

Unforgotten (Tohby Riddle, A&U, \$35 hb, ISBN 9781742379722, September) **e** ★★☆☆★

This amazing book demands several readings. Although the text is a simple poem, the illustrations are so densely layered that the reader is slowed, exploring the haunting images as if entering another world. Many people believe in guardian angels. This is the story of one angel who falls to earth. The book is divided into three sections, the first depicting a night landscape of urban lights, then an industrialised city over which the angels fly. The second follows the angel's plunge to earth. Unseen by anyone, it sits on a park bench, its shape gradually revealed by falling autumn leaves. The third section is the angel's rescue, recovery and return to the stars. The ethereal, atmospheric illustrations of the winged strangers flying from the stars to the industrial city, gloomy with smoke and bellowing steam, are breathtaking. The

ensuing photo-collages are inhabited by people, statues and transport from many different eras, as if captured in a moment. The people themselves have statue-like faces as they go about their business, oblivious of everything around them, especially of the angels hovering above. It is only the hand-drawn group who rescue the fallen angel who possess the humanity and compassion buried within us all. A book as impressive, mesmerising and thought-provoking as this deserves to become a classic. It touches the heart in a unique way, and is highly recommended for all ages.

Margaret Hamilton is a former children's book publisher. She now provides freelance publishing services and runs Pinerolo, the Children's Book Cottage in Blackheath, NSW

