

Faith Wilson

I JUST
WANNA P*RTY
TIL I D*E

I partied so hard my toenails fell off

I partied so hard my toenails fell off.
My body is a shell and my cells generate new cells to replace the dead things.
I drank myself into a stupor.
I became one with the earth's beat.
I spewed up eels and rainbows and guns.
I spewed up coconuts and taro leaves and strange names and I spewed up hair and nifo that I ate off the root of a
plant.
I bound my feet with taro leaves and walked back through the tracks of my ancestors.
I trudged through the mud I wiped the mud on my face.
I slipped and I fell and I ate dirt I ate earth.
Tired yet still I walked. Tired I ate tuna from the river I ate coconuts from the tuna's head.
I reached the shore and I reached the ship and I drank juniper gin and I lost my head.
I leaned overboard and I looked at my reflection on the water and I saw my father's face and my mother's face
and I couldn't see myself.
I danced to the beat I danced to the ocean beat I danced to the beat of my blood.
I danced and I ate roasted boar and I bled ancient DNA into their gin and their wine and it tasted like nectar and
it acted like poison and we danced til we fell and their heads fell off and I was the only one dancing, the only one
still on my feet, my feet bound in taro leaves, I
pushed their bodies onto a pyre I burnt the pyre I danced around the pyre I ate their flesh I ate them my
ancestors I ate them and I danced and I danced until the taro leaves came off and my feet were bloody and my
toenails fell off and I fell and I slept near the pile of burnt bones.
I shat out the bloody histories of my colonising forefathers and foremothers and I smelled it and it smelled bad
and I'll never get that shit-stench out of my head.
I remember it with every step I take on this vibrating fanua on this land I now call home on this land that has
housed me and accepted me and whose beat I have synced with.
I walk with the stench emanating, and I walk with gratitude and a head hung in shame.
I get used to the stench
I live with the stench
I am at peace with the stench
I use the stench to write a new story
The story is about how I walk between worlds
and how I walk between my histories
and the footprints I leave become legend.
This is a story about how life becomes myth.

DNA tests - rāhui - ancestry - desuetude - don't pick up that phone

Everyone takes a DNA test to discover whether their blood is more exotic than it really is. We're all just flesh on bones. We're all just vibrating cells.

*The heart of the universe is a steady, insistent beat:
the sound of cycles in sync.¹*

You can still be romantic about your lineage.
Descended from Paramount Chiefs in Vaimoso, Siumu, Fasito'otai.
Descended from the Chiefs of Clan Gunn.
We're all vibrating cells, we all have our own beat.
We're all flesh on bones.

Aut pax aut bellum | Either peace or war.²

Gunn means war in old Norse. Clan Gunn is one of the oldest Scottish clans, descended from Norse Vikings, thirsty for blood and a reputation for fighting.
Either peace or war ... don't fuck with me or I'll kill you.

We're all vibrating.
Mitochondrial Eve,
wrap me in your arms ...
We're flesh and bones.
We're each a chapter in the myth of our gafa.
Inheriting stories, tall tales,
and then we write our own.
What stories will you pass on,
and which will you take to the grave?

*If you want to find the secrets of the universe,
think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration.³*

This rāhui is making me pissed off.
My phone vibrates with the energy
of a thousand managers
asking me if I've *seen that email*
followed up on that meeting
updated that document
and that, my friends, is called
frequency.

Don't you dare touch that phone!⁴

Descended from gods.
I took comfort in the bosom of my mother's stories
I suppose that the earliest memories of most of us concern our mothers.⁵
But I want to write a story about my fathers, all of them
I resisted them.
Do I start in the highlands of Caithness?
Or with the street rats of Bermondsey?
Do I start as their ship arrived on the shores
of Aotearoa? Where one story ended
another myth began writing itself.
How they fought in the highlands
and built castles out of bones.
How the stories they told were passed down.
What histories do I call upon
and what has been omitted?
What is pure bull
shit and what of those stories still live in me?
What are the stories I carry
like lead in my veins?
Am I stuck with them
or can I rewrite them like you
straighten the crooked teeth
from your dad's side?
Can you purge and shit the stories
out like a good liver cleanse?
What if you don't like what you see and worse yet ...
what if you are unmoved by it?
What if you dive down
through the wreckage
and you emerge to the surface
with nothing?
I can only start with what I know.
Let me write you a story.

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1. A quote from Steven Strogatz's book about vibration: *Sync: How Order Emerges from Chaos in the Universe, Nature and Daily Life*. I was interested in the idea of there being a heart of the universe, and that it provides a beat, a music that we unconsciously live by.
 2. This is the official Clan Gunn motto. I was so struck by the savagery of it.
 3. Apparently, a quote from Nikola Tesla, but I don't know where/when he said it. I just liked the way it sounds.
 4. A hilarious song with a funky beat. IYKYK.
 5. This is a line from a book *My First Eighty Years*, written by a relative on my father's side, Helen Wilson. I grew up actually thinking she was my great, great grandmother or something but found out recently she was an aunt or second cousin. The book is boring as hell, but is an account of early colonial life here in Aotearoa, particularly their settling down south.
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PLEASE DO NOT EDIT THE SEPT LIST,⁶ Daddy

this is my daughter
she is yours too
she is where the seas meet
the tidal race she is
woven from ancient tongues
and brackish water and
laumei and jellyfish and tuna
and tartan and gunsmoke
and swords and mud.
she is not yours to sacrifice
she belongs to the sea
and she will bring peace
and she will also bring war
and she will return to this point
when she is old and greying
and she will weep for her forefathers
and her foremothers
and she will weep for her children
lost to the sea
lost to the sea
lost to the sea
so raise her to know the taste
of salt in her bones.
to know the sharp smell
when blood mixes with
seawater.
raise her to walk between worlds
harden the soles of her feet.
to write stories from seafoam
and equally
to forget them.

For thirty years I wrote my own myths
and for the last year I burned them.
Some of us lost our tongues
and some of us had them cut out.

In Caithness and Sutherland you roamed
for thirty years, poor and white⁷
starting fights with Clan Keith.
And then you had me
but I was a wild thing with bones in her hair
a wild thing with savage tendencies
with savage thoughts and a taste
for blood and you realised
we're not so different.
Either peace, or war.
You held me as a pepe
by the feet
and you stood at the edge of the cliff.

Here, take this wild young thing
take this dark, wild thing
and i'll never fight again.

And the sea rose to meet you
and Tagaloa's voice rang back.

6. This comes from a note at the bottom of the "Clan Gunn" Wikipedia page. It made me laugh that someone would write a note in all capitals telling someone not to edit the sept list. A sept is a family branch/clan.

7. A line from Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy."