

Miles Franklin Literary Award 2009
Longlist

Fugitive Blue
Claire Thomas
Allen & Unwin

Usually you can tell when something has fallen apart. You can see it deteriorating into awkward little pieces and you know, no matter what, it's a broken thing. But occasionally, it's not so obvious. Occasionally you find yourself clinging to a fragment that you've mistaken for a whole.

A beautiful, beguiling and multi-layered novel, *Fugitive Blue* tells the story of a young art conservator and her work on an unusual panel painting in striking ultramarine. As she restores the fragile artwork, she begins to speculate on its provenance - its controversial creation in Renaissance Venice and reappearance three hundred years later during a young nobleman's Grand Tour of Europe, passing through nineteenth-century Paris before its eventual arrival in Australia as one of the scarce possessions of a post-war Greek migrant family.

Threaded through the painting's progress is the story of the young conservator's own life in contemporary Melbourne, her developing passion for her work and the demise of her relationship with an actor named Mark.

I spent so much of my time restoring things, trying to reclaim their original beauty. All day, I looked at deteriorating objects with their parts exposed like a person with her heart on the outside. I could touch these paintings, make a decision and watch them transform. Done. But then there was us.

Captivating and intriguing, *Fugitive Blue* is a fluidly elegant novel that gets to the essence of love's fragility.

About Claire Thomas

Claire Thomas has published short stories in various journals, including *Meanjin*, *Island*, *Overland* and *Australian Short Stories*. She has an Honours degree in English and Art History from the University of Melbourne where she is currently undertaking a PhD. *Fugitive Blue* is her first novel.