



# Otherhood

## Essays on being childless, childfree and child-adjacent

EDITED BY ALIE BENGE, LIL O'BRIEN AND KATHRYN VAN BEEK



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### INTERROGATING: AM I MOTHER? OR AM I OTHER?

In Aotearoa the number of people who will never have children is growing — and they're pushing back against the narrative that if they don't, their lives will be somehow 'less than'. *Otherhood's* essays are by writers who've felt on the outside looking in, who've lived unexpected lives, and who've given the finger to social expectations. Some chose to be childfree, some didn't get to choose, and some — through bereavement or blended family dynamics — ask themselves: Am I a mother or am I other?

Thought-provoking, moving and often hilarious, *Otherhood* opens a more inclusive conversation about what makes a fulfilling life.

'The sheer variety of approaches, both thematic and stylistic, is the primary strength of this collection, making it one of the most thorough and varied personal approaches to this topic to date, both in Aotearoa and elsewhere . . . A vibrant antithesis to the assumption that only biological motherhood can fulfil a life and a testament to the various connections that shape our lives' — Sara Bucher, Aotearoa New Zealand Review of Books

'This is a book that will resonate with everyone who has found themselves excluded from the traditional conversations around childbearing. It not only deserves a spot on your bookshelf but also on your person, so that the next time someone asks you about children, you can simply hand them this collection.' — Jackie Lee Morrison, Kete Books

### ABOUT THE EDITORS

**Alie Benge** is the author of the essay collection *Ithaca*. She was joint winner of the 2017 *Landfall* essay competition, holds a Master of Arts in Creative Writing from the IIML, and is the essays editor for *takahē* magazine.

**Kathryn van Beek** was the 2023 Robert Burns Fellow at the University of Otago. Her articles about infertility have appeared on *The Spinoff* and in the *New Zealand Herald*. She has written for the award-winning *Misconceptions* web series, and was the driving force behind the change to the Holidays Act that provides bereavement leave for miscarriage.

**Lil O'Brien** is an internationally award-winning copywriter (as Lil Cameron), who has written for many of New Zealand's top corporates. Her 2020 memoir *Not that I'd Kiss a Girl* has had great impact on Aotearoa's LGBTQ+ community.

### SALES POINTS

- Powerful essays by a range of New Zealand writers, from well-known to emerging
- Of huge value to a wide range of readers
- Candid, empathetic, generous and courageous