



JANIS FREEGARD

The Glass
= Rooster

Searching, remarkable poems – about art, about location, about unusual expeditions, and about love.

I am not made of concrete, no. I am not made of sand.
Nor of light, nor air, nor the sound that rain makes
as it splashes on the upturned leaves of my forest home.
Have you seen my feathers? How the colours glint
in the dappled light. Have you heard my call? Oh I am king
of all I see. Hear me, hear me. This tree, mine. This whole
forest, mine.

The poems in *The Glass Rooster* explore the spaces inhabited by humans and other creatures – not just natural ecosystems like deserts or the alpine zone, but cities and outer space.

Our guide on this journey is a glass rooster – observer of stars and lover of hens – who first popped up in Janis Freegard's poetry years ago and wanders unchecked through the book. These are searching, remarkable poems – about art, about places, about unusual expeditions, and about love.

Each of the eight sections (or 'echo-systems') in the book – The Damp Places, Forest, Cityscape, The Alpine Zone, Space, Home & Garden, Underground and In the Desert – is introduced by a triolet, a French poetic form with repeated lines. Other poems are arranged in pairs, each echoing something about the other, whether desert plants, the presence of balloons or the dangers of working in a mine. The result is a tremendous, riotous exploration of an interconnected world.



Janis Freegard lives in Wellington, with an historian and a cat, and works in the public service. Her first full-length poetry collection, *Kingdom Animalia: The Escapades of Linnaeus*, was published by Auckland University Press in 2011. She is also the author of a chapbook, *The Continuing Adventures of Alice Spider* (Anomalous Press, 2013), and co-author of *AUP New Poets 3* (AUP, 2008).

Her poetry has appeared in a wide range of journals and anthologies in New Zealand and overseas, including *Essential New Zealand Poems: Facing the Empty Page* (Random House, 2014), *Best NZ Poems 2012* and *Landfall*. She also writes fiction, is a past winner of the BNZ Katherine Mansfield Award, and will publish her first novel, with Mākaro Press, in May 2015. She blogs at <http://janisfreegard.com>.

Flotsam

By the end of the second week
we'd finished the duty free
and fashioned a make-shift shelter
from the in-flight magazines.
We dreamed of shops, the internet,
trim flat whites.

When, at the fourth week,
help had not materialised,
we formed into groups.
The lingerie models built a table;
the driving instructors set about
collecting fruit.
Those who failed to believe
in a happy outcome
moved to the south face.
The seasons altered.
Strange pigeons startled us.

After six months
someone spotted
a dot on the horizon
which soon grew
into the familiar funnel of a liner.
We looked at each other.
A roof needed thatching;
there was tilling still to be done.
We lifted our implements,
turned our backs to the sea.

The Tide Rises at the Gallery

we stood too long in the washing waves

(the high-heeled shoes
the kettle
the giant apple
the bottle
the hat)

& were covered in silvery scales

afterwards we sat on the table
listening to gulls
while the wind toyed with the cloth

(the television
the cellphone
the bowl of artificial fruit
the pine cone
the glass)

as the film rolled, our state altered:
we grew saltier

never quite dissolved

Three Skulls

The first was a sheep that must have lost its footing
on those cliffs there, in a storm perhaps
(see how steep, how rocky
– one could easily imagine).

The second, by its shape and lightness
could only have been a bird
a mollymawk, maybe
blown in from the sea to die.

The third, well the third was the finder's
still attached to its breathing body
still encased in blood and nerves and skin.

On the beach today, at the river's mouth.

Jumping Ship

afterwards they wondered why
all it was
(there hadn't been time for a note)

was the pull of an obsidian sea
frosted with turquoise and foam
there'd been no sadness

just the sudden need
for a change of scene
she'd known

(of course she'd known)
the cold would knock the air from her lungs
that propellers churned beneath

but she couldn't shake the notion
of mermaids advancing: an underwater empire
somewhere *different*

Among the Mangroves

winter's glass has cracked
spring breathes warmth into cold bones
the tide ebbs, gentle now

small, square crabs scuttle over mudflats
our long silences
shatter into fragments of speech

we sense the descent of a calm
pneumatophores protrude
through anaerobic mud

our fingers brush against each other
snails wind their tracks
under a softer sky

Hothouse

I

the pond thrusts up lotuses
– petals the delicate lavender of dusk
with the surprise of the sun inside

II

Phalaenopsis waits in her wimple, bride white
lips lined red and parted
(but only the air gets closer)

III

lilies are disguised as leopards
epiphytes as stags
cyclamens are windswept women
hair blown back and faces flushed
basking
blushing

IV

today I shall become a frog
just for long enough to leap
into the centre of that metre-wide lily pad
that looks like a great green flan
waiting to be filled
while above me, pitcher plants digest
the flies I failed to roll in
on my long red carpet of a tongue

V

from time to time, I'll close my eyes
and be back in the Amazon
tamarins trilling overhead
& I'll trust that the frog-eating heron
is picking her leggy path
through some other humid pool
well away, well away

Albatross

I'm in the air, mostly,
been around the world more times than I can count.
I always come back, to Taiaroa Head, to her,

the stretch of her three-metre wings,
her swoop and glide,
feeding together on shoaling fish and squid.

come October, she'll shag a neighbour
when she thinks I'm not looking;
November, our miracle egg arrives

ten weeks of incubation
(we take it in turns)
six weeks of guarding

filling the greedy mouth
best mothers in the colony
we get foster chicks to raise

September our fledgling tests its wings,
we fly out, another ocean year
I always come back, to Taiaroa Head, to her

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