

BRAVE FLOWER BY SIMONE KAHO

1.

Knocks come like shots
Searchlights chop
up the night
A voice through a loudspeaker yells
OPEN THE DOOR!

We know
who it is
They're not
going away

Bodies thump through the house
Suzi with the good English
e d g e s
to open the door

They aim torches in her eyes
You can't hear her
replies

The Alsatian
grinds shark teeth
jerks on the leash
Suzi says
it's just me here
But the dog smells blood
(from the freezing works)

BARKS like we're
murderers
They pull us all out –
Uncle from the wardrobe
You can't jump out the window
The police are all around
closing
in

2.

There are big pay packets in New Zealand
You can earn two hundred a week
if you *work hard*
On the docks, in a factory, at the works
You can *get educated*
make it
Be a *doctor* or a *lawyer*

3.

The family waits for your money every week
They're waiting for your money and making
umu in the sun
and going to church
with frangipani and hibiscus
behind their ears

4.

Brown boys shiver outside the freezing works
wait for the Pālangi manager
to come
down the line
He squeezes their muscles
to see who's got the big ones
Like we're animals laughs Dad

We drive past the works and smell the stink

5.

The police are stopping brown people on the street
If you're wearing jandals
and a bright shirt –
watch out.
They stop Māori and ask
Which island are you from?

The North Island, mate

6.

There are no more jobs
Muldoon says *the Polynesians* have to
go home.
We go to prison first

They send us back with no goodbye
They take parents in front of their kids
They take pregnant ladies in their nightdresses

7.

I was going to stay here
I was going to
work hard
get educated
Even though it's cold

I see the hibiscus growing in New Zealand –
flares of colour in Pālangi gardens

It's a brave flower



Brave Flower

by Simone Kaho

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Published 2018 by the Ministry of Education,
PO Box 1666, Wellington 6140, New Zealand.
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ISBN 978 1 77669 472 3 (online)

Publishing Services: Lift Education E Tū
Editor: Susan Paris
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SCHOOL JOURNAL NOVEMBER 2018

20 New Zealand
Curriculum
LEVEL
4

SCHOOL JOURNAL LEVEL 4 NOVEMBER 2018

Curriculum learning areas	English Social Sciences
Reading year level	Year 8
Keywords	change, concrete poetry, dawn raids, deportation, exploitation, imagery, immigration, metaphor, New Zealand history, Pacific, poetry, racism, stanzas, verse