everything talks
For Jacinda
Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements are due to the following publications: New Zealand Listener, Landfall, Waitakere Ranges: Ranges of Inspiration (Waitakere Ranges Protection Society), Poetry Review, Stand, Slope, Jacket, Salt: International Journal of Poetry and Poetics, Ariel, Shearsman and The Iowa Review.

I am also grateful to Creative New Zealand for a grant in 2003 that helped to complete poems in this book.

Some of these poems have been read at the Going West Books and Writers Festivals in 2003, 2005 and 2007 (when I had the honour of presenting the Curnow Reading); many thanks to Murray Gray, Naomi McCleary and all those involved. Thanks are also due to the New Zealand Poetry Society (2006) and the Porirua Poetry Café (2007), for opportunities to lift the poems off the page.

I would like to acknowledge editors, readers and collaborators, for their advice, assistance or support: Elizabeth Caffin, the late Allen Curnow, Katrina Duncan, Sam Elworthy, Tony Frazer, Anna Hodge, Michael Hulse, Peter Madden, Peter Simpson; and my friends and family, who all had their part to play in this collection of poems.

I would especially like to thank Bob Harvey for his friendship and support of my poetry. I am also indebted to Karl Stead and Roger Horrocks, for their encouragement and insightful feedback. And, most of all, to Jacinda, whose love and support made this book possible.
# Contents

Zeroth 1  

1. An Arena of Reflected Caches  
   Geographic Tongue 5  
   Swallows 8  
   Echolocations 10  
   The Future Island Nestled 15  
   An Arena of Reflected Caches 17  
   Soft Focus 20  

2. Mirror Mirror  
   Mirror Mirror 24  
   Millefiori 25  
   Streamlined Mechanics 26  
   Contraptions 27  
   Commerce 29  
   Diagram 30  
   Reel 33  
   Note to Myself 34  
   Header Tank 35  
   Godley Court 37  

3. Orpheus at Whatipu  
   Orpheus at Whatipu 40  
   The Ship Beautiful 41  
   Sea Breeze 42  
   Boats 43  
   Awhitu 44  
   Nihotupu Line 45  
   Finisterre 46  
   Decomposition 47  
   From Zion Hill 48  
   The Breaking Wave off Karekare 49  
   Ghost 50
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Frisson</td>
<td>Frisson</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impending</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Climbing Beans</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wishful Thinking</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milk Station</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Godheads</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Dirty Monk</td>
<td>The Dirty Monk</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encompassed</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L’Univers est créé</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Landscape without Monkeys</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hearsay</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nave Nave Fenua</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Egyptian</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An American President</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The Deep End</td>
<td>Nowherewhon</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhere</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where’s There?</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Deep End</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
wanting to say:
wanting to hear
    what it is that I wanted to say.

Gustaf Sobin, ‘Breath’s Reflections’
Zeroth

The word appears as a clear complete whole
world pinned, lines cropped . . . faded out

upon a horizontal plane
ascension cannot be articulated

as near to being a measured pause . . . up-
lifted is rooted to the fabric of tone

equal but imperfect

what was remarked continues to track
to make a point out of distance
the wave displays a vertical drop: dead weight

vertigo transfers the first line of defence

finite, or more accurately leaden,
flesh assembles mixed emotions

core visual and verbal elements
reason deflects human nature
deft voices certified: silent protests echo
timely and impartial exposé (signs of solidarity
taglines . . . brief context beneath the name)  
several sources of identity,

placement O case-sensitive lettering 
lines of text caption illustrations 

in any case, highlights

______________

bodies contorted approximate projections 
faces tend to a rounded decimal 

layers of non-interference: angles of optimum visibility 

particulars fractured, disused . . . calibrated 

denote 
distort the point 

separate the symbol 
change position 

use a portion 
anything 
add any 
the thing 
reduce to less 
place, unless 
. . . the sun 

returns 
to zero.
1. An Arena of Reflected Caches
. . . you go winding from
distance: (old) mind wanderer . . . re-
wind fabrication.

(SoSowSew . . . )
Geographic Tongue

A beginning

conversation hijacks inaction; take your pick
river falls wet stone . . . raised along latitude lines

south, trace the bay state’s first pinnacle
configure the string’s celestial thread

(black towers over the sylvan knoll, filigrees dwarf John’s iceberg love

pines) align skywards

the hawk rose so to speak

dangerous at the edge of insight
. . . circles, inlets of serpentine towns

winter washed through this cordial drift
an eastern scene took flight over butterfly ridge

where else to avoid the plain language loop

the county fair refrain:

must cut lead-light brain from monsoon town
supplant old alibis over ridge

summer scent of highway circuitry
erased at a cross-sectional mean

longitude: east of the door, coordinates pinpoint a depot
built in clear light rapids reconnect height

a sudden state of inclusion
maps unlock timber towns: the road (you wrote) began
anywhere: now, where might that begin?

. . . interlace a kind of kindred spirit, ad-
just, then just like nothing else

attend to the point: I realise
insights pin a blinkered light

silent in the greyness of morning
seams require nominal landscapes

see how faraway scent will wrest the body

(sample tremulous bardic timbres
banquets : bastions of activated ghazal . . .

furtive ekstasis: least liquidity attack mementoes
heaven ropes haloes, or . . . so someone sang)

. . . ledgers lampoon the blistered saint
John saunters, stumbles forward

ash buries the procession
deciduous woodlands, southward tropical rain forests

meadows patch life-size deltas
kingdom come includes Hollywood wiz-

ardry; east of the long lakes
trace the deep western sash

north, around-a-bout . . . boats of
human cargo: go wade over : watch over, artifice

refresh centres . . . infer taste as destination

. . . winch clear: debris from underneath
once clear, one way recognises another
whole contours wind down
black and dark : dark and black . . . well

nothing but circumference, south the liquid surface

Southern Cross, mass of summer stars: fricative
  highlights . . . relief maps mix and match
  unstitched historical markers
to step down from wall to wall . . .
  gathering images to focus the eyes . . . combinations at eye-level
  fixed to gaze on habitation: where to dwell?
  ideation of light, of flesh, of insight . . .
  was all . . . all or nothing, a resting place?
describe this place: all compartments, doors, windows
  imagined in the way of O, some opening out of
  O . . . all you can see, the sea and sky
  I, John (he said), if I could put myself out of
  mind . . . that would be the end of it; my
  to shut myself up, it would be a mine
it could be black dark, I could be motionless and fixed.

Therefore, I listen to the echo . . .

Therefore, I find a way to explain it . . .
  Therefore, I listen to the ocean . . .
  Therefore, I get to remember it . . .
  Therefore, I listen to the ocean . . .

Therefore . . . I inch clear of it.
Swallows

Half-lit; two worlds zeroed

not a breath of wind: star-bright insects, swallows
skimming the salt green heave...the to, and fro

*

swallows go dressed in dark matter

everything staid: stain of ink: ink on face
detritus in all directions
(scene looply...linked, returning to data)

no verticals, all scattered and lying

one circumscribes coastline: two map out landscape
three swallows criss-cross

*

(a blur...red
swallow sequence...oars drawing away from shore
constant wave-after-wave
architectural sound )))))) ings...)}
*.

low swallow
low echoes.