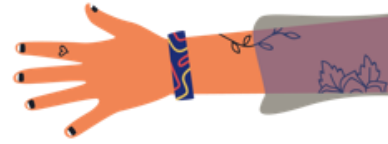


The Great Chain of Being

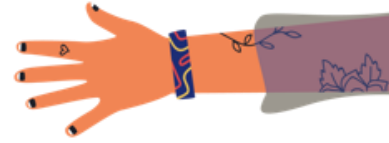


The Great Chain of Being, by Didacus Valades (1579)

Questions to discuss as a class:

- What are the different categories/species represented in each step of the Chain of Being?
- How are elements organised in this graphic representation? Think about what hierarchies are being represented. Who can rule over whom?
- Why do you think that heaven and hell appear in this painting? What do these places represent?
- What does it mean to be closer to or further away from heaven in the Great Chain of Being? What do you think are the consequences of being placed at the top or at the bottom?
- Is the Great Chain of Being also a *moral* scale?

Māori cosmogonies



Origin story 1: Papatūānuku

My flesh, muscle, sinew, and cartilage are composed of rock, granite, dirt, mud, stone, sand, and all that is dense and solid.

My bones are fossilised trees, veins of granite, gold, silver, copper, and all precious metals, branching from my core, from the centre of my being.

My blood is molten lava, liquid rock, water, boiling mud, nourishing bone and flesh through a labyrinth of rigid veins.

My breath is sulphur, gas, air and mist, seeping through countless layers of hardened skin, a skin of regenerating life. Life for my children, my grandchildren and the countless offspring which derive from them. They are the forests, plants, seas, rivers and creatures which clothe me. They are my wondrous korowai which sustains us all.

This is my story.

My new born, Rūaumoko, suckles at my breast, kicks and plays as any child, causing my belly to rumble, my body to shudder and my children to be wary. Rūaumoko stayed with me when I was separated from Ranginui, Sky Father, when we chose to allow light to come between us.

It was the right time for us to grow apart, my husband and I. It was also the right time for our children to grow and understand the responsibilities of becoming all they possibly could. And so we allowed our son Tāne to brace himself against me, to thrust his legs upward, pushing Sky Father away, to sever our embrace.

And the journey of following the unspoken words of our forbearers continued. This was their gift to us, an imprint in our consciousness, handed down from Te Kore, the nothingness, through Te Pō, the nights. A gift of love which we in turn passed on to our children, to continue the cycle of creation.

Creation requires pain, requires sacrifice, requires possibility and belief, as food, water and light for any living thing. Our separation was a time of inward turning – a time of discovery, a time of power, a time of regenerating energy, a time of change.

My korowai which cloaked my body in the past was also the foundation to receive the seed for the future. Ranginui instructed Tāne, our son, to plant the seed, to weave it into the tapestry of my korowai. And as he did so, Ranginui's tears nourished the seed, so too did light give the seed food, fulfilling a promise from the past.

This was the beginning of my journey as the mother of all, from whom all living things are created, to whom all will eventually return.

We had allowed our children to create a space between us, a space which admitted light. Light which allowed growth and the ability to stand tall. And now that our children have been free to create whatever their will desires, some have forgotten from whom they came.

But I hear them calling, a karanga of acknowledgement, of understanding that they will not forget. They call to celebrate a new day, to honour those who have passed to the next world, they call to acknowledge their ancestral parents, Sky Father and Earth Mother.

I am Papatūānuku, Earth Mother.

Taken from: <https://eng.mataurangamaori.tki.org.nz/Support-materials/Te-Reo-Maori/Maori-Myths-Legends-and-Contemporary-Stories/A-trilogy-of-Wahine-Toa>

Origin story 2: Hineahuone

My flesh is the deep red clay of Kurawaka, the blood of my parents. This blood is my blood, a sacrifice Ranginui and Papatūānuku endured so that I, the first woman, could come in to being. My bones are the bones of my ancestors, gifted by my mother. My breath, the first breath of life was mine to take – was mine to hold, was mine to release.

And following the first breath was consciousness, encompassed in this newly formed body. A body filled with love, beauty, wonder, and every emotion that I, the first human vessel, could possibly contain.

Blood, bone, flesh, spirit, and breath. 'Tihei mauri ora!' Behold I live!

This is my story.

Following the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku, light flooded the world. And with light came the possibility of life.

The children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku had only talked of life, had debated and argued over it. They had not experienced it for themselves, not in the physical forms that tormented their imaginations.

Life could not be commanded, could not be forced. Life in the physical form eluded the children of Ranginui and Papatūānuku long after Tāwhirimātea's rage had abated.

The two celestial parents, newly separated, needed time to consider how life, in all its wondrous forms, should be created. They prayed, at this time, that their lives apart would continue to follow the pathways of their ancestors, that their decision was truly for the future.

Tears of love and remembrance spilt from the eyes of Ranginui, as too did ascending mists of love rise into the sky.

And after this time of sadness, of letting go, the tears and mists which followed finally settled, covering the newly woven korowai Papatūānuku had prepared long before the separation.

It was Tāne, the male essence who followed the instructions of his father, who was gifted the seed and guided by him to weave life into the fabric of the enormous korowai. A korowai of life, of creatures, of living things, held by the earth, nurtured with water and warmed by the sun.

It was the human form that eluded Tāne, and was hidden from him. Papatūānuku waited until she knew the time was right, then led Tāne to her sacred place, to Kurawaka. This was where he fashioned me from the red clay he found there.

I was the first. The first to breathe, to touch, to feel, to hold, to know, to experience everything of the newly created world.

I was in awe with what had preceded me, with what had ensured my creation. Overwhelmed with responsibility, I felt the guiding hand of Papatūānuku in my prayers, in my blood and in my body. I felt the spirit of Ranginui in my mind and the breath of Tāne in my lungs. These things helped me understand.

And when Tāne came to me he helped sooth my fears, showing me his world as an atua, the creations that had passed by him. And in turn I helped him understand what it was to be human, to feel, to touch, to experience the world as a physical being. And from that time we brought our worlds together to conceive our first born, Hinetitama, whose journey was also written before her time.

I am Hineahuone, the creator of people.

Taken from: <https://eng.mataurangamaori.tki.org.nz/Support-materials/Te-Reo-Maori/Maori-Myths-Legends-and-Contemporary-Stories/A-trilogy-of-Wahine-Toa>



Origin story 3: Hinenuitepō

My pores excrete the absence of light, darkness. My bones are memories of past lives, my flesh, nourished with stories and gifts left by those who continue past me. My arms are forever open, lovingly held in welcome.

This is my story.

Beyond Te Rerenga Wairua, beyond the pōhutukawa tree standing at the cliff's edge, is the darkness. The darkness is my marae, my whare tipuna, my tūrangawaewae, my home. This is the place I choose for myself, this is where I dwell.

I wait for them here, the children, the grandchildren, the parents, the grandfathers and grandmothers. I wait for them to come to me, 'Haere mai, haere mai, haere mai ra...' I call.

"Welcome my children, to your ancestress, to your tipuna whaea. Welcome to life beyond the earthly realm, welcome to Rarohenga, the home of the spirit." My tupuna, Ranginui and Papatūānuku, were pushed apart and light entered the world. With light came possibility, aspiration and desire, a desire for growth, a desire for life.

It was Tāne who felt this desire in his bones and flesh, who sought that his desire be satisfied. It was Tāne who searched in vain until finally Papatūānuku, my grandmother, chose to guide his path.

And so Tāne came to Kurawaka, the pubic area of Papatūānuku, where the sacred blood of my ancestors, Ranginui and Papatūānuku had spilt into the earth. And from the red clay that he found there, he fashioned Hineahuone, the first woman, the first human, my mother.

I was conceived at this time when my parents joined themselves. As I grew inside my mother's womb, she sang to me the teachings of creation, gifted by my grandmother.

And as a young girl these teachings continued until I reached an age when blood became a sign of womanhood. Blood that not only shaped my mother but also shaped me, shaped my future.

And at this time questions of my past and future troubled me, questions of my place in this newly created world, questions of who I was to be. I asked these questions of my mother and she sent me to pose them to the carved posts of our whare.

The posts told me my father was of the spirit realm, an atua, my mother of the earth, a physical being, and I, the first born, the mātaamua, traversed these worlds, encompassing them both.

I realised as I read the carved stories that the animals, insects, plants and all living things were also part of this wider order of things. And that my father, mother and grandparents were the procreators, the storytellers.

This was when I wondered about the pathway of the spirit and also about the physical being, these two parts of myself. I wondered about the future of my siblings ultimately returning to Papatūānuku when their lives came to an end. I prayed to my grandmother to guide me, and a space opened up on the carved posts, a space for my future to be created.

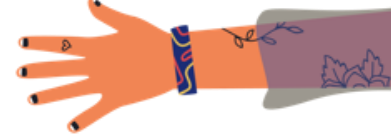
And as the newly formed carvings revealed themselves my journey became clear. This was the gift, he taonga tuku iho, from my grandmother, to my mother, to me.

And so I left my parents and travelled to Rarohenga, to receive all those who passed from the physical world to the next.

Since this time, I have welcomed them to my marae, my whare tipuna, my tūrangawaewae, to give thanks for past lives and to start anew.

I am Hinenuitepō, guardian of the spirit.

Taken from: <https://eng.mataurangamaori.tki.org.nz/Support-materials/Te-Reo-Maori/Maori-Myths-Legends-and-Contemporary-Stories/A-trilogy-of-Wahine-Toa>



Origin stories: Whakapapa and kaitiakitanga

In traditional Māori knowledge, as in other indigenous cultures, everything in the world is believed to be related. People, birds, fish, trees, weather patterns – they are all members of a cosmic family.

This linking is explained in tātai (genealogies) and kōrero (stories), collectively termed whakapapa (meaning to make a foundation, to place in layers). Experts recite the whakapapa of people, birds, fish, trees and the weather to explain the relationships between all things and thus to place themselves within the world. This helps people to understand the world, and to know how to act within these relationships. In that sense, origin stories encompass values that guide human interaction with other beings.

Māori origin stories express a deep kinship between humans and the natural world. The idea of being born from the earth is the foundation for such kinship. When one is a child of the earth there is no sense of ownership of land – rather, one holds a sense of care towards it. This sense of care is embodied in the concept of kaitiakitanga. Kaitiakitanga means guardianship and protection. It is a way of managing the environment, based on the Māori worldview. A kaitiaki is a guardian. This can be a person or group that cares for an area such as a lake or forest or another element of te taiao (the environment)

Adapted from <https://teara.govt.nz/en>

Workshop

- **Reflect:** How are the stories of Hinenuitepō, Hineahuone, and Papatūānuku related to the concepts of whakapapa and kaitiakitanga?
- What stories of origin do you have in your own culture?

Remember that origin stories are present in all cultures. Science offers origin narratives including the Big Bang and Evolution. These scientific narratives

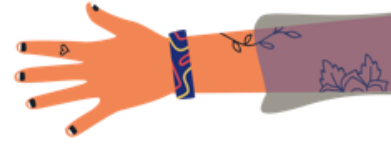
appear as universally valid given the pretension of science that it builds knowledge that is universally valid. This pretension of universality has worked together with colonisation to dismiss local/indigenous knowledge and stories, which have been demeaned as myths and untrue, as they contradict Western scientific logic. Colonisation, besides involving military control, land expropriation, change of population balance and change of institutions (e.g: law), has also involved the colonisation of indigenous worldviews.

While the imposition of a dominant colonial worldview has been a reality for Māori people, they have managed to preserve much of their knowledge, practices, values and traditions until today. This does not mean that they resist scientific knowledge. Rather, they are able to embrace more than one worldview and can see themselves as both the children of Papatūānuku and the result of evolution. Western culture and its science practices have had more difficulty accepting the value inherent in indigenous knowledge, but that is slowly starting to shift.

Tensions between science pretension of universality and indigenous knowledge are still present in New Zealand today.

The Great Chain of Being that we studied in the previous learning experience is a component of Western cosmogonies. How are the ideas of the Great Chain of Being similar to or different from Māori cosmogonic narratives? What kind of relationships with the natural world are embodied in each origin story?

- **Creative writing:** After having reflected on the origin narratives that are present in your culture, now you have the possibility to create your own origin story. Remember to add information not only of the origin of human beings but of the world itself and the other living creatures. Remember that origin stories are important because they allow us to understand our place in the world as well as our relationship with all other beings.



Positions regarding Mauna Kea

1.

The telescope should be constructed in Mauna Kea because it is best place in the world for it and the scientific knowledge that will come from it is important for the whole of humanity.

'TMT scientists selected Mauna Kea after a rigorous five-year campaign spanning the entire globe that measured virtually every atmospheric feature that might affect the performance of the telescope. This represents the possibility of pushing our vision farther into space and our understanding farther back in time to help answer fundamental questions about the universe. It is very likely that TMT will enable discoveries that we cannot even begin to anticipate today.'

Source: <https://www.maunakeaandtmt.org/facts-about-tmt/>

2.

Hawaiian Indigenous people should be respected for their decision to defend their most sacred place from desecration and environmental damage. TMT should not be built.

'There is a deep-rooted Hawaiian phrase that underscores the importance of Mauna Kea: "mālama 'āina." There is no literal English translation, but it represents a profound cultural belief that is rooted in fidelity to a cause greater than oneself — the custody and stewardship of the land, preserving it for the next generation of Hawaiians.'

Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/09/06/hawaii-mauna-kea-respected-build-thirty-meter-telescope-somewhere-column/2078408001/>

3.

Police should come and arrest the protestors who are blocking access to Mauna Kea, as they are endangering the safety of TMT workers and stopping a project approved by the law.

'Hawaii's governor, David Ige, said at a news conference that he had issued an emergency proclamation that would allow the authorities to better manage roadways and cordon off certain areas on the mountain. He said the protests had created a dangerous situation, that roads were being illegally occupied and that the state would work to ensure the telescope's construction could begin.'

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/17/science/mauna-kea-protest.html>

4.

The TMT should be built at Mauna Kea because it will bring economic benefits to the Hawaiian economy.

'TMT Corporation, the nonprofit behind the telescope, estimates its project could inject more than \$US150 million to Hawaii's economy and create 140 high-paying engineering and tech jobs. It also says the construction plan has met all the legal and environmental requirements.'

Source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02354-5>

5.

Although TMT might bring economic growth to Hawaii, this will not necessarily result in economic growth for indigenous people. Their call for privileging relationships with Mauna Kea over profit should be respected, and the TMT project stopped.

'There are now 13 telescopes on the mountaintop, but they have brought less of an economic boom than expected. The telescopes were supposed to help change that and didn't. The problem is that most observatory jobs do not go to Hawaiians... Most jobs are outsourced to the universities and organisations that invest in the telescopes.'

Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/30-meter-telescope-should-be-built-mauna-kea-2015-8>

6.

The TMT must be stopped until an agreement is reached between both parties.

'I think we need to halt construction and restart a conversation between the state, the universities and Native Hawaiians about potential alternative futures for Mauna Kea — which include restoring the ecological damage caused by the 13 other telescopes on the mountain and dismantling the 5 telescopes slated for decommissioning. Such steps would provide credibility that the University of Hawaii recognizes its responsibility to take care of Mauna Kea. Moving the TMT to an alternative site in the Canary Islands should also be seriously discussed in consideration of the community.'

Source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02304-1>

7.

Protectors of the mauna should not block the road, as this is disrupting the scientific activity and work at the established observatories. They should look for alternative ways of getting what they want through legal avenues.

'The shutdown is the longest interruption to scientific activity on Mauna Kea in the five-decade history of astronomy on the mountain. Technicians are able to make limited visits to the summit, where the telescopes are located; each is negotiated by the activists and the office that manages scientific activities.'

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02354-5>

8.

Protectors of Mauna Kea should continue with the roadblocks, as they have exhausted other legal actions and also because their arguments of having a sacred relationship with the mountain (as an ancestor and place of origin) are unlikely to be taken into account by Western institutions.

'Our distinct claims to land, difference, meaning, and meaning making become irresolvable in settler courts, state discourses and Western scientific paradigms (because) any recognition of a distinct indigenous Kanaka ontology (Hawaiian worldview) or kanaka indigeneity might also require action, which would undermine the perpetuation of settler colonial antics on indigenous soil.'

Salazar, J. A. (2014). Multicultural settler colonialism and indigenous struggle in Hawai'i: The politics of astronomy on Mauna a Wākea (Doctoral dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Manoa).

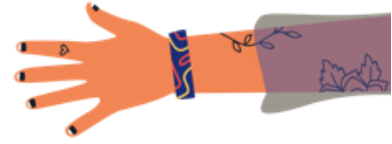
9.

The conflict at Mauna Kea is not merely a struggle over land but a struggle about understanding, practices and relationships with the world and with others.

'What is really at stake ... is a conflict between two ways of knowing and being in the world. For many Native Hawaiians and other Indigenous peoples, sacredness is not merely a concept or label. It is a lived experience of oneness and connectedness with the natural and spiritual worlds. It is as common sense as believing in gravity. This experience is very much at odds with the everyday secular-humanist approach of Western thinking that emerged out of the Enlightenment, and which sees no "magic" or "enchantment" in the world. And of course, seeing nature as inert facilitates both commercial exploitation and scientific exploration.'

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/heart-hawaiian-people-arguments-arguments-against-telescope-mauna-kea-180955057/>

Land struggles



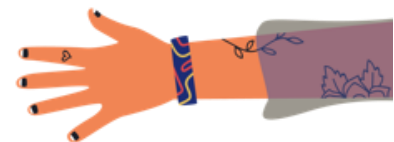
Charge pressed against the defendants:

Obstructing government operations.

(1) A person commits the offense of *obstructing government operations* if, by using or threatening to use violence, force, or physical interference or obstacle, the person intentionally obstructs, impairs, or hinders:

- (a) The performance of a governmental function by a public servant.
- (b) The enforcement of the penal law.
- (c) The preservation of the peace by a law enforcement officer acting under color of the law enforcement officer's official authority
- d) The operation of a radio, telephone, television, or other telecommunication system owned or operated by the State or one of its political subdivisions.

The obstruction of government operations is a misdemeanour, penalised with a maximum sentence of 30 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.



Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017

Public Act 2017 No 7
Date of assent 20 March 2017
Commencement see section 2

Te Awa Tupua and Tupua te Kawa

12. Te Awa Tupua recognition

Te Awa Tupua is an indivisible and living whole, comprising the Whanganui River from the mountains to the sea, incorporating all its physical and metaphysical elements.

13. Tupua te Kawa

Tupua te Kawa comprises the intrinsic values that represent the essence of Te Awa Tupua, namely—

Ko Te Kawa Tuatahi

(a) *Ko te Awa te mātāpuna o te ora*: the River is the source of spiritual and physical sustenance: Te Awa Tupua is a spiritual and physical entity that supports and sustains both the life and natural resources within the Whanganui River and the health and well-being of the iwi, hapū, and other communities of the River.

Ko Te Kawa Tuarua

(b) *E rere kau mai i te Awa nui mai i te Kahui Maunga ki Tangaroa*: the great River flows from the mountains to the sea: Te Awa Tupua is an indivisible and living whole from the mountains to the sea, incorporating the Whanganui River and all of its physical and metaphysical elements.

Ko Te Kawa Tuatoru

(c) *Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au*: I am the River and the River is me: The iwi and hapū of the Whanganui River have an inalienable connection with, and responsibility to, Te Awa Tupua and its health and well-being.

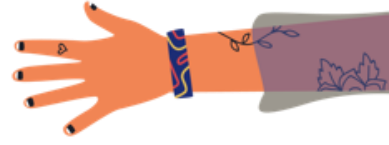
Ko Te Kawa Tuawhā

(d) *Ngā manga iti, ngā manga nui e honohono kau ana, ka tupu hei Awa Tupua*: the small and large streams that flow into one another form one River: Te Awa Tupua is a singular entity comprised of many elements and communities, working collaboratively for the common purpose of the health and well-being of Te Awa Tupua.

14. Te Awa Tupua declared to be legal person

Te Awa Tupua is a legal person and has all the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of a legal person.

Decolonising futures



Ka Mānu

E te hunga whakapono iti
Me haere Māori i runga i te
moana nui
E tā!

Ka whati te moana nui – e tā!
Ka whati te moana roa – e tā!
Ka mānu, ka mānu tonu e tā – e tā

He waka tē ai tahuri – e tā!
He waka tē ai tīkoki – e tā!
Ka mānu, ka mānu tonu e tā – e tā

Hikohiko te uira,
Kanapa i runga
Whētuki i raro rā
Ka papā, ka rū ana
Ka porepore koa e
Takinakina e – E tā!
Takinakina e – E tā!
Takinakina e – E tā!
Takinakina e – E tā!

English translation

Oh ye of little faith
Walk forth with ease upon the great ocean

Though the seas may roar
And the oceanic expanse rage
You will remain afloat

For you command a vessel that shall never be overturned nor unsteadied
You will remain afloat

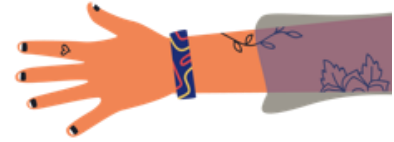
Lightning may flash

Illuminating the heavens above
Sending rolling thunder below
Resounding, trembling
Though overcome with fear
Ascend
Prevail
Lead
Sing!

Note from the composer:

In the face of great adversity, faith is a powerful agent; Faith in the divine, yourself, your purpose, your kaupapa, your supporters, your atua and the core beliefs that maintain your aroha and your mana in times of great hardship. With the growing conflicts at Ihumātao, Mauna Kea, and Standing Rock, the continued marginalisation of indigenous peoples, perpetual injustices historic and current, and the narratives surrounding the celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the landing of Captain James Cook in Tūranga – faith is the stabiliser, the enabler. Faith continues to manifest goodness and moral courage in all the kaupapa we uphold and the immense burdens we carry. Whakapono affords us clarity in times of calamity and an unyielding drive to endure and overcome, so that our spirit may still rejoice to the gentle song of peace that faith brings to our struggle.

Decolonising futures



We Are Because We Don't Have

By *Upolu Luma Vaai*

We don't *have* the spirit
We *are* the spirit
We don't *have* land
We *are* the land
We don't *have* the ocean
We *are* the ocean
We don't *have* relationship
We *are* relationship
We don't *have* stories
We *are* the story
Rooted
Connected
Fixed yet fluid in bonds of
Being in *Areness*
Born from the depths
Of *Imness*
I am 'in' the community
The community is
'In' me

I live
Because
We *are*
A chorus of
Inextricable relatedness
Breathing concords
Of differences
Savouring variations
Of unity

Have!
And perish in
A unison of loss
Uttered by

One-truth ideologies
Secured by
Systems of oneness

Are!

An all becoming source
Whose becoming
I become
A genesis of harmony
Visible
In the sleeps of the stones
In the breaths of the trees
In the dreams of animals
In the whispers of clouds
In the speeches of waves
In the walking of mountains
In the re-turns of flowers
In the rhythms of life and death

We *are*

Because

We don't *have*

Extract from: Va'ai, Upolu Luma & Nabobo-Baba, Unaisi (2017) The Relational Self : Decolonising Personhood in the Pacific. The University of the South Pacific and Pacific Theological College (pp. 283-284).

Dear Matafele Peinam

By Kathy Jetnil Kijiner

dear matafele peinam,

you are a seven month old sunrise of gummy smiles
you are bald as an egg and bald as the buddha
you are thighs that are thunder and shrieks that are lightning
so excited for bananas, hugs and
our morning walks past the lagoon

dear matafele peinam,

i want to tell you about that lagoon

that lucid, sleepy lagoon lounging against the sunrise

men say that one day
that lagoon will devour you

they say it will gnaw at the shoreline
chew at the roots of your breadfruit trees
gulp down rows of your seawalls
and crunch your island's shattered bones

they say you, your daughter
and your granddaughter, too
will wander rootless
with only a passport to call home

dear matafele peinam,

don't cry

mommy promises you

no one will come and devour you

no greedy whale of a company sharking through political seas
no backwater bullying of businesses with broken morals
no blindfolded bureaucracies gonna push
this mother ocean over
the edge

no one's drowning, baby
no one's moving
no one's losing
their homeland
no one's gonna become
a climate change refugee

or should i say
no one else

to the carteret islanders of papua new guinea
and to the taro islanders of the solomon islands
i take this moment

to apologize to you
we are drawing the line here

because baby we are going to fight
your mommy daddy
bubu jimma your country and president too
we will all fight

and even though there are those
hidden behind platinum titles
who like to pretend that we don't exist
that the marshall islands
tuvalu
kiribati
maldives
and typhoon haiyan in the philippines
and floods of pakistan, algeria, colombia
and hurricanes, earthquakes, and tidalwaves
didn't exist

still
there are those
who see us

hands reaching out
fists raising up
banners unfurling
megaphones booming
and we are
canoes blocking coal ships
we are
the radiance of solar villages
we are
the rich clean soil of the farmer's past
we are
petitions blooming from teenage fingertips
we are
families biking, recycling, reusing
engineers dreaming, designing, building
artists painting, dancing, writing
and we are spreading the word

and there are thousands out on the street
marching with signs
hand in hand
chanting for change NOW

and they're marching for you, baby
they're marching for us

because we deserve to do more than just
survive
we deserve
to thrive

dear matafele peinam,

your eyes are heavy
with drowsy weight
so just close those eyes, baby
and sleep in peace

because we won't let you down

you'll see

Retrieved from: <https://www.kathyjetnilkijiner.com/united-nations-climate-summit-opening-ceremony-my-poem-to-my-daughter/>