



The Hollows Boys: A story of THREE BROTHERS & the FIORDLAND DEER RECOVERY ERA

By Peta Carey
(Potton & Burton)

The sound of a helicopter hits different in the mountains. Sometimes a helicopter is just a helicopter; sometimes it's a search, or a medical evacuation, or worse, a recovery. In the Southern Lakes and Fiordland, the *thwack thwack thwack* of chopper blades will also forever be linked to the "venison years".

The Hollows Boys tells the life stories of three brothers, Gary, Mark and Kim Hollows, who Peta has known for more than four decades. They were young men who grew up hunting and fishing on Kawau Island in the north, and who, one by one, were drawn south to Te Anau on the edge of Fiordland National Park. There, their lives intersected with the heyday of helicopter deer culling and live capture in the 1970s and 1980s. The money was big, the competition fierce, the risks infinite and, as Peta makes clear, the adrenaline addictive.

It's a period in New Zealand history that has been heavily documented, most famously in Paul Roy's TVNZ documentary *Deer Wars* (NZ On Screen calls it "Top Gun in

choppers"). But Peta's account is different from anything I have read or watched on the topic. So many past retellings have at least in part drunk the testosterone-laced Kool Aid; the "she'll be right" of it, an acceptance of the mental gymnastics that everyone involved seems to have done in order not to process the grim reality of the statistics.

For one, in *The Hollows Boys*, the parents, wives and children are very much part of the story. There are wrecked machines and wrecked livelihoods, there are near-misses and there are deaths, and there is a lot of dumb luck. But there's also a kid waiting at the end of each day to hear the turbines signifying Dad has made it home, and there is also a mother, howling. And there is what is very clearly PTSD. Yet the book doesn't scold. Reading *The Hollows Boys*, you get why they did what they did and why they kept at it. The adrenaline, yes, and the rarified chance to fly, every day, into the heart of an extraordinary corner of Aotearoa. - LW



Making Mixtapes with Seichan

By Annabel Wilson
(ngā pukapuka pekapeka)

In *Making Mixtapes with Seichan*, Annabel Wilson reimagines the Heian poet Sei Shōnagan as a contemporary muse. Sei Shōnagan was a courtesan to the 10th century Japanese Empress Teishi, and her *Pillow Book* is a fragmented collection of observations, many presented as lists. In *Making Mixtapes*, she is ever-present, there as Annabel road trips south to chase the aurora, Tahu-nui-a-raki, ("We make the ferry, but the bar's full so we find space beneath the playground slide to sleep, read, check Kp indices") and heads to Europe with a breast pump ("I listen to Patti Smith while trying to make sure my work trip doesn't mean the end of nursing the baby I've left at home"). I love Annabel's lists. In 'Things later regretted', there's "Leaving your coat at the home of an ex. Returning later for said coat". The 'Splendid things' list includes "The beautiful infinity of Tetris". And 'WASTE' is a found poem composed primarily from phrases on airline sick bags. Like a good mixtape, the pieces flow together to make a perfect whole. - LW