

Miles Franklin Literary Award 2007
Shortlist

Dreams of Speaking

Gail Jones

Vintage (Random House Australia)

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'She wished to study the unremarked beauty of modern things, of telephones, aeroplanes, computer screens and electric lights, of television, cars and underground transportation. There had to be in the world of mechanical efficiency some mystery of transaction, the summoning of remote meanings, an extra dimension - supernatural, sure. There had to be a lost sublimity, of something once strange, now familiar, tame.'

'We must talk, Alice Black, about this world of modern things. This buzzing world.' Alice is entranced by the aesthetics of technology and, in every aeroplane flight, every Xerox machine, every neon sign, sees the poetry of modernity. Mr Sakamoto, a survivor of the atomic bomb, is an expert on Alexander Graham Bell. Like Alice, he is culturally and geographically displaced. The pair forge an unlikely friendship as Mr Sakamoto regales Alice with stories of twentieth-century invention. His own knowledge begins to inform her writing, and these two solitary beings become a mutual support for each other a long way from home.

This novel from prize-winning author Gail Jones is distinguished in its honesty and intelligence. From the boundlessness of space walking to the frustrating constrictions of one person's daily existence, *Dreams Of Speaking* paints with grace and skill the experience of needing to belong despite wanting to be alone.

About Gail Jones

Gail Jones is the author of two collections of short stories, *Fresh Lives* and *The House Of Breathing*. Her first novel, *Black Mirror*, won the Nita B. Kibble Award and her next, *Sixty Lights*, was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2004, shortlisted for the 2005 Miles Franklin Award, and has won numerous literary awards, including the Victorian Premier's Award and the Australian Literary Society's Gold Medal for Literature. Her most recent novel, *Sorry*, will be published by Random House Australia in May 2007.