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# **Beneath the Green Bucket**

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
**Master of Arts in English**  
at  
**The University of Waikato**  
by  
**MICHAELA CLARE TSEHAI SELBY**



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## Abstract

*Beneath the Green Bucket* is a personal collage, revealing an autobiographical tale — of many faces.

Since the age of seven and living with a learning disability, I became at home on the white space, stirring a sense of comfort, familiarity and newfound confidence as I graced the pages. In areas where I struggle to adequately articulate the spoken word and thought patterns, I have discovered that writing has not only provided a sense of security but has become an effective way to express myself and channel my hidden creative ambitions through the power of verse. At present, I find myself in the position to at last forge my poetic ability, conveying my memoir of emotions, memories and the diversity that is — me.

Throughout this manuscript, my poetry will turn a lyric lens upon sensitive matters and other complex shades, that are usually sidestepped or scribbled with trembling hands. Amongst the musings of my younger innocence and familial reflection, I impart themes that bare the unsettling reality. That is, the woman I once was, flinching in a corner wearing a purple stain of domestic violence. My little self, huddled inside a magnetic chamber, as the clanging proclaims an Epileptic diagnosis. A bullied victim of a pubescent tribe, the wringing hands of mirrored dysmorphia, as I shake the black paw of depression, pondering the void of motherhood and navigate the chapters of my grief. These pieces portray an intermittent journey through the joys and intricacies of my lived experience, using the energy of words and deep-seated recall, to ignite a creative understanding, of the otherwise cruel and mundane.

Attuned to the sensory, symbolism and ambience of time and place, my poems centre impassioned voice, and seek to dip dye the reader into my peculiar existence. An existence returning to the remembered shelter of a plastic, olive brim, the green bucket of my earliest memory, a real place of imaginative infant retreat. My hard hat of mock pearls, toasted petals — and faded visions.

*Beneath the Green Bucket* presents a contemporary collection of poems, that merge sprinklings from childlike incantation with evocations of adult trauma, acting as a palatable armour for those who view my words.

I believe that in life; there is always room — for a fairytale.

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I miss you.

Finally, I want to thank myself. For the steadfast belief in me — little *Moo*.

**1:01 AM**

Spilt port

two weeks late on a

Monday

Hidden

in a green lane

young Mother craves fizzy

lavender,

sliced as a segment of bergamot

cooled

*You were just an unknown piece of me*

Father

clasps the nurse's hand

15-hour

drunk on fatigue

Doused

in factory confetti

presents

floral splendour to a plastic

manager,

it cradles the infant

dressed

in her coronet

of crimson.

## A Liminal Space, With You

Beneath thistle  
and memorial obelisk,  
we pair in paisley,  
    cradled  
in moss.

Our private solitude  
    an undulating  
root bed embrace.

The whispered draughts  
of gentlemen past,  
    doff  
their fronds  
    in fawn  
and khaki.

Your face  
wore no complication,  
time was forgiving.  
A young father  
    unblemished.

The air was still,  
    but bled  
a Drakkar Noir,  
    ovine pallet  
and chewed soil.

Beside the lichen stile,  
I collect monkey tails.

You  
sculpted  
a child  
of  
unseen burden.

Ticket to ride,  
aboard  
our fractured concession.

'93  
on ruffled clover,  
a flushed cheek  
a wine gum cylinder.

Before  
the sap was spilt  
and the bark was split,  
there was  
a glint  
of dawn's liquid  
trickling  
from the mouth  
of a blue ceiling  
  
no phantoms cast

beneath  
  
our Monterey pine.

## Messiah

Lady  
in pink pyjamas

reigns

as we take  
a bend  
in the Karangahake,

Ohinemuri  
embraces the mouth of Jordan

We are Magi  
on our sabbatical quest,  
Casper, Melchior  
and Balthazar

Purple charade  
pants and spits its way toward  
North Star,  
while  
the windows cry a flurry  
of dampened faces

Mother has expelled the pip

Car horns to herald  
the birth of a glass  
Messiah  
On my knee no Frankincense  
but

trinkets made of plastic

The Pascal candle

glows its naked flame,

a neon sign

a beacon to Bethlehem

I spy — the Infant King.

## Fairy box

in late afternoon  
venetians cast  
shredded sun ribbons  
warm tangerine shadows  
kiss  
mock geometric cross-stitch  
as i lie  
in a momentary trance  
set  
in the secondary world

a cessna  
hums  
in slow pace  
reverberating  
a cradle song  
of pinpricks

it patterns my small brow  
forging

uncharted respite

i peer at the pierced  
blue admiral,  
cradling  
an upright pen made of glass

there stands  
the lone ovis  
upon  
a hill of hidden thoughts  
and dandelion

a portrait of child-like prayer  
a fleeting palette  
of milk-fed ambience  
inside  
my paper palace

untorn

admiral's  
peacoat hangs in mute  
my weary threads  
now  
frayed

i  
had things  
that once made sense

i will never again —

be six.

## The Weeping Laurel of Golgotha

And you,

gave

birth

to

that?

A plum stone,  
in solitary  
tracheal pod.

The viper's splinter,  
infuses  
rose red tissue.

Its perpetual kiss,  
disrobes  
a once noble husk  
breaking  
my integument.

And you,

gave

birth

to

that?

Draped upon,  
the scourging pillar  
flayed flesh  
and naked skeleton.

A calcified xylophone,  
in muted chime  
innocence  
nailed  
to the Laurel Tree.

And you,

gave

birth

to

that?

The marionette  
dangles,  
from hangman's string.

The noose spliced,  
in strained  
half-hitch.

Apathetic dolly,  
Petit Mal drop.

And you,

gave  
birth  
to

*that.*

## Two Weeks Late

I am

the Dervish,  
who whirls  
a helix  
in gravel dust.

I am

flour and water paste,  
archiving  
the faceless  
crowd  
in sepia.

I am

warmed turned soil,  
the glove  
of Red King Edward.

I am

a sequin vest,  
in lotus pose  
atop  
checkered fleece.

I am

a breached nave,  
tinkered  
by bloodied stalagmite.

I am

the rag doll,  
smudged  
in  
Doris Plum.

I am

a cranial Medusa,  
adorned  
in electrode corona.

I am

sunburn and polyvinyl,  
upon  
Onehunga weed.

I am

the muted salivate,  
of Mississippi River mouth.

I am

Marigold hair,  
on a yellow

downtown bendy.

I am

the idle Cygnet,  
who cowers  
her beak  
in Hacienda corners.

I am

the Walrus,  
strumming  
plastic ukulele  
in Vivienne Westwood.

I am

the embryotic sac  
that spills  
Port wine,  
two weeks

late.

## Chalk and Telefax

Trails

of pastel quartz,  
freckle across  
the easel in olive.

Dampened  
implement  
cradled  
in my dumpy paw  
imprints  
an infantile tattoo.

Dad appears.

I foxtrot  
past  
with my limp equine puppet  
to the gravely lilts  
of Mr Max Cryer.

I am presented a reel of Telefax  
as he unwraps  
the golden wonders.  
A literary casing  
of chemical potion and Dragon's fat.

I press a flexi-felt  
upon the parchment  
marked  
by legions  
of perfect puncture.

My digits clumsily  
fondle the array  
of embellishments  
dip-dyed feathers,  
macaroni  
and beach found shells,  
elbows diving  
in a clump  
of kaleidoscope plasma.

But,  
my fairy box of thought,  
has been disassembled.  
From Mica to lead,  
a nib held in my fretful grip  
mimics a guardian strap.

I scratch  
the letter *e*  
in military procession,  
under the pious gaze  
from a Novitiate's habit

The absent ballad of the whimsical Dominique.

I amble toward  
scholastic gallows,  
under a canopy  
of moppet-made nooses  
and run my gauntlet  
to a crimson, rotary slicer.

*Out-up and around!*

*Out-up and around!*

I wish I were

the one

before

the blade

resected

me.

## The Purgation

Disinfect

with ducted pearls  
a speckled verse of tenderness  
discarded

In

a Clorox drain  
huddled  
you sluice  
the former kiss  
disrobe  
a locust skin

Yesterday's posey

now  
pastel wheat

You're

a love scene cleanup

They told you

be mindful  
to eat the elephant  
one bite at a time

So

stuff its heart  
in a butcher's sleeve  
and pig ignorance in the other

knot up the plastic  
and toss them to the Pouākai

Retrace  
your steps  
to find a mind dismembered  
and recast  
as Matryoshka  
wearing many faces

void of your own

You  
forever  
the lonely McCartney  
girl  
in rusted linen

pinned on repeat  
Peering  
from a velvet zip-up  
inside a room  
in constant rearrangement

Wounds  
that weep yolk  
never blot  
with brown script and distilled spirit

So sad  
  
is never sometimes.

## The Consumption

I have  
the consumption — as did Saturn

when  
devouring his son  
at the hands of  
Goya

I gnaw on salted flesh  
pulled  
while the twang of a severed nerve string  
hums  
shepherd's tone

I have  
the consumption

a hunger  
to flay back my pelt  
break a bone

and suckle the marrow

I cut

whatever hair remains  
and all photographs  
of prized confetti  
A stroke of van Gogh  
Cézanne  
Gauguin  
Together

they rest  
as coiled tissue in a rented dustbin  
beside orange peel  
impregnated

with last morning's  
piss

I have  
the consumption

cemented  
as uncut stone you scape at  
to catch  
the bleeding

So lance  
the abscess  
and marinate in  
saline

my toyed viscera  
for all  
to see

*I am*  
the consumption  
so

let it be.

## Hibiscus and Povi

Floured pork

and pineapple palms,

sculpted offal

inside

Onehunga plastic

Dusting digits

against harlequin print,

the butchery balm

an imitation

French perfumery

The chalkboard paint peppers

tomorrow's

half price

flesh

Hibiscus and Povi

Yellow

bricked asphalt paved to Suva,

haberdashery ribbons

in camellia

baby pink

A young

sweat shirted mother

in a Rothman's murk

wrestles

a stroller  
weighted  
with DEKA synthetics.

Hibiscus and Povi

Green bananas  
patchouli and brass,  
musings  
of an Apia marketplace

Customs collide  
through the lilt  
of Greensleeves  
and Run D.M.C.  
A fountain spatters —

the boombox boys

Hibiscus and Povi.

The old woman  
dribbles  
a triple scoop  
of Rum and Rasin  
dribbles  
to  
her blemished  
mackintosh

She rests  
her oedematous base  
upon  
a raised garden bed

Her nylons  
falling  
to her ankles  
where she sighs  
reaches  
then —

leaves them.

## Lady macbeth

young cornpone dreamers we dance our weary ride in shade. a skyline  
on the outskirt and i am absent made of silk stimming to baroque in sonic  
ponder. midnight's purple nectar traces my face and forges a mood  
of how it *doesn't* matter. careless we take refuge and touch in a pale  
hangar beside the railroad. he whispers sweet nothings in a fool's paradise.  
to indulge in the unthinkable to fondle wrinkled hose. but i am still a

maid.

## Our backyard theatre

3-piece bulletproof tweed

&

a kiss

for miss moneypenny

make me a raro

shaken

not stirred

piranha bites pudgy toes

with a scuffed green wheel

on concrete

snakes & ladders

in mock parkour

potbelly brother

mutates

from bond

to blade running t-1000

a liquid metal dribble

face

negotiates

rows of hot wheels

knotted in dandelion

as little plastic beings

scurry

from wandering vanilla crumbs

we are doc & marty  
with our very own einstein

travelling the h.g calinda  
to join  
the resistance

sparks flick inside a tin rifle

we take refuge in our  
eiderdown  
donning a villain's  
goatee of Nesquik

before it gets too dark.

## Stereochonic

a  
33  
1/3  
r.p.m  
my  
prescribed  
dosage of  
opium  
silk  
i patten  
a mind  
made  
of wet  
sand  
i feel  
its pulse  
reverberate  
in  
pearls  
climbing  
inside  
the  
dizzy  
hush  
to clove  
the ache  
while  
serpents  
sleep

i  
close  
the door  
an interim  
measure  
of  
dreamscape  
i dance  
with myself  
in  
the  
belfry  
as  
subtle  
layers  
of  
instrument  
bleed  
until  
the  
final  
rapture  
this  
is  
what  
lavender  
sounds  
like.

## Absent absinthe

Flaxen  
haired burlesque  
teases  
thinned oil

and time.

Sallow hue  
in docile sage,

Toulouse  
tampered black lace,  
on a late admission.

A red mill huddle  
of half-cut artisans,  
in a pipe smoke stupor.

The mandarin-rose gaslight  
contorts  
a silhouette Tango.

Gin and jetlag  
in a citrus pairing  
A July summer,  
a Parisian spring.

You  
in an Absinthe pallor,  
and I

am absent,  
in forest green  
and  
gold leaf — surround.

## Mississippi Sleeping

Your river  
runs  
still.  
Anesthetised  
dishwater paste.

Muted crucifixions  
of past fondness  
now,  
an unturned bowl of Gumbo  
expelled to sea,  
through  
a Creole's vein.

Our unpasteurised  
love,  
in  
a calcified heart.

Ophelia's hothouse Hyacinths  
lie limp,  
in a tributary of  
twigs, shit  
and carcass.  
Her sallow cheek,  
starved  
of a cornpone's kiss.

Mississippi is sleeping,  
and you  
are the sinking feline  
deep in its crib.

While I,  
am a  
parched mouth  
void  
of  
  
French.

## Love in a Bosch

She's a mulberry chrysalis on Fulford.

Cocooned  
in the thistle-veined garrotte,  
beside  
spoilt fruit and coffee ringed  
post-it fuzz.

Send something back.

She wears  
a copper liquid smile,  
when dragged as Hector  
by Jeckell's chariot.  
Swathed  
in a teal  
and bergamot blemish,  
with splinted pane.

Send something back.

The porcelain disc,  
couples  
with flagellum lash.  
Imprints  
a mock shroud of Gehenna,  
while Stanley  
slices  
under the caffeinated ceiling.

Send something back.

Scar tissue,  
malt vinegar remedy.  
She is balding  
like a chain-store Wendy.  
Wetted  
by steel capped sneakers,  
pummelled dough.

Send something back.

## Ward kids

i once

met a stranger

who

lived

in a plaster cast

the strung puppet

in a forced retreat

while my body stirred oats

in silent prayer i was fed

a

wafer soothed

by a woman who once wore a veil

the afternoon

strains a pale paediatric

ghost children

sup

from silver

their

daily

bread

i count the dimpled ceiling and count

the

droplets of my line

against

the static backdrop of an elevated

pulpit

while the boy who belonged to the wandering thumb

cried.

# Tarantella

salivate  
and  
the taste  
of  
flesh  
on  
concrete  
his  
gun metal  
corrupts  
my coil  
a  
spasmodic  
battery  
he  
hijacks  
my rudder  
conjuring  
a  
short  
circuit  
trance

i wear  
grazed skin  
in  
muted  
paralysis  
locked  
in television static  
at sea  
i am  
slammed  
against  
rock  
in  
unknown pleasures  
a fragmented  
aura,  
of where  
to  
place  
oneself  
petit mal  
*relieve me*  
from your  
rabid web  
of arachnid  
possession  
damp  
limp

dolly

my  
fisheyes

dead.

## Magnetic sarcophagus

naked / knotted in twill tape / she slides / inside / a helium coil / restless / atop a gurney / the  
needle-pricked pulse / of a deconstructed synthesizer / clangs / its elliptical gearing / in a cylindric  
hiss / grainy fantasia / and a bucket of blood / prescribed to / soothe / through an intravenous  
portal / a daughter / lost / immortalised / in glass / she is the blighted ovum / seared / by /  
livestock iron / the physician / sneers / at electric silver scratch tissue / *brain?* / *did she ever have*  
*one?* / from a sailor suit on broadway / to a johnny made of paper / discussions / and diagnosis  
/ cower / behind the brick curtain / in a narrowminded passageway / a façade / of falsehoods  
/ and smiles / while / the still-flowing dye / leaks / no contrast /.

## When Genevieve ~~Spurned~~ Spoke to God

Good morning

Mr God

I see you have new sandals

Mine

are red

and my bag

a

glowing pink

they *almost* match!

You should know my school

a saint lives there

and tonight

*I*

live in the forest

as a fairy

Is a fairy

like a saint or an angel?

My wings

aren't feathers

but glitter stars and fish net

— that's green

Later

I will dance and try not to

thump

Have  
you seen your brother  
the one that looks like you?

The one  
with the big fluffy eyebrows  
that twinkle  
as he ties the presents  
and  
his beard that blows  
white

as the North Wind

Is he with the reindeer?  
Does Comet eat biscuits?  
Sammy's bowl has  
spare

Mr God  
this Christmas  
may you ask your brother  
Ho-Ho  
to bring a crayon

made of magic?

To scrawl a mighty  
Tie Fighter  
that spits a laser  
like Tatooine's suns  
gold glint

But  
most of all  
to draw my uncle  
John

spectacled  
and small

you would have  
*just*

met him.

## When Genevieve Spoke to Spurned God

The altar

was dressed  
in its feast of assumption  
while a choir loft  
graced with Mother's  
organ  
music

Whitened vestments  
starched  
in sorrow

a familiar calling  
in a dampened  
lip

You pulled me into your Gerald's game  
the erect cassock  
and cast the die  
before Philomena's alcove  
of tears

I fear losing  
Mother  
and another misstep

I made a Foxton's  
pledge  
to the nunnery

to disinfect the Cleric's  
sex

I didn't spurn  
God  
I spurned

you

Important?  
If so forgotten

I'm getting married  
and  
forge  
my own vows

Hail

Queen of Heaven  
Star of the Sea

Pray for the — *pervert*  
pray

for me.

## Urenui Pastel Wheat

I

was eight  
and a bit,  
when my father  
mended wounds of mirrors

At Urenui

*you*

were decent

Perched in an afterhour  
glass cut van  
I embraced  
a momentary pause  
as fireflies freckled — gold tape  
about the headlight

I watched my father  
amongst the sand cakes  
and tail wheat made of pastel

You

were a broken oil  
flick  
in the distance

I regret not joining  
to feel

the itch of Daphne  
crocheted between my toes  
And to paint  
the face of two sisters  
surviving  
in salted puddles

We could have summoned  
Rama  
and ridden him  
at low tide  
for luck

that never came

Instead

I savour  
the eve's setting  
coral  
that dusts my eyes

before I  
lastly  
lose

sight.

## Lucia

Unknown fondling's  
beneath  
the peacoat buttons  
and sash,

she  
is leather  
she  
is bone

in muted humility

The paper doll  
adorns  
her crown of camomile  
painted features with a nervous  
stroke

Worn nylons  
stained,  
her only pair half-rolled

a scattered replication

Lucia is cordial

as a tiny fawn soldier  
with bitten fingers  
divides  
squares of cioccolato  
her smile,

a thousand yards away

He of Mother

on Plimmerton veranda,

Her of Marcello's

tiny toes running

gelato,

on piazza stone

They

find each other

in corrupted

shells.

## Melancholy Amore

Why must  
you go?

Stay

in the bloom  
of our absent body  
hold me  
in your spectral arms

I will  
wash away  
the Prozac

Let's  
flirt with the edge  
and dance on a razor

Let us  
play in paralysis  
a dreamscape  
drunk  
on purple nectar

Pull  
on your shoestring elastic  
and release the underwire  
We'll nestle  
upon a beaded cobweb

curdled

inside our perfect dysfunction  
where sound  
is unsaid

Why bother to venture forth?

The daylight coven  
sent no invitation  
and we  
are already  
craftsmen of Christ

Lie  
with me

bathe  
bleed  
with me

in a live voltage vessel

Savour  
your tired efforts  
on a soiled mattress  
throttled by black dog fungi

Soak up  
your distrusted sweat  
and trusted fears  
knotted  
in a clasped serviette

Kiss  
my stale mouth

I am  
your muted afterglow

Let us cement  
together  
inside a dim lit purgatory

Why must

you go?

## All Strings attached

Muzzled

in a hot tin  
beneath  
your stairs

How many days  
left  
to waste

congested  
by your viscous  
string

In private consultation  
I  
am absolved  
of *nothing*

harassed  
by full-length  
glass

Laid bare  
an imperfection  
of spilt port  
cradled in a silver lining

cavities  
you never want to touch

Transient stain  
with trembling hands  
skywrite

my  
evaluation

You tore  
the skin  
and made me cry

there

is never quiet

My keeper  
my abscess

you leak purulence  
but  
profess

I'm at fault

Take  
your leave

without consequence

valve — worn.

## Spaghetti tins

while  
others learn numbers

i sit in a storeroom  
trolled  
by a chalk speckled  
imp  
rested  
in the blackboard

i pluck flowers  
from a style magazine  
the petals pulp  
stick  
to glittered tips

patterned on a lilac tin  
i mourn a mind  
dissolved  
in an orange bottle half-cut  
filled  
with counters

i  
am blunt left-hand scissors  
that tug  
on eyelashes  
waiting  
for the bell's  
toll

paper  
won't stick  
on ripples

armed with a biro  
branded

*special needs.*

## Low Decile Mean Girls

pinned / against / a bricked wall / and piss-stained / trough / staring up at the roof / disabled /  
beneath its decoration / of sour / tampons / and chewed / bog paper / i am bound / in the daily  
bile / jostled / and alienated / i / the *fugly lesbo* / still / carrying *puppy* / *fat* / is chimed / in valley  
slut / intonation / low decile mean girls / curved / in all / the right places / slow / their taunts  
/ into a sultry / chant / of fried syllable / they hiss / snap / pull / a sinister pout / and an  
undertone of sex / with a pinch of psychopathy / to add / to / my snivels / these predators /  
they bite / with sharpened teeth / behind / *bonne belle* smiles / you know the precocious ones?  
/ tan lines / poolside with daddy / the contoured tits / pointing / their way / to a gully make-  
out sesh / you hear / their fauxgasm / from the bus bay / they straighten / hitched skirts /  
working sandals / without backs / reapply kohl / flick / a maybelline / wink / towards / the  
lunch duty monitor / to slop / back for a feed / and a food fight / there / a pinata / of airborne  
egg sandwiches / squashed / with yogurt rivers / licks / and hysterics / an odd confetti / from  
a clogged / drinking fountain / they paint themselves / in lunchbox sludge / a type of / wet / t-  
shirt flirtation / for the pack of platformed skunk heads / branded / with neckties of cherry gloss  
hickeys / muffled sniggers / as the bell / tolls / low decile mean girls / slummock / into grey  
prefabs / as slaters enter wood / again / my shins endure / a kicking / under the guise of graffitied  
/ desks / again / an order / to the *epileptic* / *side of the room* / i feel / a glob of spittle / in my hair  
/ and open / my special book / to page 2 /.

## School reunion

It's  
not that  
she can't tie laces

The girl in a saline whirlpool  
unable to raise  
fingers

above ground

ask *her* — if she wants to go

You graze  
a buffet of wilted lettuce  
and millennium behaviour  
flat Pinot noir clouds  
whispered titters as she sits  
cold-shouldered

shins  
patterned with purple stain

Pulled face  
on marriage number two

blind  
to a young girl's incapacity  
to be loved  
folded

in origami note of scandal

A circled flock  
taunts  
as she lays limp inside  
a hopscotch scratch  
tasting  
the tang of lemon hunger games

still not wanted on the team

Ask *her* — if she wants to

go.

## In the Garden of Mr Kinklebury

Mauve

kidneys

grew

inside a fur sleeve

sowers fingers

gloved

by turned soil

Bathed

in honey

a caretaker's shut eyed

smile

at the sun

negotiates balance

on

a lopsided stool

while

the Rotary clothesline

utters

a rusted song

He bids

“move closer Madam”

as she clutches her purse of pins

that defy

all shades

of weather  
and never  
fall to her feet

Both  
devouring a  
cloud  
of sylvan rumination

yeasted sprinkles  
lifts  
from an apron's pocket  
nourishes  
the snuff brown  
sparrow  
who chimes his  
gratitude  
and flutters overhead

clasping  
his attaché  
the size of a

thimble.

## hyperion drive

get

jiggy-wit-it in a state house  
singe

living on the daily crust  
of fifty-cent saucie rolls

its

meat

packed

with

peas & split onion

whipped up by the slovacks

tucked

behind graffitied bricks

forgotten

subdivisions & glue sniffers huffing

their

woolworths

plastic

the rings that chatter frighten a hollowed mule

that grazes on patches of scattered

hair

we bomb our makeshift

swimming pool

while the pigs chop overhead

they chase

killer

wasps swarming

back

to their          ganja    hive  
                 beneath

a power                  pylon                          sundown.

## False prophets

there's

a caravan of misfits  
devouring battered supper & psalms  
upon oiled testament

smudged fingertips  
blackened fish  
a buddha's gape  
& glass water made holy

they

recount

the

first

time

speaking

in

tongues

replenished by charismatic hands

at the

cove

in neighbouring aluminium

the

refrigerated

embryo rests

his mother is see-through

gathered on the veranda

speaks

no more.

## Manic ~~pixie dream~~ girl

i was a manic ~~pixie dream~~

hick

floating

in

a

daisy skater skirt

with torn tights

and knees

dustbowl disc jock carrying a pocket

full of glo hearts

left unread

the cowabunga fruit skunk

pianist

always

had

a

crush

lounged in a tin shack on orchard rd

our private chicken coop we

pecked

at

dirt and licked wounds to the lilts

of *father and son* pillowed

by a mound of ex-lovers rags

he

told

me

i was

different from the rest

but instead

i went to lay with the 7ft lyrist

a bootleg mr cruise

upon

the knoll of a floodlit

gold

crater

in a star's gaze

tom searched for another

constellation

and travelled north to study a toe dance

on baltic ice

alone

i

was

left

playing veckatimest

grappled in my knit tea cozy

as tranquillity

waved

behind cardboard

blotting

out

the

noise.

## Mind mosaic

Eyes

so vacant  
marbles of a goat

I thought I knew myself

Hearing a song upside-down  
as the clipped willow malts  
splinters  
Its breast spoiled by a nightcrawler  
feasting  
on the high note marrow  
that never hits

Unable  
to speak in a downlink delay  
my mind  
a husk  
soaked in liquid brick  
a hideaway  
for disorganised feathers and pencils

Chewing gum  
that kisses the notes of poetry scrap

incomplete

and  
a slip of paper champagne from Mother

folded

This  
is the costume I stand up  
in secret

These  
are the fingers  
that smudge the words  
that came before

as the hands that flap about  
playing shadow puppets  
to interpret

broken  
spoke

*Excuse me*

I —

didn't mean

I didn't mean

to

interrupt

I

was wondering

if I could

if I *could*

wonder.

## State Highway Cellophane

There's a little girl  
on the side of the road,  
  
turning blue.

Clouded eyes  
of a dying carp,  
furled cellophane  
convulses in pooling bile

rubber mouth tremor.

Prepare yourself,  
high toxins ahead  
there's a Goliath inside a six-year-old husk  
oh  
how to  
deconstruct the net.

I gave Erythromycin,  
and the little  
orange pill too  
she drunk the cough syrup

but  
the daughter lies folded,

as duct taped upholstery  
in  
a Ngāmotu bound  
removal van.

They turn  
their backs to Bombay  
and put her in dual  
meat wagons.

The first devoid  
of its iron lung

She's dressed in plastic stickers

her pallor  
soaked

in  
wedgwood.

## Precious metals

little

boy indigo

dress-up box groom

lie

with seven chakras

wrapped

in mortuary silk

beside

the lichen twig

hāwera bath

submerged

in a back-room limp

they powdered you

in golden salt

to balance a verve

diminished

kissed

by messines

tears

a returned father in khaki

yearns

for the lost prince

in cursed prayer

he strokes auburn thread

and to god

he whimpers

must

you take

my little boy indigo?  
with vacant  
eyes?  
to haunt  
my no man's land  
to fall as they have fallen  
inside an empty  
pit  
of blotted faces  
he  
the most innocent  
of all

must he  
lay to  
rest  
in a  
gown

of precious metals?

**If**

If  
it pleases you

I won't eat for a week  
and pick  
the best shadow  
to hide  
my silver lining

If  
it pleases you

I am  
dampened  
by the piss smacked out  
in the corner  
of your laundry  
  
gathered

If  
it pleases you

I will raise the octave  
to puppet  
a mother's care

and dance  
my fingers  
about your forehead  
cradling

sugared words

If  
it pleases you

I'll make you breakfast  
three eggs  
a folded shirt  
coffee

without — the milk

If  
it pleases you

I'll fear the stanley  
and make a quick gateway  
to the carillon  
disguise myself  
amongst the dogwalkers

remembering — my posture

If  
it pleases you

Pierce me  
with a ground spike  
and a jug cord  
whip

douse me  
in pastry confetti

under a caffeinated ceiling

If  
it pleases you

There are vinegar remedies  
for a painted face

and I'll give you  
my last twenty  
bed  
my balance — empty

I won't see you until  
tomorrow

If  
it pleases you

It *pleases*

me.

## Trailer park panto

follow the painted pantomime

and join  
the bare legged rodeo  
a ukulele  
without her shoes

the pied flautist  
springs  
about on damp potholes  
filled  
with yesterday's christmas  
as tinsel coils toes

follow the painted pantomime

on lakeside tarsal  
she'll beckon  
through  
waitapu glass  
realigning wet togs  
as the children tag after  
and catch  
jewel bubbles to a tambourine's  
rattle

the mini urban  
troubadour  
of

taupō-nui-a-tia.

## To write beautiful things

how

does one  
write beautiful things?  
the poignant  
pure  
the lyrical lilt  
in  
a pewter  
thread dance  
to pageant  
wounds

unclothed?

how

does one  
write beautiful things?  
when one's  
cavity was searched  
fumbled  
as a dampened cloth lying  
sour  
in a rusted washing machine  
or should i describe it  
as the hide skin pocket  
home  
to discarded doctor's  
receipts?

the bureau has scanned my  
anatomy

knowing better than i

jostled like  
one of the boys in a  
rugby changing room  
the bovine grunt

a kink

suggestion

he bit my face femininity omitted  
i felt no  
kiss

enveloped by arzriel a spaniard's death  
stare  
swathed in linen's embers cigarette flick  
in a blackened psychosis  
drones overhead the butcher's shop  
cradled in gouged  
plaster

how

does one write  
beautiful things?

when it's simply

cunt.

## glass

*(After Plath's Mirror)*

i am onyx a dark stain in a disfigured stoop infested with a bile of  
theory. i am not truthful only cruel a little warped beggar's eye in a  
misshapen corner. i meditate in the same place squatting on the side of the  
wall impaired with spilt port a smudge branded by the goblin's bite it's  
malice coats me in osmotic tar a congealed gimp bondage. i am fractured glass  
wearing my black spots of a bond broken. plagued by a parasitic fishwife  
clasping upon my shoulders. she cackles and tugs at the latex cross  
i forever shall

bear.

## Abandoned script

my womb  
flutters a moth's nest spawning larvae  
a whispered cream of oddity  
will one day

gestate

i am impotent of what you  
want

instead i  
bleed disease  
inside yellow markings  
beneath friday's rain  
on  
concrete

while the love-struck  
swirl the ink  
of long island ice  
they taste each other  
beside a gold peppered  
daydream

there  
in eden's gallery  
a glazed helen carved by the fingers  
of saints  
playfully studies the palettes  
dance  
as my still page remains — blank.

## The lemon room

in the lemon room she weeps beside the lone cradle empty.  
each passing month her youth bleeds a miscarriage while the  
harvest may queens' count the toes of sonograms siting palms upon  
laminated gospel and affirm their prenatal oath. in private consultation  
she wears her wedding gown wrenched agape with a cold utensil  
physicians scratch the undesired peel. she the professed fool observed  
as an enclosed gorilla bereft teetering on the edge of a straw  
cushion nursing kittens that don't

belong.

## polypharmacy

polypharmacy is the definition  
of what it feels  
to be

skint

blotted on file  
we wait

for our laminated bingo

wearing swollen fingers & hidden pearls  
we  
waifs & strays

in a back alley tumbledown

a misprescribed  
scribble  
clasped in a lymphatic paw

weeps

the passing doctor  
numbs us  
with a white medallion taste-test  
a lolly scramble of quick remedy

a poor man's pick n' mix

the ungloved nurse

with plastic digits  
removes sutures while gnawing

bone  
we fall through      doorways

counselled  
by the      elephant man

unnoticed.

## Dolls

we

are washing clothes  
that don't

fit us

and pin them on string  
beside  
the fuchsias

i would  
love  
to open their lashes  
and make them see

though your eyes

are teardrops  
they smile

you are pretty  
and i am happy just playing  
dolls  
in the shade

of the water tank

the marmalade nursery  
once wore felt petals and birds

i'm not allowed in  
and best kept  
amongst the clowns and woollen scarecrows  
in my cornflower blue  
apartment

i can't think  
of anything grownup to say

i don't understand

all i know  
is sindy's gold buttoned windbreaker

is magic

flittering

a sky dance  
as baby pascal would do

in god's

garden.

## The abscess

Once

I was so pregnant of a future  
it seemed holy

I am now

but a leper blind beggar  
a dog  
bitten by the fleas  
whimpering  
at the mound of his master's grave.

The figure unkempt

a mary queen of torn cloth.

With

naked breast I watch  
a dundrennan shoreline  
dissolve

behind a paneless window

God

take my body  
replenish another

detach

the abscess  
a uterine ache

defile me

with cancer

as the image of man has before.

Bound

in your liquid

institution.

## Gawler grove

Hey village boy

hold on to the string

an unbiblical walking

bus sabbatical

*did you see it?*

in wainuiomata

where the boys are smart

ride

fibreglass

animals in a now dead

mall

corner shop

dan

surveys

a passing military tank

that

contains

a mother

who ate the christmas

tinsel

banton browns

and a sally lunn

don't eat the birthday doh sponge

but remember

a three-year-old's party      trick

lighting

the

ciggies

in an axminster      lounge.

## Her Majesty's Battalion

Rooted

in receded ground  
we've been here  
since  
the milk children's  
departure

and will remain  
at our post  
until she leaves

Regimented soldiers  
our pearl uninforms  
spoiled  
in a plaque of gold

We stand  
in perseverance  
to cushion her contracted  
grind  
the chalk burst Night terror  
a hop-scotch  
drag  
of barbed wire  
a shuffled  
stir  
at her nocturnal cry — gingerly bled

Under  
crimson sunrise of Flander's

caress

we scratch each other

instead

contorted

in a gun metal

smile.

## Father

the  
last words you uttered to me  
i mended grandstand seats  
with plasters  
and spoke to christmas ornaments

i once said hello to everyone  
and you were a young bohemian  
in a paisley shirt

today a departure so cheap

in  
grey pigment rested  
the responder's scrap decorated  
your feet  
while a blade sat idle  
and collected stray  
tufts  
in a rhythm faint

this  
day a black carnivàle  
the cul-de-sac sideshow  
as you bumped on a gurney  
in the guise of a hophead audience  
creeps  
leant on a rail  
cackling

from on high  
and inhaled the garish pleasure  
to watch

one die

but  
your liverpool pathway  
began  
on the fifteen-hour stretch  
washed in sand from a shopfloor's  
drum

later pedalled  
on a ten-speed down mt smart

counting cents

the  
forfeit young bohemian  
what was that

about?

## Junius departure

my father was no longer dad but a hans schweitzer postcard, bruised by yellow ink. after the 6<sup>th</sup> hour he retired from pyjamas and left the imposter to submerge in crushed velvet decay. now a warm yolk, pooling at the forearm, i kneaded the last pulse whispered through mottled skin to salvage what i could before he left and became inert as a thumbtack that held the lapis madonna, perched without charity. to oppose the departing is perversion a mortal dilemma torn from taped chapters of a cerebral survival guide. this is shock full-bodied a primal release at the elephant graveyard. it doesn't sit it does not belong. like a litter's runt consumed by the cat mother. seduced by instinct, she removes her sac infirm to suckle curdled milk.

## Dust and Four White Doves

You

lived in a cakebox,

atop

a Polynesian tapa.

But

I hear

a foot shuffle in the hallway

and a spoon's clink

in the kitchen.

There's a dash of blue spark

in my eye's corner,

while

my tongue

spits a word salad

unregulated.

There's a flicker

of sunlight and fleeting vehicles

my skin is tired,

today

I dream of Heaven.

Last night transparent,

you demanded coffee

and

told me it didn't matter

if it stayed in

or not.

In a loop  
of senseless conversation  
with absent friends  
in  
Culina.

A gust of familiarity  
sewn  
into toweling,  
I sung Revolution 9  
for a 60<sup>th</sup>  
you never  
cared

to attend.

I survive on a container of dust,  
  
and a faded promise.

The algorithm  
is no spirit box,  
ringneck doves  
serve  
no comfort.  
As did  
the sickbay doppelgänger,

a man

who wasn't you.

## Two hours

it takes 2 hours

to ride the naenae bus

to rugby practice

with

brown bantams on saturday

it take 2 hours

for the pain to recede

after a pelting

from your father's

buckle

2 hours

to hitchhike on a peninsula bend

armed

with a bread knife

and

a ten dollar note

2 hours

for the stink to rift

from piss-soaked

overalls

courtesy of mr arkle

at 4am

2 hours

to dance

as cherokee — with plastic rattle

baby

and

a stop

at the giveaway

it takes 2 hours

to mow athenree

with chewed up dog shit

jet skis

and the audience from botany downs

it takes 2 hours

to die

misgendered

casting an additional

fee

to salvage your warmth

2 hours to burn

i wait

in a breadline

clasping a sandbox of

you

in a grocer's

sleeve.

## Ghost

I

a mortal phantom  
muted

my feet  
*aren't*

above ground

but upon tarmac  
wheeling out recyclables  
the magpies  
have never left

my brow

I

live in a quarry made of chalk  
cooled

by the plastic trees  
no grass beneath  
soles

as the faces of neighbourhood  
lepers  
sneer and scape

at the concrete's weed

I

am a disillusioned  
wanderer

caught in the shift  
of a milk beam's pendulum

the breathless  
speak  
more sense

I  
bleed from a laceration  
of self  
in attempt to salvage  
pieces  
that remain

sewn  
in a wire fence  
amidst

the Shadowlands.

## Prince Kuragin

Once

a St Peters aristocrat  
found sanctuary in a Bell Block  
spire

Dressed  
in matted lace and ribboned cravat  
carried  
worldly goods and a can of meat  
tucked  
firmly under torn cowl  
of a woollen coat

The Romanov stray  
fleeing  
Bolshevik euthanasia — under sickle and syringe

He dragged himself  
on leather paws  
through October sleet

growled at lightened windows  
a halo  
of iced sponge and coloured candles

he reminisced his gypsy She-wolf  
in waltz  
and the pack — he left behind

Oiled tendrils

forward

flung

Kuragin expels his final — moan

defeated upon a frost bit

rock.

## Scarecrow

a whispered

hurl

disguised

in an

extractor vent

bile gathers

around

the

plughole

in a private

cubicle

it's good

to run your fingers

down

smooth porcelain

pray

to the scapula

and

leave me as a

scarecrow

tied

feeling light upon my

post

a hessian

crucifixion

let      rooks

pluck

out the      carrots      rind

and      detour

from

the

harvest.

## Glockenspiel

Today

I could not paint

the cataracts

milk

left me blind

My balsa

wood heart

imprinted with a plague

a pigment

I cannot see

it doesn't

rub away

Only

the twang

of fingers that pluck

no longer papillion's flutter

but

a pulled timekeeper's tendon

the strings

are crying

Tangled

in a stupor

I rotate with split face

bullied by metal hammers

The longhorns have  
consumed  
and left me a powdered cavity  
pinned  
between the brown-tail nest

in a glockenspiel's corner

Tonight  
I sketch  
a sleeping stranger's lips  
while  
the little timber figures

kiss

as  
holy palmers'

do.

## **Buckies and the war of the roses**

he rips / from a repurposed / helm / of water /and gargles / his nectar / as the blue / caterpillar  
/ lounging on a / mushroom / the self-anointed / philosopher / taunts / a riddle / inside / our  
lewis carroll / fever dream / but / i am / bewitched / by a / war / of roses / a / clash of  
blackened / swords vying / for an english / throne of tears / toast / and an ounce / of yam / the  
burnt /jester / has left / his butter knives / and the / court of / fulford / is hushed / if only /  
for a / while / the girl in the stocks / is questioned now / as ms woodville / peers / through  
pixel / she summons / a curse / to equate / his crime / he answers / only / to dicky / and lies  
wrinkled / as the blue / caterpillar / upon the mouth / of a / bosworth / blade /.

## After Hours

At

the forgiving hour  
a quiet earth whispers

Inside

a plastic skin  
living in daylight  
feels crowded

3am

past —the witching pause

it is soft

it is vacant

beside a study lamp's glow

washed

of dawn's arousal

My mind's

flurry

now hushed —while the monsters rest

Dampened

palms

now avid

naked of all violation

No need

for P's and Q's

I step out  
from the social habit  
and step  
inside a temperance  
suit  
to become my own

I am God's lonely woman

My psyche  
feasts  
the nocturnal supper

So still

I hear the girl  
in Bruges

purr

sonnets.

## Beneath the Green Bucket

A

long since memory  
of where it all  
began

before my world  
turned  
black and blue  
beneath a plastic brim  
there was

green

My container of calm  
I sat betwixt with bovine  
companions  
of sheep, horses, pigs

and trees

Fences  
to mend to construct  
into pens  
homes to my friends

where we all felt  
safe

Sheltered  
and somehow cocooned

I knew its refuge

a veranda of humanity  
my hard hat — cooled  
the soft butter lace  
a little crown  
full  
of ideas and wishes

a vessel — unblemished  
carrying  
a magical crew  
to uncharted chapters

The milk fed  
husk  
surrounded by miniatures  
tiny memory boxes

formed  
an innocent vista in the sun-soaked  
hue  
of the Onehunga harbour

its passing ships  
swelled  
my delight

Adorned  
in faux pearls  
and visions  
faded swans, toasted petals

a drapery of snouts, tails

and crumbs  
my make-believe  
was believable

treasured and complete

The dawn of me  
with  
many faces  
a child complexed

but beloved

As Brush and Hush  
journeyed  
to make the pigment of my scuttle  
a later life  
solace

when things turned

like — fruit.

## Notes

On page 18, in the eighth and final stanza of ‘The Purgation’ the name *McCartney* and the words *So sad is never sometimes*, is inspired by the 1971 song *Another Day* by English singer-songwriter Paul McCartney.

On page 38, in ‘Tarantella’ I referenced the phrase *unknown pleasures*, after the 1979 album *Unknown Pleasures* by English rock band Joy Division.

On page 45, in the final stanza of ‘When Genevieve ~~Spoke to~~ Spurned God’, I adapted a verse from Father John Lingard’s 1851 Marian hymn, *Hail, Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star*.

On page 65, in the fourth stanza of ‘Manic ~~pixie-dream~~ girl’, I referenced the words *father and son* after the 1970 song *Father and Son*, by English singer-songwriter Cat Stevens.

On page 79, ‘Glass’ was inspired by Sylvia Plath’s poem *Mirror*, from her 1971 collection *Crossing the Water*.

On page 101, ‘Prince Kuragin’ was named and inspired after the character from the British television series, *Downton Abbey*.

Finally on page 106, in the last stanza of ‘Glockenspiel’, I paid homage to the words *holy palmers*’ from William Shakespeare’s 1597 tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet* (Act 1, Scene 5).