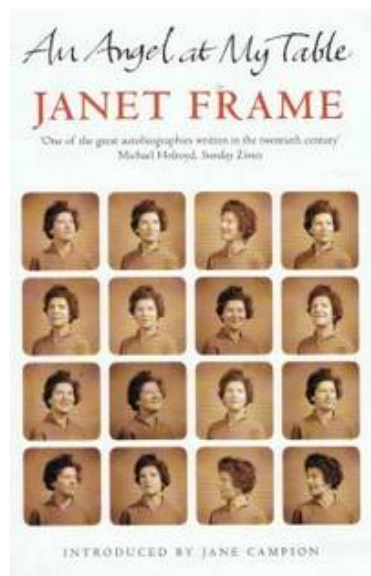


## January 2019



The first volume, *To the Is-land*, recounts Janet's her early years in small town New Zealand. She was raised with a love of words, of literature and of nature and her writing was recognized at an early age.

Janet was painfully shy – she was picked on and teased about her uniform, her hair and for being different. She is amazed to discover that many of the poets in her sister Myrtle's, and how strange it was without her!

The second volume covers her teacher training and incarceration. Her shyness and loneliness follow her to Teachers Training College. Instead of socializing, she would read and write – clinging to literature like a child clings to its mother. She attempts suicide, is admitted to Seacliff mental hospital and subsequently diagnosed

with schizophrenia.

She is incarcerated for the better part of a decade. She says that while shock treatment erase grim

memories, it creates grim memories of its own. A scheduled lobotomy is only cancelled when it is noticed that she has won a literary prize.

On leaving hospital Janet comes under the wing of Frank Sargeson – a well known writer. He supports her as she writes her first novel, *Owls Do Cry*. She describes great literature as a freedom "... as if one gave away what one desired to keep, and in giving, there is a new space cleared for growth..."

In *The Envoy from Mirror City*, the third volume, the envoy is the writer and the mirror city is the imagination. Janet gets a proper diagnosis that not and had never been schizophrenic. She says that fiction is not just putting it all down as it happens – that there must be a journey and a changing of the light.

All book club members felt there was too much detail in the first volume and that Janet seemed to be creating lists of things – like an exercise rather than a story. They also found the volume depressing.

Members enjoyed the second volume the most.

**Ratings:** Claudia 3, Gail 3.5, Judith 4.5, Janet 3.5, Margie 3, Nicola 4.5 and Sandy 4.5.

We will meet next on the 11/02/19 at 6:30PM at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to discuss *A Whole Life* by [Robert Seethaler](#).

Hope to see you all there and happy reading!

# Other Books We Read

## January 2019

The architecture of happiness by Alain De Botton, 3.5

Stasiland by Anna Funder, 3

Remember Me by Liz Byrski, 3

Clock Dance by Anne Tyler, 3

Nutshell by Ian McEwan, 3

In the Memorial Room by Janet Frame, 3

Contact by Carl Sagan, 3.5

### **Best book of our 2018 Booklist as voted by our members**

Illywhacker by Peter Carey.

### **Best other books read in 2018**

The Trauma Cleaner by Sarah Krasnostein

A Horse Walks Into A Bar by David Grossman

Tirra Lirra By The River by Jessica Anderson

The End by Karl Ove Knausgaard

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

I feel bad about my Neck by Nora Ephron

The Road to Jonestown by Jeff Guinn

Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee by Dee Brown

The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers

A Manual For Cleaning Women by Lucia Berlin