

a fine line

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Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY
Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY
PO BOX 5283
LAMBTON QUAY
WELLINGTON 6012

PATRONS
Dame Fiona Kidman
Vincent O'Sullivan

ACTING PRESIDENT
Laurice Gilbert

EMAIL: info@poetrysociety.org.nz
www.poetrysociety.org.nz

FACEBOOK: [NewZealandPoetrySociety](https://www.facebook.com/NewZealandPoetrySociety)

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WELLINGTON MEETINGS

Currently on hold.

Starts at 7.30pm with open mic.

Casual workshop opportunity with an experienced facilitator.

Cover charge: \$5 (NZPS members \$3)

Quotation of the Month

On Motivation

It is impossible to discourage the real writers - they don't give a damn what you say, they're going to write.

Sinclair Lewis

Feature Article

WHAT IS POETRY?

Ruth Finnegan

- author of *Oral Literature in Africa, Oral Poetry, and Poems from Black Inked Pearl*

Is this?

I long for you, as one
Whose dhow in summer winds
Is blown adrift and lost,
Longs for land, and finds –
Again the compass tells –
A grey and empty sea.

or

Woman, lovely as lightning at dawn,
Speak to me even once.

Surely yes, these are poems, says my poetic heart.

Yet they were not designed for books, anthologies, readers. Each was composed by an illiterate lorry driver on the rough roads of Somalia, sung in the taverns, re-sung or listened to with half-attention on the radios carried by camel riders traversing remote African deserts. They are examples of the Somali genre *balwo*¹, developed by the younger urban population in the mid-twentieth century: 'miniature' intense love lyrics characterised by evocative imagery and deeply felt emotion.

And it is not just the Somali. Throughout Africa we find unwritten songs of every kind, long or short, high art or popular, sung, danced or chanted. A Tanzanian Nyamwezi lover sings,

My love is soft and tender,
My love Saada comforts me,
My love has a voice like a fine instrument of music.²

while Ambo suitors in South West Africa composed and sang antiphonal love poems in courtship, drawing on analogies between nature and human relationships. These come too in the light-hearted love song by a young man in East Africa:

All things in nature love one another.
The lips love the teeth,
The beard loves the chin,
And all the little ants go "brrrr-r-r-r" together.³

There are humorous and satiric songs too, like the cheerful dancing songs sung in mid-twentieth century Zulu townships in South Africa where words are subordinate to melody:

This is the girl that jilted me,
The wretch of a girl that jilted me.
At Durban, the dance leaders are afraid of us!
Zululand, my home, I love you.
Goodbye, Willie I like you too.⁴

So *are* such songs ‘poetry’? When I embarked on the, to me as to others, mind-opening *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970/2012) I necessarily had to face this question.

The first thing I learnt was that the ubiquitous songs that surrounded me were indeed poems: poetic words musicalised. This was at first a total surprise to me, though I should have known better – for was this not how poetry began? Do we not speak of Elizabethan lyrics, first sung, now studied as poetry in schools and colleges? Or, less studied, but sometimes equally lovely, the sung words of so many hymns, or the Beatles’ songs? How many *Lieder* began as poems before being set, sometimes not too congruously, to music? Might it not be best as with African and most rock lyrics when they grow together?

So with African songs – when I listen to the sung words, there I find poetry. And all the better for the combination too, the arts that ancient and medieval thinkers so rightly joined together in the concept of *musica* – ‘sung words’. And if this is true of them, as of African literature, so too, surely, with Native American, or Indian, or Caribbean, or Māori songs and chants.

Sometimes these oral, unwritten, chants seem pretty unappealing as poems, however. Should this not exclude them? Take the opening of a Ghanaian Akan dirge:

Grandsire Gyima with a slim but generous arm ...

How – well, unpoetic!

And yet when I read the analysis in the ground-breaking *Funeral Dirges of the Akan* by the great Ghanaian scholar Kwabena Nketia, I understood that because each word had its poetic associations and deep imagery there was, for the participants, an unmistakable, intense, emotional feel to the words, intensified yet further by the lines that followed. I suspect that a foreigner unacquainted with English literature would similarly find little poetic in Shakespeare’s opening, full of ‘ordinary’ words:

Like as the waves make towards the pebble beach
So do our minutes hasten towards their end ...

For us, each word and its associations has poetic weight, even more so when brought together in a metric line. Is that depth of associations too not a characteristic of poetry?

And the *sound*. This too must be central in true poetry. Thus when I look at some of the beautiful poems published in your magazine I want to read them *aloud*, at

least in my mind. Their sound is so lovely. Not just the metre or the rhymes (‘end assonance’), fine enough, but the sonic resonances within and between lines, flowing through and bringing the sound and sense into the heart.

We surely demand of poetry that it should have something of this depth, of emotion, sound and sense, qualities that draw us somehow, perhaps unawares, into the eternal, the universal. Blake put it so perfectly – “to see a world in a grain of sand ...”.

I learnt two other lessons about the qualities of poetry. This was both at a somewhat abstract level from working on *Oral Literature in Africa* and its more generalised sequel *Oral Poetry*, and in a more practical way in constructing my recent *Poems from Black Inked Pearl*. (I hope you will excuse me using my own work, but it illustrates so perfectly the issues I find around delineating ‘poetry’).

This latter posed a startling challenge for me because I thought I knew it all. Surely extracting the poems that studded my novel and printing them separately should be easy?

Not so! For one thing, not all of what I felt were ‘poems’ were typographically marked as such, above all the Homer-inspired similes. In the novel these were set ‘as prose’. But they had an intense rhythmic, sonic and universal-making quality about them which somehow meant that they *had* to be included. And so they resumed the rightful poetic shape which, after all, their model had possessed in Homer’s hexameters.

This connected to another insight which I actually already knew well but had not before had to face as a practical problem – the continuity of prose and poetry. I knew from my reading about oral literature in Africa, Native America and the South Pacific that, contrary to modern (culturally prescribed and in that sense contingent) typographic conventions, the distinction between ‘prose’ and ‘verse’ is a slim one, continuum rather than a division. Indeed now when I re-read my novel, or other examples of what we rightly call ‘poetic prose’ (James Joyce or Walt Whitman or Dylan Thomas, for instance) it *all* sounds like poetry.

So it is ultimately not the jagged right-hand margins that make poetry, but some combination of artfully deployed sound, deep-set and often mystic imagery, and emotional intensity. In the novel the prose narrative breaks increasingly into poetry as the story moves more and more into a mythic mystical mode. The poems come especially when, deeply emotional, the heroine Kate is unable to express her feelings in any other way but poetry, that high human art that, with music, can transport mortals into the eternal. It is a role that reminds me of the dramatic and emotional (danced) lyrics with their intense rhythms set at key nodes within the plainer dialogue of classic Greek tragedy. As only poetry among the verbal arts truly can, these both move towards expressing the un-expressible and bring a wider more heavenly perspective, as it were, to the earthly situation, not to be captured in more prosaic language.

So when I reread my own, or a similar, novel, specially if I do it in what I now feel is its true medium, that is, *aloud*, I

find that it is almost *all* somehow poetic: in some sense rhythmic, sound-ful, in love with the echoic resonance of words. It is almost in a kind of blank verse where sound and sonic association seem in a way as important as 'sense' – though sense too, as in the African example above, must surely also be a feature of true poetry

So – music, sound, sense, imagery, sonic and poetic associations, emotional intensity, a sense of universality behind often quite ordinary words, with a quality that can also flow out into prose as well as inward into human hearts.⁵ Just as in the novel, poems – nodes of intense emotion or understanding – stud our paths and mark turning points on the way. They give us a way to live.

All these things, for me, gather together to make up what I wish to call a poem, whether oral or written. But ultimately none of that is enough. The end can only be the response of the individual soul, the reader, the listener.

Footnotes:

1. Described and illustrated in Andrzejewski 1967. Other African (and Somali) poems are longer and grander but there is no space to quote from them here. Further beautiful examples of oral poetry, short and long, can be found in the world-wide anthology in Finnegan 1982.
2. Tracey 1963 p. 20.
3. Ibidem.
4. Ibidem.
- 5 'Originality' and 'inspiration', also perhaps 'spirituality', are required qualities for some genres. But these vary so much culturally and have been defined in so many different ways that I hesitate to include them here.

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AUTHOR BIO

Emeritus Professor, The Open University; Fellow of British Academy; Hon. Fellow Somerville College Oxford; author of over a dozen well-regarded academic books, the most recent being 'Where is Language?', and a first novel (*Black Inked Pearl*) inspired and largely written in New Zealand.

Born and reared in Ulster (Derry) and Donegal. Quaker school. Double first-class Oxford degree in classics/philosophy, followed by two years school teaching, then African fieldwork (on oral story-telling). Oxford doctorate in anthropology, university teaching in Africa and Fiji, then the Open University where I am an honorary research professor.

Contact: R.h.finnegan@open.ac.uk



From the Acting President

Laurice Gilbert

It was with sadness and regret that the committee accepted the resignation of Lonnard Dean Watkins as President of the NZPS this month, for personal reasons. Lonnard has worked incredibly hard to raise the profile of the Society, establishing successful and growing Facebook and Twitter accounts, and (especially) bringing the National Poetry Conference to fruition in Wellington in November. We wish Lonnard all the best, and hope that everything works out positively for him.

As Vice-President, it is my job now to step up and keep things running. I assure you this is a temporary situation. Please see me as very much a place-holder to tide us over until the next election. I have every confidence this year's AGM will produce a crop of enthusiastic people to take over and run the Society in a 21st Century manner. While I was National Coordinator (from 2006-2014), not much help was needed in the administration of the Society as it was very nearly my full-time job. That is no longer the case, and we need willing people to take on small jobs and to share the workload across as many hands as possible.

Since my resignation from all administrative work in March 2015, I have coaxed my garden more or less back into shape, published my second poetry collection and made significant inroads into decluttering my wardrobe (the rest of the house will be a lot easier). I'm reluctant to give up retirement entirely!

This should be the only time I edit the magazine. We are currently advertising for a permanent editor, and anyone interested in putting themselves forward for this position (which is a paid one) can email me at editor@poetrysociety.org.nz for a job description.

In view of the long gap since the last issue, we are rolling over the postal surcharge paid by any member for having the printed copy sent to them. If you paid the postal surcharge last year, you need only pay the basic membership fee this year. Please make sure you tick the

postal option on the renewal form at the back of this issue, so we know who you are.

You can also ignore the auto-respond message on our info@ email address – that’s there to discourage unsolicited messages until we have someone willing to monitor and answer emails on a regular basis.

Your current committee has some major projects to come to grips with. The website is so old it’s falling apart (seriously – bits of it don’t work any more). We’ve made several applications for grants to upgrade it, so far unsuccessfully, but we will keep at it. The website is a vital part of our public profile and it deserves to look a lot better than it does.

On the other hand, the annual competition is up and running and you’ll find the competition rules and entry forms in this issue. I will edit the anthology again this year, though that will be the last time as well. We generally employ our editors for two years in a row - the first to get the hang of it, and the second to enjoy it.

I don’t know what else is in here as I write this - I work from front to back and stop when I run out of room. The contents surprise me as well as you, and isn’t that fun?



Fellowship Opportunity

Emerging Artist Fellowship – Application deadline: 15 May

NZ Pacific Studio, the residency centre in Mount Bruce, Wairarapa, has an opportunity of a 2-week Emerging Artist Fellowship open to artists working in any medium, writing included. See: <http://www.artistresidency.org.nz/blog/672874>

It’s also on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MtBruceNZ/>

May 15th is also the date of our next Open Studio Day from 2 - 4ish. People can stop in and view the home, studios, and gardens. Please RSVP to: info@artistresidency.org.nz

New Zealand Pacific Studio, State Highway 2, Mt Bruce, Wairarapa Tel 06 375 8441

Bonus: We now offer weekend residencies; see: <http://www.artistresidency.org.nz/contact/apply.html>



About our reviewer

Vaughan Rapatahana (Te Ātiawa) is resident in Morrinsville, New Zealand-Aotearoa, with homes in Hong Kong, and Philippines. Extensively published across a wide array of genres, from philosophy through to fiction to poetry and language critique. Ph.D University of Auckland; Poupou Huia Te Reo Te Whare Wānanga o Raukawa.

Reviews

Dark Sparring Selina Tusitala Marsh (AUP, 2013)

Wow! It’s been a while for us at a *fine line* to review this book.

But it is well worth the weight, eh. The wait, I mean.

There is a lot going on in this collection of a lot of poems (96 pages): for example much stylistic variation, from out-and-out and without-punctuation prose (as in ‘All the Smallest One’, while ‘A Formal Dinner’ does dress itself in appropriate punctuated attire) through more ‘conventional’ versification, through a ‘Checklist’ (the poem is titular) and to a recipe mixing and baking people in the form of ‘Guidelines’. There is also the cut’n’paste of ‘Ransom’ – a poem which actually works quite well.

Then there’s the poems that dance themselves across the page – like ‘Chant from Matiatia to Orapiu’, which is a whole lot of rhyming couplets ODing on ‘ing endings’ – which also follow themselves formatted in that the verse striates are repeated as they kanikani. Take a look at ‘Airport Road to Apia’, if you want to see what I mean about word-strata chasing their titles across the pages.

There is, throughout, definite stress on the poem/waiata/song/chant as a musical form – accentuated by the CD with guitar and bass accompanying the poet – which is also very definitely another plus here, because these accompanied pieces get up off the page, get into your bloodstream, get you inclined to dance. Selina Tusitala Marsh is a performance poet first and foremost. (A brief point of interest is that her speaking the poems is not exactly the same as the written words – but it doesn’t matter, unless you are particularly pedantic.)

So it’s the beat, the rhythm, the repetition that strikes me most about most of the works here, given that in one or two longer poems the repetition seems a bit forced and – in the poet’s worst moments – doggerel rears its ugly head, looking to get a piece of the action. I find a poem like ‘Lead’, just too relentless, too long, too much, given it is music-fied on the CD. Same as the lengthy ‘New Zealand, the lucky country’.

Sometimes she’s also a bit guilty of forcing the format, admixing words who have never even met one another before, like in the ‘haiku’ here –

Agate foetus

amid kudos acolyte

sours intuition

(from ‘Afakasi Archipelago’)

But the above comments are in the minority seat in this busload of a book, for several of the format experiments do fire, such as ‘50 Ways to Read a Mother’, which essentially echoes all the varied stylistic nuances throughout the book, inside one poem. There is the clever wordgame-in-a-poem entitled ‘Noose’. Then there is ‘Floating Ribs’, which similarly follows a stylized

template of headwords and then the body – and which is a healthy, vibrant poem at the same time.

This, of course, is also not to say that Marsh cannot unleash a volley or seven of clever imagery/figurative language in the form of simile and alliteration; it's just that she is more motivated and motivating as the artiste up on the dance/poetry reading floor. In fact, why don't I throw you a few snippets of this poet writing well?

Matariki turned the land of her body,
and breezed
(from 'Matariki')

his face, a frayed Punja's Flour sack
(from 'Bound for Sigatoka')

when war is a word like bread or water
pulled apart and poured every day
chewed and swallowed every day
(from 'Fast Talking Somalis')

her scarf turrets in the wind
(from 'A Photo Album, An Op-Shop Bargain and A Grandbaby')

as the chiropractor
plays my back like a piano
pressing and leaning
tuning up the nerves

(from 'Signs' – which, as another aside, plays punningly/punishingly with the word 'sign' throughout)

how to plant his lips
like a gentle forest of Manuka
on the hill of the body's cheek
(from 'Pebble')

This revolving lazy-susan of white coats
(from 'A Formal Dinner')

There's more here and there too, but I need to stress that Marsh's motivation in this book is thematic, rather than a desire to implant stylistic or clever-dick academic waffle into the readers' minds (there's no sign of any Notes at the back-of-the-book, for example.) Let's have a whakatātare at some of these topoi.

Not only does she want to stress chronic alienation from Pacific tūrangawaewae and the concomitant sheer hardship/angst of Aotearoa-living in some backshrub suburb in Auckland as in several poems early in the collection, such as 'Niu Sila Skin';

Not only does she want to dis men, especially wankers, bankers and closet spankers and more specifically the "male Pākehā critic's voice" (from 'Teaching Pacific Literature');

Not only does she have a vociferous social conscience

as in 'Fast Talking Somalis' and 'Girl from Tuvalu', both of which spill the guts on portentous politico-welfare and environmental issues;

Not only – and this is a big not only – does she always seem to remain positive and to see good things in potential conflict – such as her upbeat ending in 'The Best Men/Sione's Wedding', where "Kiwi audience married Polynesian screen";

But also – and this is THE BIG ONE – Selina Tusitala Marsh wrote many of the poems here – and indeed all in Part Two, commencing with the rather sacrilegious 'Genesis' – as her way of coping with her mother's death from cancer and subsequently her turning to Waiheke Island based Muay Thai kickboxing as therapy, so well-summed-up in the title 'Kickboxing Cancer'. There are several poems rooted deep in this sorrow and this rage, this hatred of the masculine-ridden beasts that are: "cancers/tumours/mastectomies/operations/surgeons/diseases/welts/rashes/funerals/bloodclots/" and the copious abundant plethora of drugs that she lists in a sort of litany, such as "Accupril, Codalgin, Losec, Morphine, Panadol..." in the poem 'Mantra'.

Masculine-ridden beats you ask? Take a look at the vitriolic rant of 'On Plagiarism', where the poet alternately stabs, poisons, nudges onto railway lines/strangles all these "him/he" cancers – indeed this utu is her "breach of copyright" –

he'll be flat and white all right

So there is an extended journey here – from the box coffin of death to boxing per se – as well-conveyed in the poem 'Boxing'. And this poet is compelled to have us share her pain and her rebirth as another strong woman fighting these beasts of man-cancer. Take Rosy and Sophie and Chloe and Nita and Ana/Selina herself in 'First Spar' and read about, as just one exemplar, Chloe, whose husband deserted her and who "leaves a gold ring and enters a blue one". Ngā wahine tino kaha katoa – unlike poor Amy Winehouse who is also incorporated here in "The Day Amy Died".

22 poems focus on her mother's death from cancer – perhaps too many, methinks, given that, of course, the poet *had* to write about it as catharsis, expiation. The title 'Dark Sparring' says it all – this is essentially a collection dealing with demise via duking, as she herself points out on the back cover. Ultimately this book is Marsh's own 'Fatele' – her impelled and vigorous dance away from death:

The dance is a fight is a dance

The only way to face death is to actively confront it, dance it away, face the void of Va and to fill it. And to never forget the love – how could you anyway, eh?

rub the knots of want away

blot her paper skin with a tender

neglect and knead her fingers with yours

knowing that all along
you just want to hold her hand

(from 'This is How We are to Love')

A brave, willing to experiment and to – almost –
forgive compilation from a woman who steps over several
existential boundaries into a multicultural, multi-ethnic,
multi-layered and multimedia melange. Which, for this
critic, is all good. Packs quite a punch, a kick in the guts.
Boxing above her weight most of the time too, eh.

Worth the wait. In gold.

Wonky Optics Geoff Cochrane (VUP, 2015)

Wonky is the key word here. Unsteady, liable to fall off a
(bar) stool; askew; out of kilter...

Geoff Cochrane's fifteenth collection of poems
and prose-pieces and prose-poems, as here, is like the
inside of a particularly diverse load of laundry – colours
(constantly and of all sorts and hues and blends) are mixed
up with streaky Whiteness and a whole load of bleak/
black humour and angst. Cochrane is hanging out his
dirty washing for all to see – most especially himself, an
older and manifestly aware-of-ageing writer – who is here
constantly thumbing back through the greasy paperback
pages of his and his cronies' methylated past.

Death is everywhere in this laundromat too –
impending death and illness; dead men and depictions
of their putrid demise; decay and deterioration of body
from far too much drinking, drug-taking and cigarette-
smoking.

The very well-read Cochrane ('Addenda' is a compote
of sardonic/ironic quotes from his favoured authors) is
himself hung out to dry throughout this collection, well
aware of the inanities, ironies, inconsistencies of his own
– and all – life as such. Thus his wit as co-mingled with his
sadness (as permeating throughout the near-novelette on
Gerald John Melling, entitled 'Blue Lightning'), his near-
distress at times, his true depth of feeling about all-too-
close-to-the bone encounters.

"In the end" ('Capitulation') however, everything
becomes rather suffocatingly claustrophobic here,
with solid seediness; decay; lapsed Catholicism and
Irish drinking binged scenarios; the man's solitary
Wellington-contingent existence; lurking alcoholism;
some fascination with Nazism evil (see 'Reading Martin
Gilbert'); always death, death, death – "my little brother is
dying" ('Pilbroch') – as typified by two lines from 'Coffee
and a Crossword':

A permanent impermanence,
my life here in this box.

and an entire set of lines from 'God And Other Worries':

How can we be sure
that death has taken place,
even when death has taken place?

Reading Cochrane reminds me so much of a *mélange*
of American noir – Hammett and Cain and Chandler
all limp to mind – of elements too of Celine, Huysmans
(yes, I know they are not Americano), Hubert Selby,
William Burroughs, definitely Bukowski, Malcolm Lowry,
Nathanael West. He seems to have read 20th Century
American fiction copiously, as he includes and cuts and
pastes Donald Barthelme, while Robert Hass, James
Gilbert, W.S Merwin are also pegged tightly to Cochrane's
saggy lines.

Then there is his fascination with certain (dark) movies
– Cocteau is here too, while the entire 'The Language Of
Film' reflects on a "boneyard" and "mordant dissolves" –
and sombre and surrealist painters & photographers, such
as Giorgio de Chirico and Ed Ruscha from 'When Colours
Flavour Time'.

Yet in the end, Cochrane reminds me most manifestly
of John Fante – the same sort of faded echo of 50s and 60s
L.A., California, with these lines from the just mentioned
poem, typifying this ambient mix:

Los Angeles. Indeed. A place in which today is
always a photocopy of yesterday.

Overall, there is a fulsome self-involvement, self-
centredness here – "I'm conducting an experiment in
living", Cochrane scrawls in 'Equinoctial'. Indeed. Women
scarcely rate a mention, other than to be fucked (see 'The
Great Wall Café'), while Māori don't rate at all.

I'm tempted to say that the man needs some urgent
perspective away from his fractured past, to get out of
Poneke and his own corpus, his designated attempts to
be a New Zealand Gulley Jimson, that don't quite ring
true through his self-possessed wonky optical lenses, the
necessary selfishness any alcoholic has as existential base
– and here I know what I am talking about. 'I' is the most
frequent word in his canon, with its cousins 'I'm' and 'I've'
on spin throughout also.

More, it's all almost as if the writer is trying too hard
to scribe gut-wrenchingly from a gutter – "I could save a
lot of money by dying and being dead" (from 'A Latte In
A Glass'). After a few similar declamations, everything
tends to come across as somewhat faux – he even intimates
the possible poseur status involved, when he quotes an
acerbic Samuel Johnson on page 92. I am tempted to ask
quite strongly why he continues to write at all, when I read
the following poem, entitled 'What I Tell Bernie's Class'
comprising the entirety of page 83:

Poets disimprove with age and should die young.
Should resemble shooting stars.
Should trace short arcs of fizz and fire
And then disappear.

Such street-life ambience may well explain the middle-
class pākehā fascination with Cochrane's mien ('Fergus'
being the publisher so dragged into the wash); opposites
attract, after all – but it all begins to pall.

Continued on p.11

2016 International Poetry Competition - Open/Junior Section Entry

Closing date: Entries MUST BE RECEIVED BY 31 May 2016

Name _____

Age/Date of Birth * _____ (* for Junior entrants only: must be 17 or under at closing)

School * _____

Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Include two copies of each poem (with no identifying details) with payment and this form.

Please remember to read the submission instructions carefully before posting your entry.

Title (or first line of poem if untitled); 1 title per line, please

Attach an additional sheet of paper with poem list if necessary

Adult entry fees

NZPS member \$5 per poem; \$20 for 5 poems

Not a member \$6 per poem; \$20 for 4 poems

Junior entry fees

\$2.50 each or 9 Kiwi Stamps for 3 poems. No other stamps accepted; coins must be firmly attached with sellotape.

Please note: this form is for individual entries only. Schools should use the school group entry form.

Number of poems submitted: _____

Entry fees \$ _____

Enclosed: cash / cheque / postal order / stamps / paid on PayPal

SEND TO: Competition Secretary, NZ Poetry Society Inc, PO Box 5283, Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145, New Zealand

website: www.poetrysociety.org.nz | email: competition@poetrysociety.org.nz

Open/Junior Section Submission Instructions

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors, *Community Post*.

Entry information

- Poems may be no more than 40 lines, on any theme, previously unpublished, and not submitted or accepted for future publication.
- We classify poems appearing in online or print magazines/journals, in or out of New Zealand, as previously published. We also classify poems that have appeared on the publicly available website or blog of anyone other than the author as previously published.
- The author's name must be recorded only on the entry form. Submissions bearing a name or any other form of identification on the poem page will be disqualified and entry fees will not be returned.
- Entries must be in English and typed, one poem per page. Email entries with PayPal only.
- Number of entries is unlimited, but the organisers reserve the right to limit the number selected for publication by one author.
- Please post two copies of each poem, each on a separate sheet of paper.
- Entries will not be returned but will be destroyed, so please keep a copy for yourself.
- Results will be published on our website by 31 August 2016. By then entrants will be notified if their poems have won or been selected for publication.
- Entry constitutes acceptance of all terms and conditions.

Open Section Prizes: 1st prize NZ\$500, 2nd prize NZ\$250, 3rd prize NZ\$100. No entrant will win more than 1 cash prize. Up to 20 Commendations.

Entry fee is NZ\$6 per poem; NZPS members - \$5 per poem. Multiple entry discounts: \$20 for 4 poems; NZPS members - \$20 for 5 poems.

Open Junior Section Prizes (Open only to entrants who are 17 years of age or younger on 31 May 2016) First Prize: NZ\$200. Primary/Intermediate Runner-up: NZ\$50; Secondary Runner-up NZ\$100. No entrant will win more than 1 cash prize. Up to 20 Commendations.

Entry fee is NZ\$2.50 each or 9 Kiwi Stamps for 3 poems. No other stamps accepted; coins must be firmly attached with Sellotape.

International entries are welcomed in both sections.

Fees can be paid by NZ cheque or NZ postal note, Kiwi Stamps (for junior section only, as noted) or by PayPal on our website, with a small fee to cover costs. Overseas entrants may pay in cash the NZ\$ equivalent in Australian, US, or Canadian dollars, Pounds Sterling, or Euros (see www.xe.com for exchange rate). Other currencies can be accepted for an extra fee of NZ\$5. Please do not send coins of non-NZ currency. No change will be supplied and overpayments will not be refunded.

Results will be posted on our website, emailed by request, or enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope (SSAE) with your entry.

Publication: All poems entered must be made available for publication in an anthology to be published by the NZPS in November 2016. Entrants will be notified by 31 August 2016 if their poems have won or been accepted for publication. NZPS has the right of first publication of all poems accepted for the anthology.

Promotion: Winners consent to the use of their poems for promotional purposes by the NZPS including but not limited to our website, brochure, and magazine.

Copyright in individual poems will remain with the poet, but copyright in any book produced by New Zealand Poetry Society Inc will remain with the NZPS.

Questions? email competition@poetrysociety.org.nz



2016 International Poetry Competition - Haiku/Junior Section Entry

Closing date: Entries MUST BE RECEIVED BY: 31 May 2016

Name _____

Age/Date of Birth * _____ (* for Junior entrants only: must be 17 or under at closing)

School * _____

Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Include two copies of each haiku (with no identifying details) with payment and this form.

Please remember to read the submission instructions carefully before posting your entry.

First Line of Haiku/Senryu (no titles); 1 per line please

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Attach an additional sheet of paper with haiku list if necessary

Adult entry fees

NZPS member \$1.50 per haiku; every 5th haiku is free

Not a member \$1.50 per haiku

Junior entry fees

\$1 per haiku. If sending coins, attach with Sellotape.

1 Kiwi Stamp per haiku for 3 or more (please do not send any other kind of stamp).

Please note: this form is for individual entries only. Schools should use the school group entry form.

Number of haiku submitted: _____

Entry fees \$ _____

Enclosed: cash / cheque / stamps / postal order / paid on PayPal

SEND TO: Competition Secretary
 NZ Poetry Society Inc
 PO Box 5283
 Lambton Quay
 Wellington 6145
 New Zealand

website: www.poetrysociety.org.nz | email: competition@poetrysociety.org.nz

Haiku/Junior Section Submission Instructions

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of The Jeanette Stace Poetry Trust, and Community Post.

Entry information

- All entries are to be the original work of the entrant, and may not have been previously published in print or online, broadcast on radio or TV, or awarded any prize or payment.
- The author's name must be recorded only on the entry form.
- Entries must be in English and typed or very clearly written on an A5 page, one haiku/senryu per page. (That's half the size of normal photocopy paper.)
- Please enclose two copies of each haiku, each on a separate sheet of A5 paper.
- Number of entries is unlimited.
- Overseas entries welcomed in both sections.
- Entries will not be returned but will be destroyed, so please keep a copy.
- Poems must not be submitted elsewhere until 31 August 2016. By then entrants will be notified if their poems have won or been accepted for publication.
- Entry constitutes acceptance of all terms herein. Submissions not complying with the rules will be disqualified and entry fees will not be returned.

Haiku Section

Prizes: The top five haiku/senryu will be awarded NZ\$100 each. Up to 20 commendations. No entrant will win more than 1 cash prize, except that the 1st prize winner will be awarded the additional Jeanette Stace Memorial Prize of \$150.

Entry fee: NZ\$1.50 per haiku; for NZPS members every 5th haiku is free.

Junior Haiku Section Open to entrants who are 17 years of age or younger on 31 May 2016.

Prizes: Primary/Intermediate: three prizes of NZ\$50; Secondary: three prizes of NZ\$50. Up to 20 commendations. No entrant will win more than 1 cash prize, except that the best of the two 1st prize winners will be awarded the additional Jeanette Stace Memorial Prize of \$100.

Entry fee: NZ\$1.00 per haiku, or 1 Kiwi Stamp per haiku for 3 or more haiku. Coins (NZ only) must be firmly attached by Sellotape.

Fees may be paid by NZ cheque or NZ postal note, Kiwi Stamps (for junior section only, as noted) or by PayPal on our website, with a small fee to cover costs. Overseas entrants may pay in cash the NZ\$ equivalent in Australian, US, or Canadian dollars, Pounds Sterling, or Euros (see www.xe.com for exchange rate). Other currencies will be accepted for an extra fee of NZ\$5. Please do not send coins of any non-NZ currency. No change will be supplied and overpayments will not be refunded.

Haiku help: Modern English haiku do not follow a 5/7/5 format, which is usually too long, and poems should capture the 'haiku moment'. Innovation in haiku and senryu is encouraged. Please visit the Haiku Help pages of our website at <http://poetrysociety.org.nz/HaikuHelp> or read previous NZPS anthologies for examples of past winning entries.

Results will be posted on our website, emailed by request, or enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope (SSAE) with your entry for a personal copy.

Publication: All poems entered must be made available for publication in an anthology to be published by the NZPS in November 2016. Entrants will be notified by 31 August 2016 if their poems have won or been selected for publication. NZPS has the right of first publication of all poems accepted for the anthology.

Promotion: Winners consent to the use of their poems for promotional purposes by the NZPS including but not limited to our website, brochure, and newsletter.

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Questions? e-mail: competition@poetrysociety.org.nz



It also may explain why VUW are happy to waste so much paper too, eh! Consider that the following poem 'Coastal' takes up an entire, otherwise blank page 37 of this 94-page collection:

Time passes. Night falls. The search is called off.

But I do want to make it clear that Geoff Cochrane can write well, when he is of mind to do so. I have no issues whatsoever with his wash-basket of poetic mechanisms, only with some of the ragged apparel carried in it, all still-stained by his involute self-scanning.

So let me consider some of the man's wiry craft.

Cochrane is a deliberate writer: he plans his passages; plots the placement, pivots the frequent repetitions, the artful assonances, the affected punctuation nuances whereby full-stops are absentees and strange single letter italicizations meander in and about. As here, from 'Sunshine In August':

Of use to a careful writer now and then:
the word that's only almost exact.

There's occasional steady rhyme here as well, as in the a-b-a-b rhythm of 'Our City And Its Hills'. And, as mentioned earlier, semi-prose and full prose interludes sprinkled around as much as the italicized-in-the-table-of-contents poem titles, which then have no titles in the text...

Geoff Cochrane, then, fully knows he is an author, is well-aware of the vicissitudes of the craft:

'It's either easy or impossible.' Said someone or other of writing (a woman, I think).

(from 'Flying Backwards' – notice women are always anonymous in this book; have no names...)

Again, he can write well, can capture an image in a quirky, rather wonky way, as here from 'Consecrated Vessels':

The *skirl* of a tram departing.

The stately *wade* and *underway* of it.

And also here:

by the ketchuppy slaughter of a sunset

(from 'When Colours Flavour Time')

This writer inhabits a different epistemological vista. Wonky optics, then, are not wanky – "In the end". The vista precludes other male, middle-aged pākehā, New Zealand writers sharing it and this significantly marks off Cochrane's wry, anxious pleas for fulfilment/attention – for this what this collection essentially is – from the banal adumbration of his assembled Kiwi bloke poet-peers.

Vive le différencé.



Poets are like proverbs: you can always find one to contradict another.

Jules Verne

Featured Poet: Christopher Palmer

Forensics

Trees draw into the sky's sudden contraction.
Instinct fills a small clearing that will become habitat,
leaving us silenced by what we didn't see.
And now,
there's a jumbled archipelago
that hangs from the ground, showing in abstract
the anatomy of this incident:
the sudden snap of nerve;
the sudden deviation from form and structure
until complexity became simplicity;
the only signature of violence within all distance.
Grass begins to lengthen;
the air cooling to a present tense.
Tracks have been caught in the sun
and have dried through the day.

The god of tiny things

inhabits maybes
fills his eyes with me

softens the dawn
with his fine white down

chirrup and chirp
like a cricketer

knows the world
is bigger than the word

*

Upside down, waiting for his show to begin.
Koala-like, hugging the arm of a chair.

Balancing on the crook formed by my foot and shin.
Wearing his favourite colour, like some red carpet premiere.

Standing on the couch, clapping his favourite villain.
Thumb in mouth, other hand curling hair.

A lizard on the floor, propping up a chin.
Sitting, quietly, with a mannequin's stare.

The most of you

Brief acknowledgement
of morning, then talk like we
rhyme, or else the world
in free verse, until evening.
But we never say goodnight.

Christopher Palmer lives in Canberra, Australia. He's been published widely since 2002, and his first collection, *Afterlives*, will be published by Ginninderra Press in 2016.



Guest Poet: Liu Ying

A Petal of Gardenia

A petal of gardenia lands on the windowsill,
When the commencement ends in the hall.
It's another June, the season of graduation,
Which makes me recall my own expedition.

Similar figures arouse my lasting memories,
Once you kissed me in front of close friends.
Soft love songs remind me of the past days,
Once you sang a song for me in the crowds.

I know I should not send you any messages,
Even though I could remember the numbers.
I do regret deleting you from my friends list,
Because I could visit your moments at least.

Maybe, one day I will forget those sufferings,
But it shall not be easy to forget your smiles.
Actually, you've never left me for one minute,
You are still living at the bottom of my heart.

Liu Ying

Liu Ying was born in Jiangsu Province, China, in 1988. English is his first foreign language, with Japanese the second one. Majoring in English, he received a B.A. degree in June 2009. For his further education, he studied Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics for three years and received an M.A. in June 2012. He worked for an international travel agency in Shanghai for two years. Since May 2013 he has been teaching English at Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages.

Member's Poem

windchime

seashells fallen
scattered and broken
from a cobweb-shrouded
wind chime
shells and a piece of driftwood
moss-covered
disintegrated
hanging from a rusted washing line

sitting in her armchair
ninety years old
she sometimes hears
the wind chime playing
tells me of
walks along the beach
morning swims in the sea
collecting shells at low tide
how this is the place
she knows as home
but will never return to
letting go
the wind chime playing
her lover's ashes
scattered to sea

Anne Curran

Anne Curran lives in Hamilton with her cat Misty. Thanks to the generous support of editors, colleagues, her family, friends and other poets, she has been writing bits and pieces for about ten years now. She hopes to challenge herself to continue writing, and perhaps even to write more deeply.



Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during the moment.

Carl Sandburg, 1878 - 1967



From the Archives

POETS IN THE WORKPLACE - NZPS

Pilot Programme

Rachel Bush

An ordinary Saturday morning in February 2004. The early visit to the Nelson market to get fruit and vegetables, the house to be cleaned, the clothes to be hung out, my friend to visit. Then a phone call. Was I interested in being a poet in residence, attached to Wellington Hospital? But being away from Nelson? Where would I stay? Who would take my granddaughter to school and pick her up in the afternoon? But I am very pleased to find myself saying that I was sure these things could be worked out and that I would like to do it.

Later when it seems likely that the funding will come through, I mention the residency to Cliff Fell. I find myself saying, "I only half like hospitals". I respect them greatly, but like them? Cliff says it would make a very good opening line for a poem.

I begin to wonder what I have to offer. I know so little about hospitals. What if I am there every day but cannot write? That anxiety stays with me for most of September, October and November, but in December, after I have come back to Nelson, I finish twelve poems.

One of the reasons for the residency was that poems might help raise the morale of hard-working nurses. After my twenty-four days in the hospital I admired nurses and midwives even more than I did before I started the residency. I am awed by their combination of professional skills and compassion, but this sort of respect is a very long way from even a halfway decent poem. I like poems to be a discovery for me as well as the reader and I don't want to write poems that just state what I already know.

I was given a name tag with a slightly demented photo of myself to prove I was Poet-in-Residence. Reactions to my job varied from monosyllabic comments like "Wow", "No!" and "Oh", to the benignly challenging, "But what does that actually mean?", and the frequent, "Who pays for that?" I was glad to be able to say that the funding came from outside the hospital system.

I was encouraged to do anything that would make poetry an acceptable part of hospital life. I gave two readings to patients and staff in the Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation Ward. Another thing I did was get permission from twelve talented New Zealand poets to publish one of their poems in the hospital. They were sent out in the email newsletter within the hospital. The poems could be put on walls, left on tables for reading, or copies printed for particular staff or patients. I also worked with new graduate nurses and took a session at one of their study days.

But I was there to write some poems. I had to be gentle with myself and not expect that these would happen immediately or by a sheer act of will. It comforted me to talk with Dinah Hawken who was attached to the

Wellington Botanic Gardens, and further into a similar residency.

I talked to patients in the Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation Unit, and in the Antenatal Unit. I watched babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and how midwives and nurses worked with them. I met the Chaplains in their long narrow room by the hospital cafeteria. I talked to staff and customers in The Fuel Bar. I talked to the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and to the man at the gate with the anti-abortion placard.

I kept a diary. I wrote about two pigeons that faced each other on the concrete ledge outside a patient's room and about the big blue crane that hovered over the changing building site. I wrote about babies in their incubators. Sometimes I wrote about unglamorous parts of the hospital, like the forlorn garden outside the Emergency Department where the biggest crop seemed to be cigarette butts. I copied medical notices from the walls of wards. It was from scraps in this book, a recorded conversation, or perhaps two or three lines that didn't stretch to the right hand margin, that I was able to start the poems.

The arts, including poetry, are valuable in hospitals. Their presence is an acknowledgement that staff are more than a set of professional skills, and that patients are more than their sickness. In hard times the arts give us joy and help us to make sense of our situation. I hope there will be more artists, including poets, who have the privilege of the opportunity I was given to work in Wellington Hospital.

First published in April 2005. Rachel Bush was one of two Poets-in-Residence placed in a pilot programme, thanks to the hard work of past President Gillian Cameron. Sadly, there were no more after these.

We acknowledge and regret the passing of Rachel Bush on 23rd March this year. Our condolences go to her family and friends. Rachel's final collection, *Thought Horses*, is being released by Victoria University Press this month.



A tiny space to fill

Frost

cold feet are just the beginning
stand still long enough and it needles
past your knees and into your loins

from there it mainlines to your heart
icicles droop from the ventricles
craving a pulse of sunshine

once it breaches the brain
it's all over bar the shouting
you think you'll never feel warm again

Laurice Gilbert

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY: COLUMN 271

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

Barnyard chickens, which are little more than reptiles with feathers, can be counted on to kill those among them who are malformed or diseased, but we humans, advanced animals that we think we are, are far more likely to just turn away from people who bear the scars of misfortune. Here's a poem by Ned Balbo, who lives and teaches in Maryland.

Fire Victim

Once, boarding the train to New York City,
The aisle crowded and all seats filled, I glimpsed
An open space – more pushing, stuck in place –
And then saw why: a man, face peeled away,
Sewn back in haste, skin grafts that smeared like
wax
Spattered and frozen, one eye flesh-filled, smooth,
One cold eye toward the window. Cramped, shoved
hard,
I, too, passed up the seat, the place, and fought on
Through to the next car, and the next, but now
I wonder why the fire that could have killed him
Spared him, burns scarred over; if a life
Is what he calls this space through which he moves,
Dark space we dared not enter, and what fire
Burns in him when he sees us move away.

Poem copyright ©2005 by Ned Balbo, whose most recent book of poetry is *Something Must Happen*, Finishing Line Press, 2009. Poem reprinted from *Lives of the Sleepers*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2005, by permission of Ned Balbo and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2010 by The Poetry Foundation.

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY: COLUMN 272

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

Whether we like it or not, we live with the awareness that death is always close at hand, and in this poem by Don Thompson, a Californian, a dead blackbird can't be pushed out of the awareness of the speaker, nor can it escape the ants, who have their own yard work to do.

Yard Work

My leaf blower lifted the blackbird –
wings still spread, weightless,
floating on the loud, electric wind
almost as if it were alive.

Three or four times it flew,
but fell again, sideslipped down
like a kite with no string,
so I gave up. . . I had work to do,
and when the dust I raised
had settled in that other world
under the rose bushes, the ants
came back to finish theirs.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2009 by Don Thompson, and reprinted from his most recent book of poems, *Where We Live*, Parallel Press, 2009, by permission of Don Thompson and the publisher. Introduction copyright ©2010 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.

Cool offer

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra presents:
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Use the code NZPOET when booking, to save 20% on tickets.

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Fri 6 May Wellington - Ticketek

Sat 7 May Auckland - TicketMaster

For full concert details and bookings, see: <https://www.nzso.co.nz/concerts/concert/aotearoa-plus-2016/>



Opportunities

Landfall Deadline: 10 June for the November issue.

Landfall is open to work by New Zealand and Pacific writers or by writers whose work has a connection to the region in subject matter or location. Work from Australian writers is occasionally included as a special feature.

The editor is interested in new work that has not been published before. While many established names appear in *Landfall's* pages, the editor and *Landfall's* readers are always on the lookout for exciting work from new writers and artists. If you are a new writer, find copies of *Landfall* in bookshops and libraries to get a sense of what is published.

Many issues of *Landfall* have themes. Keep an eye on the website for information about upcoming issues. Unsolicited submissions will be considered for all issues, whether themed or 'Open House' (submissions on any topic).

- Email submissions are preferred and should be sent as a .doc or .rtf file to landfall@otago.ac.nz Please save your file with your name, e.g. John Smith submission.doc
- Hard copy submissions should be sent to Landfall, c/- Otago University Press, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054. Please include an email address if you have one, for correspondence. We do not return submissions unless specifically requested (please include a stamped, addressed envelope if you desire this).
- Include the author's name on each page of your submission, in the running head.
- All submissions must have a covering email/letter, providing full contact details, including email and postal addresses, and a brief biography of about 30 words.
- Poets please submit no more than 10 poems per issue.
- Do not send work that has been published before.
- All submissions will be acknowledged on receipt. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, email landfall@otago.ac.nz.
- *Landfall* is published six-monthly. Submissions may be made at any time and will be considered for the next issue. We send acceptance/rejection letters once all submissions have been considered and the issue's contents list has been completely finalised (usually the month before or of publication). Submissions will not be held over for future issues unless you have been contacted and agree to this.

Contact us:

Post: The Editor, Landfall, Otago University Press, Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand

Email: landfall@otago.ac.nz

Facebook: Landfall Journal

The Loneliness Project (UK) Deadline 5pm, 14 May. Free entry.

Write a poem or a short duologue about loneliness. Register to TheatreCloud.com and add your submission. "Wait, what's a duologue?" A duologue is a play or part of a play with speaking roles for only two actors. We recommend keeping it at around 5 minutes in playing length. Rules: Each poem or duologue must be the original work of the author. Individuals may enter more than once. See more at: <http://www.theatrecloud.com/get-involved/creative-projects/the-loneliness-project#sthash.IkQGIXui.dpuf>

Ways to be Wilder Poetry Challenge (UK)

Closing Date: 29 May. Free entry. The Young Poets Network is digging a little deeper into the idea of the 'nature poem' and creating a challenge which asks young poets to write about the wild world from their own unique perspective. We've partnered with the charity People Need Nature and T.S. Eliot Prize-winning poet Jen Hadfield to create a new challenge which focuses on, among other ideas, 'remembering you're an animal'. This challenge is open to poets up to the age of 25, from anywhere in the world. There are fantastic prizes up for grabs for winning poets, plus the chance to be published on the Young Poets Network.

Website: <http://ypn.poetrysociety.org.uk/workshop/ways-to-be-wilder/>

Poetry Kit (UK)

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