

# Pānui pāpāho | Media release

10 August 2023

## A dream inspires award-winning story for kaiako

Not only did his first short story fulfill his goal to write and publish something creative, it also earned Hāmihi Duncan a place in Te Taihū Short Story Awards.

Hāmihi is a kaiako at NMIT Te Pūkenga and won the \$500 second prize in the Māori option with his story *Kua Tau Mai Te Pō*.

He says it was inspired by a dream he had in his early twenties, when he was living a long way from home in the north of Italy.

“When I reflect on the dream now, it was like the manifestation of a fear of detachment,” he says. “Feeling like I no longer had my parents to rely on financially or emotionally—it was equally thrilling and frightening.”

Hāmihi says people will read different things into it, but the dream sparked what turned out to be a horror story.

“It’s set in the present, but with archaic buildings, and a backpacker arrives in a piazza in Italy during the off season. He is alone, with little money, and night is falling. When he approaches the only place open to ask for a bed, he is brutally rejected and there is a violent, confrontational response.”

Although this is his first short story, Hāmihi began writing when he travelled outside Aotearoa in 1997.

“When I started writing this story, it seemed to just roll onto the page—the images, characters and events are familiar,” he says. “I wrote it down maybe three or four times in English and twice in te reo Māori.”

He says writing in te reo Māori felt natural — like he was accessing some sort of imaginative main artery.

“Sometimes when you write in te reo Māori you reach for a word and it might not fit, but in this story, I felt like the words came out quite nicely.”

“It has an imaginative quality to it, and you feel like you were there. When I read it, I can feel my heart beating a bit faster.”

The stories submitted in the Māori language section were judged by Stacey Morrison (Te Arawa, Ngāi Tahu) and she commented on Hāmihi’s story:

‘A short story that takes the reader on an eventful journey, skillfully told and unexpected. He iti te kupu, nui te kōrero. He pārekareka ki ngā karu o te kaipānui.’

The Te Taihū Short Story Awards attracted entries from established writers nationwide.

[Read winning entries here.](#)

ENDS

## Media contact

### For more information contact:

Jane Horder | Senior Communications Advisor - NMIT, Te Pūkenga

Email: [jane.horder@nmit.ac.nz](mailto:jane.horder@nmit.ac.nz), Tel: +64 (0)3 539 5070, Mobile: +64 (0)27 659 7090

## Photo

On request