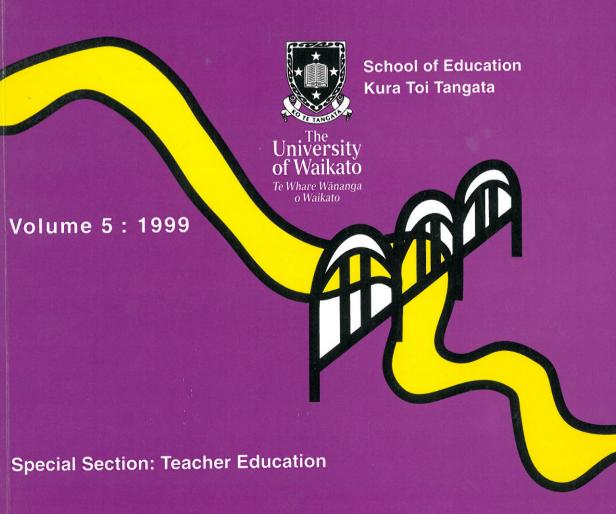
Waikato Journal of Education

Te Hautaka Mātauranga o Waikato



WAIKATO JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

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UNTITLED

I'm on my bike.

The 10-speed bike I bought my second year in high school with my summer earnings.

I only use two gears

like in grad school in Illinois I used only two of the 21 gears on my mountain bike.

It was so flat there, it is flat here.

I have on my backpack.

The one I bought in grad school.

Suddenly, I cannot remember what kind of school bag I had in high school -

it certainly was not a backpack.

It was uncool.

I'm on the road that follows the shore of Pyhäjärvi.

The road I used to bike to high school.

When I meet my old teachers during my visits, they remember that I always biked instead of taking the bus

although it was free.

The wind blows, as it always did.

My baggy exercise clothes flap.

Then, in high school, I wore skin tight Lee jeans

under which my quadriceps struggled to find space to contract

to meet the requirements of my increasing pedalling speed.

I wrapped their bell bottoms with pegs.

That was not uncool.

I am in no hurry - I'm exercising.

Then, I was always late:

for a 20 minute trip I always had only 15.

One kilometer to go, a big clock at the jeweller's shop determined whether I made it -

13 to nine and I was safe.

I remember,

in our Finnish class once somebody wrote an essay on biking to school.

Our teacher read it out loud:

the panicked desperation, the odd images of time and markers that flashed through the writer's mind

-"kaksi varista sähkölangoilla harmaa taivas taustanaan" -

(two black crows on the electricity line against the grey sky)

I remember my desperation: why couldn't I write like that.

Now, I'm still at school.

Now I never bike.

It's down under:

city and mountains and cars speeding dangerously.

Now I write -

but still only poetry in English.

Pirkko Markula