



Supermarket run; matuku moana, the traffic and me

The secret life of a city

Today I communed with a matuku moana
a white-faced heron

By an outfall, where no-one saw us

And she was grateful I suppose

For the mudbank of fetid black sludge is still home for many mudcrabs
among the mānawa mangroves tidal creek

Traffic hums-rushes-growls

It's above head-height for us

hums-rushes-growls

Incessantly

It's got its own absurd urgency

The matuku moana and I – not

We share a quiet moment

Or two

Then I tie up the dinghy

Scramble up the bank (inelegantly)

Cut my foot on an old oyster shell

Supermarket trolleys in the salt swamp – dumped there – as witnesses, of a civilisation long lost, that lived for but a brief flicker of time

Not white-faced heron time

And I find meself at the arse-end

parking-at-rear of Repco

('What an auto store oughta be')

And just fifty yards across the road from the Countdown

and its aisles of everything

(Thanks Google maps)

I'm sure they'll take me muddy

After I've washed feet in a puddle

It's the colour of my money that concerns them, anyway

I lurch off to the supermarket

(a man's gotta eat)

While she, the heron,

Mud crabs full

Takes off, floats above the bank

Light as an afterthought

Goodbye to me

Just a few wing beats

Elegantly.