telltale burns on their calves from falling off hired scooters when drunk or drugged. The little fish that nip the dry skin on your feet and legs in the warm shallows of Sa Caleta. The murmur and nudge of the pines I soon learnt were called *sabina*. The sunsets everyone claps for.

3 Saturday

On the tiles, View St

You will always remember this:
splinters and blisters. Night picnic
on scaffolding. Ripped tights, woollen gloves. Gravel
in your shoe. Hold on to everything: rimed iron piping
his hip, his hand - now lie on the tiles. Like sand-
paper? Yeah. Find the Pot and the Southern
Cross, and there's the Savoy, Robbie
Burns, the Octagon, the Crown. Lights like
fluorescent anemones. Fold into
the blurred edges of Thursday night
when you're all the places you shouldn't be. Your
room's messy but the city is pretty from up here
and we could probably get all the way out to
the ocean tip-toeing across rooftops with this
ninja balance we've got.

4 Sunday

The lake today: ashen

Conversation started

12:52am **Frank** Hello you! So when are we going to catch up?

12:53 am **Elsie** Hi I'd like to soon but Dad is on his 3rd round of chemo so I need to be spend as much time as I can with him. It's working at the moment, but the treatment could stop working at any stage so as you can guess my priorities have shifted a bit.

12:54 am **Frank** You know I'm so sorry about your dad – that's one of life's toughest trials . I wish I could come and see you and we could have a proper conversation. Facebook chat just seems so lame.

5 Monday

Sunrise: the mountains are a navy T with a Napisan stain round the neck

6 Tuesday

attraction

gaps

abandonment

instruction

huts

7 Wednesday

Gentian. Lily. Bush orchid.

8 Thursday

The lake today: silver dollar

They say she was a gardener.

9 Friday

I cannot say I cannot stay

10 Saturday

Claudia. Frank's ex. A high flyer in the city, left here two years ago. Not many jobs for professional women in Wanaka. It's either tourism, hospo, or working for yourself. My father remembers her. Says she seemed lonely. Women in the staffroom mutter about how a woman could ever leave her child. Felix flies up to spend every holiday with her. They say she's stuck in NZ. Frank won't sign a release to let her take the kid back to Sweden. When there are loud noises or new people near, Felix puts his hands over his ears.

MONT BLANC.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

I.

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

First page of Mt Blanc, by Percy Shelley

11 Sunday

My boxes from Chamonix arrived today. Books, a lot of old papers, flyers, postcards and photos of a time that I've since compartmentalised.

Closer

Stepping out of the chalet into sharp mountain air, I was glad I'd worn extra thermals. -5 in the Chamonix valley; the kind of morning where everything sparkles with photo-flash brightness: the rooftops, trees and roadsides aching with snow, the sky an impossible blue.

Crunching along the snow-sugared footpath with New Order on my i-Pod, I tried to take my time, didn't want to be early. Turning right at Brevent, I watched the skiers loading into the lift and up towards the Gothic peaks and faces Byron and Shelley were enamoured of. Looking at the 5,000 foot drop from the knife-edge arête, I thought of the last time I skied the *Aiguille du Midi* which bites the sky like a deathly incisor. It was out of season so they'd taken the safety rope down. With crampons barely gripping the frost-thaw *peuf*, I'd never been so scared in my life. But it seemed easy for our French guide as he led the way, reminding us *keep moving*. A step wrong could send you sliding over the side, along with whoever else you're roped to. Focus on the here and now, let one foot follow the other. Don't stop or think, too much.

We're like crystal

We break easy...

Down the hill, my pace quickened. I was acutely aware every footstep brought me closer, closer. I rushed to the bureau de post check to my mailbox. There was a postcard from home and a letter from London. The blue gloss of Lake Wanaka and golden poplars in the corner were at once familiar and distant. My father's

barely legible writing on the back listed swims, barbeques and sunsets, news of people I felt I no longer knew. It was signed off in the usual manner: Take care and hurry home, Love Dad.

The letter from the UK was an invitation. Some friends were organising a canal boat cruise, starting by London Fields and ending in Camden. I imagined the dancing, the wide-eyed scatter-chatter, a collective fending-off of comedowns the morning after.

I laughed out loud at the thought of that. Didn't need chemicals on a day like today, to feel a rush, with this thin air and long-awaited reunion later.

You can always take one more step – Frank used to say – keep going.

At the Plac du Mont Blanc, I boarded the bus. With the skiers and boarders, I was whisked through the glittering forest as we rumbled towards Flegere, Grand Montets, Le Tour, the Swiss border.

Every man

And every woman

Needs someone

So keep it coming...

Prochain arrêt, next stop: Les Praz.

I pressed the buzzer, stepped off the bus. Stamped my feet as much to keep warm as to feel solid ground. A few people were already having pints of Pelforth on the terrace.

Suddenly, I was at the entrance. Through the bay windows I could see Jessie, my co-chalet host there with a group of our friends. She intercepted me in the foyer,

grabbed my arm, led me towards the bathroom. *Before we go in, I have to tell you something. Frank called the chalet and said he's not coming.*

13 Tuesday

Drove Dad back from Dunedin. His blood test shows he needs a transfusion.

Frank called in. Offered me some venison from a deer he shot last week along the tops. He didn't stay long, didn't want to sit down, just hung out in the kitchen, leaning against the bench. His eyes rarely met mine – they either sought the dark hills outside or contemplated the rim of his Heineken. He asked all the right questions: *How's your Dad doing, and how are you? What's Sam up to? What's it like teaching at the school? Do you think you'll move back here for good?* I hope I asked the right things too... *How's the study going? Are the findings what you predicted? Is it hard being up there, alone for weeks and weeks?*

Our dialogue was measured, mediated. As he left he said *Felix really likes having you as his teacher. I hope he can make a friend.*

I'm going to make Dad a venison stew, try to raise his haem iron levels.

Gorge Creek

Its first Pakeha name was Chamounix. You can't get much more European than that. Each time we drive past, we scan the cliffs for the white cross on rock that marks the countless lives lost in a *sudden flood of crushing snow*, 1863. The first name of the range was Kopuwai: ogre. There's a rattle in the engine, our Subaru momentarily slower. We edge further into the interior as it gets colder and colder.

14 Wednesday

Appointment with Joel Kovak, 3.30pm

15 Thursday

awry

Felix is still taking his shoes off as soon as he arrives at school. The office took a message to say Frank has made an appointment for he and Felix's granny to see me tomorrow. He's worried Felix is alienated from the others in the class and hasn't settled in.

16 Friday

The lake today: *A certain kind of blue*

L.G.M



Temporal and spatial variability of stream discharge is directly related to variation in local climate, and this in turn is related to both regional and global atmospheric circulation and climate change. The relationship is complicated in glacierised catchments.

– F. Martene

Blue

Blue as pre-faded, washed-out denim, blue
as a glacier, all the times you walk up there -
put your cigarette butts in a film canister
camp, count, map, track the slow retreat
and advance, L.G.M: *Last Glacial Maximum*
The ice-age heart of our country.

Frank and his mother came into the class after school while Felix played with the puppets at the back. I let them do most of the talking, then proffered the Individual Education Plan. We pushed words around like *integration, additional needs, Asperger's spectrum*. I'm going to make sure he's not alone at lunchtimes and incorporate more music into my lessons.

17 Saturday

The lake today: dappled

17 March 2012

11:13 pm **Frank** Just got back from a surfing the Catlins. Love that place.

8:50am **Elsie** Lucky! It's starting to get cold here ay. Autumn's approaching. Got to go plan some lessons! Is Felix feeling ok about the swimming sports? It's going to be really noisy.

10:00 am **Frank** Well let's just say that he might be sick that day. You know I appreciate everything you do for him, ay?

20 Tuesday

Equinox 15:14 (UTC)

Drove Dad to Dunstan for his transfusion. He's not good in the mornings. I struggled to get him out of bed and in the car he seemed too anxious to breathe. Just stared out his window at the rows and rows of pine trees, each exhale like a laboured sigh he had to think about to make happen. Kept wringing his hands. Tried to find some of his favourite music on the radio: Suzanne Prentice or some golden oldies but it just seemed to be Justin Timberlake and Beyonce. Settled for talkback and called out *Beehives* every time we saw one. I asked him about the colours, if they were always striped grey, blue and beige for a reason. He didn't know. I let Dad win.

On the way back, he was like a new person. We joked about how Keith Richards is onto something, getting a blood transfusion every year for recreation.

Maori Point Road, Tarras

You and not I, notice the change in light at this time. On my side, it's all busted rough-chewed grass, homeless stink of silage, black bulls in drenched paddocks. Rusted mailboxes punctuate the long gravel line. Drenched sheep. We are haunted by the chortle of a trapped magpie, Judas bird made to betray. The black glove comes down once a day.

On your side, twilight bathes paddocks Steinlager green, all the way to those wedding cake Hawkduns, the white crown in the distance. The human need to see shapes in things: a rock that looks like a wing.

We carry on, not speaking. We carry on not speaking. You know I want to ask you something

25 Sunday

Sam, Dad and I are in Dunedin for the weekend, staying at the Esplanade. Sam's going surfing. I want to go shopping. Dad spends most of the time sleeping.

Blackhead Beach

Seaspray dissolves ghoulish hills at the far end. Black-suited, you are one of the troop who pivot *au crepuscule* on the crests. I wait on the beach with a book and a beer, watch whitewash roll in like Rizla papers, unfurling. Cranky seagulls gatecrash the melee, screaming bloody murder over the white noise of the sea. We can't save these waves that gnaw the headland. Or stop the yellow digger that decapitates the cliffs down to a blunt pencil nib with the deliberate precision of a sneering henchman. You catch your last wave in. White teeth. Knowing grin. I am unfurling and unfurling

26 Monday

the grey of grief

27 Tuesday

Missed a call from Joel Kovak last night. didn't pick up.

28 Wednesday

Back at school. Tried to write a triolet.

Evening Cove, Rakiura

Tickling tiny shells like rose-tinted jewellery

There's a certain way of running, when you run into the sea

Head back, arms flail, eyes fixed on ocean's proximity

Tickling tiny shells like rose-tinted jewellery

Delicate meanderings of tidal underbelly

Slap of kelp, skin shiver, scrape of sand, foam flurry

Tickling tiny shells like rose-tinted jewellery

There's a certain way of running, when you run into this sea.

29 Thursday



The end of the road

How to look at these mountains without feeling hemmed in?

Head for the Coast. Drive 'til you can see the horizon. Everybody knows there is no science to goodbye.

Haratua / April

Crops are now stored in pits. The tasks of man are finished.

1 Sunday

At the beach, we sit on warm stones, stare at the cold lake. You pass me a beer.

- I've been wanting to catch up with you for a while. You know the school recommended we meet regularly, for a chat, but only when you're ready.

So I stopped you in the biscuit aisle... You run into everyone, eventually, at the supermarket.

- I've been wanting to talk to you too, but not so much in a having-a-chat-with-a-counsellor way.

- Point taken. We seem to have a connection, don't you think? It must have been hard, having to leave France in a hurry and come back to take care of your Dad. It's my job you know, I'm paid to talk to people who are going through stressful times. But today is today, we're just out for a Sunday drive. Thought you might like to get away.

- I appreciate what you're trying to do. It's nice to go for a drive, hang out for a bit. I don't need to talk about anything at the moment. I keep a journal... that's where my thoughts go.

- Good to know. I've only been in Wanaka for a year myself. It takes a while to adjust.

- Where were you before?

- Down south, with my folks. Dad wanted me to take over the farm, but that's not for me. I find I can be of more use working in mental health.

- There's a lot of depression in the deep south I guess?

- *Not necessarily any more than in other places, but there's a lot left unsaid, which can explode into some pretty gnarly situations.*
- *Really?*
- *Yeah. I'm on the Crisis team for Dunedin hospital, and we go out to some homes in the country that just seem so fractured, so lonely.*
- *There's something about this isolation, here at the edge of the world. It's like whatever you're feeling, the mountains bounce those emotions back at you, magnified.*
- *It can be overwhelming.*
- *I try not to let it be. That's why I write it down. I'm interested in this stuff. I'm doing some study to find out what it's all about, as part of my PD.*
- *Professional Development? What's your topic?*
- *The poetry of place. The Southern Lakes as heart of the Heartland and what this means.*
- *Well here we are, in the heart of the Heartland. Did you hear about the mummified body that was found up in the rocks near here?*
- *Yes, I did. Apparently she might have been a Māori princess. She was found by a guy I know and she had red hair.*

3 Monday

Medical conditions

Do you wish to apply for cover for any Existing Medical Conditions which will only be covered if assessed and approved by us? **YES**

Condition name	Date diagnosed	Daily Medication
Lung cancer	15/11/2012	Tarceva 100mg
Depression	01/11/1970	Flouxetine 80mg
Anxiety	01/11/1970	Quetiapine 100mg
Thin blood	10/11/2012	Warfarin 6mg
Prostate cancer post treatment	27/06/2001	Doxazosin 4mg
Indigestion	01/11/1970	Famotadine 80mg

Treatment

Have you been treated in hospital in the last 12 months? **YES**

Have you visited a doctor in the last 90 days? **YES**

Have you been diagnosed with a terminal condition or metastatic condition? **YES**

Thank you for your application.

We cannot insure you for overseas travel at this time.

4 Tuesday

Rain, rain, rain. Will it ever stop? We have not now to worry about getting wet in going to the river for water – simply dip the billy under the table... All the bread is going mouldy. In fact we hear that this season in our country everything has gone mouldy, even the tents. I expect we will be next.

- J. Winslow

12:22pm **Frank** Hey you. You ok?

8 Sunday

First frost

I knew what you came here to say
by the swing of the gate, the look on your face
didn't know til I saw it today -
in a blue room, told to wait

by the swing of the gate, the look on your face
counting cracks in the lino floor
in a blue room, told to wait

Cancer has a colour that cannot be named

counting cracks in the lino floor
spots in your lungs like lights, sharp and sure
Cancer has a colour that cannot be named
malignant Milky Way. I couldn't, couldn't -

spots in your lungs like lights, sharp and sure
say anything. I haven't been here before
malignant Milky Way. I couldn't, couldn't

Describe the pain on a scale of one to ten

say anything. I haven't been here before
just numbness, no more numbers

Describe the pain on a scale of one to ten

ambivalent applause of rain

just numbness, no more numbers

I hate this plague, and my dumbness

ambivalent applause of rain

and your cough and the nurse's refrain

I hate this plague, and my dumbness

Describe the pain Describe the pain

and your cough and the nurse's refrain

No one speaks but everyone thinks

Describe the pain Describe the pain

how to talk above this howling ghost train?

no one speaks but everyone thinks

Six months to a year

this thing turns your skin grey

didn't know until I saw it today

terrorist snowflakes invading your X-ray

I knew what you came here to say.

10 Monday

The white heron has come back. High in its nest in the blue cedar by the clothesline. When we were kids, we used to call it the Telephone Bird because it was such a good mimic. It used to come back every summer, but Dad hasn't seen it for years. Apparently there are only about 100 left. It's considered lucky to see one in flight. The white feathers of the kōtuku are tapu. Sam wants to cut the old trees down to let in some light. I told him we have to keep the cedar.

11 Tuesday

Ruby Island

The first time we were here, we bathed on brittle stones in the dawnchill of a morning arrived too early. Squinting against too-soon light, we made out Punch & Judy faces on the scraped toast hillside. New Year's Day. Some people went swimming. You didn't. You lay on your towel sifting stones through your fingers. Now you're here with your son and a dingie, fishing rods, Dimp. The island caught fire a while ago, so the pines that once guarded the top are all gone.

12 Wednesday

I am haunted. L'azure, l'azure, l'azure. (Teacher breaks down).

– Film 101 notes on *Les Roseaux Sauvages*, André Téchiné, (1994)

The nightmare on the edge of the dream: I wake up when the phone rings, too early. I hear Sam pick up, upstairs.

I was going to go down to Dunedin, but I didn't. I can't make out any words, just

Sam's authoritarian tone. I feel the phone being placed *click* back on its cradle.

Hear every step as he walks downstairs, knocks on my door.

- *Elsie. Wake up. He's taken a turn for the worst, in the night.*

- *What's happened?*

- *It's pneumonia. What the doctor said might happen.*

- *Ok. Shall we take your car?*

13 Thursday

We lose cellphone reception just north of Manuhahea - 'The Neck' between lakes Wanaka and Hawea which once held a settlement of over 3000 people, a fortified vantage point over the flats, Mata-Au and the peaks guarding the pounamu trails to the West - and with it our connection to schedules, inboxes, obligation. I'm moving further away from the school term that seemed less about teaching and more about admin.

There's a certain corner where the change from high country to subtropical rainforest is most apparent. We're sweeping towards Makarora - *place of a thousand eels* - and there's the old homestead on the left, nestled beside *the place of the axe*: the primordial Wilkin river. There's the start of the track to Siberia.

Here's that mountain some American investor thought he'd bought and was miffed to discover it's actually part of Mt Aspiring National Park. Property of DOC. Not For Sale.

We laugh. Sam, Dad and I. We know all these places. Take turns telling their stories. There's the A-frame motels we stayed in when our camping trip up the Wilkin got washed out. The petrol station with all the Kiwiana souvenirs. Tiny jandals and tiki on keyrings. Magic flannels that expand when wet. When we

were kids, someone would always get one of those pressure-shrunk facecloths with a map of New Zealand on it in their stocking. Things that could change shape and size quickly seemed magic back then.

Last fuel until Haast. The yellow bi-plane waits in the paddock to whisk anyone with a spare \$500 into the mountains. We've been through here a thousand times. Know all the lines; take solace in the shapes that do not change.

The light alters as we enter the forest proper. It's dark in the car now we're surrounded by ancient rimu and rata. Each tree draped in moss and fern: there's so much *life*, so many species clinging on, in symbiosis. On the right is the sign for the Blue Pools – where on a boys' roadie in the middle of winter Sam stood on the platform with a weird grin, stripped to his boxers, jumped in. His friends flabbergasted as he emerged from the icy water and watched his credit cards and coins sink to the bottom. None of his buddies wanted to go in after them – so he had to dive back in, freezing.

Dad likes that story. Reminds him of all the adventures he had here, as a teenager. Hunting in the backblocks. Tracing the footsteps of an absent father. There's Fantail Falls where after a five minute stroll through the bush you see a long ponytail of water rushing into the river.

Winding towards Tiori Patea – *the way is clear* - the valley narrows and we're in the land of infinite creeks. We're at the Gates of Haast – the ancient pathway to taonga, pounamu. Rumbling through the gap in the rocks, I know we're going back to our pasts. We'd stopped speaking a while ago, retreated into reverie.

Titiro whakamuri kia mohio ai koe te huarahi kei mua i a koe.

You do not know your future, until you know your past.

We follow the Haast river. The mountains step back to let us through, the valley stretches out and the Awarua sighs as it rushes to the Coast. Dad winds down his window, takes hungry gulps of ocean air.

The water's sooty grey. Sam says there's been heavy rain – it's really high today. No good for fishing. We're lucky we got through before they shut the road. Away away into the exterior – we arrive at the edge. We've found the horizon, we're here.

Pull into the pub where Dad had his 50th. A classic Heartland hotel with cheap rooms, a sticky floor and a robust menu: bacon and eggs on white toast for breakfast, whitebait fritters, blue cod sandwiches. His mates and relations came from all over the South Island for the weekend. We decorated the tables with mountain daisies and lichen-spangled rocks we'd appropriated from the roadside. I made him a cake shaped like a trout, and the rockabilly covers band played late into the night. There was a woman with flashing eyes who took me aside, wanted to talk about my mother. I said *I don't remember her*, but that's not true. I know Sam remembers her too.

14 Friday

Jackson's Bay

Bought a crayfish from the caravan. Dad lost his balance and slipped down the bank. After a sudden notion of *is this it / this is it* a calm came over me, and Sam and I just handled it. His face was all white and there was no one around, no way to call anyone because our phones didn't work. The man in the caravan had a landline back at his house, but by the time the

ambulance arrived, Dad was alright. We stayed at the Haast Hotel for the night. The sheets felt stiff, sandflies kept getting in, moths crashed into our faces and tickled our wrists and no one got any sleep.

15 Sunday



24 creeks, makarora to haast, west coast, aotearoa

Fantail Falls

Ambushed by every kind of green we wander into a Resene chart: Jurassic Moss Middle Earth, Pounamu, Kakariki, Khaki. We're lost, pretending not to be. Gone off trail. Soak in the sudden luminosity of another glossy forest. You hear the waterfall long before you see it, bisecting the valley with the groomed perfection of a gymkhana ponytail. Feel its mist on your skin. Let's walk behind it, under the hanging rock into the cool of the other side until we disappear from sight

20 Friday



Ubud means medicine in the Balinese language and it is widely believed that it offers medicinal healing to its visitors. These special healing qualities are said to have been discovered in a vision, centuries ago during a global quest by a holy man from India, called Rsi Markandya. You will often see people meditating on this site near the Champuan river, in the gorge where it is believed his vision took place.

22 Sunday

I'm stuck on the opposite side of the world from where I want to be. My brother is hiding in his office. Chemotherapy is a bitch.

23 Monday

Had to call in for someone to cover for me because Dad's nose would not stop bleeding. His blood is thin because of all the drugs he's on so it doesn't clot like normal. At first we just joked about it, as that was the only way we could cope with the 'delightful horror' of the bright red stuff that wouldn't stop. The awful comedy of it. We went through all his man hankies, then I had to call the medical

centre to see if they could stem the flow. The doctor fixed some kind of device in his nasal passage and then we just had to wait it out. It eventually stopped thank christ so we didn't have to put him in an ambulance to Dunedin.

25 Tuesday

3:44pm **Elsie** Hey F

9:30pm **Frank** Hi you! How are you? I never see you online anymore ... How is everything?

6:40am **Elsie** Hola! I have not been online lately, working on my research. Trying to figure out what these mountains mean, these mountains that surround us. I'll come up to the ice and visit you soon.

10:41pm **Frank** I had a dream about you last night – we were walking beside the Matukituki and we fell into the river. Then somehow we were at the National Gallery for Australia. Remember when we went there? It was my first time on a plane. I woke up thinking "weird".

27 Friday

A poison in a small dose is a medicine, and a medicine in a large dose is a poison.
– Alfred Swaine Taylor, 19th-Century toxicologist.

Scarab amulet with wings at the National Gallery for Australia

I hate salad with sultanas in it. Lettuce is not meant to mix with fruit. You say tomatoes are a fruit, anyway. You're right about this sort of thing. You like: the colour orange, (being alone), *pistachio* the word and the nut. The Pollock in the foyer – once the most expensive painting in the world – does not interest you as much as the Egyptian artefacts upstairs. You pause at the scarab amulet with wings: *to the ancient Egyptians, the underworld*

*was a dangerous region one's spirit had to traverse
in order to reach paradise.*

Melbourne is the colour of a Hare Krishna
robe, the warm dust smell of nga champa. We go
outside into city light, down Degrares for coffee
served with brown sugar cubes & souvenir spoons
in old fashioned cups at a formica table with
skittery stools. There's glitter in the gutter.

28

When I went to Calle Ignacio Riquer there was nothing there. No plaque, no mark
to say *Janet Frame lived here*

29

The lake today: sun-measled



414. That's an error.

The requested URL /search... is too large to process. That's all we know.

30

The lake today: schist

1 Tuesday

Joel left a message on my school answerphone. Wants to drive to Glendhu again.

2 Wednesday

Today

In this horseshoe bay I am happily lassoed, today. Mesmerised by the eloquence of your wrists, I watch you flick and skim this stone and the next, way out in uncountable succession.

3 Thursday

Dublin Bay

But I remember the bay that never was

And stand like stone, and cannot turn away.

- James K. Baxter, 'The Bay'

Two fantails called in today, flew

down the hallway to your

old room. (You're too weak for the

stairs). Twin velvet heartbeats

loop de looped a wild Kabuki dance

round the rafters, then suddenly

out.

4 Friday

The lake today: alpenglow

Can't get hold of Joel Kovak. His phone goes straight to message. I suppose he's not available in the weekends. He cancelled my Monday appointment. Said he was going to refer me to another colleague who may be more helpful for me to talk to. I don't need to talk to anyone. I'm happy to write it down.

6 Sunday



PATU-PAIAREHE is the name applied by the Maori to the mysterious forest-dwelling race who, for want of a more exact term, may be described as the fairies of New Zealand.

An atmosphere of mysticism surrounds Maori references to these elusive tribes of the mountains and the bush. They are spoken of as an iwi-atua, a race of supernatural beings, and they are accredited with some of the marvellous powers attributed to the world of fairies in other parts of the globe. Some folk-tales of the Maori describe them as little people—but the native fancy does not usually picture them the tiny elves common to the elf-world fairydom. Most of the legends I have gathered give them the ordinary stature of mortals, while at the same time investing them with some of the characteristics of the enchanted tribes of other lands.

The Patu-paiarehe were for the most part of much lighter complexion than the Maori; their hair was of the dull golden or reddish hue, "uru-kehu," such as is sometimes seen among the Maoris of to-day. They inhabited the remote parts of the wooded ranges, preferring the highest peaks, such as Hihikiwi, on Mt. Pirongia, and the summit of Te Aroha. They ventured out only by night and on days of heavy clouds and fog. They lived on forest foods, but sometimes they resorted to the shores of sea and lake for fish... Some of them were greatly skilled in enchantments, and they employed arts of gramarie to bewilder the iwi Maori.

Nevertheless, we find them at times living on good terms with their Maori neighbours, and, indeed guarding the interests of their friends of the outer world, and resenting any interference by Patu-paiarehe from another district.

- JAMES COWAN. THE PATU-PAIAREHE. NOTES ON MAORI FOLK-TALES OF THE FAIRY PEOPLE.

7 Monday

The lake today: collected tears

----- Original Message -----

From: Paul Gomez

To: [Winslow Family](#)

Cc: [Joan Tui](#)

Sent: May 7, 2012 5:03 PM

Subject: RE: Simon's Treatment

Hi Elsie and Sam – good to see from the X-ray that the tumour is beginning to respond to chemotherapy. How is Simon's concentration/ memory going? I have included information about the Chinese herbs and chemotherapy – the Reishi mushroom seems to have interesting properties and may inhibit tumour growth. However, it contains anti-oxidants and we normally recommend avoiding anti-oxidants during the chemotherapy programme because of possible interference with chemotherapy effect.

I hope you both can have a pleasant weekend.

Regards,

Paul
Medical Oncologist,
Dunedin Hospital,
Private Bag 1291, Dunedin,
Associate Dean and Director,
Early Learning in Medicine,
University of Otago Medical School,
PO Box 931, Dunedin

12 Saturday

I hunt wild orchids, think of Baxter. His mountains, his weather. The mark he made on the Matukituki. Fill my drink bottle upstream to avoid giardia. Am eaten by sandflies, have wet boots most of the way.

I walk along the valley floor, ford the frigid river, start my ascent to the hut. The path is punctuated with alpine daisies and quartz crystal like tiny misshapen skulls. In places, the track is barely there, just rock and tree roots to trip over or hold on to. The forest thins out and after a while I'm above the treeline, in the alpine zone. Cairns like tombstones line the way along the ridge. Frank told me to be careful at Gloomy Gorge. *There's a bit of exposure; take it slow.*

13 Sunday

Apparently it's a good time to measure the glacier. There are so many factors affecting its retreat. It will be difficult to reach a strong conclusion. The ice is subject to fluctuations and shifts in local weather and temperature and global climate change. I've never seen him happier than he seems out here. In his adult life at least. As kids it was different though. They say you never fall in love again like you do the first time, and you don't realise this because you're too young.

Warning

Climbers using 'The Ramp' to North-West ridge must proceed with utmost caution. This route has been the scene of fatal accidents in the past.

I see him long before he saw me. He's engrossed in data, using important-looking tools to record the movement of the glacier, shifts in the weather. He still smokes rollies. That's when he finally notices me, as he sits balancing a paper like a cabbage butterfly between his thumb and forefinger, drops in the filter, presses and rolls the cigarette together. He looks up and smiles, does not look away.

- I hope you're not polluting our National Park. Those filters take thousands of years to biodegrade.

- Don't worry, I take everything out with me. Leave only footprints.

He winks. I'm first to turn away. Scan the dark curves of Aspiring that tower above a bright blue lake far below. We are the only ones there, out on French Ridge, in the middle of nowhere.

- So where's the Beaujolais and camembert? I joke.

And then it starts to snow. Flecks like old tabs of LSD at first, which soon thicken into airborne clusters of crystal. Translucent, each flake barely an outline of itself that melts as soon as it hits the ground, our jackets, our cheeks.

- Thanks for coming. Did you remember?

I remembered his requests: Marmite, the latest National Geographic, dark chocolate. I also packed one of Felix's recent pictures. A kea flying across a sky scratched with silver lightning.

We shut the red iron door against the storm. Inside there are candles and cards and whisky.

We discuss Felix, his progress; then our talk steers towards cancer. My father's ambition to see one more summer. The gamble chemotherapy forces upon you.

A roll of the dice calling up questions: *What's better, buying more time or quality of life?* Options, forced optimism. I watch the way he deals the cards, easing them out of the pack so they speak in sibilant whispers

is this it this is it this is it is this it

- *We had it pretty good you and I.*

Lupine eyes meet mine.

- *Better than most, I suppose.*

- *We were young.*

- *I know. I was so sad for such a long time after that. Don't think I could ever go through that again.*

- *You don't have to.*

French Ridge Hut this is Wanaka base do you copy?

- *Copy.*

Can you confirm there are two of you staying there tonight?

- *Yes we are two.*

You're still you and I'm still me. Still, I recognise so much about you. The way you frown when you're thinking. Six freckles that form the Southern Cross on your forearm. The shoulder you dislocated falling off your skateboard that never properly healed. The way it forms a crook like a broken wing that I want to nestle into. My tears make a map of Antarctica on your T shirt so you take it off and say *Come here*. In the bunkroom, the vinyl mattresses are hard and slippery and cold, icy wind rattles the windows. The candle you carried brings the moths in so you blow it out, place it on the wooden floor and it's pitch black when we kiss

In the middle of the night I reach out to touch your shoulder, your side - just to make sure you're there.

You call out three times in your sleep.

Darkness falls. Shut the door. Light the candle. Steal it all.

14 Monday

On leaving, see that -

- a) Stores are left in sealed tins and all perishable items destroyed.
- b) The hut is clean and tidy.
- c) Utensils and billies are clean and upside down.
- d) A good supply of dry firewood is stored for the next party.
- e) If wires are provided, mattresses are hung up.
- f) Doors and windows are securely fastened.
- g) Fires are completely out.

22 Tuesday

Broke up the fight today in Rm 24. Felix had one of the kids in a headlock when I got there.

Hi Luke

Here's what I saw/heard at break today.

I was on duty in the Kereru pod and heard a lot of thudding and yelling coming from a large group of students in Rm 24. When I walked in, Felix had Abe in a headlock, Drew was filming the incident on a cellphone and several students were encouraging the boys to fight.

I asked them to stop, took the phone from Drew and cleared everyone out of the classroom. I then asked the boys what happened, and Felix indicated that Abe attacked him first.

I then asked Felix to write or draw everything that happened and recorded this statement from Abe:

"The boys were making fun of me and Felix, telling me to keep kicking him. It started when the boys told me to kick his chair. I was kicking the chair and Felix got up, real angry and that's when the fight started. It was like a headlock fight. I kind of started the fight because the boys were whispering to me to do it. Mark, TJ, and I don't know who else. I was putting him in a headlock so he wouldn't be able to attack me. Then he copied me."

As this involved several bystanders and several people who were encouraging the fight I think there need to be equivalent consequences for them.

23 Wednesday

Frank stormed into school, seething. Demanded to see our Anti-Bullying policy. I had to tell him about our Star system, explain we're not into bullying the bully. It's called Positive Behaviour for Learning (4PBL). He swore and said he'd like to get one of those kids in a headlock and rub his knuckles into their scalp and see how they liked it. Tried to keep calm. Hid my trembling hands under the desk as I said it's being dealt with through the appropriate channels. We don't use the terms bullies and victims now – they're all stars – and they're all being looked after by the school councilor. Joel Kovak.

Frank stared straight back at me and I could see even the Teacher Aide reddening as he said *I'd like to smash that guy too.*

24 Thursday

Attachment theory

*I am the man you one day knew I would become.
But could not wait. And left too soon. – Gary McCormick.*

This book is a mirror, like the lake is a mirror. A place to reflect. These mountains bounce everything back, amplify your emotions. The energy has nowhere to go, so things get magnified. But is it better to keep everything inside? Suppression versus Expression. Scientists say 'toxic emotions' are linked to cancer – there's a lot of data. I guess I'll just purge onto these pages and see where it leads. That's what my friends overseas suggest. They're still doing the Chamonix – Ibiza thing. Chasing seasons. Working in the Alps, then working on the boats. For them, having to return to parochial New Zealand before you're ready is unthinkable. But they get it. I have to be here, now. So they said *Write it down, take notes, get it out.*

Hongonui / June

Man is now extremely cold and kindles fires before which he basks

1 Friday

First ice

Typically the first ice to form is called "frazil ice" or old ice, which is loosely formed crystals that clump together at the surface as the water temperature dips past 0°.

Frazil ice is soft and will not hold weight, as its structure is porous giving it a very low density and making it weak. This ice is often formed quickly and would seem to be the strongest; however, it's not, as it is some of the weakest ice and should be avoided.

The choreography of propinquity

a southern sky acnied with stars

First ice: dark heart, departure

When you go I'll wait through day

after day of heavy snow. All roads

will be closed.

4 Monday

Accidental kamikaze

A shining cuckoo smashes into the window

Her deep green pelt is so *svelte*, so Gondwana-esque

we keep the tiny dead pet in the freezer. Took it to school

to show the kids.



5 Tuesday

She was a big, heavy child, and I set off with her on my knees to ride to Pembroke – one of the little girls handed her to me when I was in the saddle – and I got across the river; but the horse fidgeted, and I got down to shift the saddle, for I thought it was hurting it, and then I could not mount again with the sick child in my arms. Evening was drawing on, and there were seventeen miles to go through bog and creek, and I carried her every step of the way, and the horse dragging the bridle, for it wanted to get back. I thought she was dying when I got to Russell's Flat – they wanted me to stop, but I cried to go on, and they brought me a cup of tea; but I was too wild to drink it, and kept begging them to hurry – so they put a horse in the buggy, and drove me the rest of the way. – As told by Mrs Macpherson to Maude Moreland, (171).

She found the mountains stifling, couldn't stay, they said. What kind of mother leaves her children? I was nine months old and Sam was three when she left the first time. The woman at the wedding said she came to visit me in the Karitane hospital. A place just out of Dunedin set up for sick kids by Sir Truby King – the godfather of Plunket - only I wasn't sick. I was there because Dad found it too

hard to look after me. Diana cried when she saw me there in my blue hospital cardigan, promised the nurses she'd come again, but didn't. Felt she was meddling, because my mother never really liked her.

Three months later, my mother came back, wanted to take me with her. I didn't know who she was. In family photos from that time my eyes are wide, hands splayed. I look terrified.

6 Wednesday

*On the banks of the Clutha River
When the hawks fly up at dawn
And each bright eye glares down
For what moves under cover
In the wide womb where all life grows,
Sweet flesh of the victim and the joy-giver,
I am the other one*

- Clutha River Song, James K. Baxter

I am the Other. We walked along the river. Stared into the swirling blue. We made up a new acronym:

L.F.H *Low Flying Hawk*

talked mostly of the weather, due to the boundaries that couldn't be crossed. The path is so narrow in parts it's awkward to walk side by side. It irked me that Joel hung back deliberately letting me lead. I wouldn't have minded if he led sometimes.

7 Thursday

The hermit dream also fulfils itself. Between the engine room and the solitary path, my life uncoils like a rope let free from a lifesaver's drum. That's the way one lives. I live among nga mokai. But I think I may die without company. All our fables blow away like smoke before we come to God. – James K. Baxter, Jerusalem Daybook

The lake today: grave

9 Saturday

The explorers returned to Dunedin extolling the virtues of the new Hawea/Wanaka region – the forests, the grassland, the scenery of this remote empty land they had found.

- John H. Angus, *Aspiring Settlers* (10).

dun hills tussock hawks

Dunhills socks awe. Discuss

claw sulk howl stalk. Your

wrinkled Chambray shirt

on my bedroom floor.

11 Monday

Matakitaki

Although Baxter himself related 'The Mountains' to Naseby, his mother related it to the Matukituki Valley and an early family camping trip, James' first experience of the mountains, when they had decided not to proceed up the valley because 'we had an overwhelming sense of the menace of mountains, which loom over the Matukituki'. – Lloyd Godman



We floated down the river with our father. Two kids pegged on a rope grazed our knees in the shallows, were haunted by willows, whirlpools, the fear of being trapped, sucked under, held down in the black. Years later, we sit at the edge. Voices search the surface in low twilight whispers til it's too dark to see our way back. There is a different kind of blackness we did not know about. You say you don't remember her.

12 Tuesday

Cuba Libre

Midnight, Havana. Everything's all Frida Kahlo disco mojo mojito. *We're wrecking like trains*, again. You lift the yellow parasol out of my drink, stab the white beach of your napkin. I make a fort out of straws. I like the sound but not the taste of your Cuba Libre. It's just a Rum n Coke when I would it would taste of revolution, freedom somehow.

13 Wednesday

(Shapes with sides)

it's like camping, your whole life

14 Thursday

Tributaries of the Waipara

"A sailor's language, and a mountaineer's"

– James K. Baxter, 'Poem in the Matukituki Valley'

Cabin Boy

Second Mate

Common Sailor

Cargo Creek

Peter Walker

Larry Bell

Rudder

15 Friday

Reflections

Lying was she?

You love fucking doesn't she?

Shouting was she?

Crawling was she?

Dying was she?

Falling was she?

She was falling

She was dying

She was crawling

She was shouting

She doesn't fucking love you

She was lying.

16 Saturday

Arête

Alien mountain flowers extend
open palms, surrender to jagged meringue:
arête *the end*. Scree slides on all sides, mouths
of black moraine scream at a CGI lake -

dance naked by the blue light

*It's so cold when you dive in, it's beyond pain
beyond numb. A jolt of hyperreality, the split-
second asphyxiation tingles, jars, stabs like
a million shiny pins.*

It feels like you'll never get warm.

17 Sunday

Before I get into sleep with you / I want to have been / into wakefulness too.

- Janet Frame

*

Holy communion

winter's first flake: the feathered

X that has no taste.

18 Monday

province - a biogeographic division of less rank than a region
- an area that exhibits essential continuity of geological history;
also : one characterised by particular structural or petrological features
- proper or appropriate function or scope : **sphere** <that question is outside my *province*>
- a department of knowledge or activity

19 Tuesday

The woman at the wedding told me the Karitane nurse had to come home with us because I thought she was my mother.

20 Wednesday

Winter Solstice

23:08 (UTC)

He has not left the apartment
in 59 days. The biscuits she made
shuffle in their tin. Open
the door and let the cold in.

Ash floats through the air like snow

floats through the air like ash.

Ice gnashes chipped crystal glass –

See the dust on the unswept

hearth. Slumped on a breaking stool

he sips his whisky

neat. He nearly calls

her name. He nearly nearly

21 Thursday

The lake today: a finger outline on a dusty floor

Distances

Update your fairytale.

Where are you based, New York or LA?

NZ or UK?

Here and there. Nowhere. Now

here.

Here-turi-kōkā / July
The scorching effect of fire is seen on the knees of man

1 Sunday



Escape the elite,

the elite escape.

7 Saturday

7 MONDAY
Met Mrs. Young of Hoonah
Hotel in Se. got her home off!
Stack day of American stock
Exch stamps -
Met Boxford at Club
of Young & Co. London (Lloyd's)
with Geo. Smith.
Stack Name Contain

8 Sunday

Rough as guts

Morning After

Last night we were swinging
from the rafters. Now my teeth
feel like cardigans and there's new
stains on the carpet.

Sam and I went out and got hammered at the pub. Why do Kiwis have so many
industrial terms for getting wasted?

hammered

nailed

plastered

rinsed

Caught up with my fellow teachers along with a few old faces. Seems everyone
has settled down and had kids – some are onto Round Two: divorces. Don't like
the sound of settling down. Dust settles. Head feels like I've been hit in the back
of the skull with a shovel. Feel I have neglected Dad today. He seems oddly
happy, feeding the birds in the garden. He gives them a special sugar solution he
makes up for them and they go through a bottle a week. He says he'd like to be
the Birdman of Wanaka – nurturing the native fauna.

9 Monday

Absence is a form of neglect is a form of abuse.

Claudia

She's a bit like my mum. Shot through when the kid was young. Her name sounds like a change in the weather: *cloudier*. They say she always made lists – things to take, things to leave (Bring a plate). She'd say your name and touch you a lot, because she was not from here. Met him at the on the banks of the river where branches hang over the water (he'd been fishing). She wanted to see Rob Roy glacier, stretched her hand out for his on the bridge. She was like that, because she wasn't from here. She makes blackberry jam for the school fair, but most people say they don't really know her. She has long fingers, iceberg eyes.

10 Tuesday

Sam's chopping firewood. I hear the rhythmic thwack as the radiata splits, a thud as the axe rocks the chopping block.

Another death

A whole bag of coke got spilt on these hills last night. We stagger outside hypnotised as wipers cut fresh ice. Drive to work in the dark, spill coffee in the console, come home in the dark. Chop wood: macrocarpa sparks, willow burns too fast, Old Man Pine has a longer burning time to last us through this News. There has been another death, but we are not inconsolable. Stoic Southern lovers move closer to their fires.

11 Wednesday

No U Turns

All summer we careened all over the island in clapped-out cars
down dusty caminos. Caught saffron sunsets at perilous addresses
Turn left at the gold boulder, follow the road til the hairpin corner
We're the big villa over the cliffs – you'll hear the drum n bass.
Curated chimeric outfits, violent lipstick, draped ourselves in scowls
swoons and cigarettes. Screamed todo verano, hierbas con hielo, Ibiza
Eivissa, I'll be there, No hay de que! Jumped from the rocks into the
blue. Cocooned in the nest of my only jersey, I grip the wheel, watch
wipers lance mucous rain. Reverse, First, Indicate, Away. Skirt
the gluey swap, skim the muslin-fogged coast, stall at the bay
where we skinny-dipped in the light of a cocktail tray moon. Some say
it could snow. My Fiat groans with neglect, scowls at winter beaches
below: a mess of Medusas, Men O War: the ocean's ghosts
Keep driving, keep breathing, this was never your home.

12 Thursday

The lake today: still, still.

*I sat down on a boulder in front of the cave, glad to be alone, and free to look in
silence filled with that exhaltation that comes to the heart of the lover of
mountains, and filled, too, with the yearning to be one with it all – to understand –
to let the solemn majesty of the mountains sink into one's being.
Awe they inspire; but fear, never.*

- Maud Moreland

13 Friday

Supermarket

I. Ice likely

Outside three huskies, tied. Nuzzle our New World bags, pace the asphalt with aching paws. You pause outside the automatic doors, remind me *They're avalanche dogs so you're not allowed to pat them*. You trace their gaze to the fading snowline on Mt Roy. It's time to go back to the ice.

II. Stranded

He's got the tan, matted hair, tattoos and a hankering for beer. He needs two minute noodles, Milo, toilet paper, Sunlight liquid and toast. It's pumping down in the Catlins but he's here, three hours from the Coast. He stands next to the mussel bin, eyes closed, breathes in

15 Sunday

Avalanches are like wild pigs - they are only dangerous if you foolishly get in their road. – Charlie Douglas

16 Monday

But although he may be thus surprised at first glance, his astonishment will grow greater, as he experiences the effects of the climate on himself. In many ways it is a trying business to reside upon the Alps: the stomach is exercised, the appetite often languishes; the liver may at times rebel; and because you have come so far from metropolitan advantages, it does not follow that you shall recover.

- *The Stimulation of the Alps*, from *Essays of Travel* by Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850 – 1894

Veritas

I want details
veritas, tree-lined
boulevards

a moonlit highway curved
round a khol-water bay
ice cubes tumbling

out
of

the

tray

a lupin garden. Fruit
trees, magazines, gardenias
an arbor, ardor, a ticket

to Europe

& lights in the harbor.

17 Tuesday

Lake Hawea has an area of 45 square miles and is 1,062 feet above sea level. Lake Wanaka has an area of 75 square miles and is 920 feet above sea level. The literal translations of the name Hawea is "doubt" and of Wanaka "legend". Te Wai-hakata is an alternative name for Lake Wanaka and this means "mirror waters".
- Taylor (108)

Port Royal

This has all got out of hand

You're starting to smoke a different brand.

18 Wednesday

Memory and dream are intermixed in this mad universe.

– Jack Kerouac, Doctor Sax.

We're in a new era of cancer medicine and breakthroughs are being made all the time. Dad's doctor said it's kind of like being around when they just discovered penicillin. The drugs are working but he's starting to lose his hair.

19 Thursday

Noun

quire

1. One-twentieth of a **ream** of paper; a collection of twenty-four or twenty-five sheets of paper of the same size and quality, unfolded or having a single fold.

2. (*bookbinding*) A set of **leaves** which are **stitched** together, originally a set of four pieces of paper (eight leaves, sixteen pages). This is most often a single **signature** (i.e. group of four), but may be several **nested** signatures.

3. A book, poem, or pamphlet.

4. (*archaic*) A **choir**.

5. The architectural part of a church in which the choir resides, between the **nave** and the **sanctuary**.

Verb

quire (*third-person singular simple present **quires**, present participle **quiring**, simple past and past participle **quired***)

1. (*intransitive*) To sing in concert.

20 Friday

Stack up the chairs. Sweep underneath. The price we pay for loving is grief.

21 Saturday

I see them all there, the faces
of your friends. Hear the low
tones of Going Home. I hold
a red hanky for the mop up but
can't stop the strangled moan
explode from my throat. Too-sweet
taste of sympathy scones and jam lingers
long after. No one said one day you
just wouldn't be there.

22 Sunday

Few people asked you why.
Now I just can't seem to get it straight in my mind.

23 Monday

You tricked me.
She sneaked out to have fun
and failed the exam. Hands up!
She just left.

27 Friday

Guilt is the price we pay for neglect.

28 Saturday

Confessional: You've had too much, son

The inherent capacity for excess. Wallow in the heights, these giddy depths. A
smidgen of wind. You've had too much sun. We've overdosed on ozone

We're travelling with knives

Mahuru / August

The earth has now acquired warmth, as have vegetation and trees.

1 Wednesday

Dissent from Mt Aspiring

Fences like stitches fix scars of infinite farms. Faux-schist walls divide same same subdivisions. Trapped in dank paddocks along the lake's dark rim, Pollock-sploshed Herefords look moonily on. Soon a golf course will go here. The hawks and keas don't care. This is where Shania Twain's place starts. Goes all the way to Macetown. Watch all this in a vivid flash. Now this cabbage tree, that cattle stop, the rock that looks like an old man. Keep driving. Undo your seatbelt when we get to the steeps in case we go over the edge. Cows don't glance. They stare – the rule: one look, one only. Don't look back.

19 Sunday

Chemo has stopped working. Cancer knits its fine lacework through his lungs.

20 Monday

Compromise

*Your cheek on the screen cut the line, caused loss
of communication. What was it you were saying?*

23 Thursday

The situation: major Low approaches

24 Friday

Wanaka Base this is French Ridge Hut, do you copy?

If we hear anything else, we'll pass it on to you.

Over.

28 Tuesday

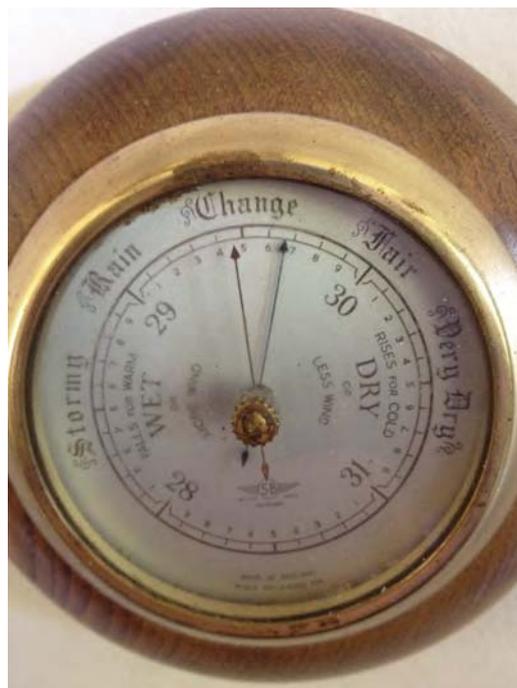
We roll the dice a final time. Dad's last chance is a new 'target' drug . They've taken a biopsy of the tumor and sent samples to Auckland and Melbourne. If they come back with a match, there's a 30% chance of it working. If not, that's it.

29 Wednesday

Today is her birthday. Was.

30 Thursday

White patches on your X ray move upwards like a vertical avalanche.



Whiringa-ā-nuku / September
The earth has now become quite warm

1 Saturday

Storm

X-ray flash takes a photo of the earth
silver heart monitor line scratches
the sky. Pulse pause. Morbid
roar of thunder

2 Sunday

The lake today: stone-skimmed

3 Monday

The lake today: emptiness

stone skinned

unspoken

adagio

requiem

8 Saturday

The lake today: adumbrative

There's an anchor in the garden. Dad found it on the beach at Karitane when he was a kid.

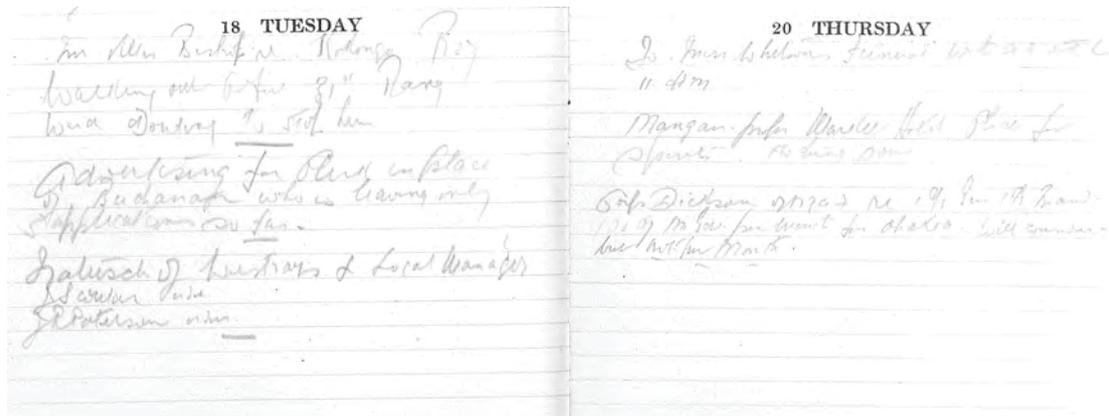


10 Monday

In this daybook I offer only a bundle of anecdotes, intuitions and conjectures – points where the shell of my own egocentricity has been broken through by the occasions of communal life. These points may be felt as wounds. But wounds are necessary (Baxter, Jerusalem Daybook 2).

Aspiring: the beginning and the end

New / high / hoping / ascending / desiring



Whiringa-ā-rangi / October

It has now become summer, and the sun has acquired strength.

1 Monday

You can wrap yourself in pain, this cloak of many colours: fine-stitched, hand-knotted, woven from delicate feathers. Soft to stroke. A grief to call your own. Now take off the cloak. Stamp on the plumes until you're engulfed in their flurry. Move through the mess. Some feathers still cling (one caresses your cheek, there's one in your hair). Move through the storm

out and away

2 Tuesday

I have discovered my mother's love for raking leaves. It's soothing to scrape the dead brown husks into piles then set a match to the skeletons. Smoke curls into the spring sky. The smell gets into everything, is at once death, and life.

3 Wednesday

rime¹

rɪɪm/

verb literary

gerund or present participle: **riming**

1. cover (an object) with hoar frost. "he does not brush away the frost that rimes his beard"

Felix draws the rugby posts of an H.

17 Wednesday

Sam took Dad to Dunedin this time. He's been knocked about by the drugs he's on and they want to build up his strength otherwise he won't be able to handle the treatment much longer. I suppose they can see we're all shattered, so he's

booked in to the hospice, for what they call respite care. I'm staying here. I'll go down and see him in a couple of days.

The X-ray shows no change. Lung cancer looks like: poisonous candy floss.

19 Friday

I call Dad and he sounds perky. *The nurses are really nice. You can have whatever you want to drink in the evenings, so they make me a Malibu and orange after dinner.*

I too feel like getting into some hard liquor.

20 Saturday

Through the ranch slider I saw Joel's silver Subaru pull up. Didn't have time to change out of my kimono or brush my hair before he bowled in and made the living room smaller, changing the energy towards something fresher, electrostatic. He took one glance at me struggling to tidy up and swept into the kitchen. *I'm putting the kettle on. How do you have your tea?*

- *Strong and bitter, please. With just a cloud of milk.*

- *Un nuage?*

- *Didn't know you spoke French.*

- *Mais oui, chérie. Bien sûr je parle du français, et toi?*

We talked, and did not stop until this morning.

In the middle of the night, we go
for a drive. Stop at the bay, lie on
the bonnet, find the Southern Cross
and the Pot. Your hands
cold as doctor's move under
my top. Most people have
a sensitive side.

21 Sunday

Joel's gone to get supplies from the supermarket. I'm not up for enduring the
general public. I'm sure they wouldn't want to see me either.

I. Brushing Teeth with Someone New

This morning you bought me nautical
toothpaste, loaded with tiny ships. I brush, sails
smash against iceberg teeth. We flash symmetrical
Shackleton smiles all day.

II. Sunday morning

Blondie Platinum, Velvet
Underground. Tar-sticky Venus coffee. A new mark
like a plum stain on the nape of the neck. Finger
bruises, hospital corners.

After we finished Joel's vegie lasagne, a white police helicopter cut through the darkening sky. Rotor blades chopped frosty air. A silver cone of light scoured the ground. Someone's missing. We exchanged a glance and both knew. Pilots are rarely allowed to have their machines out after twilight. Eyes wide, he reminded me *it's too late to fly*. I felt another energy shift, a new rift open up in the air between us. Words sounded domestic and hollow. So we stopped talking. Turned on the radio. *The long range forecast is for snow to low levels; squalls across the Southern Alps and Fiordland*. Dishes left on the bench, we waited for the body blow crisis brings, that king hit. Sat on the sofa but didn't, couldn't, touch each other. Checked our phones. No messages. Who hadn't come home? We watched the white light get smaller and smaller as it headed west, towards Aspiring.

It was weird having someone else in my bed. I had trouble getting to sleep. Joel put his arms around me but I had to extract myself and move over to one side. Lay there a long time, wide awake but in a dream. Watched the rise and fall of his chest, marveled at and yet was troubled by his aftershave's icy scent. I had nightmares I couldn't quite remember.

It always makes me feel sick when the phone rings at the wrong time. 545. Joel padded into the hall, spoke low, but I still heard him as I held my breath.

Ok, I'll be there in ten. He paused before coming back in to tell me *That was Search and Rescue. I've got to go. I don't know when I'll be back. It's Frank. They think he got caught in a slide*.

My mind rolls over the semantics and acronyms of emergency. Last seen.

Intentions. E.T.A. Flashed to the last time I saw him, walking away. Billy in one hand, rollie in the other, clambering certain along the edge of the arête, back to

the hut to record the day's data. *I'll call you when I get out. It was so good to see you, here.*

I've been sitting on the front step for hours, picking at the scabs of peeling paint beneath my feet. Consider the physiology of the human body in crisis: the same hot prickle and tightness in the shoulders that jealousy brings is also the million stabbing pins brought on by guilt, dread, the proximity of death. The body's on alert; every follicle prepared for fight or flight. The air gets heavy, hard to breathe. If, if. So many ifs. Again, the metal taste in my mouth. I recite names, lists, panicked mantras. Come back soon. Be ok. What is the cost to those we betray? I've heard counting in your head is a sign of madness.

Sunny slopes are prone to slides

Clutch the sink, consider the science. Loose, hollow pyramid-shaped crystals compromise cohesion; form a rupture layer. Riming, wind-affected drifts, convex terrain, crevasses. Deep down, sugary particles shift, settle like dust. Danger increases with gradient. Above 25 degrees, every snowy aspect becomes unstable. Risk gathers the further you go, the longer you stay. Always write your intentions, E.T.A, I.C.E – In Case of Emergency, don't forget me. Sunny slopes are prone to slides. A slight shift in balance can cause a whole slab to break away, an irreparable rift. This is the haemorrhage. This is the rupture

22 Monday

Search and Rescue recover local man

Yesterday, Frank Martene, a local geologist was rescued from a treacherous section of the Bonar glacier, where he had become trapped after a fall. The 36 year old had been camped on Mt Aspiring for the past four months, where he was studying the movement of the glacier. He is believed to have been en route to return to Wanaka. His family became concerned when he did not arrive home by nightfall on Friday, so alerted the police at 6.30am on Saturday. A Wanaka LANDSAR team located him in a bergshroud (crevasse) on Sunday afternoon, thanks to a transceiver he was wearing.

As he was suffering multiple injuries, he was retrieved in a technical long-line operation conducted by helicopter pilot Peter Knox and professional climbers Henry Adams, Rob Davison, and Joel Kovak.

Constable Mick Clauston said the man is a member of Otago Alpine Club with extensive climbing experience and knowledge of the area.

Wanaka Alpine Cliff Rescue team leader Rob Davison said he understood the fall occurred from a couloir, or steep gully, about 500m below French Ridge Hut.

Martene had set off from the hut and made good progress. He is understood to have been moving through the couloir unroped but using crampons and appropriate ice tools.

This was not unusual practice, although it was a "high-end call", Mr Davison said.

He considered it prudent to travel across the glacier with a companion but "every climber makes their own decision. It is up to them. Everyone sets their own risk level."

Mr Dickson said when he flew past the couloir yesterday he noticed "water ice" columns on the ice face, which could "come away" from beneath a climber. But he did not know if that had happened in this case.

Mountain and weather conditions were good, the snow was in "good nick" and many people were enjoying climbing the mountain, he said.

Martene is now on Life Support in the Intensive Care Unit of Dunedin Hospital.

LOCAL KAUMATUA DECRY REMOVAL OF SKELETAL REMAINS

Protesters have demanded that the 400 year old mummified skeleton and burial cloak discovered at Hospital Flat last year be returned to its original site. "The police took it away and we have not been informed about what has happened to our ancestor and taonga," cultural advisor Terry Hopoate said. "We, the tangata whenua feel it was dangerous to tamper with the skeletal remains. We are voicing our concern that its removal has upset the mauri of this area. We are seeking mediation to ensure its rightful return."

Wanaka Witness

23 Tuesday

Sublimated in the frozen silence - Newton

Frank has fallen into a couloir

Frank has fallen into a coma

(We have all fallen)

24 Wednesday

Felix writes in 'o's and 'i's like he's trying to spell out something in binary code.

25 Thursday

He opens his eyes

The first words he says are numbers

They're still assessing the damage

Measure the advance and retreat. Journey and return. What it's like on the other side. What the ice is telling us about the world. Hear the creak and groan of the mountain flexing her ancient bones. With one finger, you tap and tap your son's hand. I turn away

I cannot say

I cannot stay

29 Sunday

wOe

This moon is made for missing things, the O in the middle of woe:

cracks, fractures, fractal geometry – smack of light through serpentine rock -
viral lichen on an ashen dock. Snapshots, stolen time like stolen rum: you the
smiling pirate who refused to abandon ship. Not yet. Contraband conversations. I
knew the words but I never spoke them. Banned books. Burnt bracken.
Bannockburn. Muddy feet. Leaves turn bourbon; drop into the swollen river.
Sediment collects at the edges. (The warning notice on ginger beer). Take this
elixir to make you feel better. Working backwards from the terminus, every
milestone laced with cortisone. Knowledge seeps through skin, sinew, bone. The
cloudy X-ray, Dakron knitting upwards through the lungs. This is it. Six months
to a year. Two more seasons. The deep kick. The millstone. But

we still have miles to go and stones to throw and rocks to keep. Rocks we will
think are pounamu, but will not be. Fool's gold. Serpentine. Veneers everywhere.
The clang of venetian blinds in a high hospital room. Look down at the
playground below. Colours now callous, too bright, the opposite of everything
inside. The irreparable chemical smell of Ward C. Vendettas. *If, if there's just so
many ifs*. Everything depends on how you measure this. The lichen spreads
incessantly, takes grasp on the heart. I'm stitching memories. The last time we
climb/ed this mountain. Not speaking of a future with a hole in it. Now swallow
this. Tarceva: the target drug. Goes straight to the mutation. Swallow, whole.
With cold water is best. This is it. The deep kick, the chill.

31 Tuesday

A small hand reaches out. Felix pats my leg as we sing Hallowe'en songs on the mat.

Spooky spooky very spooky what's that it's a monster

Spooky spooky very spooky what's that it's a witch

Spooky spooky very spooky watch out it's a vampire

Spooky spooky very spooky what's that it's a ghost

1 Thursday

The nightmare on the edge of the dream: I wake up when the phone rings, too early. I hear Sam pick up, upstairs.

I was going to go down to Dunedin today, but I didn't. I can't make out any words, just Sam's authoritarian tone. I feel the phone being placed *click* back on its cradle. Hear every step as he walks downstairs, knocks on my door.

- *Elsie. Wake up. He's taken a turn for the worst, in the night.*

- *What's happened?*

- *It's pneumonia. A hospital infection. What the doctor said might happen.*

- *Ok. Shall we take your car? What do we need to take down for Dad?*

- *It's not Dad. It's Frank.*

We're here now, in the waiting room. They're sending someone to see us, before we go in.

*

- *You might get a bit of a shock when you see him. There are a lot of tubes which are helping to keep him in a stable condition. He's puffed up on painkillers and steroids. But he can hear us, and he can feel your touch. I don't want to get your hopes up but he is responsive so we have to keep talking to him, see if we can bring him round.*

10 Saturday

you hold on, day after day

18 Sunday

I'm going to have a TV dinner

pretend I'm on an aeroplane

19 Monday

I didn't want to start an argument. "Okay," I said. Then I thought of something, all of a sudden. "Hey, listen," I said. "You know those ducks in that lagoon right near Central Park South? That little lake? By any chance, do you happen to know where they go, the ducks, when it gets all frozen over? Do you happen to know, by any chance?" I realized it was only one chance in a million.

- Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger

'Paradise'

Dark lake, paradise

ducks skid across the surface

launch into twilight. Make a big

song&dance about it. You call

them the party birds because we

hear them at all hours. They say

they mate for life

20 Tuesday

Please see below the latest I have on the Melbourne EGFR result. The formal report has still not arrived but this information is all we need.

Hi Paul

I can confirm a E746-1752_insV deletion in exon 19 of the EGFR gene. I don't have an electronic copy but can copy the fax I've just received (otherwise hard copy should be on its way).

Cheers
Malcolm
Melbourne University Hospital

Mutations in the Tyrosine Kinase Domain of the Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor in Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer

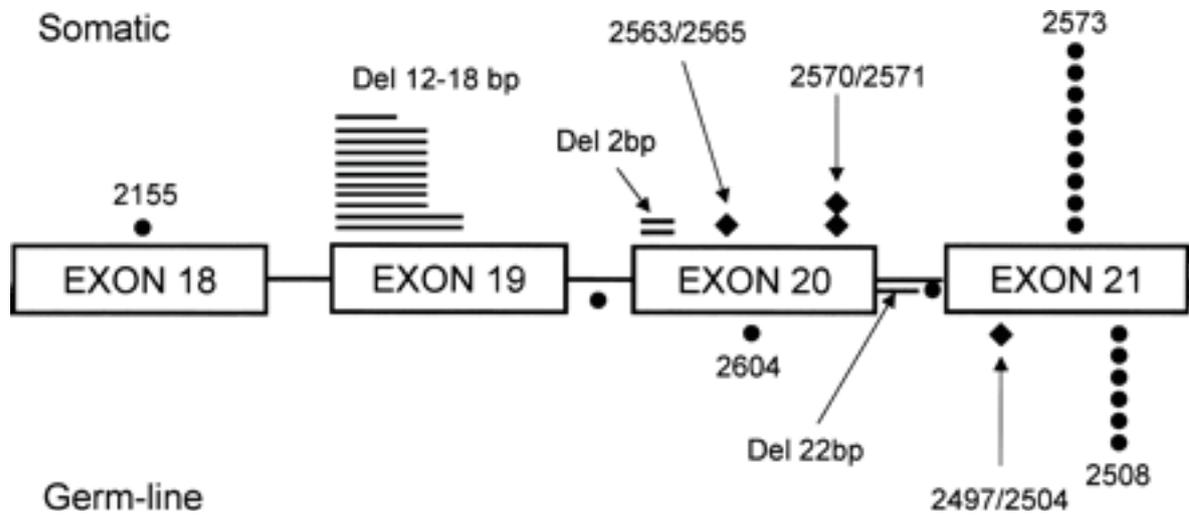


Fig. 1

Distribution and relative occurrence of *EGFR* gene mutations and germ-line variations in NSCLC. The kinase domains of the *EGFR* gene encompassing exons 18, 19, 20, and 21 are shown. The nucleotide positions of the genetic changes are as indicated. Mutations are shown above the exons and germ-line variations are shown below the respective exons. The relative lengths of exon 19 and 20 deletions, which varied from 2 to 24 bp, are represented by the relative length of the bars. Each symbol represents one case, where dots (•) represent samples with point mutations and diamonds (◆) represent those having changes involving two nucleotides.

22 Thursday

// // // // // //

Pacific waves slop

against the sea wall Te Whiti's

'ploughmen' built for Dunedin harbour.

Kohi-tātea / December

Fruits are now ripe, and man eats of the new food of the season

7

----- Original Message -----

From: Winslow Family

Sent: Friday, 7 December 2012 3:53 PM **To:** Paul Gomez

Subject: Re: Simon Winslow's CT result

Hi Paul

Sorry to bother you.

Thought I would contact you re Dad's scan results - he had the CT on 23rd Nov and I wondered if you would be able to let us know the outcome.

Dad has been tired lately and has had to increase his Prozac dose as he is feeling anxious and quite low in mood, seen by our local doctor the other day.

Thanks

Elsie

The teenagers

Motutapu: sacred island

The river says *catch my drift*. A girl just out of high school stands at the edge of the Chasm, jumps in screaming. We spread hotel-stolen towels on silver eyeshadow sand. Water clear as Bombay Sapphire. You need sunglasses for this too-blue, ultra violent sky. Willow leaves like sanpans circle the eddies, moor below our toes. You finish the Listener. The teenagers scramble back to town with plans to drive around, looking at each other. Looking for something they can't yet describe. Our chilly bin bleeds. Ice seeps down to the bones of an ancient burial ground.

----- Original Message -----

From: Paul_Gomez

To: [Winslow Family](#)

Sent: Sunday, December 9, 2012 10:13 AM

Subject: RE: Simon Winslow's CT result

Hi Simon, Elsie and Sam –

Simon's report is below and is encouraging. I have looked at the pictures and they are much improved but not quite back to normal – what we call a good partial remission. For this type of tumour this is a very good response and let's hope it lasts a good period. Do you think Simon's tiredness and depression is a build up effect of his chemotherapy?

Regards,

Paul.



Print

Send ▶

Annotate

CT Chest

Clinical data: Lung cancer, on chemo, (known diagnosis of bronchioalveolar cell carcinoma is noted via request from previous imaging.);

Medical question: Any change?

CT CHEST + Upper Abdomen

Technique: Arterial phase contrast enhanced scans of the chest have been performed, followed by portal venous phase scans through the upper abdomen. (Omnipaque 300, 95ml given IV.) Comparison was made to a previous CT scan dated 5 September 2012.

Findings: There has been an improvement in the appearance of the lungs, with a decrease in the number of irregular pulmonary nodules and small areas of consolidation within both lungs. The majority of the lesions have also decreased in size. The left subclavian and left brachiocephalic vein have not been opacified, however, the left subclavian vein is significantly decreased in size and there has been resolution of the surrounding stranding. The appearances probably represent resolution of the previous left subclavian vein thrombosis, although the presence of residual thrombus cannot be excluded on this study. There is no mediastinal, hilar or axillary lymphadenopathy. No pleural effusions. The adrenals are bulky, particularly on the left side, but unchanged. The large simple cyst involving the left kidney is again noted and is unchanged. No further pathology identified within the upper abdomen. There are no suspicious bony lesions identified.

COMMENT: Evidence of response to target drug, with significant reduction in the number and size of the lesions within both lungs.

Transcribed by: wk Dr Blane Telle Consultant

But one thing is undeniable – that in the rare air, clear, cold, and blinding light of Alpine winters, a man takes a certain troubled delight in his existence which can nowhere else be paralleled. He is perhaps no happier, but he is stingingly alive. It does not, perhaps, come out of him in work or exercise, yet he feels an enthusiasm of the blood unknown in more temperate climates. It may not be health, but it is fun.

- **The Stimulation of the Alps**, from *Essays of Travel* by Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850 - 1894

New light through dusty windows.



Mt Aspiring Road

11

So he has what they call a *good partial remission*. According to the X ray, the disease is in retreat. The nasty stars have been extinguished for a bit. Crossing the garish geometrical carpet in the hospital foyer, I spot Felix. He's circling one of the see-through pillars with Wonka-style ribbons twirled inside that flank the room, tracing the curves with his hand. Frank's mother and Claudia are in the cafe queue, their backs to me. I think about going over to them but I just can't bring myself to do it today. I steer Dad the other way, out the exit beside the ambulance bay. He and I have a long drive ahead. We might stop in Clyde for dinner. At dusk, the tree branches in the Manuka Gorge are like monstrous arms reaching out

12

flutter on a heart monitor.
footsteps down a hospital corridor.

13

Ripe fruit smell of slow death emanates from a body that will never leave the bed. A chill creeps up the left leg

14

The nurse adjusts the sheets, wipes your cheeks clear of ice trails of tears gathered there. She uses a suction pump to remove the gunk from your mouth. Your body gets colder and colder. I speak as if into an abyss in an awkward whisper. Your eyelashes flutter like dark feathers. It doesn't matter to me that your son and his mother hear what I have to say. My hot tears merge with your cold ones. I trace the dots of the Southern Cross on your arm

walk away

15

In your sleep
you shiver and mutter
some numbers. Later you cry out
on three sharp notes then fall
silent.

16

It all happened so quick – there was no time to get his ice axe in when he slipped

17

The three of them formed an acute triangle of pain. Didn't see me. So I stood outside the sliding doors and watched the traffic, all blue cars, taxis and buses. Counted summer school students coming out of MEDRED and wondered which film they'd seen. Citizen Kane, Wild Reeds, A Bout de Souffle?

I watched the triangle become a line, a wall, as arm in arm they slowly moved to their car. When the weight of grief is too much, you can't stand up by yourself.

I grabbed the black railing behind me. With my other hand I had to cover my mouth to stop the scream. It seemed like the lights didn't change for a long time. Just as they turned green, Felix noticed me and held up one hand to the window, which either meant Stop or he waved.

24

Alone we are born

And die alone

Yet see the red-gold cirrus

Over snow-mountain shine.

-James K. Baxter

we lost him.

I dreamt it snowed and when I woke up it was true.

The Rumbling Burn

Do not go alone
to a tropical island.

Don't look
at the new moon
through glass.

Don't put cats
in your poems.

If you're crying when
you're lying down
your ears fill up
with tears.

If you're on the way
up and you're puffed,
don't stop. Remember
you can always take
one more step. You can
always take
one more

step.

Footnotes

¹ Later, 'Timeless Land' - originally the name for one of Sydney's striking Central Otago landscape paintings - would become the title for the 2004 collaboration between the artist, fiction writer Owen Marshall and poet Brian Turner.

References and acknowledgements

All images in the Aspiring Daybook are by the author unless otherwise stated.

- P6 Nabokov, Vladimir. *Lolita*. Paris: Olympia Press 1955. Print.
- P7 *fort/da* refers to Freud's story of his grandson's game of gone/there which he uses in psychoanalysis in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' which appears in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol XI. London: Hogarth Press. Print.
- P8 Quotation is from *Janet Frame In Her Own Words*, Penguin NZ 2011. Print.
- P21 Image is from Browne, Anthony. *Little Beauty*. Candlewick Press, 2010. Print.
- P22 Image reproduced with permission from Ian Hamlin.
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- P28 Image is from Browne, Anthony. *Little Beauty*. Candlewick Press, 2010. Print.
- P29 *Seeking eyes grow blind* is a quote from Baxter's 'The Mountains' [CP 8].
- P34 Image from the first page of 'Mont Blanc' in Shelley, Percy. *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (1817). Source: Wikipedia
- P35 *peuf* refers to the French term for light, sugary snow
"We're like crystal..." is a quote from the song 'Crystal' by New Order
- P36 "Every man..." is a quote from the song 'Crystal' by New Order
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