

High Wire

LLOYD JONES AND EUAN MACLEOD

**\$45**

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A UNIQUE STORYBOOK FOR GROWNUPS

High Wire brings together Booker finalist writer Lloyd Jones and artist Euan Macleod. It is the first of a series of picture books written and made for grown-ups and designed to showcase leading New Zealand writers and artists working together in a collaborative and dynamic way.

In *High Wire* the narrators playfully set out across the Tasman, literally on a high wire. Macleod's striking drawings explore notions of home, and depict homeward thoughts and dreams. *High Wire* also enters a metaphysical place where art is made, a place where any ambitious art-making enterprise requires its participants to hold their nerve and not look down.

It's a beautifully considered small book which richly rewards the reader and stretches the notion of what the book can do.

'Those familiar with Macleod's pictorial world may find its location made pleasingly ambiguous by the references and reflections that Jones places beside it, while fans of Jones the novelist should enjoy the burst of visual imagery that Macleod provides. It is a book their audiences will love.' — *Artists Profile*

'Presented in a slim smooth hardback beautifully designed by Gary Stewart, *High Wire* is a finely crafted mystery of art, friendship and human aspiration.' — Sally Blundell, *Landfall*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lloyd Jones is one of New Zealand's most eminent writers. His bestselling novel *Mister Pip* won several illustrious prizes and awards including the 2007 Commonwealth Writers' Prize Best Book Award and the 2007 Montana Medal for fiction. It was also shortlisted for the 2007 Man Booker Prize.

Euan Macleod's work is represented in many private and public collections, including Te Papa, the National Gallery of Australia and the Metropolitan Museum, New York. He has won a number of major prizes including the Archibald Prize. In 2010 a monograph, *Euan Macleod: the Painter in the Painting*, written by Gregory O'Brien and published by Piper Press, was released.

SALES POINTS

- A bold new direction for the always fascinating Lloyd Jones
- A unique collaboration between a writer and an artist
- A special gift book
- Handsomely packaged

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Two years after Peter's death, I visited one of the towers. I'm not great with heights – and I was reminded of this as I nervously approached a window on the top floor, or perhaps I should say the summit, and looked down on a small plane that promptly disappeared into low cloud.

Suddenly I knew to a spine-chilling degree how high up he'd been. What courage. To trust himself to trust the wire. To take that first step. To see a bridge where no one else had.



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As a child, to get to the unending goal I had to cross the railway tracks. A bridge conveyed me to that chlorinated beam. First, the gentle ascent to where, briefly, I hovered high above the main track and the suburban rooftops. A bridge to an adult form, not an 11th part of an adult end-on-end, however briefly, engaged a confidence inspired by the genius who found a way for the road and footpath to throw me up in the air before gathering me safely on the other side.

And when I looked back where I had come from, I saw the shape of my desire rising and filling other me.

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Years ago, I couldn't wait to get off the Bessie Bridge – the noise of the traffic was horrible. I considered turning back. But, to turn back seemed to go against the grain of my nature. The horizon faded only a few seconds before a mass of skaters and male runners and joggers and women in power-walking sneakers turned me around and swept me on.

I came down the other side, and the noise was still horrible. And so I felt let down by that bridge. Nothing had changed.

It didn't compare with the excitement of the bridge from childhood. I was where I shouldn't be – because when I looked down, I saw others still bound to the earth. I could see them as they could not see themselves. I could see their desire pulsing as they checked their interference or got in and out of race. The net rising in full display. It occurred to me that I, too, was an art, but could not because look at where I happened to be. I had got away, and I had got away from what did that make me? A fugitive and but no crime had been committed – just a brief parting, an escaping from the just purpose of the life below.

I walked on, one striding hand on the balustrade now, as another space opened up before me, a space where art is made.



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