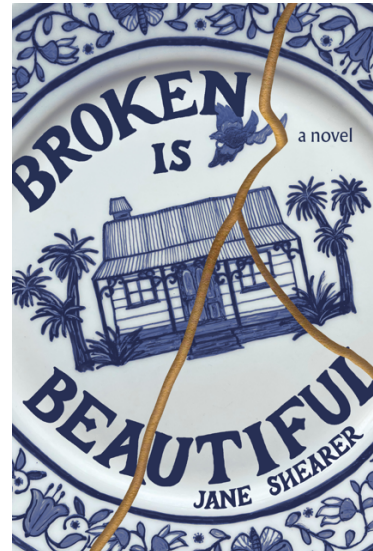


New Kiwi novel explores friendship across the vax/anti-vax divide



Jane Shearer’s novel *Broken is Beautiful* tackles the thorny issue of how to be friends across ideological divides in COVID times. It will be published in April 2023, with launch events and talks planned in Ōtautahi, Wānaka, Frankton and Queenstown.

Broken is Beautiful is set in Ōtautahi Christchurch from 2020 to 2022. Julia needs to reimagine the story of her life, which has spiralled into disarray since the Canterbury earthquakes. She is attending an Obsessives Associated support group to overcome her obsession with the broken objects filling her house.

The group makes progress, despite COVID lockdowns, until the need for vaccination results in polarised views. Julia and her new friend Lynda – a doll-obsessed marathon runner – are in opposing camps. How are such divides to be bridged?

“*Broken is Beautiful* shines a light into the workings of minds I have struggled to understand since moving to New Zealand from India,” says author June Baptista.

The novel is grounded in Shearer’s familiarity with life in Ōtautahi Christchurch, while investigating the universal experience of lockdowns and varied vaccination views.

Sue Harcombe, teacher and avid reader, says “I wanted to sit down and give Julia a good talking-to a few times. I was so incredibly satisfied when she finally saw sense.”

Broken is Beautiful is based on Shearer’s lived experience of the Canterbury earthquakes and our collective experience of COVID, which Shearer documented at janeshearer.com/blog. One civil emergency feels like enough for a lifetime but fate laughs at human notions of sufficiency.

Shearer is a scientist and experienced writer of non-fiction. She has contributed towards over \$800 million of successful funding proposals in her twenty years of consulting to the science sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is her first novel, exploring the elusive nature of certainty and knowledge. It draws on her training as a scientist together with her fascination with human stories.

“The process of researching vaccination positions fascinated my science brain,” Shearer says.

“I started off as a firm believer in the efficacy and importance of vaccines and ultimately I still am. However, reading the persuasive anti-vax information Julia would have encountered on the web led me to question my own assumptions and understand how different stances can feel equally valid.”

Broken is Beautiful will be available from April 2023 in print, as an e-book and as an audiobook.

// ENDS //

Jane Shearer is available for interview and review copies are available. Please contact publicist Elizabeth Heritage on books@elizabethheritage.co.nz or 022 652 3981.

Notes

Author:	Jane Shearer
Title:	Broken is Beautiful
Publisher:	3Eyes Publishing
NZ release date:	April 2023
RRP (paperback):	\$38.00
ISBN-13:	978-0-473-66988 (paperback)
ISBN-13:	978-0-473-66989 (epub)

Blurb

How do you mend the broken, be it toasters, relationships or people?

Julia once re-created broken objects to be better than before. Now she’s lost the will to repair anything, including herself. A series of earthquakes triggered Julia’s descent into apathy and the COVID pandemic is driving her further down.

She’s going to a support group for help – Obsessives Associated. Each member has their own obsession to overcome – eating plasterboard, amassing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, brand-name tattoos. They are collectively making progress until the vax/antivax divide splits the group.

Julia and her new friend Lynda – a doll-obsessed marathon runner – are on opposing sides. What kind of glue mends fractured humans?

About the author

Jane Shearer is a trained geologist and professional non-fiction writer who has worked in the science sector of Aotearoa New Zealand for over thirty years. She had a stint overseeing research funding in the University of Canterbury and then managing half the staff at Canterbury Museum before founding her current business, resolutionz consulting, in 2002.

Shearer is interested in any and every idea, as well as sports that involve mountains and water, singer-songwriting, and hosting friends and family on a six-hectare lifestyle block outside Queenstown that she and her partner have developed. *Broken is Beautiful* is her first novel.

Events

9 March, 5.30-6.30pm Wānaka Library	author talk
23 March, 6-7.30pm Spark Room, Tūranga, Ōtautahi Christchurch	book launch
20 April, 5.30-6.30pm Frankton Library	author talk
22 April, 2-3pm Queenstown Library	author talk