

Sand

I walked on this beach
with the Māori father of my sons
fifty years ago and more...

He didn't tell me the grains of sand
on the beach were his.

We crossed the creek
and wrote our names on a rock
encircled with a heart.

We danced at the Pirate Shippe
waltzes and foxtrots
and the Levita.

We move in different times and spaces now.
I walk the same beach in the winter.

And still no word from him about the sand.

Calling the ex at seventy-nine

He's in the hospital
in Balclutha
eighty-two now
heart trouble, etc...

I'm reasonable,
high blood pressure
now under control
watery eyes when I go out
in the cold
but that's minor

*Who is it
he says..*

Jean..

Who?

JEAN..

Who? Spell it!

Louder this time...J E A N...

Joan?

No! JEAN...

Jane?

NO! JEAN!

Oh! JUNE! JUNE! (delighted)

(Those names from the 1920s! But who is June, I wonder...)

haven't heard of that one..)

JEAN! YOUR CHILDREN'S MOTHER!

Oh, JEAN!

We talk for a while
as much as is possible,
he asks after the sons, the mokopuna..

He tires
says good-bye
but I hear no clicking off.
I hold the phone

Then I hear faintly, the quavery but
melodious voice..

My heart is sad and lonely, de da, de da, de daaa....

Jean McCormack