A Short New Zealand River Story

The dusty trees stood on top of the gorge like sentries guarding the river and ensuring its uninterrupted flow. The water travelled along on its journey and would continue forever until it became impossible for it to do so and then the world would not be as she knew it now.  
 The woman sat between the rocks on the sand of the rivers bank contemplating that eventuality and decided she would prefer when that happened  to recede, be at one once more with the Earth and float back up to the stars where she came from.

Everywhere around her on the river bed there was life. Insects crawled, butterflies flew,  crickets and cicadas chirped, and for now the water meandered on its way, smoothing stones as it went.

The green everywhere was less pronounced then she’d ever known it before. Except for the luminous thick jade weed in the water. It was as though the hillsides had let their usual colour seep into the river and were resigned to remaining dull and brown. The colours of the earth had become muted in protest at the drought that  covered the land in brown stick like  hay. The water was much shallower than it had been  for many years.  Nevertheless, it continued to move gently,  consistently,  constantly along the river bed.   
When she was younger she hadn’t noticed the touch of the wind,  or the crickets cry,  or the birdsong. She was too busy.  Now, however as age and time captured her it was what mattered most. Those things. The flight of the butterfly,  the stones that seemed to wear faces,  the  fish that jumped joyfully into the air.  She cared about them all and wanted them to be there always and forever - yet she knew they couldn’t be. Any more than her husband who promised to never leave her could be.

A  butterfly landed on her face and her tear fell onto its wing. She flew with him then. With the butterfly as her  guide the water gurgled beneath then in its friendly way and the sentry trees at the top of the gorge bowed to them.  She  knew then that one day this would be the place where she would go to remember when there were no more memories left of his face,  his touch, his smell. She would fly here and sit amongst the stones and listen and listen. And  he would speak to her through everything that she felt; the butterfly, the birds, the fish, the water, and the wind would blow her to the stars and together they would dance again forever.            