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VAUGHAN RAPATAHANA

## TUNNEL VISION

I'm digging a ditch t h r o u g h

to you

*he awakeri*

shovelling the sides

with spadeloads of speech

&

sluicing the scree

as alliterative spree,

*he awakeri*

flouncing the dirt in irregular rhymes

forcing the turf to recite better times

eroding the worms with ironic disdain

hacking like hell to sight you again

*he awakeri*

straining the vowels to hold up the clay

striking the shingle that gets in their way

mud-mixing metaphors

with watered-down muck

&

staging a dialogue  
with inoperable luck

thrumming my lyrics  
to trench and canal:  
soliciting *bon mots*  
to help out as well

ladling phonemes  
in small tracts on the side,

biting my tongue  
as they *slide and elide*

poring for syllables  
that won't stay in place

*he awakeri*

pawing this channel  
a c r o s s o u r m u t e s p a c e

striving to sing you  
an earthy refrain

*he awakeri*

hoeing the metre  
from a jabbering drain

raking all persiflage  
through infertile prose

*he awakeri*

scything *nga reo*  
to misshapen pose

oh!

I'm digging a ditch

t h

r o u

g h

to you

*engari e mone tau hirere kia tarake i ahau*

[but your torrent sweeps back and swipes me away.]

[*he awakeri* – a ditch

*nga reo* – languages]