

# The Salamanders

WILLIAM LANE

'Shoals of fish sucked the last oxygen from the shallows, and cross-hatched the channel in rippling, reefing river-muscle. Pink clouds of galahs out-screached even cicada song. And around that bend in the water, the bridge, the town and the railway did not exist.

A jet descended towards the metropolis – a city not so distant that it could not put a glow on the ridge at night. The plane was lost from sight, and the past followed.'

In the spirit of Emily Bitto's *The Strays* and Favel Parret's *Past the Shallows* William Lane's third novel *The Salamanders* is an achingly beautiful love story. Outside Sydney Arthur lives in a hut by the river, the detritus of suburban life gradually encroaching. When Rosie, the adopted daughter of his fathers' second wife returns from England to visit. their time together raises childhood memories of their father Peregrine, a famous and controversial artist, and what happened at a holiday by the ocean years ago. With poetic power Lane explores how art can become life, how we as adults can never really escape the past and the influences of our parents, and how we might embrace the beauty of the moment as we journey towards reconciliation.

Shortlisted for the Vogel prize some years ago, *The Salamanders* has been polished to a mirror-like sheen. Rosie, Arthur and Peregrine are characters the reader will find it hard to let go of.

William Lane lives in the Hunter Valley, NSW, where he is raising three children. He is currently completing a doctorate on the Australian writer, Christina Stead. His first novel *Over the Water* was published in 2014, his second novel *The Horses* in 2015.

ISBN: 978-0-9943958-4-9

TRADE PB

RRP: \$29.95

PUBLICATION DATE: 1 JULY 2016

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