

wonderful to relate

my brother leaves a message call me
something has happened is it an emergency
or terra incognita waving about in the trees
closer than anyone imagined a daughter
he says when I call him back I have a daughter
and she is twenty-seven years old

this takes a bit of explaining and when
he has I ask is there a photo did you take
some photos the files arrive as we talk
I open them and there she is someone
who looks like all of us and is most surely
herself the stranger who is his daughter
our niece and now eldest of five cousins
it takes a long time to work out
the delicate shapes that might be and when
it is done she comes to meet us
more photos more talk we have given her
our grandmother's rings she gives us
the gift of herself if we will have her

that part is easy and now there's
a wedding in the air they will tie the knot
with his people and we will travel again
to Te Matau a Māui this time
with everyone on board and in a vineyard
at the far end of summer with strangers
who have made us welcome my brother
will give away his daughter knowing
she has made us into something bigger
and more precious than anyone
could have imagined she is herself
and she is one of us for her
we will travel the miles to Haumoana
looking at the windy sea thinking about
long ago family weddings and how this one
is adding its quota of surprises
and serendipity to the story we thought
we knew mirabile dictu we say
wiping away a sneaky tear such wonders
and everybody talking we are here
with a million champagne bubbles
bursting miraculously against our lips
wish us well we are going to a wedding

for Almitra and Joel

Photo: Robbie Duncan



Michele Leggott lives in Auckland, NZ. She coordinates the New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre (nzepc) with Brian Flaherty and was the Inaugural NZ Poet Laureate 2008-09. Her new book of poems, *Mirabile Dictu* (Auckland University Press) was published in June 2009 along with an audio CD *Michele Leggott ~ The Laureate Series* (Braeburn / Jayrem).
'wonderful to relate' is from *Mirabile Dictu*



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