

a fine line

Te Rōpū Toikupu o Aotearoa | New Zealand Poetry Society



summer
2025

maunga / mountain

Featured Poets - Editor's picks | Cover Art - Rata Ingram

Featured Interview - Four years of *a fine line*

a fine line

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a fine line staff

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Editorial Assistant: Sophia Wilson
Reviews Editor: Sarah Scott
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Quotation of the season

“The mountains are calling and I
must go.” — *John Muir*

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Contributing Art

Lesley Evans, Jenny Longstaff, Oshadha Perera



GAIL INGRAM



Ridgeline – Lesley Evans

Gail Ingram

I chose 'Mountain/Maunga' for my last theme because mountains are where I feel most alive, and you responded with poetry-in-kind. I read poem after poem where you took my breath away. Whether it was **Alistair Clarke's** 'white plume' reminding us of the menace of a volcano or the 'Yeti breath on my neck' (**Jenny Longstaff**) or a river stone 'tumbled through millennia' to surrender to your hand (**Philomena Johnson**) or mountainous waves that can wrench the world 'from its axis' (**Lola Elvy**), I hope you, like me, will be awed by this stuff of the elements.

Supportively too, the NZPS committee asked if I'd like to feature some of my favourite poems over my four years as editor. But... gulp. How was I going to choose them when I'd already selected my favourites for every magazine? In the end... I wanted to select a variety of voices and I ended up pairing some of my favourite poems with my favourite haiku, which helped to narrow the field. I talk about the pain of the selection process in my interview with Sophia, along with some highlights, challenges and plans for the future.

Then Sarah selected two recent popular collections for the review section – *Talia* by **Isla Huia** and *Blue Hour* by **Jo McNeice**. Thank you **Vaughan Rapatahana** and **SK Grout** for giving us your insight into these works.

I'm thrilled too with the brilliant selection of mountain art to complement your mahi. For my last issue, I asked the committee a special favour to feature my daughter's artwork. As well as gifting this cover, **Rata Ingram** also illustrated and designed my own book covers, so I'm really chuffed to share her work with you, alongside the terrific artists within – **Jenny Longstaff**, **Lesley Evans** and **Oshadha Perera**. Kia ora, e whanau!

And finally, I would like to thank you. My team – assistant editor **Sophia Wilson**, reviews editor **Sarah Scott** and volunteers **Summer Wick-Featonby** (proofreading and Mailchimp), **Cassie Hart** (social media), and previous assistants and volunteers for not only always doing your darndest to ensure we produced something consistently wonderful four times a year but for your support and kindness. And the NZPS committee, **Robert Sullivan**, **Shane Hollands**, **Kim Martins**, **Julianne Exton** and **Ruben Mita**. What a pleasure it has been to be part of this dedicated, fun and hard-working committee. And last of all, you, poets, artists, readers – you who make the world go round. Thank you for your generosity with your time and words. I will miss you all very much.

Notes from the committee: Remember to send event and book news for The Short – Takupū to Ruben [here](#).

Our next issue, the autumn edition, we welcome our new editor. Please submit up to four poems (40 lines max) and/or up to four haiku, and artwork by 10 March 2024 [here](#).

And now the mountains are calling and I must go.

Featured Poetry: Editor's Picks 2021-2025



Glacier – Lesley Evans

Joanna Preston – Summer 2022

Chronicle of the year 793

This year, half gone, has worn heavy.
A sickness plagued the cattle,
and many were lost. A blight
has afflicted the crops –
the ears of grain grow sticky and dark
and will not ripen.

What we have to share, we give,
but so many are hungry.
When the king left, Father Higbald
stripped the hangings and plate
from his room, sent the sacristan
to sell what he could and buy bread
for the weakest, for the children.

And still the portents come.
Dragons in flight, great flashes
of fire from a cloudless sky.
The miller's son ran wild – tore
at the skin of his chest and arms
until it hung in bloodied ribbons.
He saw visions. Demon faces
leered from the walls
he said. A day later he died.

Stranger still, at vespers three nights ago
a great flock of birds blackened the sky.
People cried out, or fled, or clung
to the altar cloths.
So many birds! Yet afterwards
not one feather was found
to name them.

And now again! Strange,
how their wingbeats sound
like oars.

from *tumble* (OUP 2021)

Alison Glenny – Spring 2021

Forest

He claimed to have invented the night. This was not Romanticism, which was mainly a question of translation. Yet she was often mute during their carriage rides. Some believed her melancholia was due to mourning the poem, which came to grief in a quarrel over nightingales. Others referred to a nostalgia for the forest. She had often drawn attention to its winding paths and where they diverged, the touch of dark wings.

¹Amatory (*noun*)

1. A woodland path or cloister used for nocturnal walks, often with a wandering or irregular design.
2. A cabinet or chest intended for a piece of music performed once at evening, then laid aside.

²Opera boxes hidden behind leaves and flowers. When the wind moved the branches, bouquets were flung onto the ground.

³ A reference to her slim book on the lives of crepuscular birds. Their dark plumage with cryptic markings that resembled the pattern of bark, leaves, or lace.

from *Bird Collector* (Compound Press 2021)

Julie Bates – Summer 2025

even
in this dream
a scent of pine

Serie Barford - Spring 2022

Water songs

pigeons flock to our fale at sunrise

I scatter birdseed
scoop water from bowls

tilt my palms so it trickles
tinkles
splashes
sings to thirsty birds

pigeons are suction drinkers
draw moisture into hollow bones

I pour coffee for one
lurch through days
hunker in your chair at night

Masina rises full and luscious
sings recalcitrant tides into kings
I pour nightcaps

wonder which song lured you over the falls
if there were sirens in your head

from *Sleeping with Stones* (Anahera Press 2021)

Barbara Strang – Winter 2023

arriving home
on census night
so many stars

essa may ranapiri – Spring 2023

the beast on our wall will eat my heartbreak

after Kahurangiariki Smith's Hina

you left us your pink taniwha
to dance the walls of our whare
to the slap of jandals
as us bisexual baddies
go for a feed of hot chips
tomato sauce and salty goodness
fuck yes we're living the life
diving into the awa
cos my gayass bitchass sentimental ass
never wants to let go
the Waikato is so big and strong she can take it all
its hundreds of
beauties of turns and turnings
the whirlpool watching us
as you eat m&ms a staple at the house
because i knew she loved them
afterwards the sun turns me into the whitest Maaori you've ever seen
(or Tama turning me pink like the taniwha waiting for us)
and you hold me as i crackle with
that very specific kind of loss
that comes from opening up your chest
for someone to take whatever they want
but they just
turn away

Jenny Fraser – Autumn 2024

summers gone ...
our grandmothers campsite
flowering flax

Brent Cantwell – Autumn 2022

the Sounds

By the time we entered the strait,
we had two kids but weren't married –
and – of course – Te Moana-o-Raukawa was rough as
but the Sounds –

the Sounds told us that the ground once shook,
that the fault cragging this place perfect
looked from above like the un-fury of a frayed
knot –

closer though, from the front deck of the Aratere,
I kept one good eye on my kids
and a clag of bracken holding together a broken rock –
my new-grey bones, if I'm honest –

it must have been early for me –
I was green
and either missing the blond flick of a toi-toi plume
or my daughter sucking on a teething husk;

a seal pup doing the worm
down a slippery rock into still-water who-knows-where,
or my son,
lost in his own excitement –

I remember feeling so much was at stake there
and my daughter, barely walking,
leaving a broken biscuit on the edge of a plate,
stumbled my way, saying *daddy* –

I trembled then at the beautiful sound of *our fault*.

Sue Courtney – Winter 2022

wintry night
a Milky Way arcs
from my neighbour's chimney

Sarah-Kate Simons – Winter 2023

They wanted to write love poems

i

they wanted to write love poems
(where every word is innuendo)

they flirted with bad decisions in the night hours
(and cursed out the bitter grain they reaped)

they mused on the mysteries of their bodies
(please, teacher, a handbook on biology for the class)

and bemoaned a boy they should've kissed
(these one night flings are as intoxicating as popping pills)

ii

i wanted to write everything
(where every word is the universe unveiled)

to waste hours musing on how
(butterfly wings come in scales like music)
(dew trembles, anxious, on a spider web)
(the rain grows the flowers and washes out the blood)

and wade with pen and paper through a wretched city
(the shape of a boy's smile as his life lies in pieces)
(the hallelujah of a woman living under a bridge)

and speak out with words like eiderdown
(we do not read poetry to burst our eardrums)

iii

such unforeseen consequences of the things that leave the lips
(be it poetry or a misbegotten kiss)

they wanted to write love poems
(i wanted to write everything)

Bill Manhire – Autumn 2024

The End of the World

Some people think the end of the world is coming,
they think they know everything but they don't.
Yesterday I got a thing in the mail
that says hundreds of gorgeous women
are waiting to chat with me.
I don't think I'll bother this time round.
The electric toaster keeps me going,
it can do six pieces at once.

Peter Free – Autumn 2022

potato eyes
the next generation
sprouting in the dark



The second De La Beche Hut — Lesley Evans

Dominic Hoey – Spring 2024

Seagulls

when we was young
we used to talk about going overseas
on the rotting deck out front of our flat
drinking and watching the sun clock off for the day
we did a lot of drinking on decks back then
most of them in need of repair
and i mean obviously
we'd both been across the Tasman
but Australia's the learning disabled New Zealand
and the horizon was a locked door
graffitied with stories of places
from books and television
yeah we made plans to escape
repeating them
like a depressing theme song
but getting out
felt like trying to grab hold of the night
so we drank
perched on the rotten pieces of wood
seabirds who'd slept through migration
dreaming of the sun

Debbie Strange – Winter 2023

frozen trough
I cup the warm breath
of my horse

1st Place, 2018 Sharpening the Green Pencil Haiku Contest

Perena Quinlivan – Winter 2024

The Queen is Dead

Trumpets ring out
flags slice the surly mist
light tumbles, your lustre is fading.

The karanga calls
you take flight, voiceless
haere ki te atua, haere, haere, haere.

To some a blurred vision
your slight hands gifted to a country, and tender caress
gone. Your whanau pani, adrift.

Summoned by the deep, luminous voices
the public spectacle holds us.
Our time is coming

Anne Curran – Spring 2021

earthmovers
mould new embankments —
planting natives

Michelle Elvy – Summer 2024

Tussock

We move through windy Central
stark landscape either side, still
yet in motion. My mother says
it's like nowhere I've been.

We keep climbing through basalt,
stony and shallow, and when
I sneeze it's as if it echoes across
this wide terrain, dry and golden,

remembering everything.
When I was little we drove our
family car through a tumble
of landscapes, five kids a jumble

arms and legs crisscrossed, weaving,
our histories tangling
though at the time we did not know
this was the point.

I tell my mother my friend
says I have tussock hair, breezy
In its own particular way
which makes me laugh.

The word tussock, I read, might
come from Middle High German *zūse*,
meaning lock of hair, or maybe
Scottish Gaelic *dosag*, little tuft.

I say, my hair's turning
grey, might be silver tussock.
My mother looks it up:
Poa cita, Ngāi Tahu taonga.

It's coastal, she reads, likes salt,
– like you. She smiles and says
the word again, *tussock*.
I hear it slip over her teeth,

the hard *ck* in her throat. She looks
across the land, says one should be
so lucky to have hair as beautiful
as this.

Featured Interview



Copland Hut – Lesley Evans

Sophia Wilson interviews outgoing editor Gail Ingram

Sophia Wilson (SW): *Gail, you've now been editor of a fine line for four years. It would be fair to say the journal has flourished under your care and input. When you started out as editor, what was your vision for a fine line? Has this come to pass? Has the journey been as you expected or proved surprising?*

Gail Ingram (GI): Thank you, e hoa, it's been a wonderful time. When I first started, I wanted to grow *a fine line* from a newsletter-type publication to a literary journal that stood on its own merit among other quality journals in Aotearoa. I wanted to increase the diversity of our submitters as well as make the magazine a thing of beauty. *a fine line* has always been known as a great supporter of emerging poets, and it was also known to support the generally older membership of the New Zealand Poetry Society Te Rōpū Toikupu o Aotearoa (NZPS), but this perhaps did not reflect the diversity of our wider Aotearoa New Zealand population. One of the first things I did when I became editor was to acknowledge Te Tiriti and our Māori poets. I was also instrumental in updating the te reo in our name. I updated the formatting and introduced artworks to the magazine, most of them submitted from our poet members and community. I believe art and poetry are natural companions, and I wanted our magazine to be aesthetically pleasing.

And yes, our magazine has grown too, our submission numbers doubling over four years! Over the last two or three years, our team have updated our strategy to an open and diverse membership and increased payments to our poets. We also began accepting poems from non-members for a small submission fee, and while we still have our supportive member base and usually one or two first-time poets and writers in every issue, the diversity of poets submitting has increased overall. This is important to me. I made a point of featuring poets from all walks of life and from all over the motu, from Selina Tusitala Marsh to Joanna Preston to Sam Duckor-Jones to essa may ranapiri, alongside some terrific student poets, such as Sarah-Kate Simons and Oshadha Perera. We also started publishing shortlisted student poets for the winter Student Feature issue; and with the turn to an online magazine, the breadth, scope and amount of poetry has increased.

SW: *We are immensely grateful for all these changes you've incorporated, Gail! In this process and in your editorial role generally, what have been the main highlights and challenges?*

GI: Each magazine is a highlight! I love seeking out the cover artists and am always surprised by their generosity in sharing their work and same with article writers. It has been a pleasure to help writers finetune their expression through the editing process. Our *a fine line* poets are very generous people! And I extend this too to my fellow editors. I think I've had a new assistant editor every year, which has been additional work in the training department, but every one of them have been such a pleasure to work with, working above and beyond the given hours to layout the magazine, put the cover together and then get the issue up onto the website. And like you, Sophia, always just saying *yes, sure* and doing the mahi when I ask for the 50th time for another edit.

The hardest thing is deciding which poems will make the cut. Every time, I turn away several poems that would be lovely to publish but I have to meet the budget and make agonising decisions as to who stays and who goes. This choice is getting harder as the numbers of submitters and quality of submissions increase. However, I decided early on in my editorship

to give a little feedback to each poet so at least everyone has a take-away, even if it is ‘you made the shortlist again’. This distinguishes *a fine line* from most other journals and I’m really proud of that!

Another major challenge is finding committee members to support the work. While I can’t thank our two *a fine line* volunteers enough – Summer Wick-Featonby for proofreading and compiling the *a fine line* Mailchimp, and Cassie Hart for posting the *a fine line* social media posts – I have found it challenging to give *a fine line* poets the advertising, celebrating and growth they deserve, particularly on the wider New Zealand stage. If you have some spare time, please consider joining our wonderful hard-working committee to help grow our wonderful community. We need you!

SW: Thank you, Gail! On that note, how would you describe the specific contribution a fine line makes to the wider Aotearoa poetry community and environment? What role does it play for the New Zealand Poetry Society / Te Rōpū Toikupu O Aotearoa itself?

GI: *a fine line* is both an entry point for new poets – many writers have been published for the first time in *a fine line* and/or are given feedback to continue to grow in their writing – and also a place where we present and celebrate the talent of our best Aotearoa poets to model fine, diverse and cutting-edge poetry.

Within the NZPS itself, *a fine line* is both a place we can showcase our members’ pieces as well as attract new membership.

SW: You are a busy person — poet, writer, editor, teacher and mother among other things. How do you juggle your various commitments and roles?

GI: Poetry and family are my life. I decided in my 40s when I discovered I was a poet (*a poet!*) that I was going to try and make my living from it. Mental as anything, I know! But to spite the naysayers, I wasn’t going to buy the line that poets can’t make a living from their work. Well, actually, I personally don’t know anyone who makes their living from writing in New Zealand, but I wanted to at least make my living from *poetry-related* work, and luckily when I didn’t know what I wanted to do I had trained as a teacher in my 20s, so I teach poetry for the Write On School for Young Writers. Also, over the years I’ve built up my own freelance editing, including editing for some fantastic journals. NZPS were instrumental in building my editing career as they offered me my first editing job as an anthology editor back in 2017. I loved it – making the selections, emailing the poets and making the anthologies as beautifully presented as they could be. And also in 2017, I went to work with Michelle Elvy and team at *Flash Frontier*, and in 2018, James Norcliffe offered me his position as poetry editor when he left *takahē*. I have learnt from the best! To be honest, I also do a few other non-poetry jobs – a tutor and cleaner and some English Language examining. Yes, I have five part-time jobs to support my writing and family, not to mention those volunteer jobs along the way! The actual poetry writing and being part of the poetry community that I have squeezed around the income-earning makes it all worthwhile. It sustains the ups and downs of family life and the hardships and rejections of being a writer. I’m glad this has been my path.

SW: How has some of the editing experience you’ve just described helped or influenced your own writing journey?

GI: One of the ways editing has helped my writing, beyond income, is that it allows me to see what concerns our poets, and it strengthens my own idea of what I *like* a poem to do and what

I want my own poems to do. I've always leaned towards poetry that says something about the wider world, culturally, politically, socially, as well as poetry that is thinking and experimental, and when I make poetry selections, I see the different ways people do that. It is a privilege to have that opportunity to see poets that are new to me coming through, that open my horizons on how to see the world and name it.

SW: You published your second poetry collection Some Bird in 2023, followed in quick succession by your third collection, anthology (n) a collection of flowers in 2024. How do your latest books differ from your powerful earlier collection Contents Under Pressure?

*GI: I think I found my voice in my recent two books. My first book Contents Under Pressure came out of my Masters in Poetry at Massey where I was learning to put a collection together during the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes. I've written about how writing saved me through that time. However, Some Bird was compiled from many angry poems I'd written over a number of years of learning what it meant to be a woman in Aotearoa over the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of this one. anthology (n.) a collection of flowers came out of my love of the land and walking through it. It's a tribute to our native flowers, but also a natural, social, cultural and personal history of Aotearoa, inspired by its tiny *poesies*. Even though these last two books came out very close to each other, the poems from both collections had been written five years or more before. The five years was how long it took to find publishers, and then two different publishers found the two books within the space of a year! The nature of the beast.*

SW: 'Writing saves my life. I write every day. It gives shape to my dreams and responses. It is a voice that is and isn't me. Ha! The disappearing trick of it.' I like this enigmatic quote from your website The Seventh Letter!

GI: I was thinking about the Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland when I wrote that, but also the way readers often believe what you write is autobiographical when it isn't, and it is. Poetry is creating art, and in the creating, it becomes objectified; the experience you were writing about no longer belongs to you but the world. People often say my poetry is very honest. I don't know what they mean. I try to be honest to the inspiration but if it means changing the details to create the right feeling I will.

I have three huge inspirations: the mess of family, the mess of our whenua, and other poems that have smacked me across the face with their audacity and beauty of the language.

SW: During your time as editor you've highlighted many terrific poems and artworks. Are there particular pieces (poem, cover and artwork), or editions, that really stand out for you?

GI: You can see some of my favourite poems in my Editor Picks but there were many more. As with all selections, I was thinking about diversity of voice and style across the selection so many other favourites that didn't make it in. Some names come to mind: Janet Newman (spring 2021), Sam Duckor-Jones (summer 2023), Jeni Curtis and Lincoln Jacques (winter 2022), Courtney Edwards (winter 2024), Ariana Tikao (spring 2024), Sherryl Clarke and Robert Rinehart (autumn 2024), and also your poems, Sophia (autumn 2021) and Ruben's (winter 2023), both of you now on the team! One of my favourite articles was Erik Kennedy's (spring 2021) as I'm a great lover of eco-poetry. And some of my favourite artworks were by Jan Fitzgerald (spring 2021, a fine line's first cover artist) and botany artist, Rebecca Smallridge (spring 2022), regular contributors Jenny Longstaff, Claire Beynon and Lesley Evans, and I

couldn't not mention my daughter (complete bias!) Rata Ingram, who generously donated this, my last cover.

SW: You recently introduced the Bug of the Year Poetry Competition. Would you like to say a few words about this new NZPS venture?

GI: Claudia Jardine hosted an Insect Poetry night in a cockroach suit at Little Andromeda in Ōtautahi towards the end of 2024. The NZ Entomological Society Conference was in town too, and the insect poets were out in full force; the whole night was hilarious. The Bug of the Year is like The Bird of the Year – you can vote for your favourites. The Entomological Society approached me about running (and judging) a poetry competition to run alongside the voting for the 2025 BOTY competition, and being a fan of crossing the sciences with the arts, I said yes. Entries close end of January so still a few days to get your 25-line poems in! There is a category for each bug so there will be many winners! There are cool books up for grabs and the winners will be published on the NZPS website and The Entomological Society's website.

SW: What will you miss the most about your role as editor?

GI: I will miss all of you. Your care for poetry and language and getting the right word in the right place. I will miss being in touch with the new poets and poems coming through. I will miss our team and the care they take. One of the reasons I wanted to leave is that it is a huge privilege to be an editor, no less a paid one, in an industry that is vilely underfunded. It's a position that should be shared around so we can all learn and grow our craft stronger. Different editors select different people – we all have our own biases. Let the next editor begin and see *a fine line* and NZPS grow some more!

SW: What core advice would you give to our incoming editor?

GI: Respect every poem, work hard, and enjoy the wonderful NZPS team!

SW: Can you share a little about your plans for the future?

GI: I'm an editor but I'm primarily a writer, and a writer needs to write! After the last two years heavily involved with the production and marketing of my two recent poetry collections (work that is more draining than creative), it's time to write some new poem babies into existence, to tease out what my inner voice is passionate about and to see what comes. Under my lucky star, at the end of last year I received news that I had been accepted for a six-week residency (my first one ever!) at Robert Lord Cottage in Ōtepoti Dunedin starting in late February. Wow, space has been opened for me to write. So I'm off to put my head in the clouds for six weeks and we'll see what comes after that. Hopefully it will sustain me for what looks like another rocky year ahead in all spheres.

SW: Congratulations on the residency, Gail! We look forward to welcoming you in Ōtepoti. And ngā mihi!. Working with you has been an absolute pleasure ... I'm sure I speak on behalf of many poets and artists in expressing heartfelt appreciation, not just for the work you have tirelessly showcased and celebrated, but for your patience and efficiency and for your unwavering generous, kind and inclusive approach to life, writing and other people.

GI: Thank you, Sophia. It's been wild and wonderful. Nō reira tēnā koutou katoa.



Look to the mountains — Jenny Longstaff

Grant Shimmin

The first cry

It seems so vast on the pre-dawn stillness
the sound of your distant cry
accompaniment to the grainy shape of the world
far off mountains still imagined shapes
under the corner-lifted blanket of night
closer hills defined only by bowing streetlights
a vapoured moon
and sky a lighter shade of dirty grey
than the colour I suspect frames your clownish white face
But Google is not my friend,
its offering for “white-faced heron call”
devoid of evidence that that is what I heard,
mournfully skinning the silence
a big call befitting a big bird
and you’re the biggest I see around here
except on your regal white cousin’s rare visits
Then I remember the gulls
the avian extroverts unembarrassed
by their overtly outsized voices
and on reflection I couldn’t be less surprised
at the identity of dawn’s shredders

Tim Jones

The Season

The mountains reconvene.
An avalanche of voices
thrums the heavy ground.

Precise, confidential,
the wind reports the news
it gleams from pavement tables:

the All Black's private pain,
a public intellectual's
ceaseless quest for vengeance.

The mountains shake their balding heads.
The culture of celebrity
has pushed them to the margins –

there are no peaks on the social pages.
Aspiring no longer, they allow the wind
to hustle away with the clouds.

Eroding, reminiscing, the mountains shake their
heads. Snow falls, forgotten dandruff,
through the swiftly warming air.

First published in *North & South*, August 2007

Lola Elvy

Tumble: Indian Ocean Crossing, July 2015

Waves crashing at our sides and I think
we're going under. You say
to stay indoors. I watch the books go flying
words spilling out, smacking
into walls two meters away. The pull of gravity
comes from somewhere new, unfamiliar
forces us to stand fall sideways.
We tumble over ourselves. I cannot
see the sky from here, the world wrenched
from its axis. More water
than I can measure – teak is bursting
at its seams. Then
your voice and all is still. It will take us days
to mop the wetness from the corners
 – bedsheets, clothes, all we have –
and months more to lose the salt
our footsteps smoothing the saline glisten
into the varnished floor.



Lighthouse – Oshadha Perera

Alastair Clarke

High Country

These volcanic extrusions
scarring this high plateau, these now
under snow. Passing through is passing

through a geology primer –
the road descending now to Taupo's
solipsism – its lonely vacancy.

Here we answer to none but to
mountains – Ngauruhoe,
Ruapehu, Tongariro –

to powers ungraspable. This,
a world shaping minds – presently
silent, while eruptively cruel.

So we stand by the lake's liquid
crater gazing at death and history –
while the Pohutukawa stir

a little, just a little in breeze.
Distant, Ruapehu's white plume
mounts quietly above snow.

Jenny Longstaff

Encounter

We pause and listen
to absorb the prayer wheel's message,
spinning its supplications.
The sun-split glare shines on waiting snow –
waiting to let go, softening,
but heavy as the unloved heart.

Under the icefall,
brittle truth stares us down.
The dead climber salutes our puny progress,
his arm raised in a permafrost greeting.
The mountain will hold him
forever gripped to her chill consequence
above the tattered pennants
of remnant prayers.

Bruised air vibrates
a shuddering sigh of regret.
Too obvious, the blizzard will come
soon enough for us all.

I feel Yeti breath on my neck
as the clouds boil above.

Gaela James

Ardre

You could not sleep at all
beneath the northland kauri
You found no guardian of your peace
as the ancestors called out
of quarrels that were not yours to settle

They whispered tales of spilled blood
as the strong winds howled in solidarity
for they had been waiting for one who could
hear the descendants of the sea

And though their pain was not your own
in dreams they flew you
aloft mountain tops and over water
as a witness to their insistent grief
too raw to allow you refuge
too unheard to permit you respite

Oshadha Perera

The Moon Rose

Last night the moon was on the news
the amateur reporter's eyes touching the sky,
as he went on about how it was a Milestone
with a capital M and 72pt bold font.

A lonely telescope in middle of the Pacific
has picked up an image
of the moon.

And on the moon was a plant,
a rose, its scarlet bright yellow shining,
highlights jumping out, dancing in the moonlight,
soft, curling surface as smooth as the touch of the breeze,
shining, glittering, hypnotising everybody who saw it.
Florists fought with astronomers
with words and hands (and other things),
to see the rose that floated in space
and they wanted to see more,
and more,
and more.

They named it the Moon Rose,
a new species, they said,
though its origin was a mystery.

But I knew how it came there
because I can still remember that day
like corals through tropical water.
I was so high up that my nerves were tickling
vertigo stinging my legs
my heart,
my mind,

as I watered it, covering it with soil.
I did it for grandma,
the day she died beneath the white hospital ceiling,
her eyes motionless as she gave me her last hug,
wrapping me in a polar fleece blanket of love,
the day she said she'd be on the moon
waiting for me.

Previously published by Dunedin Public Libraries (2024)

Robert Rinehart

Shasta

Sherman Spangle, uncle of mine,
climbed Mount Shasta early as a youth.

I knew him, of course, as an old
wheelchair-bound former itinerant

carpenter, all-around fixer: he solved
everything practical, fingers calloused

but kind. I remember his eyes' sparkle
as he taught me to lace worms,

thread them on a hook. Men like that
substituted for my father, whose pursuit

of the good life meant he lost out
all things. Like soft snow & brittle

high-altitude air, tastes from effort,
& joining up steep sides, iced ladders,

of an obstacle that somehow, during
the trudge, boosted you like a comrade.

John Ewen

Mt Davy

1012 metres, Paparoa Range, Westland. Named by Haast for Sir Humphrey Davy, inventor of the miner's safety lamp.

We could never know what it took from her
to leave all that she knew and loved
a part as close as her own heart beat
to say goodbye for ever to each one
of hers by blood, taken by her husband
to where the seasons were all out of step
with calendars and stubbornly the sun
would rise and fall in the wrong sphere.

She came from coal; the gentle landscape
of the Tyne. Now she felt marooned among
the never ending bush-clad, rain-swept hills.
Above them all Mt Davy loomed; dividing
two vast coalfields with its bulk. At first distant
and brooding it came to be the weather vane
she looked out to every day, her talisman.

Her husband died, children moved on; the mountain
now the only constant in the several places
where she lived. Somehow its massive shoulders
assumed a sheltering stance, that familiar figure
in the background. With cloud it would retreat
into its own seclusion, as a hermit might withdraw
to meditate. Sometimes a petticoated mist showed
just a tantalising glimpse stirring an old memory
of her mother's ankle beneath long skirts.

Then, when she was already in decline
I borrowed a key to use a service track and drove
her high up to a point along the ridge
as close as I could take her to the peak.
For the first time she could see all Mt Davy saw
looked down on serried hills, saw the great sweep
of sea and shore to Aoraki and the other giants
and was content.

Sara Qasem

Harvest season

Ya bayee 3ala shajaratn 'al zaytoon, el laymoon, wel teen;

(Oh, if only you could see the magnificence of our olive, lemon and fig trees too.)

On ancient soil where earth embraces sand the
heavy silence of harvest season echoes loudly into my
native land. Our trees long planted; our emblems of peace—
and forage, we must, for our forthcoming feast. An
olive tree is like a human; its skin is not to be harmed
and so softly we will gather our fruits of *salaam*.

Akh ya falasteen; fa2adtik ya baladee.

(Oh my dear Palestine, how I miss you, how you are missing, from me.)

Our martyrs now unshackled – our twining turtle doves
now vining, curling, up far above – to the moon, to the
sun, from the river and to the sea – to our branches, these
roots— long past your false decrees. To
el sha3eb el Falasteene – this anchor of generations –
those who long surpass your illegal occupations. To the
fields of native bloodlines, of gauze –
there's so much gauze – to how rich we are in
kuffiyehs, tatreez and mountains of *loz*.

Like wildfires you have spread this systemic oppression—
burning our crops but failing to account for the heat of my
dispossession; the child of the diaspora, *fly we will*
through your barbs and your wires, we weave – a
hand-me-down Palestinian skill.

To the great narrative shift – of pardon my roots to
make room for me in my pastures, I don't want your
disputes. To *akh ya falasteen; jayatlik ya baladee*.

(Oh my dear Palestine, wait for me, I am coming to get you.)

To where *baladee* means *ardi* and *ardi* means
home. Right by the shining golden rock – the one that
meets the dome. Here we are olive groves by the thousand, we are
al Daffah el Arabiya, we are *yabayee 3ala el Saboon el Nabulsiya*
we are *Khalto's maramiya* and *3amo's shajarat el teen*, we are
Mama's Thobe and *Teta's tatreez*, we are *Baba's hands* that
code for *Jedo's genes*; *law te3refo sho ya3ne abtal el Jenin*.

(If only you knew what it meant, to have the heart of a warrior, as one from Jenin)

We are palms with groves like a stable olive branch. Rearing
lands with displaced fingers and *put them back where you found them*

hands. We are hues of brown feeding this soil. We are
hues of brown inhabiting this bloodline. We are—

*akh ya falasteen, erje3telek ya baladee —
oh my dear Palestine, I am here and I have returned —
to you. We are foragers and
we will forage, for harvest season's feast.*

Elevation

This mountain
this body
my shoes—

this mountain
this body
my shoes—

this mountain
this body
my shoes—

this mountain
my shoes—

this mountain
my shoes—

this mountain
my shoes—

this mountain

this mountain

this mountain

this.

All of this.
All of us.
All of it—

Together,

amazing, isn't it?

synchrony,

still

and so very high up— look

how we become

one, again.

Desna Wallace

Some nights

Some nights
she dances beneath the giant kauri
especially nights when the wind whispers
soft and mournful
dance, kauri tells her
dance
and she does.

Some nights
she sings beneath the giant kauri
especially nights when the moon is full
bright and glowing
sing, Kauri tells her
sing
and she does.

Tonight
she cries beneath the giant Kauri
gentle tears falling from above
cry, Kauri tells her
cry
and she does
for Tāne Mahuta ~~himself~~ is crying
the Kauri are crying
and in unison
they cry
save us.

And she answers
I'll save you
I'll save you

Nola Borrell

Denniston

Out of the swirling mist the wives come
in their proud white blouses
ready for their grey men, up from Banbury
Patrick's Rose laughing, her wild mum running through
Conn the Brake, brain buzzing with words -
bord and pillar, baffle, brakehead
balance, banjo and barrowman -
the impossible drop of cable railway.

And below ground, the cramped tunnels,
waiting for the blast, the quick silence,
the risk of fire, toxic gas, falling rocks
underworld of shovels and sweat
candleholders and carved names
and shawls they call angel's wings
the patient horses standing by
the only life they know.

We stand in the steps of those miners
warm on the sandstone, encircled by stillness
the air less desolate, those steep hills benign
an empty truck poised at the incline head
a lone chimney, strangely solid, a china shard
traces of coal dust, rusting rails
Westport, soundless, two thousand feet below
near the sea those wives would never visit.

But what sunsets, the women
leaving the fire to brave the crisp night
or, the miners, later turning down the lamp, to find
the Coalsack silhouetted against the Milky Way
and Venus, her bright presence
the creaking props, the sunless days forgotten
the slow moon rising, the vast sky,
listening for a hare, hoping for magic.

Note: Patrick's Rose, Eva, Rose's mother, and Conn the Blake are characters from *The Denniston Rose* by Jenny Patrick

first published in *Broadsheet* 10, 2012

Linda Albertson

Aoraki Mt Cook unseen

As the last breath of the previous today
fills up the glass in the window frame
there is no visibility in the ranges this morning.

I slide the lace curtain to one side
my sight is beaten

yet I saw un-life in her eyes
after life turns a corner. My hand palms

cold glass. The last step
from a shrivelled pathway to the summit
is the same for everyone.

Yesterday, from Hooker Lake,
I saw Aoraki and heard
a perfect symphonic note held forever

I saw un-life in each of her eyes
I plummeted
before time wrested me.

Now, in my after-herlife, I circumambulate
my decades with her
missing the sun-lit crags, avoiding the gravelly slopes.



Aoraki Mt Cook – Oshadha Perera

Philomena Johnson

Mountainous Descent

The Buddhist koan asks: What is the sound
of one hand clapping? I want to know:

What is the sound the seasons make
as they unfold? The sound green
makes as it turns yellow? Turns orange?

Turns red? What is the sound of the stone
held in the hand? Grey when scooped
from the slow icy waters of the river bed.

Dry, a white so fine, something essential
stirs our dreams, nuzzles it – yearns to taste
that whiteness whole, yearns to meld
with the textures of an unseen world.

Weathered by wind and water, this
once-was-mountain froze, fractured,
crumbled – tumbled through millennia.

Far from the primordial home,
something answers, surrenders
to the warmth of the palm of a hand.

Stephanie Smith

Pāpāmoa Hills

On these steep slopes I am innocent as a babe,
so much I have let go of.
I don't ask what the hills remember
or what the karaka tree knows in its bones.

I come down off the summit.
Heat rises fragrantly
from dry grass, dry dust, dry sheep shit.
The sun smites my nape.

At the paddock gate I speak quietly to the sheep.
We look at each other without fear.



Cabbage Trees on the Port Hills — Lesley Evans

Rachel Miller

Visitors

It's always the same the morning they leave,
we stand them to attention
against the backdrop of Hauturu.
They smile fixedly, the menfolk rather flummoxed
having nothing to do with their hands,
they hold them out ready like props
for winding wool, and after much jocular
wrap them around their neighbours.
Hauturu is poised, the torn outlines
of its broken nose staring up at the sky.
An infinite mountain, snapped.

Allure

When you wake in the alive of night
please don't look at the moon without me.
The mountain will lift up her skirts
and the early morning cloud
will cover her naked crevices, drawing
curtains around their private consultation.
Then stretching back, with that hungry look
of approbation she will rearrange her folds,
grinning between the crisp cold sheets of August.

Sherryl Clark

It will not comfort you

they tell you to listen for ‘whumpf’
as if the snow above is whispering
a warning – fingers tighten, under-layers drop,
cracks radiate, white flumes build to clouds
as the mountain sheds a slab of snow,
shrugging it off like a too-tight overcoat –
anything you thought of as soft
is now heading towards you
at breakneck speed – images come
in nightmare fragments
that suffocating sensation
of thick bedcovers was a dress rehearsal
you should have heeded –
in the gap, trees vanish in seconds,
birds quick to rise, hearing the death knell
long before you feel the rush
of an avalanche at your back.

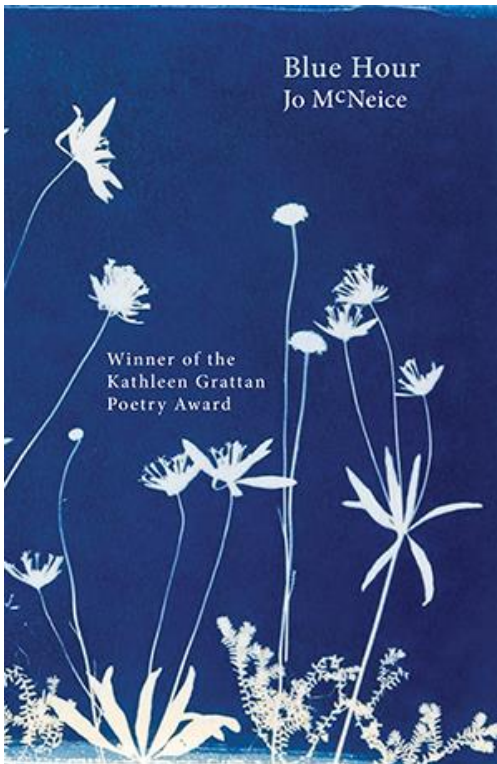
Red Planet

a giant has scooped and scoured
this planet to grey-brown rocks and sand,
valleys and mountains stripped of life
here a finger-gouge, there a swipe with a massive fist
pulverising to grit
scientists talk of minerals and mantles, core and crust
dreamers extol the red blush of its iron face
volcanoes and ice fought like mythic gods
to shape its blasted landscape
now thick dust billows
as landslides thunder down
Mars keeps calling to us
drawing us forward like Livingstone lemmings
into its siren song of silence.

S K Grout

Blue Hour – Jo McNeice

(Dunedin: Otago University Press Te Whare Tā o Ōtākou Whakaihū Waka, 2024). ISBN 978-1-99-004882-1. RRP \$30.00. 68pp



The 2023 Kathleen Grattan Poetry Award winner Jo McNeice’s debut collection *Blue Hour* takes place in the spaces in-between – the flash of a camera, thunder before rain, one heartbeat to the next. McNeice gains inspiration from ‘walking in green spaces. Especially Karori cemetery. It’s sprawling and peaceful, it feels like nature is reclaiming itself. Looking at the plants, insects, graves, statues, birds, there’s an amazing amount of material.’[1] The speaker/poet looks back over her encounters with grief, betrayal, loss and mental health crises but, through the process of reclamation and time’s progression, there is also recovery and healing.

The speaker/poet looks back over her encounters with grief, betrayal, loss and mental health crises but, through the process of reclamation and time’s progression, there is also recovery and healing.

Surprisingly, for a collection titled with blue, the colour makes a limited showing – despite the eye-catching cyanotype cover of dandelions and urban flora. There is, however, an abundance of every shade of colour from purples and greens to ‘buttery light’. The opening poem “Aro Valley” begins ‘I want to take / your picture’, announcing a number of different obsessions the book navigates – how to capture a fleeting moment in words, performance, and the role of audience and player. Like the time of day – l’heure bleu / the blue hour – these poems move through twilight at dawn or dusk trying to make connections.

McNeice skilfully connects poems to each other across the collection via repeating words and images, most especially in her use of fairy tales. Each poem connects like a puzzle piece to the next. “Tidal” begins ‘(t)hrough a fisheye lens’ which follows the first of three poems titled “Mermaid singing”, and then the final line of “Kiss”, ‘(w)aiting to lock me in a brand-new dark’, echoes the final couplet of the following poem “Flicker”, ‘beyond the dull light / somewhere’.

McNeice employs three glosa poems in the collection[2] with the first inspired by PK Page, a poet who wrote an entire book of glosa poems. Repetition and revision – also in the form of a villanelle, “Bees haunt the sunflowers” – suggest mental health and the process of recovery.

Negotiating with and learning from the past is a key template for many fairy tales, and McNeice makes abundant use of the allegory. We encounter worlds reminiscent of Hansel and Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood and The Little Mermaid, and symbols of fairy tales repeat again and again: garden paths and trails, breadcrumbs, forests and hearts. This is evident in lines such as ‘You say it three times, like a spell,’ in “Ghostheart” and ‘the mirror lies then tells the truth’ from “Going where I have to go”. The fauna – wolves, blackbirds – and flora – nettles, mandrake, rue, hellebore, mustard seed, borage flower – intensify this world-building.

The word ‘heart’ appears in a number of different poems, most repeatedly and significantly in one of the central poems “She’s feeling old”:

A tower block heart knows its pain is
very ordinary,
very plain, basic, ugly even. Forgettable.

Some types of pain are just more
pleasing to the eye.
 (“She’s feeling old”)

In the same poem, there’s a two-line list of abstractions: ‘Disorder. Disintegration. // Disobeying.’ disrupting the narrative in both meaning and sound. McNeice’s poetry disrupts – like any good fairy tale – in its imagery and word choice. In each of the mermaid poems, the singing lines are completely unexpected – ‘I have never taken cocaine.’ In “Compartment C”, there is ‘thunder without rain’ and the

speaker’s mind is described as both desert and forest, as if from one extreme to another.

Negotiating with and learning from the past is a key template for many fairy tales, and McNeice makes abundant use of the allegory...symbols of fairy tales repeat again and again

There is a sense of telling a story – whether myth or personal history – and McNeice layers this awareness of audience through a compelling use of ‘you’ throughout. There are instances where the ‘you’ feels intimate and/or known: ‘You tell me it’s because I have bipolar disorder.’

and

You ask me when my birthday is.

(You never asked before now.)

Grow up.

(“Ghostheart”)

Other times the ‘you’ seems almost to speak to another part of the ‘I’ of the speaker.

Admit nothing.

Your mind is a blizzard.

(“Admission”)

This sense of something shared through time and experience culminates in the poem “You & me”, which blurs the line between reader and speaker, a back-and-forth which is porous and malleable, allowing the reader to participate – as audience, co-conspirator, confidante, guilty party.

McNeice also incorporates a more modern sense of telling a story – through the lens of a camera or a film or TV script. “An analysis of us as a

film” introduces a ‘hero’ (who also arguably acts as anti-hero) and the poem weaves between different viewpoints and characters to interpret – or perhaps re-interpret – a personal history. The ‘he’ of this poem, as well as the psychiatrist, appear again fleetingly throughout the collection.

I am very careful
to write you in anonymously
like the ghost who lives in the TV.
 (“An analysis of us as a film”)

Blue Hour navigates the passage of time through film and photography, as well as the seasons,

I stand on the edge of autumn
on the verge of the afternoon.
 (“You & me”)

and the changes that take place in a garden – ‘The sky is an adamant shade of green’ from “Mermaid singing (iii)” and ‘The sky glistens with your / mistakes’ in “Purgatory”.

In “Admission”, McNeice tells us ‘Nature is ill but she won’t admit it’ and this embodiment of the vast natural world around the poet to say the unexpected, the unspoken, the difficult thing connects *Blue Hour* to other recent Aotearoa poetry collections such as Serie Barford’s *Sleeping with Stones* which uses the seasons to navigate grief and Robin Maree Pickens’ *Tung* which meets the vastness of place and language to create an emotional landscape. Whilst reading, I was also put in mind of New Zealand-born Chloe Honum’s frank but tender engagement with mental health in her US publication *Then Winter*. ‘The fluorescent light in the group therapy room is vetting me for some terrible migration.’ (“Kiwi”).

Claire Orchard calls *Blue Hour* a ‘shifting kaleidoscope of light and darkness, entrapment and escape’ [3] and indeed McNeice explores and considers what emerges from memory and

experience and compellingly offers up her reality to the reader. By utilizing an engagement with nature, McNeice also proposes a pathway to restoration and regeneration.

[1]

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/newsroom/jo-mcneice-wins-the-2023-kathleen-grattan-poetry-award>

[2] A glosa typically consists of four ten-line stanzas with a borrowed excerpt from another writer.

[3]

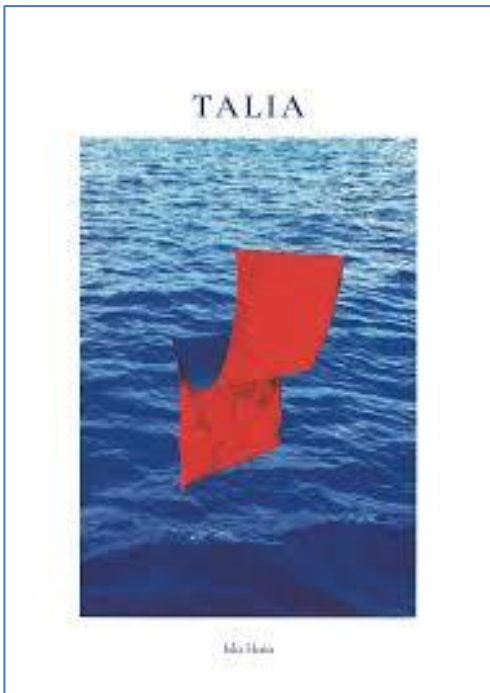
<https://www.otago.ac.nz/press/books/blue-hour>

To review books for *a fine line*,
please contact Sarah Scott,
reviews@poetrysociety.org.nz

Vaughan Rapatahana

Talia – Isla Huia

(Auckland: Dead Bird Books, 2024).
ISBN: 9781991150639 . RRP: \$30.00.
87pp.



This is the first collection of toikupu – of what I think will be several – by a promising kaitito Māori, Isla Huia (Te Āti Haunui a-Pāpārangī, Uenuku). In fact, I also think that – going by this book – there are two Isla Huia! There is one who pens rather impressionist verse, in which the themes are somewhat sublimated by a forest of dense images, giving an ambience of intrigue as to what the poet is ‘writing about’. For example, in the very long piece “karakia” we encounter a selected litany of –

i want to drive above every hilux...
i want to feel very washed...
i want to burn like acid from my hairline
to the sun...

I... think that – going by this book – there are two Isla Huia!... one who pens rather impressionist verse, in which the themes are...sublimated by a forest of dense images, giving an ambience of intrigue... [and]...the more accessible Huia, who dwells on intensely personal topoi

‘He aha tenei?’ ko taku pātai.

Then there is the far more accessible Huia, who dwells on intensely personal topoi pertaining to their whānau, whanaunga, hoa and hoa makau. In this mode they take direct and unflinching shots at historical Pākehā colonisation and its continued ill influence on ngā iwi Māori ināianeī. For example, from the excellent “godly” regarding a relic of the supposed founder of Ōtautahi:

i just want them to
stop spending money on
your very dead face...

And what about this from a prose poem, the caustic “chelsea hotel” – ‘this is a hospital for the pissed or piss-poor, but not pākehā’.

While the entire “taumanu” (pp78 -79) is a paen to te ao Māori, ki te tino rangatiratanga.

Then there are the killer lines from the aptly and not so subtly titled “that māori cultural thing of literally knowing this”:

on the office wall, there is
a whakapapa

of white, male principals, who are
looking
down on me and up my skirt all at once.

I admit that I like the cogent second-self toikupu more, which I also note flows through Huia's mahi in the latest issue of *Pūhia*. The more over-the-top amorphous poems leave me with he maha ngā pātai (many questions) even after reading them several times. Mind you, I may be obtuse.

Huia has some other rather distinctive traits trailing throughout their poetry. One is their incorporation of a wide geographical spread of locales across Aotearoa New Zealand. References are made to Kaiapoi, Tūrangi, Te Rēinga, Arowhenua, Hiruhārama, Te Henga, Tokaanu, Mahurangi, Surrey Crescent, Raetihi, Sandringham (the latter three places lifted from perhaps the most admirable piece in this collection, a mōteatea titled “where are your bones?”).

The pervading bi/multicultural atmosphere is embellished by references to FIKA, the rōpu of primarily Pasifika women writers from Ōtautahi, and some fine lines centre on this bonding network:

aunty has been learning how to
fix people indigenously...
aunty knows how to get deep
in the brown girl's fascia...
these are the hands of
sāmoa, aligning...
they cannot
surveil us here.
 (“aunty says”)

Then there is the fearless honesty regarding their own passionate emotions, experiences and

exigencies. Although they consistently refer to themselves with a lower case ‘i’, Huia remains right up front and writes candidly about institutionalisation and incarceration, the death of loved ones (as in the final “poroporoaki”), the sublimation of Māori, the travails of the less ‘fortunate’ members of society, and their own entanglements in these, not so subtly epitomised by lines such as ‘fuck, i feel māori when i'm not scared’, in “te awa”. Powerful stuff.

The pervading bi/multicultural atmosphere is embellished by references to FIKA, the rōpu of primarily Pasifika women writers from Ōtautahi, and some fine lines centre on this bonding network

Lots of loss, masses of mamae. Indeed, the book is titled for her best friend, Natalia Saegusa, who died in 2022. Yet, of course, there are powerful love poems and positive acclamations too, such as the ardent accolade to their wife, titled “eleven eleven”. For example:

to night 'n day/where we married/
over steaming hot potato/and it felt so
native,
so hāngī/so ancestor/to say
the passenger seat is your mould
now/love/
there is nothing i wouldn't do for
you/and
i think we should/keep this up forever/

Thirdly, as I continue to tabulate stylistic and thematic features in *Talia*, there is the copious inclusion of ngā kupu Māori throughout, and I am certain we will sight even more in the next collection, eh. Indeed, in a good number of

pieces there is an abundance of ngā kupu Māori, given that these generally are single words, with a sprinkling of phrases. One point I will make though, is the occasional inclusion of the letter ‘s’ as to indicate a plural or a possessive – as in ‘whaea’s sisters’ - but, of course, there is no such letter in our arapū!

There is – especially in those allusive and elusive impressionist tracts – a plethora of brilliant imagery, such as:

the karanga of their ambulance

to nail chandeliers into

the ceilings of our mouths

(“hiruhārama, jerusalem”)

and

in some kind of

acapella muscle memory

(“urumau”)

These adroit examples are not situated solely in the more opaque tracts either. What about this mighty sample:

a fact so irredeemable/and hot to the
touch/that it

slots better/into a cloud formation or
penne pasta/

than into language

(“eleven eleven”)

Overall then, an impressive initial compilation of poetry by a gifted young kaituhi wahine Māori. I look forward to their next volume and offer thanks for being given the opportunity to review this one.

Tēnā koutou katoa mō tēnei kōwhiringa.

To review books for *a fine line*,
please contact Sarah Scott,
reviews@poetrysociety.org.nz

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Windrift Haiku Group. Their generous donation to the NZPS will support ongoing haiku projects, such as this haiku feature in *a fine line*.



Two bunk bivouac, three tired trampers — Lesley Evans

Ariana Tikao

floating mountain
mirage on the horizon
ko Maukatere

taramea spikes
finger pricked, blood drips, that hurts!
giant flowers' scent

Wanda Amos

snow melt...
welcoming climbers
a circus of kea

ruru's haunting call
echoes up the mountain...
we gather to say goodbye

Alicia France

McKinnon Pass mist –
in the shelter
soup fogs up my glasses

dusk –
honey spills over pinnacles

Kanjini Devi

mountain top
I can see clearly
where I strayed

Haiku Dialogue 7 August 2024

Rachel Miller

a fir cone cracks
in the tinder dry pines
one second of fear

Oshadha Perera

harvest moon
tadpoles hiding
under a rock

Sandra Simpson

a cloak
about the shoulders of Ngauruhoe –
wild koromiko

Thomas Smith

the no ao kē
of a starry starry sky
glacier after glacier



Swirling contours — Lesley Evans

Nola Borrell

Motuara
climbing in Cook's steps
past a ruined pa

Kokako 4, 2006

downpour
a slug ascends
the window

Piers Davies

a solo tui
calling in the fog—
the streetlight halo

Julie Adamson

Denali above the clouds
I didn't look
high enough

mountains of debris
caught in the floods
climate change



Shades of pink – Lesley Evans

Julie Adamson lives in Wellington by the sea, always changing and inspiring her. She has been published in *Kokako*, *Island Writer* (Canada) NZPS Anthology 2020 and *a fine line*.

Linda Albertson lives on the lands of the Djiringanj people in Bega, NSW and spends increasingly more of her time reading, writing and talking about poetry. In 2023, she won the Booranga Writers Poetry Prize.

Wanda Amos started haiku at Ngunguru school, New Zealand. She now lives in Old Bar, NSW. She combines her hobbies of photography and haiku and has joined the Australian Haiku Society Committee Websites: wandas wanderings on Facebook and Instagram.

Serie Barford (Pākeha-Hāmoa) explores syncretic identities and narratives through poetry and prose. Her poetry collection, *Sleeping with Stones* (Anahera Press), was a finalist in the 2022 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards.

Julie Bates, from North Beach Christchurch, is a published poet and haiku writer locally and internationally. Winner of the 6th Moriako Haiku competition 2024.

Nola Borrell writes haiku, tanka, and haibun in particular. Her work is widely published here and overseas.

Brent Cantwell is a New Zealand-born poet who writes, teaches and lives with his family in the hinterland of Queensland's Gold Coast. He has recently been published in *Jacaranda Journal*, *Westerly Magazine* and *takahē*. His first collection of poetry *tether* was published by Recent Work Press in October 2023.

Sherryl Clark writes poetry and fiction, both for adults and young readers. She lives in Whangarei and works part-time as an editor.

Alastair Clarke's work has most recently appeared in *Live Encounters*, *a fine line*, *Orbis*, *Landfall*, *Fresh Ink*, *Poetry New Zealand Yearbook*, *Antipodes*, *Mayhem* and in *Ezine*.

Sue Courtney Sue Courtney lives beside the estuary at beautiful Orewa Beach north of Auckland. Her love of nature, birds, photography and the night sky inspire many of her haiku. Her website is <http://s-sense.nz>

Anne Curran writes haiku inspired by the landscape, seasons, people, and events of Hamilton. She remains grateful to writing friends, mentors, and family members who nurture this hobby.

Piers Davies is a longtime poet; widely published in Aotearoa and overseas, co-facilitator of Titirangi Poets and co-editor of its Ezines and anthologies.

Kanjini Devi is a published poet who calls Hokianga home.

Lola Elvy writes music, poetry, and other forms of creative fiction and nonfiction. She is a central committee member of the New Zealand National Flash Fiction Day organisation and founded and edits the online youth journal *fingers comma toes*.

Michelle Elvy is a writer, editor and teacher of creative writing. Her books include *the everrumble* and *the other side of better*, and anthologies including *A Kind of Shelter: Whakaruru-taha* and, forthcoming, *Te Moana o Reo | Ocean of Languages*.

Feeling close to the mountains, whether tramping, exploring or even viewing them from her home city of Ōtautahi gives **Lesley Evans** a headful of images that help her to learn about painting them. She has always thought that mountains and poetry belong together.

John Ewen is Kapiti Coast-based. His poems, short stories and non-fiction have appeared in NZ literary magazines and anthologies, online and broadcast by RNZ.

Raised in Alabama, **Alicia France** earned a BA in languages from the University of Montevallo before studying design and becoming a mother in Aotearoa. A former student of Hagley Writers' Institute, Alicia enjoys weaving her curiosity into works of art.

Jenny Fraser, New Zealand. Her haiku, tanka, haiga and haibun appear in international journals and anthologies. She's been honored in international haiku form competitions and in Haikupedia. She serves as tanka editor for the United Haiku and Tanka Society journal, *Cattails*.

Peter Free is a science teacher from Wellington. He has been fortunate to place in several international haiku competitions, including winning the Katanogahara Story Award in the 3rd Star Haiku Contest (2022) and first place in the Basho-an Haiku Contest (2023).

Alison Glenny lives on the Kāpiti Coast and is the author of *The Farewell Tourist* (Otago University Press, 2018), *Bird Collector* (Compound Press, 2021) and */Slanted* (Compound Press, 2024).

SK Grout (she/they) is a writer, editor and poet who splits her time between Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau and London, UK. Their debut pamphlet, 'What love would smell like', is published with V. Press. Their poetry and reviews are widely published in the US, UK, Europe and the Pacific. <https://skgrout.com>

Dominic Hoey is a poet, author and small dog owner in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa. He's released two bestselling novels and written a million love poems.

Rata Ingram has designed and illustrated poetry and picture books, and event posters in her spare time. Her poems have been published in national and international journals, and on walls in Ōtautahi.

Gaela James is a Welsh born poet living in Taranaki. They write of what they see and hear in their daily life. This submission has been blessed by the subject and her kuia before submission.

Tim Jones lives in Te Whanganui-a-tara / Wellington. His recent books include poetry collection *New Sea Land* (Mākarō Press, 2016) and climate fiction novel *Emergency Weather* (The Cuba Press, 2023).

Philomena Johnson's poetry has appeared in anthologies and journals including *takahē*, *Fuego* and *Voiceprints 4*. She won The John O'Connor First Book Award 2024 for her manuscript *not everything turns away*. Philomena tutors at the Write On School for Young Writers.

Jenny Longstaff is a Dunedin resident with interests ranging from the environment to tramping, history and motorcycling. A keen observer, she enjoys exploring verbal and visual imagery while waiting for paint to dry and watching the grass grow.

Bill Manhire was born in Invercargill and lives in Wellington. "The End of the World" will appear in his next book, *Lyrical Ballads*, which he hopes is closer than he thinks.

Rachel Miller is a visual artist and poet living in South Hokianga. She has had poems published in *Te Kohu*, *Fast fibres* and NZPS.

Oshadha Perera is a poet and short story writer from Southland. He is a winner of the Lancaster Writing Awards (Poetry), NZPS International Poetry Competition (Youth) and Southland Creative Arts Awards (Emerging Talent).

Joanna Preston is a Tasmanaut poet. The author of two award-winning poetry collections, she teaches at Hagley Writers' Institute and The Poetry Class, is an editor for Sudden Valley Press, and the current chair of the Canterbury Poets Collective.

Sara Qasem is a Palestinian writer and spoken word poet based in Ōtautahi. Her work explores grief, resilience and advocacy for marginalized communities, using storytelling with the hope to inspire meaningful change through shared human experiences.

Perena Quinlivan (Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Waikato-Tainui) is a Tāmaki Makaurau based poet and art critic who works in the area of Māori economic development. Perena's poetry has appeared in a range of journals.

essa may ranapiri (Ngaati Wehi Wehi, Ngaati Rangiwewehe, Ngaati Puukeko) is an uri or some shit living in Te Papanui, Kirikiriroa. Author of *ransack* and *ECHIDNA* published through Te Herenga Waka UP. They are working on their third book of poems a verse novel titled *Puke*. They will write until they are etc dead.

Vaughan Rapatahana (Te Ātiawa) commutes between homes in Hong Kong, Philippines, and Aotearoa New Zealand. He is widely published across several genre in both his main languages, te reo Māori and English. He is the author and editor of over 45 books.

Robert Rinehart (he/him) is a dual citizen poet living in Aotearoa New Zealand. Poetry has appeared in *Sky Island Journal*, *Chelsea*, *Suisin Valley Review*, *Concision* (USA), *Mayhem*, *a fine line*, NZPS Anthology (NZ). He lives in Whaingaroa.

Grant Shimmin is a Christchurch poet born in South Africa, passionate about humanity and the natural world. Words in *Roi Faineant Press*, *Remington Review*, *Bull*, *Blue Bottle Journal*, *The Hooghly Review*, *Epistemic Literary* and elsewhere.

Sarah-Kate Simons is a poet and writer from rural Canterbury but now residing in Tauranga. She is widely published online, in magazines and anthologies. She has a great affinity for moss, the theatre, quoting mythology out of context, and macaroni.

Sandra Simpson lives in Tauranga where she finds plenty of time to dream, but not always to sleep. Sandra has been editor of *Haiku NZ* since its inception in 2006 and is the South Pacific nominating editor for the annual Red Moon Press anthologies.

Stephanie Smith lives in Tauranga, where she worked for many years as a local history librarian. Retirement has been a gift that enables her to write every day.

Thomas Smith changed his creative focus during COVID. He has haiku, free verse poems, and limericks published in a number of literary journals. He lives in Austin, Texas, USA, with his family.

Barbara Strang lives in Christchurch. Her haiku and poems have appeared in New Zealand anthologies 1998 onwards. She leads the Small White Teapot Haiku Group, and has two published poetry collections.

Debbie Strange (Canada) is a chronically ill short-form poet and artist whose creative passions connect her more closely to the world and to herself. Please visit her archive: <https://debbiemstrange.blogspot.com/>.

Ariana Tikao (Kāi Tahu) is an artist of the sound and word variety based in Ōtautahi. She is a New Zealand Arts Laureate and has an MA in Creative Writing from the IIML. www.arianatikao.com

Desna Wallace is a published poet and children's author who loves to potter with words.