

June 2026

Kia ora koutou,

Hope you are all having a cosy winter and enjoying these beautiful crisp sunny mornings!

I am pleased to announce that from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2026 we are making some changes to our subscription prices. We hope this will help make our library more accessible for people.

Standard membership will change from \$69.00 to \$70.00 pa

Student/ Community card holders \$35.00 pa.

If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch.

Warm wishes,

Holly

### What's Happening

The second creative writing workshop will be happening on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July. If you missed out on a place, we will be sending an email out to members before advertising the August workshop. We aim to prioritize Athenaeum members.

Feel free to email me with any questions.

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The Mid-Winter Dark Tales event on the 18<sup>th</sup> was a wonderful evening.

A big thank you to Fiona Farrell for chairing these lively conversations and to Alex Bligh for taking photos.



### Book Review

#### *The Road Home* Rose Tremain

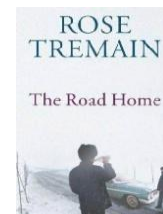
Lately, I've found myself gravitating towards some of the older books here in the library. I was reading about Rose Tremain and was curious to give one of her novels a try, especially as we have several of her titles here. I was immediately drawn into *The Road Home*, which follows recently widowed Lev, a 42-year-old former lumberyard worker who is moving to London from Poland.

Poland has recently joined the EU, and like many others, Lev is heading west to make a living, all so he can continue supporting his five-year-old daughter and elderly mother back in Poland. The novel begins on the long bus journey. Lev quietly sips his vodka as he practises his English with Lydia, the woman sitting next to him. Their friendship grows from this initial meeting, and I think the author conveys this somewhat circumstantial relationship very well.

Lev arrives in London on a hot summer's day. After spending most

of his money on his first night's accommodation, the story draws the reader in as the difficulties and limitations he faces become clear. Lev ends up in North London, where he searches for work, a home, and a way through his grief. For the most part, he is met with generosity, and it is not long before he finds a place to live and a job as a kitchen porter.

At one point, Lev's landlord and friend says, *"Life's a feekin' football match to the Brits now. They didn't used to be like this, but now they are. If you can't get your ball in the back of the net, you're no one."* That is pretty much how Lev, working as a kitchen porter, is made to feel.



I really enjoyed the descriptions of London and the way the author captures the isolation and uncertainty of being an immigrant in the UK. There is a quiet compassion running through the novel that stops it from becoming bleak, even as it deals with grief, loneliness, and the struggle to build a new life. I was impressed by how the author was able to create a character like Lev. I found myself quietly cheering him on, even when our protagonist was shown to be quite flawed. This speaks to Tremain's skill in creating such a complex and deeply human character.