

*Looking at a green field,
for two Māori boys*

Matariki Williams

There is no idle land in Aotearoa

It must
grow trees for timber or
graze cattle for dairy or
house sheep to be
shorn. And,
what is idle land
anyway?

Idle land cannot produce

It must
enrich our soil and
make us richer. Does
the flower have to earn its keep, is it
not enough to be
beautiful, to be
given and received?

Idle land cannot be extracted



So,
 these commons right?
 Superfluous space, from
 the manor borne. To the
 domain of the commoner they
 become, coming together
 to till, drill, bend the land to its
 will

Feet planted in foreign soil

Do you watch
Outlander and think ‘oh,
 my tipuna would have been around
 at that time. Don’t,
 forget. I am Scottish too.’

Do you watch
Kairākau, your cousin
 playing your tipuna and think,
 mean cuz, that’s me, that’s us,
 ko tāua tāua

The roots are shallow and deep

Do you go
 over there, to those old places, where they have
 toy stores that pre-date te Tiriti, with
 the blessing of your nannies and koros and
 their reminder

Do the water moko, don’t forget to do the water

I hear of the power of the paddock.
I see the potential of the green field.
I envision pastures swaying with trees.
I trust the communion
between mother and son.
Papa and Tāne.
His feet in the soil of home.

But what was once there, and what
remains?



Above: Lukas and Jordan Green at Yarnton Commons, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom, 2000. Photo: Christina Green.