



Instead of goodbye

There is an island kissing
The southern Japanese shore.

The men fish, tying fireflies
To strands of pure silk

Whose light refracts deeper
Under solid, slow dark water.

The koia hear with their eyes
And dive up, eagerly brazen

Unlearnt yet. They are caught
And taken in baskets for women

To dress, and offer up with genko
and lime, pure tender flesh.

The fish is eaten gratefully but
The eyes are discarded as small

Black and empty berries.

The fishermen and their families
dine well, bellies swollen as the ocean.

And beyond their shutters, beyond the
delicate oyster breaths of sleeping children,

beyond the bamboo and maple shrubs,
beyond the grey salt grit of the shore,

amid the soft hump of water upon sodden
hulls, the hymn of night breeze washing to

and from land, hang the fireflies still.

Jerry Beale

for Kristen



He's a bloke who's seen the world from a great many angles. As a soldier, farmer, pro-fighter, mixed martial arts exponent and instructor, poet, short story author and advertising agency creative director. Growing up in the UK and Northern Ireland, he's also lived in the US, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and now Auckland, New Zealand. His writing has been published in a variety of magazines and collections, and he actively reads at both live venues and festivals – the most recent being the Parihaka International Peace Festival in Taranaki, New Zealand.

