

# WAYS OF BEING

CELEBRATING INCLUSION



*Jessica Heron, The Sea, 2025 (RWL Art Social Group)*



A Rodney District Poetry Anthology  
with images from  
RICI's Creative Convergence 2025

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**AIM (Adults in Motion):** members' participation

**'En Plein Air' session:** a 2-hour public outdoor painting event for local artists

Individual poets and artists are acknowledged alongside their works.

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Margaret Needham, *River Romance*, 2 December 2025 (*En Plein Air*)

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*Vivienne Raney, Mahurangi River View, 2 Dec 2025 (En Plein Air)*

# INTRODUCTION

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**Rodney Inclusive Communities Initiative (RICI)** is a charitable trust in the Rodney District, north of Auckland, New Zealand. RICI promotes inclusion and accessibility, and supports the wellbeing of disabled people and their families - through advocacy, information, and events.

**Creative Convergence** is RICI's annual week-long inclusive arts festival, held in Warkworth in early December to align with International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 Dec). It connects local creatives, community groups, and marginalised communities through diverse, accessible events.

**WAYS OF BEING – Celebrating Inclusion**, is RICI's first publication. Featuring work from *Creative Convergence 2025* participants - including the *Poetry Jam*, *En Plein Air* painting session, and the final Art Display - artworks are thoughtfully placed to complement the poetry, and the design is accessible and welcoming.

By showcasing local talent, this publication strengthens local community connections, expands access to the arts, and promotes collaboration and inclusion.

## **Rodney Inclusive Communities Initiative (RICI) Trust**

**Board of Trustees:** Gareth Pring (Chair), Ursula Christel (Secretary), Charlotte Owens-Pring (Treasurer), Mireille Vreeburg, Beverley Tennant



*Summer Alcock, This is Me, 2025 (RWL Art Social Group)*

# DYSTONIC STORM

Jayne Lewington Lovell

On a clear day I'll flippantly  
tell you that 'Dystonic Storm'  
would make a great name for a  
rock band – and it would

But when the mercury falls and  
winds blow anywhichway my body  
barometer rides the Beaufort Scale  
from 1 to 12 – and back again

The band of pressure over head  
flashes lightening very frightening  
thunder rumbling causes mumbling  
stumbling – and confidence crumbling

Am losing words in my distress  
Mayday Mayday SOS; Calling all cars  
Call out the coastguard  
Call out anybody – and my mother

A signal comes on the breeze  
tap, tap, the mercury is rising  
like my hope that I can face a  
new day – and carry on

On that new day I'll flippantly  
tell you that 'Dystonic Storm'  
would make a great name for a  
rock band – and it would



Roger Williams,  
Untitled, 2025  
(RWL Art Social Group)

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*Dystonia is a neurological movement disorder characterized by involuntary, sustained muscle contractions that cause twisting and repetitive movements or abnormal postures. These spasms can be painful and may affect a single body part or the entire body. A dystonic storm, also called status dystonicus, is a rare, life-threatening medical emergency in which a person with dystonia experiences severe, generalised, and painful muscle contractions and rigidity.*

# ODE TO A DUMP

Roger Williams

Tip the stuff over the hill - far away.  
Chuck it or stuff it.  
The problem here to stay?  
I have heard it said that your shite  
Should be put out of your sight.

**Chorus.**

**We don't own it. The kids will pay.**

The money goes to another shore - for sure.  
We will take your rates and that is fair.  
We will waste it and the waste we will  
share.  
When its miles away - who is to pay?

**Chorus.**

**We don't own it. The kids will pay.**

Trucks a few hundred a day  
That's why there is a motorway  
- they say.  
Rail is better but it might just fail  
and then the shite stays here in our pail.  
Climate change is only a lie?  
Trucks they cost but they soon die.

**Chorus.**

**We don't own it. The kids will pay.**

It is down the drain so what is the fuss?  
The dirty old river is already a mess  
Farms it has, but none there are new.  
A drop in a bucket, so what is the 'too do'?  
The fish do care but they are only a few.

**Chorus.**

**We don't own it. The kids will pay.**

Reduce, reuse and recycle they say,  
But it is too easy to pay to send it away.  
If they were so good they put it on show  
But who is to worry. Barely a few?

**Chorus.**

**We don't own it. The kids will pay.**

To keep your rubbish near home  
is not too hard.  
The Riverhead Forest is in your back yard.  
The money to be saved is not hard to see  
but over the hill is too easy for thee.

**Chorus.**

**We don't own it. The kids will pay.**

*Maureen Roke,  
Boy with Flounder,  
2 Dec 2025  
(En Plein Air)*



# LOPSIDED

Dr Greg Judkins

That woman with curious ears  
sits alone at a wobbly  
pavement table, witness  
to a patchwork world.

A bawling kid traipses behind  
in shoes that flash and squeak  
while the wrong flavour ice cream  
melts over her hand  
and a stout woman in plaid  
is tugging a tardy little dog  
while another lugs lopsided shopping bags  
to the waiting bus stop  
where a sleek man  
swerves in  
leaps from his Lexus  
waves a card  
at the florist  
and whisks off  
with a bunch of white orchids.

She reaches down with a folded napkin  
and tries to wedge the table level  
while mismatched strangers wrangle  
their way home or wherever they go.

*Roger Williams,  
Roberts Building and Town Clock,  
2 Dec 2025 (En Plein Air)*



# IN PRAISE OF DIFFERENCE

Dr Greg Judkins

Chinese people in Cornwall Park  
interest me.

One lady claps her hands above her head  
while walking slowly backwards.

A man strides ahead of his wife  
beaming and loudly greeting  
every one he passes. *Hurro! Hurro!*  
*Morning!* I reply, catching his cheerfulness  
but, unsure whether the downcast eyes  
that follow reflect respect or  
embarrassment,  
I long to greet her too.

One old man with a bucket and scoop  
is gathering sheep poo for his garden  
and later, over the other side, I see  
his counterpart stooping and picking  
under the stinky ginkgo tree.  
I would like to reassure a lone woman  
wearing sunhat and surgical mask  
that the sun is weak at 7 o'clock  
and while a mask may be wise on the bus  
and in the supermarket, out in the breeze  
she could safely enjoy the fresh air.

The Lee family taught this schoolboy  
the art of wielding chopsticks  
and the etiquette of taking the nearest  
chunk of chopped meat  
even if it had the most bone.  
I learnt to suck on salty dried pickled  
plums  
and enjoy them, to prune tomatoes  
and to pick and pack strawberries  
with the best specimens always on top.  
I drank weak jasmine tea and learnt  
*ngor i nee* means *I love you*.

And younger still, having fallen in a deep  
sluice pit

by the milking shed of the neighbouring  
farm

I was hauled out by a Chinese boy called  
Hylee Ahoy

and as they said he had saved my life  
I gave him one of my plastic cowboys.

Later, when we lived in Nepal, working  
and learning to communicate in Nepali,  
how odd we must have seemed  
with my bushy beard, mispronunciations  
and our walking hand-in-hand in public.

The locals laughed and welcomed us  
despite our strangeness and their poverty,  
ever friendly even when cheerfully  
overcharging us for fresh buffalo milk,  
and we wouldn't have wanted it  
any other way.

Linda Stevenson,  
*Emergence*, 2025



## IN THE FRAME

Dr Greg Judkins

Queen Street Mall, Brisbane

She pushes through  
the Sunday spring parade  
of short shorts trainers  
heels shoulders and shades;

pushes her way past  
confectioned kids  
the busker's hungry hat  
and guys holding hands;

she bends to the task  
taking her time  
as the mall pavers rattle  
the small wheels of her frame.



*Natalie Hutchinson,  
Have a Peach, 2025 (RWL Art Social Group)*

# THE TREES

Schalk van Wyk

For over a hundred years  
the trees have stood:  
A perch for kookaburra  
The laughing visitors from Kawau  
And kingfishers  
And honking geese  
And wise-eyed ruru  
Keepers of the night.  
But mainly the kākā  
Screeching  
As they home in on their evening roost.

Then the men came  
Their angry chainsaws snarling  
Loud growls and cracks  
Until the huge trees came crashing down  
The earth shaking  
As the trunks hit the ground.

And that evening  
As the sun set over the Dome  
The kākā returned  
And wheeled in bewilderment  
Forlornly shrieking  
As they searched for their home.



*Melody Piclisan-Perrin  
Family Tree, 2025*

# EMPTY ROADS

Sue Hill

It's an empty road, with a full moon up above  
Street lights fade and two lanes merge to one  
There's arrows and there's circles, and there's little dotted lines,  
They're all just waiting for their chance to shine  
Shape shifting shadows slip into the lights and they're gone  
On this empty road, with a full moon up above

So I'm floating down this empty moonlit road  
It's a legal high that comes from letting go  
Love, like life, like roads, like time  
Just what's in front of what's behind,  
Not lost, not found, tonight I am no one  
On this empty road with a full moon, up above.

And I have no fear, I have no pain  
Not lost or found, I'm nowhere bound  
Tonight I will live for ever

Now I'm heaven bound, with that big moon above  
Me, the moon, the road, merge like one  
If hell is just a state of mind,  
Things that we can't leave behind  
Then heaven's in the rear view mirror and it's full of nothing  
Like an empty road, with a full moon, up above

It's an empty road,  
A big fat moon above  
A legal high  
Little arrows and dotted lines  
It's an empty road with a big moon  
Oh it's such a full moon

*Jessica Heron, Untitled, 2025 (RWL Art Social Group)*



# WORDS

Sue Hill

If I had the words I'd say, 'hiya, love you!  
If I had the words I'd say, 'thanks, you're de bomb!  
If I had the words I'd say, 'thank you, and I love  
you'  
But I don't have, words

If I had the words I'd say, 'thank you, and I love  
you'  
But I don't have words, 'cause they're stuck inside  
my head  
Somewhere in between my brain and my funny  
crooked mouth  
Words, won't come out.

If I had the words I'd say, 'choice music today!  
If I had the words I'd say, 'MUM, my tooth hurts!  
If I had the words I'd say, 'what are we having for  
dinner? Pizza? huh?!  
But I don't have, words.

*You use words that I just don't  
comprehend  
And you do things, (for my good)  
that I just don't understand  
So I get so frustrated  
And I wave my hands about  
And I try to explain  
But all that comes out is  
"Arghh, arghh garghhhhh!!!"  
'Cause I don't have, words.  
The words you use are not the same, as the ones  
that I do  
The words I use are not the same as yours  
But that don't mean that we don't talk we do it all  
the time  
It's just a different kind of language  
Yours and mine.*

I might not have the words to use, but I've mas-  
tered 'the look'  
It took you a little while but now you really read it  
good!  
The frowns a bit more complicated for all that it  
infern  
But you say my smile is worth  
A million words.

*You write words to them to explain,  
what it's like  
They write back to you with stuff,  
that you don't like  
And you get so frustrated,  
At what they keep on missing  
And you rant and you rave  
about their ignorant decisions  
And you go "grrrr!! grrrr!! hghrrrrrr.....!!!!"  
And say, "No one fucking listens...!!!!"*

Because your life is different  
Doesn't mean that you are different  
It just means that other people do the things that  
you don't do  
I'd do them if I could  
But I can't so that's all good.  
I just do what I can  
I just do what I can  
I just do what I can....  
Can you, understand?

I use wheels to get around, 'cause my legs don't  
work that good  
My body doesn't always do the things I think it  
could  
I'm a really messy eater, and we don't talk pee or  
poo...  
Well seriously, would you?!

Special is a word that people seem to use quite  
often  
Different is a word they often seem to say  
I don't walk or think or talk the way these people  
do  
So I guess that makes them, different, too...

If I had the words, I think that I would, like, write a  
song  
That explained all of this, and the world would  
sing along  
'Cause every body's different, we're like sunshine  
and rain  
And I guess that makes us, all the same...

If I had the words I'd say, 'hiya, love you!  
If I had the words I'd say 'thanks, you're de bomb!  
If I had the words I'd say thank you and I love you,  
But I don't have words  
But I don't need, words....



Cassie O'Flaherty, A Happy Busy Day, 2025  
(RWL Social Group)

# ANCIENT RAIN

Judith McNeil

'Ancient rain, falling down,  
wires my bones to the ground.'

Jimmy McCarthy

Whakamarama languorously  
sprawled above the sea  
lifts one sleepy eyelid  
surveys the coastline  
Pakawau to Wainui Bay

Decides after two months  
of dry we need rain

'Just a sun shower,'  
says the saleswoman dismissively  
I try on new old clothes  
at Trash Palace

It heaves over me  
this rain – warm & clammy  
soaking the black dress  
held together with safety pins  
covered with a black Takaka tee-shirt

A wash looks more likely  
at home the water tank fills up

Accompanied by Vanessa I take  
my newly cleaned body on a mission  
to find the perfect pine branch

We hack and saw then hoist  
the branch to shoulder height  
Two women walk in misty rain  
carrying home that symbol of Xmas

With champagne bottles unstoppered  
glasses half empty - tree lights  
casting a yellow glow  
we sing old songs from childhood  
& like in childhood place wrapped gifts  
under the tree as our parents did  
without the secrecy

Our lives have opened up new rituals  
Cyb and Ewan's chocolate fondue  
Dai and Sara's salad platter  
my Chinese chicken

Christmas without turkey -  
without husbands  
children & partners - Donna & me  
two sisters who sing 'Ancient Rain',  
drink & argue overwhelmed  
by the emotion of creativity.



*Temoaki Tereti, Untitled, 2025  
(Mahurangi College - Te Korowai Aroha)*

# WAITING AND THROWING

Judith McNeil

While waiting in pain  
for surgery I become  
good at throwing things  
Clothes into clothes basket  
or onto the chair to air  
to wear the next day  
The more painful the walking  
the more excellent my aim  
I learn to balance glasses  
on plates or plates on cups  
as I shuffle into the kitchen  
One hand on the walking stick  
the other a competent waiter

*Student work, Clay Forms, 2025 (Mahurangi College - Te Korowai Aroha)*



## AT TAHI BAR

Judith McNeil

avoiding the long drive  
into Tamaki makaurau  
*I hate to see the evening sun go down*  
blasts at me  
from the stereo  
I remember Marg Layton  
singing this to dying sun  
accompanied  
by honky tonk piano  
(Wellington folk festival  
in the days of big outdoor jams)  
here  
there is only five of us  
the barman  
clarinet breaks between the verses  
and fresh cooked snapper  
to die for



Roger Williams, *Untitled*, 2025, (RWL Art Social Group)

# WHO KNEW?

Ursula Christel

Who knew  
that genuine love and laughter,  
rich friendships and joy  
would emerge from places  
least expected?

Who knew  
that the strongest bonds  
would quietly evolve over time  
regardless of culture, status,  
age or abilities?

Who knew  
That the simple recipe of  
music and song, art and dance,  
and a table of scattered comfort food  
could weave us all together,  
in timeless unison?

We did. We knew.



*Summer Alcock, Freedom!, 2025 (RWL Art Social Group)*

# HAIKU

Ursula Christel

flames crackle and smoke  
billowing swirls lift up hope  
matariki dreams

cicada chorus  
slicing the summer silence  
a song for sunshine



*Linda Stevenson, Reconstruction, Digital Image, 2023*

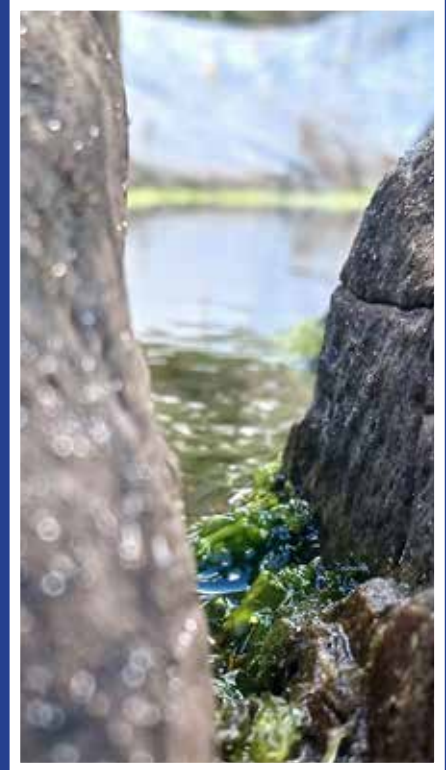
# HAIKU

Warwick Rope

deep taste of toheroa...  
a distant memory

sheltered reef...  
she speaks of a friend  
taken beyond

hihi  
a high-pitched flitter  
spreading the sun



*Photos: Albie Bott, 2025  
(Horizon School)*

# MUSINGS

Linda Stevenson

Leave the troubled garb  
Let loose  
Extricate yourself from the fetters  
of pain  
of loss  
of frustration  
of anger  
of despair of humanity  
of disappointment in yourself  
and other human beings.  
Transmute your conditioned  
way of thinking.  
Nobody has a hold over you  
Relinquish  
Dance!

You're leaving  
the Chrysalis  
perfect  
unblemished  
Your wings have emerged  
Fly!

Plant seeds  
of compassion  
kindness  
integrity  
diversity.  
Let them  
spread  
like wildflowers.  
Reseeding.

May this invisible barrier  
Be like ice  
Melting, from  
The warmth  
Of the sun  
And my heart



*JR Tekaai, Flower Field, 2025 (Mahurangi College - Te Korowai Aroha)*

# SNAP SHOTS



# CREATIVE CONVERGENCE 2025

