

putiya makara wingani (can't stop feeling)

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Greg Lehman and Camila Marambio

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Greg Lehman and Camila Marambio dialogue across the Pacific Ocean about the ancient now in Tasmania and the settler future in Chile.

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(A message to the reader.)

Putiya makara wingani (can't stop feeling)

There is a mountain in whose shadow I dwell. One of her old names is *Kunanyi*.

She shelters us from the cold south westerly winds that surge up from the Great Southern Ocean to lash our island *Lutruwita*. She sucks moisture from these winds, which flows from her breasts, across her reclining form and cascades down through the forests and

grasslands of her foothills, carving out gullies from the ancient rocks of a distant volcanic past, and dancing through a thousand waterfalls on its way to quench my thirst. *Mangana* the black cockatoo announces when the wind and rain is coming. He lives amongst *Kunanyi's* forest cloak and shows himself as a messenger when the distractions of the contemporary world threaten my *wingani*.

I listen carefully each time I hear *Mangana's* call. I am schooled in science, so I hear him as a bird. I know the species of Protea, like Banksia and Hakea he seeks for their seed. But I also know that these trees are Countrymen. They are totems of the nations of our Old People. So when *Mangana* calls his flock to feast in the Banksia forest, he refreshes our relationship in a way that science barely knows.

Kunanyi is more than a geographic presence in the landscape. For my *Palawa* ancestors, she was a being from the beginning of things. Her fecund form spoke to all in sight of her. The power of creation. The endless cycles of birth, growth and passing; reaching back to times before time. Our Old Stories tell of the world before *Palawa*, the first human being. *Palawa* was made by the star spirit Moine, pulled up out of the earth where devils lived, and first appeared as a kangaroo. Moine's children, it was said, came down in the rain and into his wife's womb. The Country speaks of these stories, and the bodies of the creation spirits can be seen all around us in the mountains and hills, reminding us, playing out the stories of creation every day.



Greg Lehman and Camila Marambio

The Smell of Her

It's not a matter of clarity but of opacity

there is a pocket of unknowns and that is where I live.

She lives there to, they all do, but I'm looking for her:

the mother of the mother of the mother of grandfather.

I want to say her name.

I want to know her face.

Hear her stories.

What did she see?

How did she feel?

Who did she touch?

Why is the chord cut?

Is memory the chord?

Are my stories, her memory?

If so, can these written words bring her here?

She wasn't tall and her breast were large,

the weight of them curved her upper back creating a ridge

I walk on.

My bare feet touch her skin,

her soles planted the earth.

Making me resilient.

She is old, and circular.

She gave breath away

lifting the winds that comb my fair hair.

The sharp aroma tells me I am looking in the wrong place,

I sniff the evening scent of the flowering Huachuma,

and taste her nectar.

Bzzzz.

Stories of the past sing loudly in my veins, where a thousand campfires still smoulder. The verses of these songs are not known to me. They are too old to be remembered. And the Old People, who could teach me, are gone. As if to taunt and tease us for this loss, the British wrote down fragments of the stories of my ancestors, even as they squeezed the breath from their lungs, and their bodies returned to the earth. I spend my days as a scholar of these fragments, searching for shards that I might somehow reassemble into the briefest of syllables. Shattered remnants of our People's past. Just to hold them for a moment and honour them.

The crust of the earth is made from rocks. It is softened and soothed from its hard and unyielding state by the same waters that give us birth, and that continue to flow down the undulations of *Kunanyi's* giant form. If we come from the earth then we come from the rocks. This story is important. It points to even older events of creation and change.

Kunanyi came into her being as a massive intrusion of molten magma from deep in the earth. Like *Palawa* was drawn from the earth by *Moine*, our creation mother also emerged from the earth. This was so long ago that the continents had yet to break apart into the regions we now call home. At that time *Lutruwita* nestled against the coastline of Antarctica. That shore extended to include South Africa and Patagonia as the southern edge of the ancient continent of Gondwana.

A warm equatorial location nourished vast forests that wrapped the land in ancestral forests. No *Palawa* was there to witness this grand scene; just the creation ancestors. But the forests of *Protea* and *Nothofagus* have left their own descendants as our companions today. Their presence reminds us of a trans-specific lineage that predates the shape of the Country itself. And *Mangana* is their voice, reminding us of all our origins.

I walk along the rugged coast and hear the howling of was there before they arrived.

They, who is also I am not.

Inhaling deeply, I tease out my writing:

"I'm angry and confused.

Or, am I angered by confusion?

Or confused by anger?

Clouded by doubt."

Every which way,

the source of my anger, confusion and doubt is the inescapable history of colonization, of which I am culprit. The root of the bifurcation.

Yes, a caustic start, but I won't backdown. Breathing in I try, once more, to distinguish the obfuscated aroma of herstory. I move beyond the top note (my face) and arrive at the middle: Bunster (read bastard).

Of Viking descent, my mother's maiden name dates to 1066. Bunster was a fictitious last name given to illegitimate children. The offspring of those British bastards crossed the great Atlantic, navigated the Southern straits of Karukinka, and upon arrival they onerously masked their wretched beginnings, cloaking their bitterness with the alcohol of Colonia Inglesa. The foul odour of the murderers of Selk'nam country is on any day surpassed by the peppery aroma of Chalkeniké, the sacred Canelo tree.

Peering at my ancestry, gloom mixes with lithic mystery.

At the suggestion of Trawlwoolway artist Julie Gough, I look through my genes.

I thank her for there I found that my bones are still populated by Indigenous wisdom.

The fragrance that arises from my patrilineal auntie's kitchen soothes the trauma, commandeered by shame, concealed by the need to survive, effaced by the passing of time and the advancement of bastards' extractive economies. To access the healing balm of the ancients I must grapple with my dubious origins and dig my nose into the hole, the mutt that I am. As a person of mixed descent, Kiltra (bastard bitch, female mongrel) is the name of my perfume.

If you take a sincere whiff of Kiltra, as I am doing now, you'll first be pierced by the artificial air of superiority, then the acrid smell of complicitous settler crimes which I attempt to duly pay for by sitting still for a good long while;

awaiting the strong wind that blows in from the future,

a resinous arboreal scent that guides me home,

followed by the hum of bees and the sweet aroma of native honey.

Kunanyi was named by the *Nuenone* people of Bruny Island. From their perspective to the south, the mother's form is clear. Even the descendants of the British colonists recognise that they are in the presence of something transcendent, and call the ridgeline "Sleeping Beauty". The best-known daughter of the *Neunone* was *Trukanini*. She has come to symbolise the fate of *Palawa* at the hands of the British.

Trukanini's father was chief of the *Neunone* people. He and his family had seen the coming and going of James Cook, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux and Nicholas Baudin, a procession of European explorers scouring the South Pacific in search of the Antipodes.

This had begun with the third voyage of Amerigo Vespucci, who sailed to the newly discovered Tierra de Santa Cruz. He was seeking a westward passage that might take him to the spice ports of the Far East. Vespucci's exploration southward along the coast to Patagonia was celebrated in Europe as the discovery of the fabled Great South Land. In 1503 he wrote in a letter to Lorenzo di Medici,

I found myself in the region of the Antipodes... this land is very agreeable, full of tall trees which never lose their leaves and give off the sweetest odors... Often I believe myself to be in Paradise... This land is occupied by people who are entirely nude, both men and women... they have no law, nor any religion, they live according to nature ... they have no king and are subject to no-one.

The idea of the South as a place for conquest by Europeans was born. When James Cook arrived on the Country of the *Neunone* in 1777, his officers saw them through the same lens, described them as having a “harmless cheerfulness about them”, “without jealousy or reserve of strangers”, and having “few or no wants & seemed perfectly happy”. To the British, the Palawa were little different to the Selk’nam,

the inhabitants seemed to have made the least progress toward any kind of improvement since Dame Nature put them out of hand, of any people I have ever met with... as for (genius) they have to appear less than even the half animated inhabitants of Terra del Fuego.

My tribal grandmother, *Woretemoeteyenner*, like *Trukanini*, was stolen away from her family by British sailors. These women, *Tyrelore* (island wives) survived through guile, diplomacy and determination to outwit her colonial tormentors, captors and lovers. When *Trukanini* died, the government trumpeted her as the last of her people. A queen.

If the queen is dead and has no heir then the nation, they surmised, was finally theirs. But the lovers had sown the seeds of their own defeat. The mixed-race children of *Tyrelore* were nurtured by the corpuscular embers of ancestral fires. Their *Palawa* culture would not die so easily. We still walk our Country as surely as the Protean forests of Gondwana persist from *Karukinka* to *Lutruwita*.

I smell my ancient grandmother’s breath. It inhabits this land. Her liquid wisdom is the place where I swim. She enters my body every time I submerge in the cold rocky pools of seawater gathered at the feet of the Cordillera de la Costa, mi lugar.

Today and yesterday, I find solace from my estrangement, from her estrangement, by walking the littoral zone that I sense with my feet is where her song animates me, her granddaughter. Communing with her I drift along the liminal space of salted air and mountain wind, la Cordillera de la Costa. I walk to show my respect, to let her stories enter the soles of my knowing. The sweat that gathers at my brow and the tears that run hot along my cheeks are her homecoming and my plea for advice, she is alive and always provides.

The beating of the lofty wings of the ghost of the coastal forest, *Peuquito*, is a call for my attention. I am drawn into the dreaming. It’s a hall of mirrors. I see all of her seeing me and I see my fractal complicities. I am a *Kiltra*, and they know this. Their love is not tainted by ambition but sparked by the story of feeling. The pain and the grief they endured was not in vain.

Years ago, I sat around a table at a poet’s home on Bruny Island. “Greg,” I asked: “what is Bruny’s original name?” May I call you Greg? What’s in a name? Can I address you with the intimacy of cousins? If so, then I’ll share a story:

Greg was there; as was Bruno, Lucy, Denise and Pete, the poet. We'd spent the day together and were gathered around a small stove-fire. Our bodies were tender from a day exposed to the elements. Seen through the eyes of a Trawulwuy man, Adventure bay is like my perfume, layers upon layers, of grievances and resilience. When someone helps you "see what you are seeing" you become available to multiplicity, humbled contradictions. What luck! I recall the midden that Greg and I stood with. There, tiers of mineral intelligence held the ancient and not so distant stories of the island. I sat in the kitchen mound as Greg animated the dances that had occurred there, returning with his words.

Days prior to this happening,

Bruno and I were sharing a meal in North Melbourne. He'd just arrived from the north and in great camaraderie I spoke to him about the rigorous schooling I was receiving from Aboriginal Australians.

"Everything is alive" I said.

As a Gaian, he nodded in agreement, but I pushed us further, whispering:

"Nothing that is claimed extinct is disappeared."

"Listen," I urged.

"Tread softly.

Ancestors are awaiting acknowledgement.

Smell them in the briny and let yourself be lost."

He took a sip of a natural wine that he found as rank as some find the scent of Kiltra to be. We both leaned in, into trouble, allowing our differences to be between us.

This kind of friendship is extraordinary. Like like. Kind-ness. Curious Kinship.

Back to the poet's table, we are playing a guessing game.

Greg has presented us with a wine bottle; not to drink but to scrutinize.

Shall we talk epistemology?

Know how.

I do not know how to do me.

I'm fractured, dissident, breached, illegitimate, fancy and false, tardy and frayed at the edges. How is knowing acquired in my condition? How do I mind knowing without confiscate knowledge? The tension within this question, within in me, is the fire of my

rage. I'm demoralised by the exaltation of the Bunster lineage to Latin American royalty.
No where can I find a written account of the stories of my barefooted grandma's walking
routes. Her feet, my pride.

River people. Reindeer people. Glacier people. Desert people. Flower wars.

I am beset with grief,

this pain is the fountain of my pen.

I write with its bloodied ink.

Making mistakes, I fumble,

but I am not important.

It is the knotted story that wants untangling.

We belong because we are given to.

Pachamamita soy tu rezo.

The tide has left a littered shore.

A storm came up while I was gone.

In the night. My eyes shut firm.

'Tis a risk I take to close these eyes.

On days that I have lived.

On years. And generations too.

With rest I fade away.

I crumble, tired, into the earth – my mother's breast.

To rest. To rest.

The beach is strewn with planks and oars.

Chests still locked and casks split wide.

Ahead a seal lies dead. Roughly flensed.

Another. They stretch away along the strand.

Off to the point where a fire burns low and slowly dies.

"Is this my work?" I bellow low.

That voice is lost to howling air.

An accursed wind that's stiff and cold.

An eternal Westing blow.

The crows, they crouch and hug the dune.

Fixed upon a setting sun, they cast a glance.

And see my lonely soul.

Behind them, middens too bear witness.
Resolute. They stand against the wind.
But rising seas will one day strip their shells, bearing bones within.

The blow chills all who've walk this shore.
Who dare to ponder time and tide.

Old grandfather. His voice, it flurries in my lea.
Too quiet for me to know his words but loud enough for me to dream.
Of his dark face and knotted hair.

Puralia Meenamata

There is an Elder in my life whom I hold as mentor and friend. Jim's name is *Puralia Meenamata*, the name itself a homage to his own mentor, the *Noonuccal* poet Kath Walker. She called herself Oodgeroo, after the paperbark tree, and bid Jim, a *Meenamatta* man to do the same. These names bind the writer to their ancestral Country and honour the task of writing as an act of resistance and celebration of cultural strength.

More than a decade ago, Jim and I spoke at a conference of the South Project, of the need for a Museum of Southern Memory. Such a thing would nurture and celebrate the diverse creative practices that carry the stories of First Peoples and those, like the *Tyrelore*, who are cast up on the shores of cultural upheaval and trauma. Our vision for a Museum of Southern Memory would reach into and beyond the colonial archives to celebrate the cultural practices that carry culture through time. Southern memory speaks of origin, resilience and sustainability. It draws its beginnings from before the age of our Ancestral creation beings and is carried by our crafts people and artists. Its voices include those of *Mangana and Kunanyi*. This vision grows through conversations like this one. We invite others to join us.

Puralia Meenamatta has been pushing his way through the thickening days of his eighth decade for a while now. Each time I see him, his face is more deeply lined in equal measure by the rage and laughter that has spanned our time apart. He is the sovereign of his life now. He has earned his place on the Earth, which he knows as his Mother. The ground he stands upon is solid under his feet. It is rocky, soiled and woven with the roots of grasses and trees. Water flows through it and the sun warms it. It smells sweet. Below the surface of the Earth, the mycorrhiza sing with life as they wander from species to species, gathering all in a conversation that flows freely from life to death to life. Recycling. Always growing. A nervous system of Gaian dimension – an everlasting seat of immortality.

One day the mycelia will find their opportunity to enter our skin. To rejoin our flesh and bones to the Earth. To reunite like with like. Gases will rise and minerals will fall. Liquids will flow and we will burst through our last moment to sit down with *Kunanyi* and all other Ancestors—*Palawa* and *Selk'nam*—adding our stories to theirs.

This synthesis of writing by Greg and Camila has emerged from time spent together exploring the persistence of Indigenous culture in place on Bruny Island, Tasmania, where they were in the company of environmental philosophers Pete Hay and Bruno Latour.

About Greg Lehman and Camila Marambio

Greg Lehman is a descendent of the Trawlwuy people of north east Tasmania. His tribal Grandmother Woretemoetyenner, along with other Trawlwuy women, was traded by British seafarers in the early 19th century as slave labour for the sealing industry. Woretemoetyenner's father, Manalargenna, was a Clever-man and warrior who led the First nations of the North east in a guerrilla campaign to drive the British from their lands. Greg is Pro Vice Chancellor of Aboriginal Leadership at the University of Tasmania, and his research, curatorial and creative practice explores the representation of Aboriginal people in colonial art.



Camila Marambio is a mestiza curator born on Yaqui country in the northern Sonora desert to young immigrant parents from Chile. She is director of Ensayos, a collective research practice that focuses on ecopolitical issues impacting archipelagos. She founded the program in 2010 on Karukinka/Tierra del Fuego in order to integrate artists and humanities scholars into the existing scientific research teams in the region. Working in partnership with Wildlife Conservation Society's Karukinka Natural Park and the Selk'nam Corporation Chile, Ensayos is currently advocating for peatland conservation. Camila is postdoctoral fellow of The Seedbox: A Mistra-Formas Environmental Humanities Collaboratory at Linkoping University in Sweden.



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References

^{↑1} Eisler, *The Furthest Shore: Images of Terra Australis from the Middle Ages to Captain Cook*. pp. 13-16.

^{↑2} Thomas, *Cook: The Extraordinary Voyages of Captain James Cook*. p. 295.