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Poem

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EXPOSED

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EXPOSED**Annabelle Forrest****EXPOSED**

Look at yourself and where you are
a life locked up with no contrast.
You have not gone far
engulfed in your past.

You are now in your future
it looks just like your past.
You are swapping back and forth,
you are where you were last.

Your past is dark and shameful
hidden and abused.
In your past you are a killer.
Your past, you think will kill you.

A future you want
a future so bright.
Your future is dark,
the idea of your future is not right.

So sit behind
and look at you now,
what do you want to say
to you right now.

I will forgive myself, sitting in the past,
I will not forget myself, sitting in the past.
I will embrace my now
because you are me
and I am you;
sitting here,
staring at the other eagles there.

Here in the now
we are all learning to fly,
and this fight for flight into our future is bright.

Only you will know
on the path to tika*,
how you will go
and that was Aratika*.

*Tika : correctness, righteousness or straightness

*Ara: a way, course, pathway

*Aratika: translated as finding your right path

I was honoured to experience a program called Aratika*. Aratika led clients who had experienced a traumatic past on a 3-day therapeutic journey, uncovering real truths and pain while seeking a positive future path for life. I heard each individual analyse their criminal past, present and vulnerable future. I remember each person and empathise with their struggle to move beyond the weight of the past. Their stories became too big to keep inside my head, leading to this poem of hope; *Exposed*.

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Annabelle Forrest is a nursing student and Te Runanga Tairā Representative at Te Kura Matatini ki Otago. Her whakapapa is Ngāpuhi but her tūrangawaewae is Cambridge. She is passionate about nursing and promoting one's health in their own space.

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