

*“To the Top of the Plum”*: Seven New Zealand Poets

In an earlier century, I would have brought you a sketch of a tui, or cuttings from a pohutukawa tree. A tui is also known as a preacher bird, because of its throat’s white tuft. It sounds like a cough when it flies, or like sketch paper rustling in the hands of a ship’s artist. As part of continuing exchanges between the University of Iowa and Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, I taught a six-week poetry course in Wellington last January and February. It was summer there, and I met some of the seven poets in this section, discovering the others through friends and books. What can one take away from travel? I mailed my girlfriend a necklace of pounamu, the national stone, and I asked these poets for some poems.

In Michael King’s *History of New Zealand*, he says we know the pre-modern earthquake occurred in March from berries preserved on toppled trees. These poems composed my days as I wandered through Wellington, between cicadas and wind; I am happy to have them preserved here.

Zach Savich