

At Home in the Sky



I once lived in New York for a short time.

One day while riding a train, I saw a man standing on the very top of a high building with a cloud of pigeons whirling around his head. It was an extraordinary sight and I couldn't get it out of my mind. I told everyone about what I'd seen and eventually I came to meet Mike who kept pigeons on the top of a derelict building in New York's Lower East Side.



I climbed to the top of Mike's building just once - I wasn't brave enough to do it again! First we climbed three floors using the fire escape. Then we went through a window and across the timbers of a burned-out floor. Out of the window on the other side, we scaled a ladder fixed to the outside wall up to the roof! But when I was up there it was worth it. New York rooftops are truly special places. Some are gardens. Some look like the tops of fairytale castles. Some are playgrounds and children write their 'tag' and street address on their chimney pots so their friends on other rooftops can see where they live. And some people, like Mike, keep homing pigeons on them.

From the giddy height of Mike's rooftop I wondered what I would see if I could fly over New York. I wondered about homes in the sky ... and from this wondering a book and exhibition of collages grew.