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Te Mauri - Pimatisiwin

**Becoming Natural Again**

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**Phillipa Te Paea Pehi**

*Ngāpuhi- Te Māhurehure, Ngāti Pakau*

Let me explain  
In a way  
You may  
understand

Imagine  
Always  
always  
Knowing there is  
something  
Fundamentally  
'wrong'  
With you

Inherent illness  
Reflected in mirror faces

Your teachers  
Your parents  
The police  
The doctor  
Your friends  
Your children  
Your fears

And yet...  
follow the invisible thread  
-all the way back through time  
To stolen brutalised land  
Raped and murdered kin  
Displacement  
Replacement  
Violence  
Fear

Like a cork  
Surfacing  
As truth always does

To the cries  
Exhortations

Suppressing  
Denying  
Vilifying  
Pathologizing

'let it go'  
'we are all ONE people'

Denying any harm done  
To explain  
Why  
I cry  
We cry

Our natural beautiful selves  
Distorted beyond recognition  
Less than  
Worth less

Token  
Sacrificial lambs  
Whakapapa destruction

And yet  
    And still  
        the cream rises to the top

Our stories  
    our purpose  
        our essence  
            our bodies

Interwoven  
Eternal  
Beyond hurt

And yet  
And still  
Here...

Shining in our dreams  
Or sudden waking movement  
Just beyond sight

Healing is...

A recognition  
A return  
An unveiling

To discover  
To return to  
what was always there  
  
was never lost

### **He Mihi – Acknowledgement**

This poem was inspired when listening to the wisdom shared in an interview with a First Nations Elder and medicine man Gerry Oleman. Saa Hiil Thut, is a member of the St'at'imc Nation from Tsal'alh (Shalalth BC). He is well-known for his work on indigenous health and wellness and his podcasts 'Teachings in the Air' <https://www.teachingsintheair.ca/>

### **About The Author**

Phillipa Te Paea Pehi is Māori from Aotearoa's Far North and is the mother of one beautiful daughter- her greatest achievement and contribution to the world. She has practiced as a clinical and research psychologist for the last 30 years, among many other things, such as walking the length of Aotearoa four times in support of te taiao (our natural world) and tangata whenua (people of the land). In the last few years, she has also had the enormous privilege of being part of ʻāʻāmin/Tla'amin and Xwémalhwu/Homalco canoe whānau

(families) on the epic tribal canoe journeys of the Pacific Northwest. Poetry since childhood has been one of her spiritual lifelines through trauma and adversity, but also to express her enduring and fierce aroha (love) and manaaki (care) of whenua (land) and tangata (people) in Aotearoa and abroad.