

LAND – THE LIFE FORCE OF MY IDENTITY





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As I lay comfortably in the warmth of my mother's womb.

Gently and silently, she breathed LIFE, within my being.

I was not alone in this space called fanua, the womb of love.

Surrounded by the spirits the wairua of my ancestors.

Connecting me to the land, river, and ocean where I belong

With God at the center of it all.

At dawn on the day of my birth.

The sunrise approached, the beginning of a new day.

The sound of the waves from afar

Carried by the gentle sea breeze, filled the air.

Birds communicated from their nesting places.

Roosters crowing in line with their morning routine.

The morning dew condensing upon the colourful

Leaves of tropical plants.

Their freshness bringing new growth while the sunrise reflects over it.

I finally arrived at our open fale/house I made it home safely.

The softness and comfortable hands of an elderly midwife

Who happened to be the family matriarch.

I felt the gentleness of her caring arms as she carefully


Handed me over to my parents,

Who eagerly waited to hold me for the first time.

There was silence and tears of happiness enveloping me.

Their tears symbolizing blessings of love,

From these significant people in my life.



A prayer of thanksgiving was recited on my arrival.
As the fetu ao – morning star started to fade away.
A symbolic and traditional ritual took place at the same time
For the fanua, the placenta to return to Earth,
Where it was originally from.
It is part of my heritage, my fasinomaga,
My family genealogies' past, present and future.

“E tele ā'a o le tagata nai lo ā'a o le laau”.
A person has more roots than those of a tree.
Roots that are strongly intertwined and deeply woven within,
Connecting us to the land.

This precious island home was created by God.
A legacy from my ancestors who shed their blood
To ensure our customs, culture, traditional values, and identity
Will never be taken away from us.

Their indigenous knowledge and wisdom had enabled us
To treat our land, rivers and our ocean with great respect.

Our land is life for us.
As years went by great changes reached our shores.

The silent agony and the cry of our land
Hit the core of the heart, too painful to comprehend.
Knowing our home will soon be covered with water.

And it will be gone, gone, gone forever.
Sadly, this is the reality that we are now facing.

This is a big loss for our future generations
for in losing our land, we also lose a most
Tangible and vivid life force upon which we form

OUR IDENTITY.