



Brief Lives

By Chris Price

Auckland University Press, New Zealand, 2007. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Brendan O'Brien (illustrator). 184 x 138 mm. Language: English. Brand New Book. Chris Price won the NZSA Award for Best First Book of Poetry with her collection *Husk* (AUP, 2002). This second book, *Brief Lives*, is a surprise - a collection of prose poems of varying lengths, followed by a long essay, all elaborate and inventive variations on a theme. *Brief Lives* is a dictionary of biographical fragments and reflections on known and unknown figures. Chris describes it as a meditation on mortality and the tasks of recording, collection and recollection that we quixotically undertake to stave it off. She explores human lives as performances or works of art, often peculiar or eccentric, and it is itself an example of this creative oddity. Chris writes with great lucidity and takes meticulous care in the arrangement of the pieces (by alphabetical order of title) and in the measured tone which allows elements of autobiography along with amazing snippets of arcane knowledge, a method somewhat reminiscent of Martin Edmond's award-winning *Chronicle of the Unsung*. The final essay, on the French writer Villiers De L'Isle Adam, is brilliant...



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