

For you, Helen

*The patio of
Helen's house looks
out to the
vast, sweeping lapis
blue of the
Gulf; its islands
in high summer
distant, high-cliffed
and hazy; plunging
sheer and arid
beautiful as Troy.*

*Orere in autumn
is soft some
days: English as
meadows, the Pheasants
poised in gold
feathered Savile Row
coats plucking gingerly
through lush grass,
beaks raised to
wide sky, grand,
and taciturn.*

*In winter the
river swells and
rises, brushing toetoe
holding sleek eels
deep in her
banks.*

*She is secretive,
cool as her
clear smooth-skinned
water*

*Months later morning
fishermen make their
way over velvet
sea to spring
fish, chasing waves
of tender morsels
through the bright
still of afternoon
they bring home
their catch for
the wry clever
cook and watch
her move deliberate,
passionate, as the
pohutakawa flowers on
the road to
Orere*