Maggie Rainey-Smith is a novelist, poet, short story writer, essayist and book reviewer. *About Turns* was the first NZ novel to be chosen by Whitcoulls as a Guaranteed Great Read, and *Daughters of Messene* has been a bestseller in Greece. Her poem ‘Formica’ was long-listed for the 2019 Fish Poetry Prize, judged by Billy Collins. Maggie’s poems have been published in leading journals and anthologies but *Formica* is her first collection.

*Formica* begins in 1950s Richmond with the author’s family struggling in the aftermath of a war that took her father to Crete to fight and then Poland as a prisoner of war. At the Formica kitchen table, Maggie’s mother is reciting poems while chopping the veggies for tea. Maggie listens while tying her boots for marching practice. Poems follow her as she makes her way in the world – working as a typist, doing her OE, becoming a wife, a mother and grandmother …

An unsentimental writer of honesty and humour, Maggie nods to the lives of all women of her generation – too often defined by their fertility and kitchen appliances when there was fun and fulfilment to be had elsewhere. Not that Maggie doesn’t adore her Kenwood mixer, but it lines up with abiding friendships, granddaughters, travel, sex and the joy of words.

“The characters in these poems are typists, returned servicemen, teachers, people without pretension but with their own colourful inner lives. The title poem ‘Formica’ is subtle yet so rich with imagery that it brings to mind a compressed Alice Munro story.” — Fiona Kidman