The Random Web **by Will Leadbeater. Wellington: Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop, Paekakariki (2011). RRP NZ$5. Pb, 24pp. ISBN: 9781869421274. Reviewed by Patricia Prime.**

The Random Web by **Will Leadbeater** is Number 26 in the Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop mini series. In this latest collection by Leadbetter there are 29 pithy poems in which he tackles a variety of themes and forms. There is flexible interplay of lyric and humorous poetry.

An unpretentious use of words and images portrays the landscape and the complexity of relationships. In "la Lune", a short lyrical poem about the moon, he writes:

> Only the tides
> and lovers
> share the
> blue lunacy
> of her magnetic light.

and in the poem "In A Café On La Brea" he writes of the concerns of not being able to speak Spanish to a woman he wants to go on a date with:

> She was lonely,
> I could see that;
> but after she asked me
> if I could speak Spanish,
> she had no English.

These poems have intense personal meaning for the writer, but there is no compulsion to hold back. The reader is taken into the poet's inner world with clear phrases and sometimes with his ironic humour. The build-ups, the portraits that lead to sincerity and compassion are admirable. In "Romance", for example, he says, "you would / sigh with / content/ after every kiss taken / along the full / length/ of that / fence." In the poem "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" he writes about rejection. The poem is very moving. The poet's anguish is evident. "Sonnet 1" also concerns unrequited love, in which he is in a "state / of deep despondency":

> There are things
> that someone somewhere
> has not known –
> how to speak of these.

In the section of poems entitled "Five Fictions," Leadbeater concentrates on films, an advertising slogan, books by the Brontes and Austen and an extract from Zapata's journal. The use of language in these poems creates startling effects. The poems in question are brief, bold and colourful, with imagery depicting both the adroitness of Leadbeater's fun with words and his knowledge of literature.

The final poem "Epilogue for Twelfth Night" is versatile and honest as he sums up not only the play, but the themes of his poems:

> and each player's
> love
> exactly matched
> up
> with all the songs
> now rendered –
> and not one left
> unsung