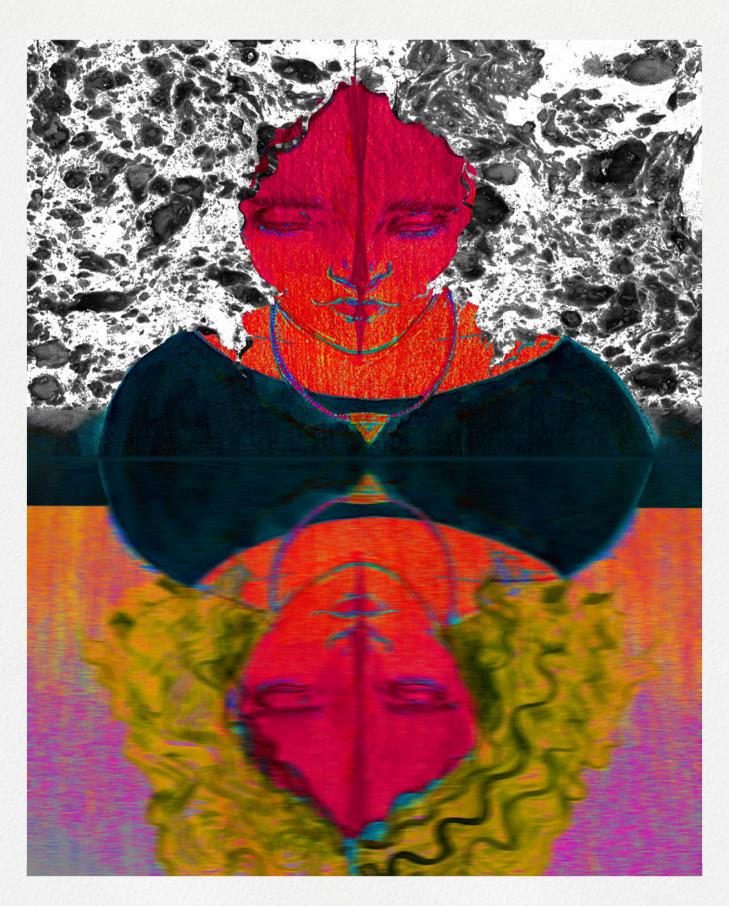
ISSN 2744-3248 Dec 2020



Tarot #1 - Dec 2020

First published 2020 Text copyright is retained by each poet Volume copyright @ Pīkake Press

This journal is copyright. Excepting the purpose of fair review, no part may be stored or transmitted in any form without permission in writing from the publishers. No reproduction may be made unless a licence has been obtained from the publisher.

Publisher: Pīkake Press Executive Editor and Designer: Kit Willett

Cover art by Katia Krpo instagram: @ok.krp

Typesetting: Cormorant 16/22



CONTENTS

Kit Willett 6 Editorial

Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod 8 Solar Powered

Siobhan Harvey 9 Haunted House

Rhiannon Hall 10 Autumn Dreams

Rachel J Fenton 11 Auckland, Good Friday

Erin Ramsay 12 The Mirror

Ria Masae 15 Drifting Threshold

Denise O'Hagan 16 The Dry-Cleaner's Daughter

Michael Morrissey 17 Air

Trish Veltman 18 Stones for the Shoah

Andrea Malcolm 20 The Heart Returned

Jamie Trower 21 Society of Captives

Lincoln Jaques 22 Ovid at the Trillos Cabaret Lounge

Ted Greensmith-West 24 Witches' Sabbath

Mat Gorrie 25 Plum Tree

Richard Bonifant 26 Fleeting Love

Brian Graystone 27 Precious Love

Donna Faulkner 28 Kaikoura Coast Post-Quake

Yael Klangvisan 29 Te Henga

Rachel J Fenton 30 Rock Oysters

Andrea Malcolm 31 Beachcomber

Ariana Sutton 32 Luminary

Jamie Trower My Travelling Papers 33 The Language of Maps Trish Veltman 34 The Lakes Hayden Hyams 36 Andrea Malcolm Progenitors: 1874, The Crossing 37 Migration Lincoln Jaques 38 Twenty-Two Years Denise O'Hagan 40 Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod Progress – Then Pause 41 Siobhan Harvey My Mother is a Ghost Living in My Mind 42 A Changing of The Guard Donna Faulkner 44 Richard Bonifant 46 Anzac Siobhan Harvey Rise Up 47 Mind Srishti Moudgil 48 Love Story Mike Johnson 49 The Boy Nikolai Trish Veltman 50 Somewhere Craig McGeady 52 Interminable Bloom Jamie Trower 53 A Pigeon at Puke Ariki Plaza Trevor Landers 54 Mat Gorrie Ohakune – Eve of A New Year 55 Jana Grohnert 56 Landscape with The Fall of Icarus by William Carlos Williams by Jana Grohnert Ria Masae Poeting 58 Ted Greensmith-West All the Hipster Poets Have Come Back 60 from the Dead



Editorial

One of the great pleasures of founding a project such as this is finding a name to fit. I spent some time thinking about tone and messaging, about aesthetic and style. I very quickly realised that what I wanted this journal to be was something timeless, classic, and beautiful that would sit comfortably in the Aotearoa poetry landscape. I wanted something digital and accessible; with the feel of a print journal, and something visual that sparks a freshness in the poetry for the reader. I wanted a journal which would place a (non-exclusive) focus on progressive voices and feminist voices—those voices that comment on aspects of society.

In my search for inspiration, my eyes fell on my tarot decks. Tarot reading was popular with some second-wave feminists, I thought, and particularly within the Goddess movement of the 1970s, and it is resurging now among millennial and post-millennial feminists; tarot is empowering, particularly with its acknowledgement of diverse spiritual experiences.

And then I reflected that Jung explored each card in a tarot deck as archetypal of the human experience. Aren't poems the same?

This journal is a collection of poems, of human experiences. We

each, as readers, insert ourselves somewhere into their stories, not unlike tarot. And not unlike tarot, we can interpret them in a variety of ways. So, I settled on a name.

Some use tarot as a spiritual practice, others as a tool for self-growth; others still simply admire the cards as art. So too do poets write for different reasons, both conceptual and affective, and as a reader of this collection, you are invited to read these poems however you need.

I hope that when engaging with this journal—either cover to cover, like when unwrapping a freshly-bought tarot deck, or sporadically, at random, like when practising—you are challenged, and that you find some comfort in the experiences of these poets. I believe that each of these poems carries a taonga to offer you.

It was a delight to design this journal and to hand-pick these poems from such a rich pool of submissions. I look forward to *Tarot* having a long and exciting life in Aotearoa's literary world.

Kit Willett, Dec 2020

Kit Willett is an Auckland-based English teacher and poet. His first poetry collection, *The Dying of the Light*, responds to treating Milton's *Paradise Lost* as a sacred text, exploring themes of ecofeminism and postcolonialism in the epic narrative, and is planned for release 2021.

Solar Powered Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod

No sun gets in this gloomy room, festering ceiling mould blending with summer fly spots

couch no longer comfortable, used countless times for children's huts (like this) she's committed

to leaving it out despite condensing space. She crawls in, cocoons where armrest touches back

listens to the rain, curious why her mind's solar powered: substandard without sunshine.

Haunted House Siobhan Harvey

At night, the home turns to dark matter: constellations spin at dusty windows; stray cats prowl a lightless street; veiled vehicles steal by. Belonging here is seized from TV flickers, the home electric with absent light, the world-views of politicians, people-traffickers, wall-builders, warmongers and fake-news profiteers, ghosts in the haunted house of the news. The swell high in the estuary close by, the home imagines itself, like the migrant, rowing in ocean air beneath moonlight. There is upset. There is unsettlement. Freighted with loss, a sleepwalker disturbs corridors; their breath troubles empty rooms. The home soothes this wild spirit with warm tea, guides it to resting, then sings it to sleep. Soon thoughts become dead bodies washed up on starless shores, craft capsized in deep waters, babies born to detention centres. The home peels away the roof of this strange reality, as if it's a scar, as if it bleeds. At the heart of the matter is such music as beats in the body unseen, and here the home calls out sanctuary to all who are displaced, all ghosts turned away, in dark matter, from entry elsewhere. Come to me, it cries. Come be bodies safe as homes no politician, people-trafficker, wall-builder, warmonger or fake-news profiteer can haunt.

Autumn Dreams Rhiannon Hall

Crouched, I pile twigs balls of newspaper, snap off square of white fire starter. Stretch out my hand for red wine. Place the glass back on low bench, by an open copy *The Best Australian Poems 2017*. Igniting fireplace kindling. Poetry heats my brain.

I watch paper twist to ash, twigs glow red.

Tomorrow night, I'll ask him to grab beer —
last taste of lingering summer. Tonight,
enjoy this fire I duck down, place log,
watch it blacken. Smelling the fruit of this shiraz —
grapes picked at end of summer – tasting sun,

crouching so he can watch *The Footy Show* I pretend I don't have school tomorrow.

Auckland, Good Friday Rachel I Fenton

The weekend before the fall a scorcher heralds a clear out. Old clothes belonging the children, mine and his, provide torture:

a Solomon's case earmarked for Paying it Forward North Shore Facebook Group descends into the garage. Behind the dining

table, a corner by the window end I call my office, it's messy. Poets, feminists, novelists, historians,

stacked like lovers, are compatible yet compete: Keats' "Hyperion" in three parts, though fragmented, makes the appetite whet

for Dante; The White Goddess rubs the heart of Marilyn Monroe between the slip cover and hardback of Women in Dark

Times; and Shakespeare and Austen get at it like Catullus and Clodia, fuckers in a mansion of one apartment fit

to burst into flames, where every other woman is named Beatrice. Most small things will fit in a box, be forgotten. Bother

this red plastic lighter, found on the sill, pocked and pimpled with barnacles, rust; lives crusted where raw metal should have its fill

as it rolls over ancient flint and bites like an eel. Useful. This still occupies.

The Mirror Erin Ramsay

"Carol looked at her. 'How do you become a poet?'
'By feeling things - too much, I suppose,' Therese answered conscientiously."

The Price of Salt, 1952, Patricia Highsmith

i. Bliss

I spilled water on the carpet when I knelt to feed the houseplants Like you broke the milk jug Ambivalence touched me lightly I waxed translucent

I read in my old cahier the violent words of fantasy I felt my knuckles drag Soft fevers tore my skin I ate fitfully and late

Music rang and crooned
The curve of my throat was vulnerable
Restless in the stair bend
I fell heavy with yearning

ii. The Mirror

You I found you I saw you in the Palermo You stole glances but were afraid

And being you, I saw myself In some unfamiliar frame You were too much of a boy

Let me count the ways

That I am you I read Joyce's *Portrait* too

I too bought material things for love And saw figures in clouds And whole worlds in Sandringham houses that each seemed like their own country

I saw you and within you I saw myself too And within that silhouette another self and on and on Until I numbered in the thousands and millions

iii. Anger

Like you I could not escape capriciousness Like Auckland weather

On Oxton Road I watched a curl of leaves rush across the street, unwinding Those blissful feelings closely held were now dispersed and lost

I felt the blow she dealt you The shame of living vicariously

I looked for you in a palindrome of movement Here and there and here again

But you were gone and there was only jealousy A disgust at never knowing true and beautiful affairs

And the sky turned to slate And the wind blew as if to say

You will never settle You will for ever shift and change

I stared at the 1917 in stone on a Dominion Road building which was there before you or I were born

And selfishly believed that the world held its breath for me and that was why the streets were empty

I ran to find you and put you behind me

iv. On to Perigee

In the end I came to your conclusion There will be a gradual return, the journey slow where it had been so quick before

I'll walk towards the natural and right ending of things

It is an omnipresent ending
I'll make your choice repeatedly
On shuttering grey days and when the light is lemon-toned

None of the first ecstasy now But still the wingbeats of the pulse of love— Like you, I choose to continue

Drifting Threshold Ria Masae

A doorway stands at the throat of the world. Pulsing light dazzles the upper half gloom blackens the bottom.

Are rapture and misery so side-by-side?

Above, a ball of moon is indented with potholes from when it was still malleable and rolled across a gravel night. Then the zenith blasted the sky into soot.

A grey patch coughs a dull glow around the night's orb.

If I tip-toe and stretch my bones across the sea I can almost pluck it from the sky.

Below,
the veins of the sea froths as its pelt ripples —
ocean tongues hunt in packs —
they ride onto the shore to lick my feet
then ebb back to circle the doorway
never drifting me with them
to the ever-turning wheel of life and death.

They tease me. They torment me.

For there, across the world stands my silhouette unreachable.

The Dry-Cleaner's Daughter Denise O'Hagan

I'd catch the sharp smell of solvent As I rounded the corner down from our apartment Hurrying each morning to the station at the Cross Under the glorious jade and scarlet cascade Of dozens of swaying bougainvillea Where, with practised bendings and twistings, She'd be folding and smoothing and hanging And sheathing in plastic the incessant array Of shirts and trousers and jackets and suits That hug so many of the city's nine-to-fivers, Until finally one day I stopped and entered, And handing over a neighbour's creased receipt A child in the backroom stared back at me Her almond eyes unblinking in the gloom And I wondered why she wasn't at school, As the manager, with my change, explained: 'I keep her with me, since a week ago, A man, he try to buy my daughter.'

Air Michael Morrissey

The air we breathe has been nosed by someone else

A second hand oxygen coin of a different realm

Indolent as a Mexican siesta xenon has fled the atmosphere

We wanted ozone but we got carbon dioxide

We do not know the life of air though lungs have necessary nous

We look into the eyes of strangers and know them for the first time

Stones for the Shoah Trish Veltman

I rise for Mitzvah.
Pale March sun shimmies in a pink frock.
Street lamps still stroke curious fingers across slow, black ripples of the River Dragor — gold paths bleed to the west bank.

My feet imprint winter's last breath, past shining rows of doors with brass nameplates and lion heads. Shadow trees claw red brick walls and unlit window eyes, speechless witnesses to spent lives.

I scoop a pocket-warmed pebble in my left palm.
There are no graves.
No marble tombs.
No names etched in polished headstones.
Yet every Itzhak, every Leo and Misha, every Adela and Lea, every Rivka tattoos my survivor's heart, as permanent as ink on my wrist.

Snow and sorrow paves these streets. I walk west. New offices of glass obliterate old tenements where three thousand people were corralled in a hundred houses, caged like battery hens.

Sky discards last scraps of night. In a quiet alley, cobbles

wear scars of ghetto gates and bullets, whisper memories of blood and bone. With the first sound of birdsong I place my stones.

This dawn marks the hour the caged became cargo; driven out, transported in cattle-cars to Treblinka and vanished. Gas and smoke and ashes.

This day, shalom was silenced in the Shoah.

The Heart Returned Andrea Malcolm

What if the heart were like the brain and earlier anatomists who'd carved it up had already assigned discrete territories, all labelled for their different functions —

love, hate, fear, joy, trust and grief; while the less clear mutables mill and mingle at the borders? I'd look and think: there's the section damaged by fire while here's the part

that beat upwards like a bird, we thought we'd soar and never return. And this — this was the bit in gravity's thrall, poor errant mortal fallen back to earth.

But I think, in truth, you're more sophisticated than that, more a hologram that with meticulous care, I could prise apart cell by cell, to repeatedly find housed in each one

the universe including myself; again, and again infinitely nested inside myself. And I have to say if that's the case it's hidden well. I'd approached this anatomical sight

with such trepidation, but cut and sealed in this plastic bag, it's so ordinary and disconnected from anything I have ever felt; like something I could mistakenly pull

from the fridge, throw on the flame and offer to myself for eating. As if I were my own ancient god consuming myself in return for blessing and meaning.

Society of Captives *Jamie Trower*

I kept your concentration for long enough.

I kept my promise to call your bluff.

I kept the blessed wine and holy bread.

I kept you gossiping with the voices in your head.

I kept your foreign language translated.

I kept your ultramodern madness incarcerated.

I kept you building walls, working you all in vain.

I kept you bleeding in our clinics, cussing at the pain.

I kept you thinking that you were the prodigy of this age.

I kept you fretting and strutting your way across this wooden stage.

I kept you speaking of revenge, lending you skin in the game.

I kept you spitting lies to douse yourself in flame.

I kept the ashes from which you rose.

I kept the feathers, but I burned your clothes.

I kept the ropes that tied you down.

I kept your kingdom; I broke your crown.

Ovid at the Trillos Cabaret Lounge *Lincoln Jaques*

While in Rome I swear I saw Ovid sitting in the Trillos Lounge sipping on a cocktail and trying to write with a feather quill.

Rascal.

But it wasn't Rome now I think of it but the bus station in downtown Auckland.

1989.

Shielded by glass I looked out to the street at the Bedfords breathing fire. Trillos then was a boozy dance hall beneath the Air New Zealand building. A smorgasbord of porn perms, drag queens and hairy-matted chests.

A place to accumulate the exiles.

I never did escape. I went with Ovid we discussed Tacitus in broken Latin. Yet there's a memory still of a small café in Rome near the Spanish Steps where I left my shadow after smoking hashish after getting drunk on limoncello eating spiked tiramisu.

Realising I never left.



Witches' Sabbath Ted Greensmith-West

When did we stop marching?
Picket lines made, unmade, remade
from picket fences
torn up by their roots before the cops arrive and
on Karangahape Road
the bumscrew boys whip out their cudgels
and dance the Osculum Inflame —

by moonlight we are witches by daybreak we are men.

Faeries have secrets — their ways are not our ways ways of love existing in a world of illusion and sentimental make-believe incantations around a frothing cauldron and eaters of children.

Down the streets we chant the Perverts' Almanac forms emerge from the Blackthorn and under the torchlight of a hostile moon there are naked boys.

The young have secrets in the acoustic dark the leather-bound dark as if holding together the pages of our story.

We must acknowledge the numbness of absences and until a sort of dawn breaks

we are witches, we are witches.

Plum Tree Mat Gorrie

Juice runs down young chins. The drip of spring dew, dancing on tongues. Equal measures of sour and saccharine syrup. Our brash youth. Hands grab greedy flesh in soft teeth. A delicious snarl. We dare to take more. To reach among the leaves. Pluck as many maroon planets before the eye of God catches us. He will scald us. Chastise bold avarice. But how can we turn away from that golden taste? Delight young bodies, feverous and candied. Sumptuous plump bellies. Curved and dreaming with our heads in the tree.

Fleeting Love Richard Bonifant

In this instant
We are perfect love
You my slice of gherkin
Pulled from this Quarter Pounder
In my lonely lunch hour
In this moment
We belong together
Me with my girly locks
And ten-dollar shades
You with your touch of tomato sauce
If only love could be this simple

Precious Love Brian Graystone

Strong winds rip across open water, large waves crash upon the shore. Sombre clouds fill the sky, heavy with the stormy rain to come. Close by my window, watching the gathering storm, echoing the downcast feelings running through my mind. Harsh thoughts rush about my mind, though no bad deeds have I done. Ask my love to hold me tight to drive these fears away. My love did gently take my hand, clasped her arms around me close, and eased my aching mind.

My love, she is the rock on which my very being stands. She is the foundation on which to build my hopes. My love for her knows no bounds, she owns my very soul. Together down this path of life, both hand in hand we walk. The future we cannot know, but together, to the end, we will go. My most precious love and me.

Kaikoura Coast Post-Quake Donna Faulkner

Guttural rumblings splinters day. Splicing time. After and before a

pause. Mountain slabs tumble tug of war with rising sea floors belching out chalking rocks, exposed in blistering sun. Bathing seals straddle boulders strewn upon a shore that wasn't a shore before. Old junctures cracked and split cling and still embrace the mountain scarred. Papier-mâché band aids

heal fractured roads,

the cars choke

the broken link.

Te Henga Yael Klangvisan

Three slices of golden light butter yellow upon a fairy sea gone with one slap of the wind witch's icy palm and the monstrous sea erupts in a green tinged roar

Three raging kelpies great silver fins churning flashing manes flying mad gallop to the shore

A mossy giant scales the crumbling stone walls amidst the chilly tumult another flails and falls the water sprites leap and shriek

I felt your ghostly breath warm at the corner of my eye a touch coasts across my cheek spectral fingers slip into my hair

I know what I was given then while the gloaming pressed and clouds roiled and whipped across the grey, wild sky the memory of your magic in the fragile remaining shards of light

Rock Oysters Rachel J Fenton

Waitematā Harbour mudflats marked by mangroves. My thoughts go to Manukau,

my love. Weeks ago, we walked to the flagpole at Waitangi. On the way you reminded me of things I'd rather forget like a soon-to-be-ex. Life has a way of rushing at me like the unexpected movement of tide in a peculiarly curved inlet.

You wipe away bird shit from the binoculars after which discourse turns to water divination.

Taking up a length of driftwood you address me as Gandalf while I pick a safe way among the grey boulders we suspect were placed there after the fact. Sitting there, leaning to shape the water with your hand, you talk about rock oysters. How beautiful you look, I don't tell you.

Reaching, I encourage you to let me help you off the rock.

Beachcomber Andrea Malcolm

after Dover Beach, Matthew Arnold

Dead eyed and walking this desolate stretch of sand; Infinite grains of futility to think that any of this will last. Avoid the tide line, its grating roar, its eternal sadness will get us all in the end. But for now, comb, sweep

scan for signs, warnings of something, somewhere to lay the blame. The wind sends delicate froth scudding across the black grey plains, silica winks nature's catalogue of jokes. My nostrils contract at rotting kelp, abandoned

hermits' homes, a carcass mangled in fishing line. The salty tangle of broken feathers, scraps and skull picked clean; light and easy as life when I had health.

Genes locked in bone to add to my collection, fragments of a fishing urn and desiccated seaweed crawling with creatures unseen.

Luminary *Ariana Sutton*

Luminary.
Silent anchor,
solo anchor,
occasionally shuddering
through the currents,
twirling,
stirring.

Fierce waters. Waters that take, waters the beckon, waters that break.

The feeding birds, bird of incandescent survival.

The humble bird grinding winds.

A southern wind cleansing. Wind-funnelled coalescence, isolated wind gathering, migrating a luminary dreamscape.

My Travelling Papers Jamie Trower

Crumbs of crumpled tealeaf twist about the blanched afternoon hour. I have shifted onto my third fresh cup and my sketchbook is now filling, a colander of names and trinkets. Children in their swimsuits and their mothers sing along the promenade, performing to the gulls and they play castanets for the fishermen who tug and tug at their latest trawl. The Duke Festival today carves along fiberglass, cloth-like barrels roll out to sea. Big notes call out from the library. A tone of sepia through low cloud unveils a collarless dog without an owner, tufts of hair hanging from its mangy bones, patrolling the buckets of trevally and gutrot. A dozen impish ears prick up, and several pairs of tiny instruments start to click it closer. One mother clicks it away, unashamed. My sketchbook, ample in its capricious nature, gets netted in both spheres.

The swilling croak of a myna curtsies upon arrival and takes a turn about the page. I toss away bits of bread from an egg sandwich, watch the crumbs scatter and a bright bird dab its thanks. There is olive green chicken fern and belladonna everywhere—the path is gradually filling. We had driven through Dallington, along Linwood Ave and up to New Brighton with the windows down and six kilometers away at afternoon prayer, another barrel is loaded and dispatched. A year from now the gunman, whose name we dare not speak, will get life without parole.

The Language of Maps Trish Veltman

Waves roll a turquoise silk swatch from this coiled wire of road to Kāpiti Island. Beyond Kāpiti's green pleats, silk sea still unfolds, spreading to another piece of this jigsaw land, that last interruption before Antarctica.

The South Island is so clear today I think I should see red flares flower on pōhutukawa trees, your wet-suited arms wheeling through distant splashes of waves, while blue flashes of tui wings guide you to shore.

A ribbon of dust streams silver glitter through my fingers. My view blurs.

Some days, the South Island is an indigo suggestion, a smudge blurring sea and sky, or a soft tumble of clouds gathered on a distant hem of water below snaggletooth mountains.

Other days, its shape is so sharp I think the continental plates shifted miles closer.

Under a shade cloth of night, I know where it lies, from spasmodic scythes of silver light – maybe a lighthouse signal in the Marlborough Sounds.

But on days clouds draw heavy drapes across the sky, or rain falls in grey stripes, my only sight of the South Island is when I open the glove-box and unfold a neat rectangle of map you put there before you left.

You taught me the language of maps, a fluent lexicon of contours and coordinates. You said all paths can be traced with a map and compass; all landmarks found.

Because of maps, I know some things are not lost just because they are hidden from view. The Lakes Hayden Hyams

Today we went to nature. It was alright. Freakin' cold tho. Made me feel like I'd been to the gym.

When we got home I watched a video on Facebook. A biotech company producing 'bacon' from mycelium.

Beyond the hum of roads, And possibly even Covid, My hands shrivelled until, I regretted not buying the gloves I saw at Kathmandu.

It was a good price.
I probably should have bought them.

Progenitors: 1987, The Crossing Andrea Malcolm

His voice is a sing song, swelling and falling like the interminable waves.

No pretty ditty this but a chanting dirge, mournful request – 'though will God

exist where we are going, if we ever get there? Something's taking the children off one-by-one —in my arms my first babe squirms, barely eight-months old.

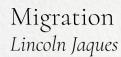
The crew don't like women coming above, tell us 'out of harm's way', but I wager

the captain wants us hid for quite another reason. Today we all stand on deck to witness the tilt of a rough wooden board, the fate of its piteous bundle.

The women groan — a guttural sound! on seeing it consigned to the depths.

We will never grow used to it. When I look to my man his stare is dark glass, a mirror to the sea. I know he has flown, escaped as he does to that so-called new home promised by Wakefield's deed. Every part of me trembles — it was madness to listen! — for long moments I hate him.

The Berar ship left London for New Zealand in 1874 and arrived in Wellington 96 days later in 1875. During the passage there was an outbreak of Scarlet Fever, causing 21 deaths, mainly children. On arrival surviving passengers were quarantined on Matiu (Somes) Island before being allowed onto the mainland.



When we came to these shores the job my father was promised didn't exist; the factories had all closed down.

He was torn between homesickness and his love for his family. He'd left a dead father who lost his lungs to Hitler's camps.

There were already strangers here; we were strangers too.
We were refugees, of a sort, fleeing the cold heart of metal press

factories and car assembly lines, working 14 hours a day ticking off each hour on the clock that held our heartbeats in each second

hand stroke. The English hated their own; we were exiles into a land of exiles. We didn't belong; none of us did. We left God behind,

thankfully; and we pretended this life was a "better life for the kids". The suicide rate climbed. And our child mortality stats.

But we clasped onto our ways, as those in exile clasp to their religion. We passed cemeteries ignored those who bereaved their dead. On the bus this morning I passed a young gentleman, a collection of battered suitcases, 3 kids, their eyes like sun-spots. His wife

standing still, staring, wondering if they'd finally seen the end of the world. But I knew where they'd come from, and where'd

they'd be going, having been one of those kids, gripping onto my father's hand in the pouring rain thinking of home as an empty room.



Twenty-Two Years Denise O'Hagan

since I last heard your voice, or saw you step off the plane at 76, quite an age to emigrate, newspaper in hand as my mother pushed the trolley, aware you weren't quite the man you used to be unaware of what you brought by merely being there grasping your trusty cherry wood walking stick shiny handled from all the years of grasping, time enough to scrape a meeting with my son who grew up not knowing what he missed, yet still that great grey slab of time keeps stretching getting no more distant for being more thinly stretched week by year by decade, and now you're doubling back two countries ago, tea-towel slung over your shoulder, pouring a glass of red and flipping potatoes in olive oil, steadying the fry-pan with the wobbly black handle as I slice garlic and onion, and tear off a chunk of bread, jamming it between my lips as my mother taught me to shore up the watering in my eyes.

Progress — Then Pause Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod

i.m. Bain Carmichael

I watch my grandfather dying like my baby being born,

the rasping gasp of his breath against my aunt's demonstration: like this dad, deep in, deep out,

they would tell me when breath turned to scream, like this now, deep in, deep out.

Progress - then pause. The bedside vigil hours grow. Chips of ice, water on a sponge, small physical talisman offered from this side.

Days late and I walk one foot in the gutter, one foot on the path; an illusion that I can make all things come to pass.

My Mother is a Ghost Living in My Mind Siobhan Harvey

The dead aren't always buried. Some live on in silence separated by their need to

slip

away. From me,

she is forever cold, as if lost at sea or in undying snowstorm, body seized by fog or mind disturbed from collective memory. Who are you? I ask, Where did you go? One moment, a farewell; the next refusing to speak. She comes to me in crises: her tearful rejection of me; my tearful certainty she can't love. During lockdown, she's free to haunt my absent days and nights until I call down the heavens to end it all. The other life I might have known with her is filament burned into my mind. A movie never released; a book unpublished: these I inherit as she ghosts me. The forgeries and false antiques of reconciliation, long lost phone calls stirring in the still of night, I learn to surrender everything in time. When finally free, hope is brokenwinged and blunt-billed. Downed by careful navigation and deceit,

I'm left to the emptiness of another, to embalm and burden myself, her silence and haunting judgement born by me as eternal cut.

A Changing of the Guard Donna Faulkner

A first mourning. Protocols veil customary expectations.

A single tear – grief's initiation.

Navigating unfamiliar exequies.

The tear that dammed an avalanche somehow yielded.

I imagined that
I had witnessed the tear
drop's
formation.

Its

—stretching —membrane straining to contain the world.
Swollen heavy with the burden of what was expected.

A draughty church, stale and cold with duty.

And my father in the aisle – carrying his own.

A solitary tear — resting visible on his cheek, his sadness surrendered.

One single tear.

Private grief witnessed on public display from the second row where I stood stiff behind hard pews. Senses assaulted by hollow hymns echoing the peculiar dust and draft of occasional religion.

I sought reprieve complying for respite these structured rites. Saturated by eulogies and prayers. My father's tear doused such childish expectations.

I broke protocol, weeping countless tears as the mantle passed to him. ANZAC Richard Bonifant

Here they come
Walking in the half light
Shuffling their feet
Hunched in the beautiful rain
Medals don't glisten now
Dulled in the dawn showers
And by the twilight of age
Old men now
Their number fading
Coming to remember
Mistakes of yesterday

Rise Up Siobhan Harvey

Like candlelight of protestors, the fires cast from old homes upon the inlet's dark water are extinguished by eviction. Darkness may consume them, they who are ghosts, who are displaced from their homes, power cut, emptied of belongings perhaps, but these protestors are alight with oxygen enough to flame protest, Rise Up! Rise Up! Like a symphony on the theme of loss, their voice carries across the land. It is owl cry. It is moonlight. By night, it is breath disturbing those who sleep. Rise Up! Rise Up! Their chant swells again with the tide. As homes are taken to resting elsewhere, these protestors are left to watch from windows dead without their fire. Like electricity, the pulse of rejection burns long in them. It is a fierce sun. It is the last song of a dying bird. And they who are incandescent with injustice, continue their cry. Rise Up! Rise Up! For these protestors have nothing but embers, yet they fight on with a burning need for home, family and faith, if only to retain their voice. Which is the most powerful thing of all.

Mind Srishti Moudgil

heart losing control over eyes act is over time to go back to the source or destination shedding its clothes body dismantling into five elements for salvation or another pair of jeans but the mind remains with its cravings and memories of heartbreaking transcendental moments seeking the ocean through rough patches collecting impressions investing in joys attachments in cycle of desire and fulfillment over lifetimes in pursuit of nothingness

Love Story *Mike Johnson*

you are the line I am the colour

you are the form I am the after-image

you are the shutter I am the plate

you are the brush I am the vista

you are the cut I am the content

we are each to the other as the other together

be it hourglass or mirror

The Boy Nikolai Trish Veltman

Wolves live in our cistern. They moved in the day Mr Adams told us a story in assembly about that Russian boy.

Their disguise is a cascade of blued water, like Siberian blizzards. Their appetite as deep and impossible as the River Volga;

Nikolai was only the start.

I know it's true: Mum stops tutting when I ask her to flush, saves herself, tooth and claw, for Dad.

Even in daytime, the wolves don't rest. Nikolai was taken at noon. Rising wind screamed like a child in the sleigh-driver's ears, and falling snow buried the smell of blood.

Running isn't fast enough.

Wolves can't climb, I whisper, over and over, but I fall asleep with my head under cover, and lie with my legs tight-crossed if I wake in the night.

My parents' voices whip like winter winds on Russian plains, and I stay awake, remembering the boy Nikolai.

Somewhere Craig McGeady

Somewhere a mower plows somewhere a dog barks somewhere children laugh cry and fall silent somewhere a train dashes through its tunnel chased by an imagined fox somewhere a crowbar is dropped somewhere not far away a hammer-drill tears at the hollow insides of an apartment drowning the birds that were long forgotten the train that had long since passed the children that couldn't comprehend silence the mower that might be memory and the dog that dropped like a stone.

Interminable Bloom *Jamie Trower*

Amid dusk when the sky was peppered sour orange and the sun sat sideways, we watched a notch of a meteor blister and break above us.

We are watching history, she said, hands trembling.

Make a wish, he replied, his voice cracking and tumbling into orbit.

She squeezed her eyes shut and I did too, wanting beyond belief at that blushed collapse of something so unworldly.

We wished on that key-stroke ribbon of interminable bloom, dragging itself across the country and overflowing the horizon, believing that it flew for us.

Us, so content in gazing skyward, believing that our wishes were justified and looked so everlastingly endless.

A Pigeon at Puke Ariki Plaza Trevor Landers

A solitary, self-satisfied pigeon preens her burgeoning flank, lavender pink breast, contentedly crooning to herself.

She grips the mottled, lichened ridge tiles of the dark basalt stone terrace, patiently, scrounging every last morsel.

She plots her next move, surreptitious forager, twitching head, scanning 270°, furtive explorations, the Huatoki Stream will offer no easy dinners either.

Ohakune – Eve of a New Year *Mat Gorrie*

I watch mountains drink

the sky, its burden

of purple and cold steel

blues bulge.

Overflow of thirst

for newness. Anaesthetise

stinging nettles of old

pain. Still yearning

I look up and see

God in nature –

the mother whose round hips

I swim to and clutch

when sky mirrors

the sea

and storms, I am afraid of disappearing

at the very edges.

I seek calmness in quiet –

mother hushes with her scent —

pinecones and kawakawa.

I saw the mountains

drink the milk of the mother.

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus by William Carlos Williams by Jana Grohnert Jana Grohnert

According to Brueghel

Williams

the class

when Icarus fell it was clear

there was a lot more going on

a farmer was ploughing his field

in obsolete military garb

the whole pageantry concerned with itself

yes, but -

what about the shepherd the bollock dagger and is that

a dead sheep down there in the bushes?

who cares about

the wing's wax

when

there is no grass where the sheep are grazing

and the farmer is a demoted soldier by the look of things.

significantly there was another story noticed

this was

presumption which led to

Icarus drowning

in the first place

Poeting Ria Masae

because my mother sang Samoan and English nursery rhymes and lullabies because vibrant illustrations and dramatic stories in my cousins' children's biblical set

because Mrs Plank and her bag of poetry tricks at primary school

because Bess (dear Bess) and her Highway Man

because the pen is gentler than the sword

because the page doesn't judge, it just waits and listens

because paper absorbs grief and bitterness safely

because art speaks a thousand truths when the artist is cowering

because the interaction of words, imagery and emotions

because compliments and ego

because I miss the laughs and stories of beloved bodies who have returned to spirit

because I'm nostalgic for the celestial womb

because I walk through the valley of the vā

because pain is sometimes necessary

because secrets aren't meant to be dangerous

because I'm no longer afraid

because they told me not to talk about it

because I stopped giving a fuck what they told me

because I hate you

because I use to hate me

because he said I'm nothing like my father

because sometimes I don't have the capacity to voice my depression,

trauma and anxiety in a coherent sentence

because of the heartfelt stories I receive in return

because I occasionally weep for both the sorrow and grace of humankind because not enough people were writing about sexual abuse and mental

health

because what if that was me?

because that was / is me

because empathy in a world where too many people don't give a shit because how do you know they're not Jesus?

because hurt
because healing
because I burn and I rise
because fist pump to the underdogs
because I am breathing and this is living from seed to dust
because my capacity to love overflows my 'Best Mum in the World' mug
because I'm not a slut who asked for it after all
because the scared little girl who was hiding in the dark since 1980 has
finally stepped into the sunlight
because fly little one, fly.

All the Hipster Poets Have Come Back from the Dead *Ted Greensmith-West*

Building your rejection letters into a pyre and upon that, building my church because even in literary publishing there must be an eponymous "you" hidden somewhere, lurking in the depths of your radically indented stanzas.

How do I reconcile dreams of greatness with such spectacular failures?

It's like Scooby and the gang letting loose an actual ghost and not just an old man in a white sack.

It's like the inevitable mathematical outcome of calling your journal 'Vicenarian Excesses' and including my poems about make-up sex.

It's like being trapped in a portaloo and expecting it to teleport you to France.

It's like Jonah and the whale except the whale is an angel-haired hipster who boldly proclaims: writer! academic! poet! on her Instagram bio.

You see yourself as the grand arbiter of happiness, walking artistic success round the block on a cruelty-free faux leather harness.

Judgement falls right on top of me like a vindictive anvil out to settle scores or like stubbing my toe on the crazy pavement of disappointments. It's like having a Nescafé machine filled with inexcusable love poems.

It's like being told you're the Florence Foster Jenkins of bad poetry but secretly knowing that Florence Foster Jenkins is the Florence Foster Jenkins of bad poetry.

I don't think my poetry is speculative enough for these dark days and when everyone else seems to be pushing daisies through pages all the hipster poets have come back from the dead with their deconstructed community art projects and their pixelated nipple tassels and their syndicated rejection letters.

Poet Biographies

Richard Bonifant Rev. Richard Bonifant is a teaching fellow at Trinity Methodist College. He is currently undertaking a PhD investigating specific psychological effects in churches in New Zealand. In addition to this, Richard is an ordained Anglican priest with 16 years' ministry experience. In that time he served the church in parish ministry, Auckland City Mission work and school chaplaincy. He also writes stuff!

Donna Faulkner Donna Faulkner née Miller lives in Rangiora with her husband Victor. Her work has been published in fws: journal of literature & art. Donna has also had poetry included in this year's Havik: The Las Positas College Journal of Arts and Literature.

Instagram @lady_lilith_poet

Rachel J Fenton Rachel J Fenton's poetry has appeared in Landfall, Poetry New Zealand Yearbook, English, The Rialto, and Magma. Shortlisted for The Emma Press poetry pamphlet competition, the Mslexia poetry pamphlet competition, and the Zed Press pamphlet competition, her chapbook Beerstorming with Charlotte Brontë in New York is forthcoming from Ethel Press.

Mat Gorrie Mat Gorrie is a Wellington artist and writer. A recent graduate of Victoria University of Wellington, his poetry has appeared in national and international literary magazines.

Brian Graystone Brian Graystone was born in London in 1945 and moved to Ashburton in 2007. He was widowed in 2009. His poetry is reflective and well-structured, and he often incorporates natural or civic imagery in his stirring sonnets.

Ted Greensmith-West Ted Greensmith-West is a writer and solicitor based in Auckland. He was born in London and grew up on the Otago Peninsula. He has published articles in *Gay Express* Magazine and was highly commended for the Prole Laureate poetry competition 2020. He is currently working on a collection of poems and his first novel.

Jana Grohnert Jana Grohnert is from Germany. She graduated from the University of Cape Town, South Africa before moving to New Zealand in 2012. She is currently enrolled at Te Herenga-Waka - Victoria University of Wellington, where she will commence a PhD in Literary Translation at the beginning of next year.

Rhiannon Hall Rhiannon Hall has been sharing her love of poetry through a poetry club at the high school she teaches at. She has poems published in *BlazeVOX20*, *Burrow*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, and has published an essay in *Axon: Creative Explorations*. She is a Doctor of Creative Arts candidate at Western Sydney University.

Siobhan Harvey Siobhan Harvey is a migrant author of five books, including the poetry collection, *Cloudboy*, which won the Landfall Kathleen Grattan Award. She's also co-editor of the bestseller, *Essential New Zealand Poems*. She is widely awarded. Presently she's a Lecturer of Creative Writing at AUT where she is completing a PhD in Creative Writing. A new collection, *Ghosts*, is forthcoming from Otago University Press in 2021.

Hayden Hyams Hayden Hyams is from Tāmaki Makaurau, currently living in London. His poetry can be found in *The Poetry Zealand Yearbook, Takahe, London Grip, The Friday Poem, Fast Fibres* and *Milly Magazine*. He is working on his first collection of poetry.

Lincoln Jaques Lincoln Jaques holds a Master of Creative Writing from AUT. His poetry and fiction have appeared most recently in *Tough Magazine* and *Noir Nation, Mother Mary Comes to Me: A Pop Culture Poetry Anthology* (Madville Publishing, Texas), *a fine line, The Blue Nib, Mayhem, Poetry NZ Yearbook* and *Blackmail Press.* He was a finalist in the 2018 Emerging Poets.

Mike Johnson Mike Johnson is a poet, novelist and short story writer. He has had two literary fellowships and has twenty-two books to his credit. His novel *Dumb Show* won the Buckland Award for literary excellence. He lives on Waiheke Island.

Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod Elizabeth (Libby) Kirkby-McLeod has been published in a range of journals and online publications. Her first poetry collection, *Family Instructions Upon Release*, was published in 2019 and was well reviewed. Elizabeth has a First Class Master of Creative Writing from AUT, where she was a recipient of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Postgraduate Study. More at https://ekirkbymcleodauthor.com/

Yael Klangvisan Yael Klangvisan is a West Auckland poet. Her poetry and prose can be found in literary journals, *Hecate, Meniscus* and *The French Literary Review*.

Trevor M Landers Trevor M Landers is based in New Plymouth. His poetry has been published widely in New Zealand and internationally. His last volume, *Heart of Joyful Fortune* (2019), is being reprinted. His forthcoming volumes *Whetū Mārama* and *Drawn from Life: Poems and Illustrations* will both be available in late 2020.

Andrea Malcolm Andrea Malcolm (Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi/Pākehā) works as a communications manager in Auckland. She is doing a Master of Creative Writing at AUT, writing poetry as a memoir on receiving a heart transplant/making sense of calamity. She is published in *The Spinoff* and 26.org.uk and has work forthcoming in *Takahē* December 2020.

Ria Masae Ria Masae's work has appeared in national and international publications including *Best New Zealand Poems 2017*, and *Circulo De Poesia*. A collection of her poetry titled *What She Sees From Atop the Mauga* features in the recently published *AUP New Poets 7*. Ria is currently working on her first poetry book.

Craig McGeady Craig McGeady is from Greymouth. He writes with thanks to Mr. Miller. He has poems published in *The Garfield Lake Review*, *The Wild Word*, *Genre: Urban Arts*, *Roanoke*, *Apeiron Review* and *Meniscus Literary Journal* among others and is winner of the 2018 Given Words 'The Spanish Connection' poetry competition.

Michael Morrissey Michael Morrissey has published 24 books—13 of poetry, five of fiction, one memoir, and edited five other books, mainly anthologies of short fiction.

Srishti Moudgil Srishti Moudgil is an experienced content writer and published poet based in Wellington. She has over three years of experience in writing content for diverse niches and audiences. Her books *Half Concrete Half Water* and *Half Concrete Half Water Part-II* can be read on Amazon Kindle. She also writes blogs on srishtimoudgil.wordpress.com

Denise O'Hagan Denise is one of the few poets who holds a NZ passport, was born in Rome and lives in Sydney. She has a background in commercial book publishing and is Poetry Editor for Australia/New Zealand for *The Blue Nib*. Her poetry is widely published and awarded.

Erin Ramsay Erin Ramsay is a nonbinary Pākehā poet. She is currently working as a high-school librarian. Eventually she wants to have an academic career focusing on queer history, language and gender identity, but for the time-being is simply trying to survive the trainwreck of a year that is 2020.

Ariana Sutton Emerging poet Ariana Sutton, is inspired to write about healing, resistance and the hidden antic of bats. She's a keen tarot card flipper from down under. She was first published in Melbourne's *Work in Tumble* and is the recent winner of the 2020 Dan Davin literary award.

Jamie Trower Jamie Trower is a poet, journalist and motivational speaker from Auckland, New Zealand. He works for *M2 Magazine* as a writer, and in his spare time scribbles on post-it notes about life, death and everything in between. He is actively involved with poetry around New Zealand.

Trish Veltman Trish Veltman lives in Paraparaumu but originally comes from England. She writes short stories, novels, poems, and a blog. She has had poems published in *a fine line, Blackmail Press*, and *Mayhem*. Her story *Shoe Laces* won the 2020 Page & Blackmore / NZSA short story competition.

