

Paradise Diptych

by Tessa Sinclair Scott

from DREAM HOUSES

(Kelsay Books, 2019)



Section of right hand panel from *Mural for the kitchen of McCahon's Titirangi home* photograph © McCahon Trust.

Peeled off McCahon's kitchen wall,
carried through the wet green of French Bay,
the Paradise Diptych hangs on brass-link chain,
from bolts dug deep in twelve-foot stud.
Over a square of monkish blue,
Adam grazes Eve's swerving curves
their necks stretched, they gaze up
at the scumbled sky, ready
to cast their net wide
and catch four little birds
between them.

NOTES

This poem was inspired by the 'Mural for the kitchen of McCahon's Titirangi home', 1952. The painting, which was acquired directly from McCahon's French Bay home (now the McCahon House museum) by my father in the early 1960s, still hangs over my parents dining room table. I grew up staring at this picture as we ate our dinner, and I always thought it was my Mum and Dad in their garden in Auckland, which was a kind of paradise for us four kids (the four little birds from the poem).

Originally the painting formed the inside cladding of the McCahon kitchen wall — my Dad and his friend Frank removed the work in two pieces, lashing them securely on top of their car with ropes, then plugging up the space left by the wiring and light switch with a slap of brown paint, which you can see in the photo above.