



# Jay to Bee: Janet Frame's Letters to William Theophilus Brown

*Janet Frame*

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In 1951, just days before her scheduled lobotomy after years in a mental hospital, New Zealand author Janet Frame's first collection of short stories unexpectedly won the Hubert Church Memorial Award, one of the country's most prestigious honors. The procedure was cancelled, and Frame would go on to become one of the seminal authors of contemporary New Zealand literature.

During her time at the MacDowell artist's colony in New Hampshire, Frame met painter William Theophilus Brown, and their friendship resulted in a whimsical and artistic correspondence that lasted until Frame's death in 2004. In Brown, Frame found an ideal listener who inspired her to take the art of letter writing to new creative heights; over the course of their correspondence, Frame included character sketches, personal disclosures, invented tales, and over 300 of her own doodles and collages.

This compilation of over xxx letters and original illustrations has been published nowhere else in the world, including Frame's home country of New Zealand. This moving and enlightening correspondence opens up the hopes, fears, joys, and inner machinations of one of New Zealand's most renowned authors, and offers a side of her dramatic personal history often ignored or misunderstood by the public. The closeness and intimacy of the two artists allows for unfettered wordplay, where Janet is merely "Jay", Bill merely "Bee", and granular, unprocessed creativity is allowed to flow freely; the result is a book that vividly captures the brilliantly unique wit that was Janet Frame.

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