

The book cover features a high-contrast, black and white illustration. At the top, several bare trees with intricate branch structures are silhouetted against a light background. Below the trees, a large, light-colored oval contains the title and subtitle. The foreground is filled with a dense, textured pattern of vertical lines, representing grass or a field. Two chickens are depicted in this field: one on the left, facing right, and one on the right, facing left. Both chickens are rendered in solid black with red combs and wattles. The overall style is graphic and minimalist.

**PASTURE  
AND FLOCK**

NEW & SELECTED POEMS

**ANNA  
JACKSON**

***A time-spanning collection of sequences and poems  
from the poet of the everyday extraordinary.***

There are some poets you travel the routes of  
so often you could feel your way in the dark,  
that turn, that corner, and then the plummet  
towards the end. What does it give you, after all,  
to meet in person in a room? A thought  
the dog doesn't share, when, having known  
the followed route, the stored scent,  
an affair of the air, here is  
the other dog! Incarnate! Guessed and host!

– *'Poets know words, know routes, know ghosts'*

Uneasy nights out with dead Russian poets, dalliances with German gasfitters and emotionally fraught games of badminton are brought together for the first time, along with a brand new body of work, in this time-spanning selection of Anna Jackson's poetry. Local gothic, suburban pastoral and answerings-back to literary icons are all enhanced by Jackson's light hand and sly humour.

Pastoral yet gritty, intellectual and witty, sweet but with stings in their tails, the poems and sequences collected in *Pasture and Flock* are essential reading for both long-term and new admirers of Jackson's slanted approach to lyric poetry.



Anna Jackson made her debut in *AUP New Poets 1* before publishing six collections with Auckland University Press, most recently *I, Clodia, and Other Portraits* (2014). She has a DPhil from Oxford, and is now an associate professor in English literature at Victoria University of Wellington. Jackson is the author of *Diary Poetics: Form and Style in Writers' Diaries 1915–1962* (2010) and, with Charles Ferrall, *British Juvenile Fiction 1850–1950: The Age of Adolescence* (2009).

## The invisibility of poets

Mayakovsky's an exception  
with his yellow and black striped shirt  
and his smile flashing  
like a simile –  
most poets are invisible.  
Or why write poetry?

Some poets invent an imaginary  
visibility – Bella Akhmadulina  
went round for years with  
an invisible visibility  
flung over her shoulders  
like a ray of sunshine.

Till she caught a fever and saw her GP  
forgetting he couldn't see her –  
so embarrassing, though  
he was kind,  
really very kind.  
As embarrassing as going to a hair salon  
with head lice (*they* aren't invisible).

And so at last you see  
you will have to  
become, in the words  
of the poet, Khlebnikov,  
'a sower of eyes' –  
tossing them into the future's  
black sky,  
hoping they will land  
somewhere  
along their long  
projectory.

## Amanda in the mirror

Pink cheeked, dark browed, scowling  
at herself the way people look  
at themselves in the mirror, as if we were  
our own worst enemies, rehearsing  
a German phrase, ein bisschen Hoffnung, a  
little bit of hope, this is Amanda, the night before  
she sits the German exam that results in the letter  
she holds in her hand, weeks later, the letter,  
weeks later, everyone is asking about  
and no one knows has arrived.  
She has won a scholarship.  
She had described ein rosa-beige Haus,  
a pink-beige house, knowing beige  
was the word for beige and risking her use of it  
looking like a guess, intent on capturing  
a dream, the black tree trunks, a whole landscape  
in shadow, the sense of sunlight falling  
elsewhere, a *dank* feeling  
which she used the word feuchtes – humid –  
for, anxiously, the taste of pencil  
in her mouth. She sees herself now  
looking anxious in the glass, the feeling nowhere  
apparent of sunlight in her heart – das Gefühl  
des Sonnenlichts, she thinks to herself  
with a smile that doesn't appear on her face.

## Saoirse at the fridge

Saoirse weeps at the fridge door  
removing nothing, the cold air  
on her tears, her feet in socks  
from Singapore Air. There's a pink stain  
on the shelf where the milk sits seeping  
and outside the window someone  
is sky-writing something in the sky  
she cannot read – there are two planes, one  
undoing the writing of the other.  
No one knows she is there,  
even she herself feels more like a butterfly  
dreaming it is Saoirse . . . surely  
when it woke up it would feel  
as light as air! And full of fear.  
Quickly, lay your load – those eggs  
that hatch into hunger machines.  
She is hungry, oh she is hungry,  
but does not want to think about for whom.  
She picks out her coldest onion,  
her tears tight on her face.

## Flammable

The world was flammable, we knew it was.  
Our hair lit up with candle-light, we peeled off  
the wax from the table and made it into  
something beautiful, tender as the high voices  
of the castrati, fine as smoke through the grain  
of an old LP, a radiance through their song  
like the flame of a wick slowly burning,  
burning in its casing of wax. We all felt it.  
We all had wine to drink, the dregs  
in our glasses covered over with a new tide  
of wine from a new bottle, a taste  
like the tone of a clarinet with an old reed, old  
but not frayed, pliable as smoke and thick  
as wax. And then the morepork in the pine forest  
sounded its two sad notes, singing  
its 'I-Thou' song to an absence,  
an absence felt by every one of us, our futures  
dark to us, so close and so alight.

## Mornings are sudden

You call me from far down the path that was  
less travelled once: following it now  
I tread in the mud made by others since, pushing  
aside blackberry vines all blossom, no fruit.  
This is the time of year there are no cicadas, no  
flies, no crickets at night, no fruit flies on  
the fruit, no fruit on the ground and  
the ground is sodden. Mornings  
are sudden, storms come on slow.  
Following you means going anywhere  
to its *end* – if I cut across the field  
I'm heading to the horizon, if entering this cave  
I'm entering the grave, in measured steps,  
your absence my metronome.

AUCKLAND  
UNIVERSITY  
PRESS



9 781869 408794

**\$34.99**

Paperback

210 x 135mm, 148 pages

ISBN 978 1 86940 879 4

8 March 2018