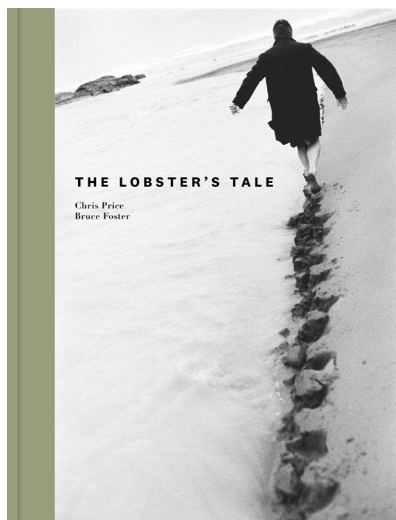


The Lobster's Tale

CHRIS PRICE AND BRUCE FOSTER



\$45

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'WHAT'S THE LOBSTER'S TUNE WHEN HE IS BOILED?'

Exploring the lobster's biology and its history in language, literature and gastronomy, *The Lobster's Tale* navigates the perils of a life driven by overreaching ambition and the appetite for knowledge, conquest and commerce.

In conversation with the text, Bruce Foster's photographs navigate a parallel course of shadows and light, in which the extraordinary textures and colours of the natural world tell a darker story. *The Lobster's Tale* is a meditation on the quest for immortality on which both artists and scientists have embarked, and the unhappy consequences of the attempt to both conquer nature and create masterpieces. Meanwhile, below the waterline of text and images, a modest voice can be overheard whispering an alternative to these narratives of heroic and doomed exploration.

The Lobster's Tale brings together award-winning writer Chris Price and distinguished photographer Bruce Foster. It is the third in the kōrero series of 'picture books' edited by Lloyd Jones, 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 its understated way, this 'tale' of the lobster — or of where the quest for it might end up — is typical of Price's engrossing and distinctive interweaving of anecdote, of histories both natural and cultural; and of a fabulous cast of characters gathered together around the edges or shorelines of Bruce Foster's visual field, all under the lobster's 180° field of x-ray scanner vision' — Ian Wedde, ANZL

'The standard all university presses and publishers of literary works, artists' monographs and photobooks should aspire to' — *PhotoForum*

'An intelligent and beautiful picture book. A philosophical underwater exploration under a guise of absurdity' — *ArtZone*

'It is a work of art. It is beautiful. *The Lobster's Tale* is more than just a homage to one of gastronomy's greatest accomplishments. It is a metonym for where we are right now as a people, and where we are going' — Chris Reed, *NZ Booklovers*

'There's an elegiac serenity to the images, which are not directly illustrative but lead a life of their own' — Paul Little, *North & South*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER

Chris Price's work often hovers around the intersections between literature and science. She is the author of three poetry collections including *Husk* (Best First Book of Poetry, Montana NZ Book Awards, 2002), *The Blind Singer* (2009) and *Beside Herself* (2016), as well as the hybrid 'biographical dictionary' *Brief Lives* (shortlisted, Montana NZ Book Awards' biography category, 2007).

Bruce Foster's work meditates on the dialogue between the natural and human-altered environments, and is held by major museums and art galleries throughout New Zealand.

SALES POINTS

- A lyric, or collage essay, this is a unique collaboration between a writer and a photographer with long and distinguished careers and is the third in the acclaimed kōrero series, edited by Lloyd Jones
- The first two in the series, *High Wire* by Lloyd Jones and Euan Macleod and *Shining Land* by Paula Morris and Haru Sameshima, have been received with acclaim
- An earlier version of the text was longlisted for the Notting Hill International Essay Prize in 2015

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In Nerval's day the French zoologist Henri Milne Edwards (his father was English) produced his three-volume *History of Crustacea*, which became the standard text on the subject. Milne Edwards held senior positions at the Paris Museum, the Jardin des Plantes and the Sorbonne, and he pioneered scuba diving with an air pump, a modified fireman's helmet, and lead sandals that enabled him to walk on the seafloor in Sicily and observe and collect specimens there. It was he who christened the pockpore lobster, New Zealand's other lobster species, *Pulmonicea cerreuzi*. One hundred and sixty years and several taxonomic shifts later, this lobster has its own genus, *Sigambra cerreuzi*.

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through the throats of earth and stone; rain snow and ice all give it volume. Handfuls of fear are

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everywhere found in dust, but this is water — either a hymn or a disaster, and between the two

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carries her offspring a few weeks more until they're ready to let go. You too are water — but the old gods

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'The absurd man says yes and his effort will henceforth be unceasing. If there is a personal fate, there is no higher destiny, or at least there is but one, which he concludes is inevitable and despicable.' Arguably, in one interpretation of *The Philokles*, Wallace was trying to find his own way of saying yes to the meaningless labours of Sisyphus, to the absurdity of existence. For the rest, he knows himself to be the master of his days. Sisyphus returning toward his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which becomes his fate, created by him, contained under his memory's eye and soon sealed by his death. Thus, convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, a blind man eager to see who knows that the night has no end, he is still on the go. The rock is still rolling.

Out of clear-eyed and level-headed despair, divested of the false consolations offered by God or the gods, Camus answers Hamlet's question in the affirmative. The last sentence of *The Myth of Sisyphus*: 'The struggle towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.'

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don't need the irrigation of your praise or tears; they need your aid, your patient, repetitive devotions.

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