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Where Oceans Meet: Subjunctivity in Flash Fiction

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

Constrained by a limited word count, the writer of flash fiction is compelled to distil a story experience into a small space. The relationship between reader and writer in the co-creation of the story requires a fine balance of what is and is not revealed, and what is revealed subjunctively through the craft of the writer. In this thesis I examine the work of writers who succeed at getting this balance right, and I attempt to hone my own craft in the telling of very small stories.

The first section contains definitions of flash fiction and story, and explanations of the influence transactional theory and the phenomenological approach played on my analyses. I also draw on some writers, such as Eudora Welty, Lydia Davis, Ernest Hemingway and Ralph Waldo Emerson who have contemplated the role of brevity and reader response in their writing. Then follows an introduction to my process of story analysis and the four readings of very short fictions. This section concludes with a discussion of the role subjunctivity plays in the writing of a flash fiction. In the second section, I present a preface and a collection of original flash fiction stories titled *Where Oceans Meet*.

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- *Flash Frontier*: “Class I Hemorrhage” as “Broken Promise”, “Dancers are a Hazard on City Streets”, “In the Weekend we went to the Beach”, Lento”, “Lost Bearings”, “In the Middle of a Ball of Wool” as “Miscarriage”, “Pests and Pestilence”, “Points of Origin”, “Sisters”, “Trampolining in the Matukituki” and “Where Can the Children Laugh”.
- *Best Small Fictions, 2017*: “Sisters”.

- *NZ Flash Fiction Day—Micro Madness*: “Blind Tasting”, “Two Milligrams and All is Silence” and “Your Father Carries Time in his Pocket”.
- *Sleep is A Beautiful Colour*, UK National Flash Fiction Day: “Iridescence”.
- *Headland Issue 3*: “Time to Go”.
- *We Society Poetry*: “10 in a Packet”.
- *Scattered Feathers*, NZ Poetry Society : “Whiskers on Roses”.
- *Bath Flash Fiction Anthology, 2017*: “A Complicated Birth”.
- *Raven Chronicles Journal Vol 25: Balancing Acts* : “As Seen Live on Fox News”, “Lost Bearings” and “The Damaged Ones”.

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