



BLACK BOUGH INTERVIEW

INTRODUCING ANKH SPICE

Ankh, your poetic voice is pretty unique.

I'm so fortunate to be in Aotearoa - these islands are unique. Being born a guest in a place that screams history, language, and mythology (if you're open to hear it) is a gift. My language-love-affair started early - I talked at 9 months (creepy) and read at 3 - and I've been playing with words ever since. Te reo Māori is part of the school curriculum here, and I got the idea that language is a lovely, flexible, constantly-evolving animal.

That these are islands is a huge influence. We're all made of salt-water and wind, and that's in every poem I write. It also goes with the mythology - the earth beneath my feet is a living thing, the peninsula I run on is a beached sea-monster - I don't know how anyone *doesn't* write poetry here.

Where do you think your poetry comes from?

When I was 11, a wise doctor told me some kids are 'born raw' - with every sense on full blast, wide open to the world. I think those skinless babies (if they survive) grow up to be our poets. For me, every experience is accompanied by a vivid internal feeling-description, begging to be translated into a form that will pop it into another human brain. I love poems that transport me into a place/moment/experience that isn't quite my own way of navigating, and I hope mine do that for others.

What's your writing process like?

I have piles and files of notes and ideas, mostly a bizarre run-on word salad. I jot constantly, and then percolate while I run (my other main obsession). That's every day - after a run, usually there's an almost fully-formed poem ready to write-and-wrangle.

Usual internet-bonus-question: If you could pick a superpower, what would it be?

Here's a secret - everyone already has one. It's called kindness, and it could quite literally change the world. I'm unashamedly

sappy about that - do I think kindness can bring down a regime, or stop climate change? No - but it could empower another person who will be the keystone for either of those things. Tread carefully and gently, especially with your words. Poetry proves that words have great power, so wield them as if the next one you use could make or break another human - because it could.

You're a recent arrival to poetry-Twitter. What do you think about it?

There are people here who are lifting each other up and amplifying lost and disenfranchised voices that need to be heard, and it's fostering something quite new and very alive. Most importantly, there's room for everyone - giving people the space and inspiration to *create* in an exhausted and time-poor world that often seems determined to suck the creativity out of us? That's special.

What inspired you to submit to Black Bough's Apollo 11 issue?

I'd read Issue 1 - like being presented with a sample-plate of succulent poems in a never-ending banquet dream. I knew I wanted to be part of Issue 2, particularly as I'd literally just written a couple of imagistic spacey poems. I had no expectation of acceptance into a global project of this scope, so Matt's hugely positive response floored me.

Are there any New Zealand poets you think the rest of the world should be more familiar with?

Selina Tusitala Marsh (NZ's current poet laureate - she's incredible, please read her), Robert Sullivan, Tusiata Avia, Hone Tuwhare (although I would really hope everyone knows about him) and Fiona Kidman and Jenny Bornholdt, who are fellow Wellingtonians - I admire their work very much. Honestly, there's a whole new generation of young NZ poets with very unique voices that the world should have one eye on, and delightfully many of them are on Twitter - I won't name them because I know I'll miss someone, but keep a close watch on @starlingmag.

Ankh tweets @SeaGoatScreams Fb: