

# 28 days

Janet Charman and Elizabeth Anderson

In this creative memoir the unsettling provocations of Elizabeth Anderson's startlingly nuanced café scenes are set in vivid besidedness with the anecdote and revelation, the evidence and irony, of Janet Charman's zeitgeist capture—*28 days*.

A dialogue between artist and writer, which reads as a dance of light and shadow, theory and practice, community and loneliness. This striking event-encounter both grieves and celebrates the emotional, sexual and social cycles that borderlink strangers and friends.

**'A month's journey. Love first,  
then words and clothes to guard it.'**

Elizabeth Smither

**'Pithy and pungent — both image and text.'**

Don Bassett



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**Janet Charman** won the Best Book of Poetry Award at the 2008 Montana New Zealand Book Awards. This is her 11th book.

**Elizabeth Anderson** has worked in print design studios and at BBC television in the UK. She is an art educator with an MFA from Elam, UOA.



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# 28 days: about the authors

Writer Janet Charman and artist Elizabeth Anderson (available for interview)

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**The authors** of the newly published *28 days*, Janet Charman and Elizabeth Anderson, live in Avondale. They had never met until they both began attending a daily protest—an occupation trying to save 23 century-old native trees growing in the Canal Road Arboretum. This attempt carried on for many months, even under the outdoor quarantine conditions of the Covid lockdowns. Their hours spent on a berm in Canal Road, over a cold winter, saw them bathed daily in macrocarpa smoke from a brazier kept burning by the protesters.

Anderson and Charman's collaboration here is the 'silver lining' for them, from those clouds of woodsmoke. Their joint project rises from the ashes of the endangered native species—since felled—that they sought to protect.

Undeterred by that environmental loss, *28 days* is a testimony to their continuing belief in the value of engaging in peaceful and open community dialogue, whenever contentious issues and differences of opinion emerge.

Charman's share of *28 days* is constructed from short written texts; each met on a facing page with an illustration from Anderson. These lightning sketches can remain untouched or are

developed further with colour. They follow in the historical traditions of Japan's Edo period prints of *The Floating World* (1603-1867) and Toulouse Lautrec's Parisienne café culture works from the late 19th century. Anderson's interest lies in the richness of everyday social intercourse. The west Auckland sensibilities of her vibrant *28 days* renderings are a testimony to the buoyancy of café culture in Tāmaki Makaurau today.

Charman's accompanying text is indebted to the cross-genre sexual politics of Virginia Woolf's novel-essay *A Room of One's Own*. Her own 'everywoman' profiled in a series of 28 'snapshots'—concise narrative exposures, which borderlink the variety of solitary and social groupings captured by Anderson. The two authors intent on highlighting glimpses of their own lived realities—as these might be shared by their readers.

Anderson and Charman consider that what they have produced is a 'creative memoir' because their cross-genre dialogue interweaves a range of social and cultural strands. Each representative of the surprises and complexities, certainties and uncertainties, experienced in our lives today.

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