



Alice Miller is a musician and was once a historian, and these poems are full of the lyrical texture of time: ancient stories playing their notes against contemporary facts and feeling. At the same time, her book takes us far beyond its title, letting us glimpse again and again – in finite space – what is limitless. – Bill Manhire

Alice Miller is a writer of poems, plays, essays and fiction. She has an MA in Creative Writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters and an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was a Glenn Schaeffer Fellow. Miller grew up in Eastbourne, Wellington; now lives in Vienna, Austria; and has also lived and published in the United States. The poems in this extraordinary full-length collection ask you to force yourself beyond your own boundaries. *Ours is a life worth losing*, Miller says here, *let's unlace it from its post and see what creature it becomes. . . .*



Contents

skin

		Crowd	26
Body	2	A Morning in Troy	27
Apple	3	Far From Shore	29
After Battle	4	Slow	30

steps

		Ocean	31
		Secure	32
		The Ache	33
		Below the Senate	34
Waiata	8	Nature	36
Eyed	9	Earth	37
Air	10		
What it Takes	11		
Waiata	12		
Terms	13		
In Season	16		

earth

		body	
		Towards	40
		Album of Breath	41
		Burn	42
		The Carriage	43
		History	44
Recon	18	Through the Eye	45
Grow	19	The Hole	46
Antarctica I	20	Unearth	48
Antarctica II	21	Countrymen	49
Wet	24	Mahina Bay	50
Album of Cold	25	Orbit	51

BODY

It's strange to want to give someone the earth
again. It's strange to be the same planet
but split to forge a new, raw globe,
past plundered by lovers and strangers. Forgot
the way my own earth cracks and tries to make
its half an other's, forgot old stories re-made
to fable, to a minor bible for a plastic land.
We walk our planet and the print of our feet scrawls
on to our bodies. Each morning we walk to unearth
more mountains. Each day I sing the valleys
alive. Each night you find a dark pool,
and when you test it with your toe, a green
river ruptures. A quiet mirror opens.

APPLE

The night the earth's crust cracked
under us, great
hands reaching

to brush the earth's skin

to crane red fingers up

and caress the green

we felt the planet wrench herself,
rip soil from rock, split trees
shudder buildings till they broke

and tore our own eyes wider

AFTER BATTLE

This stitching between bodies isn't skin.
It's only old rope, easily cut.

Where the seam tears there's blood.

I found a body under the trees,
thrown from its horse.

I wrapped taut silk around its bones
and watched the rivers roam the roads.

It was just me and the body.

I pretended it lived, and together we listened
to the sly sounds between trees.

*

I want you to come here,
restitch your head to your shoulders,
and form a word with your mouth.

Come here and surrender.

Because there're still days that my army
loses horses, days I lose sun

and try to saddle up the darkness –

and whenever we ride to battle together, it rains
and we cannot see sky for water,
and the grass becomes dirt, and

waves break the fields, and the bodies
all muddle into the earth.
And although your breath

was once pressed into mine,
I no longer know who's against me.

WAIATA

Morning and your eyes

blow open, encircled by ripples of skin.

You're looking at the wall – at the white square the mirror
once covered.

Did you really let out all the birds? you say. I put

my hand on your neck

but your head won't move. Your eyes

look like the holes left

when two stones are

thrown in a river.

EYED

One way's easy but an easy way's
worse. Fear
 cracking on these lies' rocks, fear
oceans that'll swallow our rolling
 eyes. Our masks may only
 fool ourselves, but we are
the only damn fools that matter. I want you not
 to stop your fear but reach your fingers
 deep in it.
Say well, what do we have here.
Say what can't we make when we're together.

AUCKLAND
UNIVERSITY
PRESS



\$24.99

210 x 148 mm, 64pp, paperback

ISBN: 9781869408060



9 781869 408060