Rivers of Cellophane

Poetry from the EcoAko Workshops



Illustrations by Kiara Underwood

About

EcoAko is a programme of in-school workshops combining science and art to inspire protection of our moana. Ako, in te reo Māori, means both to teach and to learn. EcoAko aims to teach young people about ocean issues while simultaneously learning from the art that they produce. Through this anthology of poems created in our EcoAko workshops, we hope to spark intergenerational conversations about ocean issues and inspire rangatahi to use their artistic and scientific talents to protect our moana.

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Ritika Joseph

rivers of
cellophane
wind around mountains

mountains of
masks
and microplastics

oceans of
plastic bag jellyfish
of sunken
bottlecap
boats

swirling

swirling

out of
bubble wrap
blankets
and
styrofoam
straws
continents start
to form

pale wispy strands
drifting and floating
soaring and falling
making their way through the world
unrestrained



Claire Travers

glittering shards drifting through the sea
floating with the currents
soft and small
dangerous and unbreakable

turning the ocean hazy and gray
choking the birds and fish
pretty and harmless
deadly and poisonous

disintegrating down into colourful powder
turning sea animals lifeless and limp
bright and useful
discarded and abandoned



Tomo Hudson

A single plastic bottle drifting alone in the sea
It floats around an endless ocean
But then another bottle joins it
And another, and another, they keep coming.
Soon the endless sea is filled, circling endlessly
in a gyre.
The sound of the waves are a clatter at bottles.
It will never end.

Owen Xu

Produced from a plastics factory
and moulded from a plastic factory
brought and used
only to be thrown away
somehow strays adrift
and ends up in the ocean
eroded over years and years
but it still lingers.



Grace Guan

Plastic is great.
It is convenient.
For humans,
Plastic is a wonderful, terrific invention.

Plastic is awful.
It is venomous.
For animals,
Plastic is a deadly, lethal, terrible thing.

“What a wonderful thing”, people smiled cheerfully.

“What a horrible thing”, animals choked sadly.

When humans finally found out what they did
They cried and said “Help, it’s not too late”.

They picked up rubbish beside the sea,
They saved the turtles that are nearly asleep.
They are trying, trying to save the ocean
Save the Earth,
But the dead animals can’t experience a resurgence.

People love plastic, “We can’t stop using it”, they said.

Animals hate plastic, but they didn’t say anything.

Kirsten Harris-Lines - *Dotterel Drama at Waipu Cove.*

Characters:

Dotterel (Dott)
Dotterel Chick
Kirsten (Conservationist)
Kirsten's Cat (Sookie)
Angus
Angus's Dog (Shordy)

Angus: What's this?

Kirsten: What's what?

Angus: This sign in front of us, what does it mean.

Kirsten: Ohhh, you mean the sign for endangered dotterels.

Angus: endangered what?

Kirsten: endangered dotterels, they're shore birds that make nests in the sand

Angus: ok but why does it say that I have to keep my dog on a leash?

Kirsten: Because dotterels are nesting here.

Angus: Well, what does that have to do with me and my dog?

Kirsten: It means that you have to keep your dog on a leash so that it in no way disturbs the dotterels.

Angus: Yes, but Shordy is a well-behaved dog, he would never ever do anything bad like that.

Kirsten: Mhm, that's why he's looking at my cat like she's a bar of chocolate. And even if he was as well behaved as you say, he could still accidently do something that badly affects them.

Sookie hides behind Kirsten's leg.

Sookie: Meowwwww.

Shordy: Well, I am insulted.

Dott and her chick emerge from the tussock grass in the sand dunes.

Dott: Cheep Cheep

Dotterel chick: Cheep!

Dott: Please oh please, look out for me and my fellow species, there are only 2000 of us left in this world.

Kirsten: That's terrible, is there anything I can do to help?

Sookie sticks her head out from behind Kirsten, eyes fixed on the birds.

Sookie: Yum, winner, winner, dotterel dinner.

Dott: Well, you could start by listening to that sign over there, and, another thing you can do, is lock that cat up.

Dotterel Chick: And throw away the key, Chip chip!

Sookie licks her paws.

Sookie: I never promised anything. So if your population goes from 2000 to 1999… don't be surprised.

Kirsten tightens Sookie's leash.

Angus: Fine… I guess Shordy can run around at the park or something.

Shordy: It better be a good one!

Angus and Shordy walk off stage.

Kirsten (to Dott): Don't worry, I'll make sure that these rules will be strictly obeyed.

Dott: Chirp, thank you, chirp.

Isabella Wallace - *Plastic in the Sea*

Plastic in the sea,
no matter how far I look
it's all that I can see
all of it there because of
people like you and me.

Plastic in the sea
as stunning as glitter
as small as a grain of sand
millions of tonnes that we
put there.

Plastic in the sea
trapped by gyres
spinning round and round
it's fate not to leave or
escape but to stay.

Plastic in the sea
as far as I can see
ruining the ocean for
every creature in the sea
all of this caused by people
like you and me.

Emily Liang - *Turtles*

Swimming around in the sea
four turtles are having fun,
swimming with each other,
chasing each other around,
running away and teasing one another.

A small turtle,
chasing his friends along,
His happiness is like a ray of sunshine

But all of a sudden,
The little turtle swims too far out,
Without knowing,
The little turtle gets caught in a big giant green net.
The green net strangles the turtle, unable to escape.

Another turtle look around,
he notices one of them have vanished
he calls out but there's no response.

The little turtle
stuck in the net,
has died.



Davey Trewin

I watch as they go out in a boat
They come back to boast
The kids are quite bombastic
Not knowing they just caught microplastic

It is time for dinner
thinking they caught a winner
But they will be quite sick
From their newly caught plastic

Now they have cancer
Just learning the answer
Staying in a hospital bed
Until they are dead



Isabella Malcolm

Break The Surface
The reflective sky-blue ocean,
Motionless, tranquil, untouched
But to break the surface
Fall into a world,
So different from our own.
Oh, but to break that surface.
The once murky bland world
Changes in an instant
Pinks purples flashing blues
Sleeping sharks slipping though
the ice blue
Never stopping swimming
My whole world changed
Now I am under the sea



Fletcher Horth - ***The Ocean used to be amazing***

The ocean used to amaze us,
And still does nowadays.
But now its future hazes,
And there is no way to delay.
The fish are swimming,
The rods are spinning,
The trash is winning,
As turtles give it a trimming.
The life before,
Had little gore,
But now there's more,
With microplastics in the core.



Indigo Tomlinson

The ocean is a woman,

subjugated,
oppressed,

told that, to be beautiful, she must let oil
Swirl,
dark and greasy through her spindrift hair,
lustrous black,

Suffocating.

her stomach is empty, but for plastic shards,
she cannot eat, because food is a sin,
greed, a crime,
for some.

a beautiful barbie, flesh pressed flat
beneath bleached-coral skin,

stark white,
jutting bones protruding from her rib

Cage.

face powdered the same,
arsenic and coal dust

Choking.

lungs drawing tight,
depleted of air, running away with the
Outgoing tide, but forced back in,

towards her tormentors,

again, and again.

No escape.



Cyrus Ikimouga - *The Ocean*

It is wonderful how the ocean used to be
Full of light and pleasure
Magnificent creatures, unique and alive
Want some Kinas? Just go for a dive

Nowadays its dark and gloomy
Rubbish and litter be doing the griddy
The world is hotter than it used to be
It has warmed up a couple degrees
People overfish
Half the ocean gone
Humans need to help
These fishies stay strong



Gabriella Ely, Elsa Mead, and Mehar Deol

Sea turtles swim freely.
Fishes wander mindlessly.
Dolphins dive happily.
They are quite lovely.

What they don't see
is what's happening outside.
Their homes they had to flee,
They all run and hide.

The treacherous oil,
the horrible plastic
causing turmoil,
the effect is drastic.

Taking their lives,
polluting the oceans.
No one survives
this ocean distruction.

But they can still be saved
if we find a solution.
All the creatures unscathed,
if we stop this pollution.

Anrae Aguilar - *My Ocean*

I look at you and I see
your gorgeous ocean blue eyes looking
at me.

Your coral pink hair waving in the wind.
I wish i could hug you which would
make your heart spin.

Her pretty personality is absolutely everything.
She reminds me about the beautiful ocean.

She is one of the amazing Liberaces.
When she sings, her eyes light up like confetti.

You're talking to other people? I see.
Now I'm thinking, "When will you notice me?"



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