



# Family Instructions Upon Release

Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod

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## Selling points:

- Powerful and unique poetry.
- Addresses issues of men's mental health and suicide.
- On processing grief and loss.

*'I have no words.'*

This is so often our response to grief and loss, when dealing with it ourselves or consoling others. Elizabeth's father took his own life in 2012. Unable to find words of her own to write about what had happened, Elizabeth took them instead from the 2006 Penguin Classics edition of *Twelve Angry Men*, a play she and her father attended together when Elizabeth was a teenager, and combined these with the New Zealand Government's 'Fact Sheet 4 – Suicide and Self-Harm'. Armed with this limited dictionary, she was able to write poems that are by turns mournful, angry and searching. The cumulative effect is surprising in its narrative drive and cathartic power.

“... I still don't own  
any original words to explain  
our story, and all that will undo.”



Elizabeth (Libby) Kirkby-McLeod's work has been featured in *takahē*, *Landfall*, *Poetry New Zealand Yearbook* and the NZPS 2018 anthology. She was longlisted for the 2008 *Six Pack 3* anthology and her poem 'Her Warning Signs' was Highly Commended in the 2018

International Poetry Competition. Elizabeth also reviews poetry and produces the NZSA Oral History Podcast series.



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