

Songs to the Unsung

Cover artist: Lynda Bell, 'The Guardian'

SONGS *to*
the UNSUNG

- an anthology of prose and poetry by -
KAYLEEN M. HAZLEHURST

Revised Edition published 2026
First published in New Zealand in 2023 by
Blue Dragonfly Press

Copyright © 2023 by Kayleen M. Hazlehurst

The moral rights of the author have been asserted.
This book is a work of fiction. The characters and dialogue
are the products of the author's imagination.

All rights reserved.

Except for the purpose of fair reviewing, no part of this
publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by
any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying,
recording or any information storage and retrieval system,
without prior written permission from the publisher.

National Library of New Zealand Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
Hazlehurst, Kayleen M, 2023
Songs to the Unsung/ Kayleen M. Hazlehurst

ISBN 978-0-473-66230-1 (Paperback)

ISBN 978-0-473-76802-7 (EPub)

Printed and distributed by
CopyPress (RealNZBooks), 141 Pascoe Street,
Annesbrook, Nelson, 7011, New Zealand
www.copypress.co.nz

For information about bulk purchases,
please contact CopyPress, Bookshop.



COPYPRESS

My love. Listen. Are you sleeping?

—John Updike, *The Centaur*



Contents

Introduction / 1

Between Auckland and the Bombays / 5
Earth Warriors and Pale Frogs / 7

Among the Cotton Tails / 9

Young Girl Waits / 16

The Gull / 19

A Distant Muting / 27
From Liquid to Light / 28

Cherry Sails / 31

Wild September Oranges / 44
A Weka waits for Breakfast / 45
Under the Ylang-Ylang Tree / 47

The Letter Home / 49

First Fall / 55
The Sidewalks of Montreal / 57

Farewell to Relics / 59

Old Cobbers / 76
Lamb and Latte / 78

Songs to the Unsung

Nora's Sword / 81

Come the Winter – 1918 / 91

A Spring Milking / 92

Safer Routes / 93

Three Poems – 1947 / 106

Louise / 109

Last Plane to Paradise / 136

King Tides / 138

The Citadel / 139

Ode to a Chestnut Tree / 140

Introduction

Close to dawn one morning when I was about fourteen I had my first auditory dream. A great orchestra was playing a beautiful symphony, accompanied by a chorus of singers. I was so moved by this that I woke weeping. My distress was caused by an urgent sense that I should write this music down but, unlike Beethoven, I didn't have the skills.

As writers, artists or even politicians we can always keep an ear open to the music of the spheres. Our physical world may be impaired, but somewhere between belief and science there is a wonderful space for creative imagination. Here, we can reside and seek inspiration. Here, we can compose our own interpretation of experience. Over the years I have become convinced that even in the direst of circumstances we can keep on singing.

Poetry encapsulates our emotions in time and space—the vibrational qualities of sea, sky or forest, a special fall of light, the palpable effects of colour, sound

and silence. And, of course, those profound questions that fire our convictions.

We read the poems of others for their familiarity and insights. We write poetry so we can revisit different eras and moments of contemplation. These scribblings sanctify places we want to recall, purify passions we may have long since outgrown, and enhance the compassion we have for our fellow creatures (and increasingly, for the planet). As antennae of a changing world, they can alert us to coming catastrophes and counsel us like wise friends.

Novels and stories have their own contexts and colours, their own journeys, star maps and visions. They explore new territories. They employ an ease of language that creates intimacy between the characters and the readers, until the very last page and beyond.

Songs to the Unsung is a selection of works by one New Zealand author that spans several phases from youth to adulthood. Visual images and themes, toyed with in earlier years, became pools of ideas for later prose and verse.

Contemporary Reflections: The joy of a road trip. Grief for a dying ocean. An experience of Covid quarantine. A warning about high tides and tyrants. A cross-dressing amateur detective and his failed sniffer dog gain acceptance in a small country town.

Kawau Island: A haunted girl longs for the return of her lover. A weka waits in the rain for his breakfast. Storms of love and loss are expressed in romantic language, interwoven with exotic landscapes—and other experiments.

Far from Aotearoa: A young man misses his family and gets into a pickle with a New York City policewoman. A lovelorn student is befriended by a squirrel among the ‘wood and ices’, the snowy roof-tops of Montreal.

Home and Country: A childhood ode to a chestnut tree. Seaside stories for young adults. Poems and ballads in memory of my father that speak of the beauty and sorrows of rural life.

Wartime: Passages from two novels and a short story about strange goings-on in a small Australian town are set in wartime. Although I was born in 1949, readers may sense an intimacy with the Second World War period in my work. The story-telling legacy endowed to me by my parents and grandparents is echoed here. It sparked in me many years of research and inspired my creative imagination.

There may be uncaught masterpieces or mislaid harmonies in our lifetimes, but eventually we *can* learn how to write the music down.

KMH



Between Auckland and the Bombays

Wild flowers line the highway
 between Auckland and the Bombays.

Moonstone, claret and magenta.
 Pigface, poppy and calendula.

They blur the peripheral senses,
on the expressway to the Waikato.

Here, a pilgrim chooses
 ... coast or city grey?
Near Maggie's Grill and the Fruit and Veg,
 or the cabbage farm and the megalith.

Gliding down the Razorback
 ... turning off at Pōkeno.
Past the bank of daisies,
 stopping off at the village for tea.

Whitebait fritters, shared with strangers.
 Lives portrayed in common waistlines,
common wallets, common dreams.
 United by an evergreen.

Against the silver clouds
the heart of a hawk is beating.
He scans his living world,
more deciduous than our own.
Winter's gossamer dreams and naked lace,
with October buds appearing.

*(Up Flynn Road, across Cook Strait, through the Magellanic
Cloud, Orplid Press, Hamilton, 2021)*