[excerpt]

What New Zealand reads: part three

The final part of a series in which prominent Kiwis reveal their most memorable books of 2013.

By Guy Somerset In Books (<http://www.listener.co.nz/culture/books/>)

Catherine Robertson

Writer and reviewer, who this year released the novel *The Misplaced Affections of Charlotte*

*Fforbes*.

Keith Richards’s *Life* convinced me regret is for wimps. Best line: “Mick’s very good with the locals.” *The Life and Loves of Lena Gaunt* by Tracy Farr is a mellower riff on music – a sensual, sensory treat. Kate Atkinson tells *Life After Life* with a confidence that makes it plain she won’t give a damn if you don’t like it. *Afterliff* by John Lloyd and Jon Canter offers more words for things we don’t but should have words for, such as “Garmelow: the longed for silence that follows a car alarm.” *Great Granny Webster* (from 1977) is a brilliant, merciless portrait of three fictional women, by an arguably more interesting real woman, Lady Caroline Blackwood (married Robert Lowell and Lucien Freud, died of drink). Afterwards, I needed *The Comforter* and the spare,heartfilled beauty of Helen Lehndorf’s poems. A gem set in a council flat, *The Score* by Adrienne Jansen asks if some things are too broken to be fixed. An earthquake breaks everything with nausea-inducing vividness in Pip Adam’s *I’m Working on a Building*. And to follow a life told backwards, what else but Lee Child’s *Never Go Back*. Once more, Jack Reacher fails to blend with the locals. He should call in Mick.