

HENARE KING

## Katahi Ti

The book “The Tail of the Fish” was published in 1968 and written by a Te Aupouri kuia, Matire Kereama (nee: Hoeft) of the far north of Aotearoa, New Zealand. I grew up with this book as my grandmother would read the stories to me at bedtime. Although my comprehension of each story was very vague and unrelatable to my life at that time, today, I find myself totally absorbed by the historical content and knowledge encapsulated in each chapter.

I completed a Masters of Applied Indigenous Knowledge at Te Wananga o Aotearoa in 2017, entitled; Tales of the singing fish: He tangi wairua. I composed twelve waiata (Maori songs) of which ten of the waiata was information extracted from ten chapters of the book. The other two waiata were composed specifically for my people of the Te Rarawa tribe, namely, Ahipara.

Parents today can scarcely believe how the Māori children of long ago survived without cupboards full of ready-to-eat food. Yet they did survive wonderfully well and were healthy because they lived active outdoor lives, which developed their physical and resistance to disease. Quite a big stream flowed through Hauturu settlement and contained many swimming pools. There were deep pools for the adults and shallow ones for the very young children. Many days were spent in the river, swimming, racing and diving until hunger drove everyone home.

Early morning swimming was a favourite time to swim where you could lie in the warm long grass and the noise of chattering children startled the skylark birds which flew upwards, singing excitedly as they went. It was a signal to begin

another game which everyone loved to play putting the skylark's song into words.

Ka tahi tī ka rua tī  
Ka noho mai te patī te patō re  
Ka rau nā ka rau nā  
Ka noho te kiwi  
Ka pō he wai

Tai tai to pī to pā  
Ka hui a mai  
Ko toko te rangi  
Kai ana te whetū  
Te mārama i te rangi

I te papa takina  
E hui tāre  
Ko te tio e rere  
Rā runga rā tope kapeka  
E hue kua rere turakina  
Te arero o te rangi

Kōtare wiw wawa keke  
Te manu i tau nō tū e