Dragons
beneath a canopy of blossom trees
an Asian student dances this way and that
in the shadows and light
she stoops to gather pink and white petals
that fall like snow
she presses them into her book
old wind blows her exam papers homework and notes
into the air they disappear over the Southern Alps
and she simply darts about gathering each delicate petal
no bigger then her thumbnail
she will imprint these flowers in her heart
when they are dry paper-blots of colour
she’ll give them to her friend or lover
oh tell the world there’s hope
she’s remembered for a time what’s important and what’s not
as we file our teeth, arm for war and destruction
and the battle dragons come to drink our blood
in a cold blind world, slow to see the beauty of colour
and quick to forget

The bomber
(suicide bomber Middle East 2002)
carrying the bloody egg
taking everyone
for one last ride
leaving a hole
ribboned with guts and torsos
she dresses for the kill
announces her protest against oppression
and the slaughter of her tribe
with a bang
and a puff of smoke
eighteen summers old
she’s happy to pay the price
of a ticket to death
with madness and hate
equal to that of her oppressors

R.I.P.

rest in peace

rip

**Startled birds**
the sky flecked
with the flight of birds
in a moment gone

clouds sail over the horizon

we do not stay, we come and go

like startled birds
and drifting clouds

We are
we laugh we dance
we sing we fight
we love squabble and squawk
we hunt and are hunted
we dream and fly across the sky
we are birds

Walls of the night
in our whare tipuna (1)

woven into the stars
old black and white photos hang

we have placed them amid
the firmaments

uncle Tamati, cousin Hoera
Mum

deoth divides us

Roimata Toroa (2)
tears of the albatross fall down the walls of the night
NOTES:

1. The whare tipuna is a traditional Maori ancestral house where we meet on community occasions. These houses contain the carvings of our ancestors and we hang the photo’s of our dead loved ones on the walls.

2. Toroa means the albatross. Roimata Toroa means the tears of the albatross. It is a traditional pattern woven on to the walls of our traditional houses.

Apirana Taylor was born on the 15th of March 1955. He is a Maori from New Zealand. He is from the Ngati Porou, Te Whanau a Apanui, and Ngati Ruanui tribes. Apirana is a poet, playwright, novelist, short story writer, story teller, actor, painter, and musician. Many of his poems are frequently studied in New Zealand. Some of his poetry and prose has been translated into several languages. He lives next to the sea in Paekakariki New Zealand, with his wife and partner Pru.