

## COVER TO COME



**Janis Freegard** is a Wellington poet, novelist and short story writer. She has won a number of awards including the Geometry/ Open Book Poetry Competition and the BNZ Katherine Mansfield Short Story Award, and she was the inaugural Ema Saikō Poetry Fellow in the Wairarapa. Janis performs with the Meow Gurrlls poetry collective.

## Reading the Signs

Janis Freegard

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• colour illustrations and cover image by Neil Johnstone

### Selling points:

- Award-winning Wellington author, poems set in the Wairarapa.
- Work that is scientific, thoughtful, humorous
- Linked poems with themes of loss and discovery
- Writing about gender fluidity and climate change

The poems in Janis Freegard's new collection take their starting point from the poet's daily ritual of reading the tea leaves while writing in the Ema Saikō room in the Wairarapa. This leads to unexpected discoveries about the world around her, from spider visitors to the writing room and a papyrus-fine gecko skin in the nearby wildlife sanctuary, to news of the ancient bdelloid rotifers that defy natural disasters and the recently extinct amphibians that did not. Then a gender- and species-fluid interpreter turns up to help the poet work her way through the daily revelations in her tea cup ...

*Reading the Signs* is a series of linked poems that are thoughtful and humorous, provocative and tender, and come together as a quiet epic about a planet that is fast running out of puff.

*I walk into Ema Saikō's room to find the poet herself at the writing desk, long hair scraped back in a bun. She wears an embroidered robe. Tea? I offer. It seems the right thing to do.*

*I let her choose the teapot. I was tossing up between late evening blue and bright green. She claps her hands and says something about bamboo. So I go with the green one that looks like a Dalek.*



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