

We recently did a kayak trip along the Abel Tasman and up around Separation Point. Something that really impressed me, were the 'sea kayak' guides. I have seen them before up in Picton, in fact we sat down with lunch and watched in fascination as a guide rounded up his charges and set off straight into the path of the ferry. They lived. Their unwavering cheerfulness was what struck me, and has moved me to write the following:

An Ode to the Sea Kayak Guide

by Fiona Fraser

Sod the office, that life's not for you
Cruising the blue seas like a mother duck
With your charges flapping along behind
Sometimes even in the right direction with luck
Smile affixed, and encouraging 'you can do it's' rolling off your tongue

She'll be right, they've had the safety briefing
Smile affixed in encouraging style
Anticipating they can make it past the first mile
Once on the water instruction continues
When I say left go left, no that's right
Mop up the collisions and try again

Coax your charges to shores afar
Four km's in two hours really pushing the bar
Smile still affixed as you drag them on the beach
Wet feet wasn't in the package no matter how much you beseech
Time to feed them and put up the shelter
Change hats to chef come entertainer
Those Dusky Bays really save the day
Room enough for creature comforts and treats
Plus the BBQ to do the tasty eats

We look over from our scroggin and tea
At the chips and salsas, choice of four
The chilly bin with bebies to numb sore bits
And much, much more

Smile affixed you offer us the scraps
And discuss our trip over the maps
Your enthusiasm is to be seen to be believed
As its back to your charges to settle them for their nap

Early to bed, late to rise, but you set off in the morning in scorching time
Two hours from go to woe and the group is on their way
Careering off towards the rocks
No, back paddling into shore
No, T-boning their mates
Good grief, I can't watch any more

Yes, Sea Kayak Guide

I raise my paddle to you in awe
From what I saw, that ain't a job for no ordinary being
Thank you for showing off our fantastic sport and our beautiful country by sea
But if you want some help, don't look to me