



The Land Ballot

Fleur Adcock

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A land ballot was the means by which Fleur Adcock's grandparents, immigrants from Manchester during World War I, were able to bid for a piece of native bush on the slopes of Mount Pirongia in the North Island of New Zealand. Their task was to turn this unpromising acreage into a dairy farm. When things didn't work out as they had hoped much of the responsibility for running the farm and engineering their eventual escape fell on their teenage son, Adcock's father. This sequence of poems follows the course of their efforts and builds up a portrait of a small, isolated community. 'In a compelling mix of fact, conjecture and imagination, she recreates one of the most fascinating and strange periods of our colonial history: small isolated communities establishing determined pockets of Europeaness in an alien environment' – Sarah Quigley, *New Zealand Listener*. 'Informality and immediacy are vivid ways to remake a world; and Adcock's style has not dated in the half-century since her debut' – Fiona Sampson, *Guardian*. 'Fleur Adcock is as clear-eyed as always in a collection that ranges widely over lost worlds, family histories ...but always maintains the art of seemingly artless observation' – Adam Newey, *Guardian*.

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