

A. FRANCES JOHNSON

— **A. FRANCES JOHNSON** is a poet, novelist and artist and is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Melbourne, where she teaches Poetry and Poetics and Contemporary Eco-fictions. *Rendition for Harp & Kalashnikov* is her third book of poetry (Puncher and Wattman 2017). *The Wind-up Birdman of Moorabool Street* (Puncher and Wattmann) won the 2012 Michel Wesley Wright Prize. In 2015 she won the Griffith University-Josephine Ulrick Poetry Prize for her suite, *The Book of Interdictions* and, in 2017, received an Australia Council residency (B. R. Whiting Studio) in Rome. Her post-colonial novel, *Eugene's Falls* (Arcadia 2007), retraced the Victorian journeys of colonial painter Eugene von Guerard, and two associated solo exhibitions interrogated the construction of knowledge discourse around colonial landscape, agriculture and botany (Geelong Gallery 2010, 2015).

“THIS BOOK OF APOCALYPTIC POEMS OFFERS US A WORLD TRANSFORMED BY CRUELTY AND WAR, YET THESE POEMS ARE HAUNTED EQUALLY BY THE BEAUTY AND BRUTALITY OF BEING ALIVE.”



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LITERARY CAREER

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ABOUT
ENTERED WORK

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QUOTED
REMARKS
COURTESY OF
THE POET MARIA
TAKOLANDER

— **MY NEW COLLECTION** extends themes touched on in *The Wind-up Birdman of Moorabool Street* (2012). Satirical poems reflect with tenderness, anger and irony on the ways humans chronicle, construct and war upon their natural environments. *Rendition* puns on the idea of a song lyric, translation, surrender and also torture. In anti-pastoral, anti-war poems, human beings appear tragically marginalised, lost or held too close. I wanted cautionary ecocritical threnodies to sit alongside personal elegies and historically themed free-verse political poems to suggest a world awash with interlinked maladies, as if to say that human beings must recalibrate love, death, survival and history as matters of urgency. — **FOR PART ONE** (Soar), I researched drone technology and the devastating environmental impacts of war. Shelley's west wind becomes a problem of national emergency: images of drones and border security meld with parodic romantic imaging of nature. Landscape and tropes of the natural world are shown as subjects of loss and abandonment. In part two (Sore), different sorrows are contemplated. A series of elegies deploy parodic techniques in order to resist sentimental lamentation. The dead are mourned, but death itself is de-reverenced, shown as capable of its own ironies and clever tricks. Part three (Saw) shows history and culture under pressure; free-verse poems perform time-travelling acts of witness, representing the past anew to our troubled zeitgeist.

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