

I: Fog/scent adjacent

I'm not really giving you much here, or maybe I am?

Do you want me to write about your mahi - or do you want me to do something fog/scent adjacent?

I reckon you do you, which is probably fog adjacent 🌀 (Fog/scent that is)¹

II: Ārai

I swear I first saw the view from my old house in a dream: high, wide windows spanning most of the front wall framed ships docked in port, a quiet sea, a gull sitting on the top of a streetlight, and the resolute hills across the bay. When the owner took me through the whare for the first time, I stepped into the lounge and it all felt familiar: the blue-black-green of Ōhinehou harbour, two huge ships at rest, the hills glowing golden as though they were lit-up from the inside. For a little over three years, from my perch at the window, I'd hear the shriek and cry of manu as they followed the fishing boats; the smell of timber in the air as logs lay stacked and waiting to be taken; see the moody sky change colour, clouds chasing each other over the hills, hungry for a taste of the sea. I'd watch the ferry go back and forth to Te Waipapa too. Sometimes my son would go across to stay with his dad; sometimes I could see all the way to the ferry dock from the kitchen. But some mornings I'd wake to a thick wall of fog between us; a great, grey, cloud so heavy it stopped me seeing any further than the footpath below my house. No sea, no harbour, no hills, no ships. Instead there was a smokey force-field dividing us; an ash-coloured curtain between scenes. I'd take my place on the couch and listen for the gulls and try to picture what it looked like on the other side.

III: Brain Fog (or "my ancestors who navigated by the stars watching me use GPS to get somewhere I've been 27 times ")²

Rongo is all the senses except sight.

It's not the same thing as mist. It's about density. Visibility. You can take off in it but landing is a no go. Kohu ~ fog, mist, haze ~ It's all up in the air, I'm afraid. ~ "Red lines can't be drawn around where exactly it begins and ends"³ but sea fog is formed when water vapour condenses around bits of salt (and ihu is nose and (of course) the prow of a waka) ~

Nebulous, meaning vague, unclear, ambiguous, (haven't the foggiest) comes from the Latin *nebulosus*, which translates to "cloudy" or "misty" ~ Ka hanga hēneti tēnei? ~ Apparently it's no good having your head in the clouds ~ Does that make scents? (Or is that clouding your judgment?) Uncertainty ~ rangirua, pōnānātanga, whakapōkaikaha, haurokuroku... but certainty? ~ "we couldn't find that"⁴

Rongo-ā-puke is like, instinct you know? Listen to your guts ~ & (of course) follow your ihu...

IV: Missed Maiden

¹ Conor Clarke, personal communication

² xennial.kid [disorientated descendant meme]. *Instagram*. Feb 11, 2026.

³ Sophie Davis "Effect of fog: An Introduction" in Layne Waerea's *Working Together: A Parliament of Fog*, Working Together Books, 2024, p.12.

⁴ Te Aka Māori Dictionary

<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=certainty>

According to ancestral narratives, Hine-Kohurangi is the atua of mist and fog who can be called upon to conceal and protect, though this is but one of her names; for Tūhoe, her name is Hinepūkohurangi, for Ngāpuhi she is Tairi-a-kohu. You may have heard the pūrākau about how she loved a man named Uenuku and how she'd stay with him at night but journey home to the heavens at sunrise, never allowing her true self to be seen by anyone else. You may have heard that Uenuku tricked her by blocking out the morning light so that she stayed too long despite her desire to remain hidden. Did you hear that this deception was the catalyst for her leaving, and that Uenuku in his grief, looked for her for the longest time? Did you hear too that Ranginui took pity on him and "pulled from him the colours that were always inside him" "water droplets dispersed and reflected" - a man transformed into a rainbow?⁵ In Kelly Joseph's contemporary reimagining of this pūrākau, she has Hinepūkohurangi and Uenuku meet in the present day at an abandoned plaza where "weed-filled concrete planters, tipped rubbish bins, tagging, shattered plastic orb-lighting, cigarette butts, [and] glass shards" form the backdrop.⁶ Hinepūkohurangi notes the strong "musky, oily" odour of Uenuku who lives in a flat with "smells inherited from the previous owner" - layers of scent embedded in the furnishings, each of them a lingering memory. The story follows a similar plot-line: love *develops* in the darkness; the one rule is betrayed. Only in this version, Uenuku is not a hunter, but an artist. Uenuku is a photographer.

V: Haere tonu (me he manawa tītī)

Jess Maclean explains as a "preventative entity that mediates between being and light" who "resists clarity and transparency", Hinepūkohurangi reminds us that whilst the light might reveal some things, it can also produce "shallow" observations; Hinepūkohurangi helps us not only to acknowledge what is hidden but also what should remain hidden, the things we *cannot* know. In her dispersal of light, Jess writes, it may be that Hinepūkohurangi "function[s] to preserve mystery by sheltering or concealing it".⁷ Not a barrier, but a cloak then. Not a wall, but a bridge that leads us from "unrelenting light" to necessary darkness - to a realm where our other senses are engaged. How might we be prompted to rely on our other senses in honouring our relationships with the world around us then? How might we navigate uncertainty and mystery? And how might we be brave enough to follow our nose?

Just be you and take it wherever you want it to go...into foggy misty floundery feely... into the depthless night...hope it takes you somewhere meaningful (more star emojis.)⁸

Kirsty Dunn, June 2026

⁵ Kelly Joseph "Hinepūkohurangi and Uenuku" from *Pūrākau: Māori Myths Retold by Māori Writers* (eds. Witi Ihimaera and Whiti Hereaka) Vintage, 2019, pp.156-180.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jessica Niurangi Mary Maclean, "Te Paerangi: Darkness and Light in Māori Oral Tradition" MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2021, pp.122-134.

⁸ Conor Clarke, personal communication.