



THE TOWER

Carol Lefevre

The wooden stair was just as she had imagined it, even down to the creak in its second-to-bottom step. But the tower room was lovely beyond anything she could have dreamed – afloat at the level of the treetops, it seemed to Dorelia more like a boat than a room, with everything that might trouble her banished.

Widowed after a long marriage, Dorelia MacCraith swaps the family home for a house with a tower, and there, raised above the run of daily life, sets out to rewrite the stories of old women poorly treated by literature.

Throughout this winding story, Dorelia and the elderly artist Elizabeth Bunting are sustained by a friendship that reaches back to their years at art school, and bonded by the secrets of a six-month period when they painted together in France.

The loneliness of not belonging, of being cut adrift by grief, betrayal, or old age, binds these twelve connected stories into a dazzling composite novel. Within its complex crossings and connections, young and old inhabit separate yet overlapping firmaments; grown children, though loved and loving, cannot imagine their parents' young lives. For most, the past is not past, but exerts a magnetic pull, while future happiness hinges on retreat, or escape.

A perfect mosaic of women's lives and rooms lit by sinuous, perceptive writing.

—Susan Wyndham

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LITERARY FICTION



Carol Lefevre holds a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Adelaide, where she is a Visiting Research Fellow. Her novel *Nights in the Asylum*, Picador (UK) and Vintage (Australia) was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, won the 2008 Nita B. Kibble Award for Women Writers, and the People's Choice Award. *If You Were Mine* (2008) was published by Vintage.

She has published short fiction, essays, and journalism, and a non-fiction book, *Quiet City: walking in West Terrace Cemetery* (Wakefield Press, 2016).

Her most recent book *Murmurations*, a novella in eight stories (Spinifex Press, 2020) was shortlisted for the 2021 Christina Stead Prize for Fiction in the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, and the Fiction Prize in the 2022 South Australian Festival Awards for Literature.

Carol continues to publish essays and short fiction, and contributes occasional seminars to the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide.