



# The Huia

my stuffed toy  
is a songbird  
with white-tipped  
tail feathers

her coat is black  
with a metallic gleam

its sheen is like  
a pāua shell

her cream  
and grey beak  
is as thin  
as a needle

her saffron-coloured  
wattles bob  
when she trills

her whistle  
smooth and  
unslurred

she calls at dawn  
before the tūī  
and the korimako

when I look at drawings  
with her glossy  
rounded wings  
I can understand  
why she is tapu



my tūpuna would tie  
her feathers in their hair  
with harakeke  
and reverence

it makes me feel proud  
because my name  
and the name of my ancestors  
is *Ngāhuia*  
the huia

Tāne-Mahuta  
can turn into any  
creature

I imagine  
that he thought  
the huia deserved  
to be protected

it makes me sad  
when I look at my huia  
squishy because of the  
stuffing inside

I pretend that it flies  
or that it is perching  
somehow

watching its surroundings  
dead wood  
decaying bark  
huruwhenua and moss  
huhu and wētā







I imagine canopies  
lush with hīnau  
and kahikatea  
lichen like coral  
that now grows  
on my trampoline  
and large kauri trunks  
because they have never  
been cut down

I heard the huia's call  
by listening  
to my mother's laptop  
a man mimics  
and whistles the huia's song

on the wall  
in our dining room  
a digital print  
is perched  
forever still  
its song is lost  
the picture is flat  
only ink and pattern  
the shifting of the  
huia's feathers  
is silent

huia bones  
are only found  
in the north island

it had no fear of humans

Words by Waihīrere Ngāhuia Hakaraia, age 10  
(Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Tūwharetoa)  
Pictures by Danielle Wu, age 15

Winner Elsie Locke  
Writing Prize 2024