



# a fine line

January 2012

The Magazine of The New Zealand Poetry Society

*Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa*

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## 2011 Anthology

AVAILABLE FOR DIRECT DELIVERY

*ice diver*, the 2011 NZPS poetry and haiku anthology, was launched with great aplomb by many of its contributors, their families and our own members. Edited by Linzy Forbes, the anthology was created from entries to the 2011 New Zealand Poetry Society Competitions: the award winning poems and haiku, and a selection chosen blind by the editor from this year's 2000+ entries. It is a lively mix of work by adults, children, well-known and first-time poets, from fifteen different countries.

The theme of the competition was open, as always. Subjects covered in the book include relationships, loss, landscape, the past, childhood, grandparents, animals, war, food and, not unexpectedly, earthquakes. You can order online at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/2011anthology> or by emailing for an order form to [editor@poetrysociety.org.nz](mailto:editor@poetrysociety.org.nz) Postage is free within New Zealand.

## Contents

2. From the National Coordinator *Laurice Gilbert*  
About our Contributors
3. A Warm Welcome to ...  
Congratulations  
Noticeboard
5. Competitions & Submissions
7. Reviews: *The Corrosion Zone* Barbara Strang *Gill Ward*
8. *Walls to Kick and Hills to Sing From* Murray Edmond *Mary Meyerhoff Cresswell*
9. *in/let* Jo Thorpe *Heidi North*
11. American Life in Poetry  
From the Web
12. Featured Poet: *The Academy*
16. Mini Competition  
Reviews: *Thicket* Anna Jackson *Vaughan Rapatahana*
18. *Guarding the Flame* Majella Cullinane *Vaughan Rapatahana*
20. *Kokako 15, 2011* eds Patricia Prime and Joanna Preston *Seren Fargo*
22. Haikai Corner *Kirsten Cliff*
24. Members' Poems: John Adams, Anne Curran, Thakshan Fernando, Suzanne Herschell, Kristine Jensen, Fred Simpson, Mary Bell Thornton, Debbie Williams, Karen Zelas

## *From the National Coordinator*

Laurice Gilbert

There's no Feature Article in this issue. What there is, is a slew of reviews, a parcel of poetry, and a gallimaufry of gleanings. So I hope you enjoy the summer reading, and get some useful ideas for Christmas gifts for the poetry-lovers in your life. Alternatively, you'll know what to ask Santa for.

The annual Anthology launch in Wellington was an exciting occasion, with contributors from Warkworth to Wanaka attending. It's a wonderful end to the competition/ anthology cycle each year, and I feel honoured to be able to host it. Some of the young people who have work in the anthology might never publish anything again, given that often their poems and haiku are a result of set exercises in class. It is my hope that by giving them this special occasion, with older/ more experienced poets joining in, they will see first-hand a literary community that values the work they do, and they will do more of it, class exercise or not.

We have been lucky with overseas visitors in 2011, with three excellent workshops: American poet Lesley Wheeler re-introduced the joys of rhyme in all its variations in June, and later we had visits from Australian poets Harry Laing (Voice) and Lesley Synge (Narrative). Let's hope we get more of these excellent opportunities in 2012. Attending workshops has multiple benefits – you get time to write (and have to, since everyone around you is), you get the input of someone with different poetic experiences, and you meet some wonderful people who are also on the pathway to improved writing. I can't recommend it highly enough, and my experience has been that most workshops are suitable for both beginners and more advanced poets, so don't let a lack of experience put you off attending. It could be just the impetus you need to take your poetry to the next level.

A major development in the life of the NZPS, which is currently unfolding, is that we are making a serious effort to have a more public face in the Auckland region. We are aware of a perceived Wellington bias in the Society, which is not surprising since it began here. Despite that, we have been making efforts to widen our scope, have developed good links in Christchurch and other places, and are consulting with an Auckland group that is keen to work with us. This is intended to be a mutually beneficial relationship – we want a presence in Auckland; they want to expand out of the super-city. Without wanting to buy into the south-of-the-Bombay-Hills cliché, I believe it can be difficult for those on either side of the divide to understand and appreciate the differences in lifestyle between our biggest city and others which are centralised and easier to get around.

I don't know where this development will take us. The Auckland group's focus is on the spoken word and performance poetry, while ours has traditionally been on page poetry and publication, with a secondary goal of encouraging poets to share their work at open mics and other readings. This could be the synergy from Heaven, or a hopelessly misjudged collaboration that goes nowhere. Naturally, I'm hoping for the first, and that both groups will benefit from each other's experience and strengths. Watch this space.

### *About our Contributors*

**Kirsten Cliff** lives on the noisiest street in Papamoa and has written several poems about it. She blogs at 'Swimming in Lines of Haiku': <http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.com/>

**Mary Meyerhoff Cresswell** is a Kapiti poet and one of the co-authors of *Millionaire's Shortbread* (OUP, 2003). Her work appears in a variety of print and online journals.

**Seren Fargo** has been writing Japanese form poetry since 2007. Her poems have won awards and been published in several countries. She lives in Bellingham, Washington, USA.

**Heidi North** has recently returned from London, where she worked as an editor. She won the Feile Filiochta International Poetry Competition in 2007.

**Gill Ward** lives on the Kapiti Coast. She organises the Kapiti poetry café monthly event 'Poets to the People', and is widely published.

**Vaughan Rapatahana** is a New Zealand writer, poet and teacher who currently lives in Hong Kong. His iwi affiliation is to Te Atiawa. He holds a PhD from the University of Auckland.

**The Academy** is a group of Wellington poets who have been meeting regularly for over five years, to workshop and share poems, support each others' writing, and celebrate their successes.

### *A Warm Welcome to ...*

**Rob Fixter** Woodville

**Penny Higgins** Auckland

**Catherine Moxham** Palmerston North

**Gus Simonevic** Auckland

**Chris Smuts-Kennedy** Cambridge

### *Congratulations*

**Ernest Berry** was awarded First Prize in this year's Gerald Brady Awards for Best Unpublished Senryu (Haiku Society of America). His winning senryu will be in a future issue of *Frogpond*.

**Margaret Beverland** and **Kirsten Cliff** have work in *Paper Wasp*.

**Greg O'Connell's** poem 'How to Swim a Length Under Water' is published in *School Journal*, Level 2, October 2011. It is accompanied by the instruction: "Recite in a single breath".

Past editor of *a fine line* (from the days when it was still a newsletter), Lynn Davidson, has 5 poems in *PN Review*, a prestigious journal with some seriously flash names in its line-up.

**Vaughan Rapatahana** published not one but two books in November: *Home Away Elsewhere* (Proverse Press) and *china as kafka* (Kilmog Press). He is also guest editor of the next issue of *Blackmail Press: Marginalisation*, and reviews Hone Tuwhare's *Small Holes in the Silence: Collected Works* (Godwit/Random House 2011) in *Landfall Online*.

Speaking of *Blackmail Press*, Issue 30 contains poems by members **Charmaine Thomson**, **Marion Jones**, **Lora Mountjoy**, **Jenny Dobson**, **Kerrin P. Sharpe**, **Martha Morseth**, **Sandi Sartorelli**, **Sue Wootton** and **Vaughan Rapatahana**.

*Takahe 73* contains poetry by **Michael Harlow**, **Robynanne Milford**, **Joanna Preston**, **Barbara Strang**, **Catherine Mair** and **Linley Edmeades**, along with fiction by our Patron **Fiona Kidman**.

The 2011 Takahe Poetry Competition, judged by **Sue Wootton**, was won by NZPS member **Jan Hutchison**. **Jo Thorpe** had both a runner-up and a short-listed poem, and Jan also appeared on the short list with a second poem.

*Valley Micropress October 2011* (ed **Tony Chad**) contains work by **Margaret Beverland**, **Neroli Cottam**, **Anne Curran**, **Deryn Pittar**, **Pat Prime**, **Fred Simpson** and **André Surridge**.

### *Noticeboard*

#### CORRECTION – WINDRIFT REPORT

Last issue's report on the September meeting had one of the haiku wrongly attributed. Here is the haiku, with the correct name:

every few minutes  
the pianist flicks hair  
from her left eye

Karen Peterson Butterworth

## FUNDRAISING FOR THE NZPS

Help the NZPS raise money by doing the occasional survey by email. Every time you complete a survey we'll get paid for it! Sign up: <http://www.buzzthepeople.co.nz/helpfundraise.aspx?s=303A8CBB> This fundraising programme is run through a website called BuzzthePeople, and they've raised over \$349,474.91 for New Zealand charities, schools and individuals since they started in 2005. When you do the surveys you'll also have the chance to win prizes with monthly giveaways and the occasional big prize (they've given away 3 cars, laptops, iPhones and iPad + 3 lots of \$10,000 cash over the same period). Buzz runs surveys for all sorts of organisations, ranging from Government departments to ad agencies and media companies. You can unsubscribe at any time you like and they never use member details for any promotional offers. Please do sign up - and send the link to all your friends too so we can make a real difference.

## HAIKU FESTIVAL AOTEAROA 2012

Renowned writer and editor Jim Kacian heads the line up of tutors at next year's Haiku Festival Aotearoa in Tauranga, from June 15-17.

Jim is coming out from the US especially to take two master classes at the festival, which also includes workshops on renku, haibun and performing haiku. Other tutors are Tony Beyer, Owen Bullock, Dr Lawrence Marceau (University of Auckland) and Sandra Simpson.

The festival will also include a visit to the Katikati Haiku Pathway for a ginko with a kukai afterwards. The Saturday evening will feature, among other events, the presentation of the prizes for the Katikati Haiku Contest and an open mike session.

The festival is designed as a residential event with accommodation and restaurant on site. For more information, and a registration form, please visit the festival website <http://hfa2012.wordpress.com/> or write to: 82 Grace Rd, Tauranga 3112, including an SSAE.

## MAKING POETRY ACCESSIBLE

The poetry collection *Oh Light - an anthology of writings and reflections to enrich the spirit* (2008) is now available in several accessible formats including Braille, DAISY audio CD and an ordinary CD.

As a DAISY audio CD it joins several other New Zealand poetry books in the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind's library (<http://www.rnzfb.org.nz/members/library>) – books such as Sam Hunt's *Doubtless: new and selected poems* and Janet Frame's *The goose bath, poems*. DAISY audio CDs provide readers with audio of the text, with special formatting that allows readers to 'bookmark' pages as they would in a print book. Members of the RNZFB can borrow these (and other electronic and Braille versions) from the Foundation's library.

A CD of the poems in *Oh Light* is available to the general public, thanks to a collaborative arrangement between the Disability, Spirituality and Faith Network (publishers of the original print version) and the Foundation. The Network is delighted that not only will blind and partially sighted people be able to explore what *Oh Light* has to offer, but also people who have difficulty holding a book/ turning pages, or who have difficulty comprehending the written word. Chairperson of the Network, Gillian Bell, says, "It's always good to *hear* poetry too, so we're sure the CD will appeal to a wide range of people." Purchase via [www.dsfnetwork.org](http://www.dsfnetwork.org).

## POETRY AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE

The Auckland Theatre Company, under the directorship of Michael Hurst, will be performing T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land', from December 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. Hurst says: "I want to present this most apt and moving piece in a theatrical exploration, using voices and characterizations, movement, music and physical expression. This will be an immersive experience for performers and audience alike; a journey into the possibilities offered by the text".

As well as an intellectual and emotional exploration, this will be a fully realized performance of Eliot's great work, featuring 34 Aucklanders over 65 who have volunteered to be part of the project. Booking

details at: <http://www.atc.co.nz/home/participate/event-detail.aspx?event=5000>

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Editorial Changes at *Haibun Today*, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> December. Jeffrey Woodward, General Editor: Queries about matters other than manuscript submission – [haibun.today@gmail.com](mailto:haibun.today@gmail.com); Patricia Prime, Reviews Editor: All proposals for articles, interviews and book reviews – [haibuntodayreviews@gmail.com](mailto:haibuntodayreviews@gmail.com); Glenn G. Coats and Ray Rasmussen, Haibun Editors: Submissions of no more than three unpublished haibun that are not currently under consideration elsewhere – [hthaibun@gmail.com](mailto:hthaibun@gmail.com); Claire Everett, Tanka Prose Editor: Submissions of no more than three unpublished tanka prose that are not currently under consideration elsewhere – [httankaprose@gmail.com](mailto:httankaprose@gmail.com). For more detailed information on the submission policies, consult the Submission Guidelines – <http://www.haibuntoday.com/pages/submissions.html>

### Poetry @ The Thistle Inn, Wellington

#### FEBRUARY MEETING

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm

Guest Poet: Teresia Teaiwa (Wgtn)

#### MARCH MEETING

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30pm

Guest Poet: Gus Simonevic (Auckland)

The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Wellington. Open mic. \$3 entry for members.  
Meetings Supported by Creative Communities Wellington Local Funding Scheme.

## Competitions & Submissions

*a fine line* - call for submissions **Deadline: 7 February** The editor welcomes your contribution. We currently pay a small fee for Feature Articles and reviews. See publication guidelines at: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutsubmissionguidelines>

**Sentinel Literary Quarterly Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 20 December** For previously unpublished poems in English Language up to 50 lines long. Poems entered must not have been posted to a website or blog and may not be under consideration for publication or accepted for publication elsewhere. Prizes: £150, £75, £50, £10 x 3 plus publication in *Sentinel Champions* magazine. Entry Fees: £3/1, £6/2, £9/3, £12/5 (Enter as many poems as you wish.) Enter online or download Entry Form from the website: [www.sentinelquarterly.com/competitions/poetry-0112](http://www.sentinelquarterly.com/competitions/poetry-0112)

**The Caselberg Trust International Poetry Prize for 2012 Closes: 31 December** This year's Judge is Wellington poet James Brown. 1<sup>st</sup>: \$500; 2<sup>nd</sup> \$250; 5 Highly Commended awards (with no monetary prizes). The 2 winning poems and Judge's report will be published in the May 2012 issue of *Landfall*, and all 7 award-winning entries will be published on the Caselberg Trust web-site, copyright remaining with the authors. The Conditions and Entry Form can be found on the Trust's web-site, [www.caselbergtrust.org](http://www.caselbergtrust.org)

**Dream Quest One Poetry & Writing Contest (USA) Closing date: 31 December** Write a poem, 30 lines or fewer on any subject, single or double line spacing, neatly hand printed or typed. For details, go to <http://www.dreamquestone.com>

**Flash 500 Humour Verse Competition (UK) Closes: 31 December** Entry fee: £3 for 1<sup>st</sup> poem; £2.50 for each poem thereafter. Up to 30 lines. 1<sup>st</sup> £150 & publication; 2<sup>nd</sup> £100; 3<sup>rd</sup> £50. Website:

[http://www.flash500.com/index\\_files/humourverse.html](http://www.flash500.com/index_files/humourverse.html) Results announced within 6 weeks of closing date and the 3 winning entries will be published on the website.

**Versal 10 - Call for submissions (Netherlands) Deadline: 15 January** A \$2 reading fee applies. Guidelines and (online only) submissions at: <http://www.versaljournal.org/guidelines> For a close look at *Versal's* tastes, purchase the current no. 9 or a back issue: <http://www.versaljournal.org/order>. Pre-order *Versal 10* when you submit and they'll waive the submission fee.

**Wenlock Poetry Competition (UK) Closing date: 23 January** Open poem up to 40 lines, previously unpublished. Fee £5 per poem. Prizes £500, £200, £100. The short list will be judged by Gillian Clarke. Winners will be invited to read their poems and collect their prizes at a performance on Saturday 14 April as part of the Wenlock Poetry Festival 13- 15 April 2012. Entry form and full details: [www.wenlockpoetryfestival.org](http://www.wenlockpoetryfestival.org)

**2012 Hippocrates Awards for Poetry and Medicine (UK) Deadline: 31st January** [www.hippocrates-poetry.org](http://www.hippocrates-poetry.org) Poems entered are to be of no more than 50 lines, submitted online, and accompanied by entry fee (£6 per poem). 1<sup>st</sup> £5000; 2<sup>nd</sup> £1,000; 3<sup>rd</sup> £500; 20 commendations each of £50. Medicine may be interpreted in the broadest sense. Themes may include the nature of the body and anatomy; the history, evolution, current and future state of medical science; the nature and experience of tests; the experience of doctors, nurses and other staff in hospitals and in the community. Other topics might include experience of patients, families, friends and carers; experiences of acute and long-term illness, dying, birth, cure and convalescence; the patient journey; the nature and experience of treatment with herbs, chemicals and devices used in medicine.

**Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ), Poetry Competition. Deadline: Must be received by 29 February** Judge: Kay McKenzie Cooke. 1<sup>st</sup> \$175; 2<sup>nd</sup> \$125; 3<sup>rd</sup> prize: \$75; D Scene best Dunedin poet prize: \$75. Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ) is a Dunedin-based arts in health charity. Our aim is to provide a free source of well-chosen poetry for: patients waiting for medical appointments: rest home residents waiting for meals, outings or appointments: hospice patients and their families: and prison inmates. Unpublished poems of up to 25 lines on any theme suitable for a waiting room environment will be accepted. Entry Fee: \$5 per poem/\$10 for up to three poems. Each poem should be printed on one side of A4 paper and posted to Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ), 19 Hunt St, Dunedin 9013. No email entries, please. Entry conditions: [www.waitingroompoems.wordpress.com](http://www.waitingroompoems.wordpress.com)

**Prole Laureate (UK) Closes: 1 March** One entry: £3, subsequent entries, an extra £2 per entry. Looking for a poet who engages, challenges, entertains and is inclusive of a wide audience. Open to all forms of poetry: free, blank, structured, rhymed. Once the short list is formed, it will be sent to the Judge. Guidelines: <http://www.prolebooks.co.uk/page6.html> Winner: £130, publication in the April 2012 issue of *Prole* and on website. Two runners up: £25 each, publication on website and possible publication in April 2012 issue of *Prole*. Entries are welcome by email and post: [poetrycompetition@prolebooks.co.uk](mailto:poetrycompetition@prolebooks.co.uk)

#### POETRY MENTORING

With extensive experience as an Editor and teacher of Creative Writing, Owen Bullock offers a one-to-one Mentoring Service to aspiring writers to help them reach a publishable standard. Batches of 6-10 poem preferred; whole manuscripts considered. Owen Bullock, M.A. (Hons) Email: [bullock.trail@orcon.net.nz](mailto:bullock.trail@orcon.net.nz) Website: <http://www.owenbullock.com/>

*Advertisement*

## Reviews

*The Corrosion Zone* Barbara Strang (HeadworX, 2011) 84pp ISBN 978-0-473-14818-8

RRP \$24.99

Gill Ward

*The Corrosion Zone* is a second collection of Barbara Strang's poems. Her first book, *Duck Weather*, was well received and Strang has been widely published in other NZ anthologies and literary Journals both in NZ and overseas. She is a valued editor for the New Zealand Poetry Society's anthologies and has won several awards for her poetry and literary writing.

The title of this collection was suggested by the LIM report for her house in McCormack's Bay which stated it was in the "corrosion area within 200M of coast". Although most of these poems would have gone to publication before the second big Christchurch shake, the sense of instability of ground and life threads throughout these poems. Indeed, the cover, depicting the basalt cliffs of Godley Head, emphasizes the vulnerability of this land on which we build our homes.

But first, the book itself. I am a believer that the book which holds the words should be a fitting and respectful vessel for the quality of writing it contains. This book feels right. It is pleasant to hold, with high quality paper, elegant font and the poems perfectly set on the page. It is a comfortable weight with a satisfying selection of poems.

The poems Strang has selected for this volume are poems of love and grief. They touch on family and places which have made up her life. While she mourns the death of her younger brother Andrew, who took his own life in 2002, you understand that she has come to respect his decision. She celebrates his life and Andrew's own poetry, which she quotes in the poems she has written for him.

The volume is in four sections and is dedicated to her brother and parents, who are addressed affectionately in many of the poems. It could be said these are small poems about big things. They are spare and concise without losing any poetic quality. They are never wallowing or sentimental in spite of dealing with intensely emotive subjects:

Now you're deep in the soil  
at Deborah Bay

there is nothing to see  
on the port green hill.

(Back in the garden with cabbage tree flowers')

Strang always has an eye to the future - she says goodbye to her past but strides into an optimistic future with it tucked firmly under her arm. There is a wry humour underlying sadness:

### Things You Left

You bought a large bag  
of pickling onions by mistake -  
they're beginning to sprout.

I finished the rest of  
the prunes on Saturday.

Some of the poems are poignant because they are about such ordinary feelings. I was glad of the 'notes' at the back of the book which gave several of them a context. Some, of course were explanatory. Take 'Old Pet', its last verse:

She and I  
in the large backyard -  
and only me to miss her.

The poems for Strang's brother are particularly moving. In 'Fatigues' there is a glimpse of a young man who could be her late brother. A universal experience when one has lost a loved one. Here is verse one:

Often in Dunedin I notice  
a tall young man  
who looks like you

and the last two:

I can't believe you're  
not the one haunting these streets  
with a new friend

your shoulders hunched  
in a greatcoat suitable  
for soldiering on mountains.

'For a Song (for her father)', begins :

After it ended  
the war was still on  
around our house

The refrain depicts the bewilderment of an older man trying to come to terms with a war he fought while young:

My father had been there  
didn't talk about it

The poem shows him looking at old war photos and withdrawing "fat volumes of war histories from the library". It is a bleak and graphic poem of horrors not overcome. This father is brought back to life with fragments of small scenes from the writer's childhood, places visited and family outings.

'Curiosities' describes the odd bits he collected as they "roamed the South Island":

This stone is what has lasted,  
part of a tree  
frozen in time like you  
but communicating

There are many poems to reread in this collection. You are allowed the intimacies of another's life, a generous sharing of emotion. The poetry is accessible – just occasionally I was lost but found my way back after a closer read. With poetry, though, it is no matter that the poem does not tell the reader everything in one hit. A little intellectual probing never hurt anyone. I suggest you read this book – it tells a story.

***Walls to Kick and Hills to Sing From*** Murray Edmond (AUP, 2010) ISBN 978 86940 458 1

*Mary Meyerhoff Cresswell*

Dancing with words is a noble art, and Murray Edmond is very very good at it. His newest book gives us lists and prose poems, jacket notes and soliloquies, dialogues and scripts, all in a fullness of fine words. The book is written as theatre – and has been comprehensively reviewed from this angle and in an atmosphere of literary criticism: see *NZ Books* and the *Listener* (for print), more on the internet.

Here, I'll just start at the beginning and go on at random: 'Setting the seal on NZ poetry' recalls RAK Mason's famous dumping of his first book, yet again off the wharf but this time presided over by a seal who quotes the man himself, bringing us a healthy whiff of future fame (or possibly of the Cheshire Cat).

Read it, because I can't quote it without ruining the story.

'Suburban nature morte' is metaphysical, and it's turtles all the way down, as they say in metaphysics: three *someones* are vividly pictured but too self-involved to notice much, all the way down to the third *someone* who "performs

his yoga on his patio in tigers  
and panthers yoked with flowers  
on his Dionysian dressing gown  
which is open to interpretation.

'A translation of one of the sonnets of the importunate' presents a great array of flaunted styles that reads like colonisation on fast forward:

They brought those fêted seals in bells and hats  
and leis by fated sails from ocean bowers  
with cargo load of sated foals and gold  
crew of fetid souls -

'people are like flowers/they last for hours' sounds so sweet on first reading. 'Whose say-so says so?' reminds us that a good word-dancer can throw out a hard truth and be safely around the corner before we do a double-take.

'Of the nature of nature' is the centre of the section called 'Peripety' (which can mean, in the phrase Edmond uses to end the preceding poem, the "sudden moment of not having"). When you are in the middle of climbing through the looking-glass, which side are you on?

She looks at me and I look back  
and she thinks I am not who I am  
but I am

and then,

I can't be nobody can I  
if I've become someone else so many times  
more like a proliferation

We may go back and forth, but things are never again the same after we have crossed the middle once.

'The last caravanserai' – written in the style of the grand old Duke of York, up and down again, with one word different – points us toward "the feathered camels of poetry", who are on the move. Coming and going with the camels is, I think, a more appealing prospect than lying planked out on some wharf quoting RAK Mason.

And speaking of quoting, these comments gives fewer quotes than considered par for the course. The poems are so well constructed that I found it very difficult to take bits out – far better to just go and read the book. It's worth every word.

*in/let* Jo Thorpe (Steele Roberts, 2010) ISBN 9781877577185 RRP \$20

Heidi North

This is Jo Thorpe's second poetry collection. I've not read the first – *Len & other poems* (Steele Roberts, 2003) – but it was inspired by the sculptures of Len Lye. This elegant collection seems to follow on in that theme. Jo is a poet/ dancer who uses words to explore the texture of movement – to dance.

There is a tautness to the work; the poems are musical and quite muscular. They leap and vibrate: in 'Holding, as we must, to the *ah* of the day in which everything remains':



place that the poem was taking me. And I enjoyed the journey.

This is a collection that thrums with energy. It's elegant and assured. I imagine readers who appreciate classical music and dance will doubly enjoy it.

### ***American Life in Poetry: Column 278***

*By Ted Kooser, US Poet Laureate, 2004-2006*

Peter Everwine is a California poet whose work I have admired for almost as long as I have been writing. Here he beautifully captures a quiet moment of reflection.

#### **Rain**

Toward evening, as the light failed  
and the pear tree at my window darkened,  
I put down my book and stood at the open door,  
the first raindrops gusting in the eaves,  
a smell of wet clay in the wind.  
Sixty years ago, lying beside my father,  
half asleep, on a bed of pine boughs as rain  
drummed against our tent, I heard  
for the first time a loon's sudden wail  
drifting across that remote lake —  
a loneliness like no other,  
though what I heard as inconsolable  
may have been only the sound of something  
untamed and nameless  
singing itself to the wilderness around it  
and to us until we slept. And thinking of my father  
and of good companions gone  
into oblivion, I heard the steady sound of rain  
and the soft lapping of water, and did not know  
whether it was grief or joy or something other  
that surged against my heart  
and held me listening there so long and late.

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 ©2008 by Peter Everwine, whose most recent book of poems is *From the Meadow: Selected and New Poems*, Pitt Poetry Series, Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2004. Reprinted from *Ploughshares*, Vol. 34, no. 1, Spring 2008, by permission of Peter Everwine 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.

#### ***From the Web***

The first Chinese space docking on 2 November inspired not just national and scientific pride, but some romantic sentiment as well. Several different Chinese newspapers and commentators described the Tiangong 1 ("Heavenly Palace") and Shenzhou 8 ("Divine Vessel") spacecraft, which linked up in orbit for the first time, as "lovers" making a "kiss in space," state newspaper Xinhua reported.

"Tiangong, my lover, for the arrival of this moment – wait for me. I'm coming," reads a poem called 'Lovers' Talk', published in Tianfu Zaobao, a Sichuan-based daily. Another article, published by Xinhua itself, wrote, "If we compare the space docking mission with the pact of a pair of lovers deeply in love, it

will be the most romantic story of the season." (From: <http://www.space.com/>)

The focus at a Chicago Poetry Brothel event is on its poetry showcases, which feature several poets who dress in Victorian-style costumes and read excerpts from their work throughout the night. These poetry excerpts are known as "teases"; if listeners are interested in hearing more from a certain poet, they can purchase a token for a private reading that takes place in a special booth. This gives the listener the opportunity to interact with the poet one-on-one and ask questions about the poem they have just heard.

"Our target is really the people who don't go to poetry readings...normal people," explained Michael Pichowsky, better known at the brothel as "The Good Doctor." (From: <http://www.redeyechicago.com/>)

If it doesn't work horizontally as prose...  
it  
probably  
won't  
work  
any  
better  
vertically  
pretending  
to  
be  
poetry.

*Robert Brault*

## ***Featured Poet: The Academy***

### **The Baker**

When the dough fails  
to rise, he thinks about his mother  
knee deep in the cold  
stream, back to him as she picks, eats  
the first sour huckleberries of the season.

He watches from the bank of stones,  
cool, tumbled smooth,  
piled into the town they'd built  
together.  
She saves none for him.

She wades back, takes  
his hand, the sand from between  
his fingers sticking to hers.  
Under the pines, along the trail home  
she asks whether he's hungry,  
and offers the bread he'd smelled  
baking when he woke that morning.

*Carmen Downes*

pub. *across the fingerboards* ed. Barbara Strang (NZPS, 2010)

## Across the road

The woman across the road  
lives alone, directly  
next to a man  
who also lives alone.

Between them are twelve,  
maybe fourteen inches (centimetres  
ineffectual, tip-toeing)  
of brick, half an inch (each side)  
of gib-board, a feathering of wall-paper,  
a smear of paint.

The house exactly mirrors itself,  
like the weather-vane couple,  
wooden predictors swinging each one in  
and out. She, off to work,  
he, drunkenly forgetting medication,  
taking an axe to her fence.

*Anne Harré*

pub. *a fine line*, Mar. 2007; *Listener*, 2008.

## Before and After

Before New Zealand

I did not know:

- that pigs have teeth
- that abalone has another name
- that there is a gumboot capital of the world
- that distance is a cruel deception

After New Zealand

I know:

- how to return a stranger's smile
- how to wrap my tongue around every syllable
- how to not be anonymous
- how to be a foreigner

*Margaret Vos*

pub. *Turbine 02*

## the 4am marine forecast

At night I listen to the marine forecast.  
The radio sits on the pillow  
where your head should be.

*Anne Harré*

## Abseiling At the Ellice St Quarry

Turning my back on the light year  
separating me from the city,

I let my feet find the wall  
- walking as a spider walks -

suspended by ropes I can only hope  
are stronger than gravity.

Things with wings rocket from bushes  
that have no right to grow

so far from the security  
of a horizontal plane.

A century flashes by  
and I'm back in Wellington,

sustained once more by her skyline,  
smiling the width of a galaxy.

*Laurice Gilbert*

pub. *Shot Glass Journal* #3, February 2011

Harvey Molloy's *Tuesday Poem*, 15/3/11

## Weeds

Someone is pulling my hair. I turn  
and see behind myself a hand

reaching for the weeds that surge blistering green  
and I yank but the roots lie under my skin,

lacing between thin tissue and porous bone,  
burrowing into the crevices of my father,

mother, lover. A parasite on me, in me,  
of me: witchweed, broomrape, dodder.

Someone is shredding the leaves, I turn  
and see behind myself a hand.

*Carmen Downes*

pub. *ice diver* ed. Linzy Forbes (NZPS, 2011)

Talent is helpful in writing, but guts are absolutely necessary.

Jessamyn West

## Café Love

This week, the girl who makes my coffee  
is in love. Her face has plumped itself  
into soft marshmallow, pink and illuminated.  
She smiles, and my coffee has lost  
its bitter sharpness.

Last week, the girl who makes my coffee  
was not in love. There were thin lines,  
biscotti hard fractures around her mouth.  
The coffee maker, pre-historic chrome,  
snorted angry steam.

Now, as she places my cup on the counter,  
there is the smile. "I hope you don't mind"  
she says, nodding towards the wonky,  
chocolate syrup heart, sinking sideways  
into fragile foam.

*Anne Harré*

Runner-up: 'Eat Your Words' Wellington Café Poetry Competition, 2010

## Found Poem

Love lyrics by Laurence Hope  
Chants Indous (French)  
Price: five shillings net, complete.

The Desert  
All that is lovely. Fate.  
Low Voice, Medium Voice, High Voice.

Pagoda of Flowers  
Petals  
Flower Tree  
Love (duet).

Three Oriental Songs of Egypt  
Jewels. Jealousy.  
Within the Sphinx's  
Is your mouth.  
I envy every Moon.

Casement  
Hanson Towne  
Opens to the Sea  
I saw two Love-ships.  
Price: four shillings net, complete.

*Margaret Vos*

Highly Commended, Bravado 2005 poetry competition; pub. *Bravado*#5, Nov. 2005

## 10 lies to see you through another day

I'd love to do you a favour  
Your opinion is important to me  
Your children are fascinating  
That's a riveting story  
You've done wonders with this room  
That colour really suits you  
I do so enjoy our chats together  
We must get together again  
I've stopped drinking  
I'll call you

Laurice Gilbert

pub. *The Book of Ten* (Zebra Publishing, UK, 2009)

5<sup>th</sup> member of The Academy: Gillian Cameron

### *Mini Competition*

There were no entries (possibly because of the excessively short time scale, but maybe you just didn't like the subject), so the wonderful Glenn Colquhoun poster goes unclaimed. Therefore the competition is extended until the March issue of the magazine, with a small change: write about whatever you like. I'll award the poster and a lucky dip poetry book to the poem I like best. Disclosure: the editor's personal bias is towards narrative poetry and humour. And if you want to write about creatures of the deep (see November issue), you might get extra brownie points. Deadline: 7 February.

### *Reviews*

*Thicket* Anna Jackson (AUP, 2011) ISBN 978-1-86940-482-6

Vaughan Rapatahana

This is Anna Jackson's fifth collection of poems.

Let me diverge somewhat tangentially here.

To my mind there are two traditions within the poetry of Aotearoa-New Zealand. I know I could possibly be accused of overgeneralization, but here goes, eh.

Firstly there is the long-standing and potent English-language verse tradition brought here by Pakeha colonialists in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and cemented into place in the ivory towers and stalwart literary journals of this, our fine *turangawaewae*. A tradition replete with styles and rules and theories and notations and classical references, and patterning on past English poetic masters. What David Eggleton so well declaimed as: "the measured tones of a disembodied voice deep from within a university common-room armchair"\* when writing of what Hone Tuwhare wasn't.

Then there is a far earlier (with reference to actually being nascent to this our *turangawaewae*) traditional qua indigenous and oral tradition of *nga moteatea* Maori, which could not be further removed from the first as outlined above. Here Nature is personified as endemic Being, while most of the methodology of the first tradition above is defenestrated completely. In many ways this latter approach to poetry as song delivery has been modified by more recent poets – both Maori and Pakeha and Indigenous per se – like Baxter, Tuwhare, Hunt, Eggleton himself: "...involved up to his eyebrows in the lyric essence of the moment, his harmonious burblings able to conjure up the poetic immediacy of any given situation" – again the latter's reference to perhaps the prime exponent of this way of poeticizing, Hone Tuwhare. Nowadays, of course, this 'less formal, less institutionalized' way of writing verse incorporates some form

of the English language, but at the same time with an oblique, often postmodern reference to the first tradition, and in the case of Tuwhare – especially – a strong sense of humour.

Anna Jackson is definitely prowling the vast grounds of the first school – she is an academic, published by an academic press, and living and working in a city which – dare I say it – reinforces the most stringently this English patterning tradition. The collection *Thicket* could have been written in/ about England – Wellington is actually the only New Zealand place name mentioned – and the te reo Maori vocabulary representation is limited to the word Pakeha written once, in a poem ‘Dream Golems’ – whereby the vital Maori tradition of restoring placenta to Mother Earth is offhandedly dismissed by two of the poem’s non-Maori residents. Her collection comes replete with references to and Notes about Virgil, Fibonacci sequences, et al. England and parlours and badminton, the British Museum and St. James Hotel all permeate the pages, resonating with the non-elegance nomenclature of John and James, not Hori.

On first impression there is then defined distancing from the gritty blood and guts the first tradition so distinctly behoves, whilst there is also an obsession with self – as if Jackson has self-objectified her inner workings as the concentric crux of the poem. The pronoun ‘I’ is the main protagonist in most of this somewhat terse verse.

Note also, as a fluidic aside, that there is sea/ water imagery spilling everywhere from within her corporeal frame.

I have to wring out  
the salt from my hair before  
I can lift my head  
(from ‘Salty Hair’)

Nature is only refracted as an extension of the individual – Jackson herself – rather than an extant and independent evergreen entity.

Yet, given all of the above – and this is significant, so please bear with me – I like *Thicket*. It is quick and easy to read in one sitting – I read it on the train from Tin Shui Wai to Tsuen Wan West. Twenty minutes max. And then again, and again.

It grows (excuse the verbal frolic) on one; on me, actually. It is a clever compilation of a woman’s woes and wry wranglings about men, children, *whanau*, siphoned into a portfolio enclosing briefs from ancient Greece and Grimm. This collection is – despite my preamble above – accessible, though somewhat thorny. Indeed, some of the branches lacerate quite badly.

Because after further careful reading the voice that clamours for attention here is no Jane Austen, is no persona; it is Jackson’s own naked yet sequestered scream, and it sounds one hell of a lot like Sylvia Plath, whom Jackson herself so ironically castigates with: “... if she weren’t so determined to think up something new and different to do to interest the critics” (from, ‘Frank O’Hara for Charles’).

This is after all, rather personal stuff. For Jackson suffered/ suffers the rigidities of marriage and ‘all’ this brings. Witness the following:

But you can’t throw a marriage  
Children, a job, back  
Into the sea...  
(from ‘The Fish and I’)

While an early poem – on page two – is entitled ‘Marry in Haste’.

Anna Jackson manifestly is ‘Zina at the Zoo’:

I will not cry a single tear for you,  
leave it to the men.

I transcribe below a poem in its entirety as further exemplification of Jackson's main theme:

### Watch This

Time to get real  
You're getting older -  
  
you should think about getting  
a tiny house strapped to your arm,  
  
with a tiny mortgage to pay.  
And when a tiny child runs out,  
  
you should strap that child  
around your arm till it grows up -  
  
here is your watch,  
you can say to it then.

Thematically pain-drenched, yet stylistically and spiritually a sop to an historically imported form. What would I give is to see such agility & ability lambasted with curses, broken lines and real reference to Aotearoa; some momentum away from fettered neo-colonialism toward prima facie postcolonial poetry that is ours and only ours.

When Jackson is at her best, as here in 'Second Puppet', she is indeed Plath, but *pae kare* – she also needs to bloody well laugh, eh.

### Second Puppet

I will be the second puppet,  
smiling at the puppet laughing.

My eyes will be open  
but sly.

I will be the puppet with eyebrows  
raised high.

The reason my shirt is more crumpled  
is I am the one you touch.

It is my choice to be second puppet,  
and not to laugh so much.

\* 'Purorohu: Hone Tuwhare's Rain Spells':

[http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/kmko/06/ka\\_mate06\\_eggleton.asp](http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/kmko/06/ka_mate06_eggleton.asp) ]

*Guarding the Flame* Majella Cullinane (Salmon Poetry, 2011) ISBN 978-1-97056-79-6  
*Vaughan Rapatahana*

Let me make this quite clear right from the outset: Majella Cullinane can write; she is a damned good poet.

This is a quite quiet, understated, mellow collection; the whole tone reflects one of the thematic obsessions here: Autumn. Indeed there is a continual reflection on falling leaves, and the soft autumnal tones of this season – as witness titles such as 'Leaves', 'Autumn Is Where You Find It', 'Autumn's End'.

There is no bombast here, no overly academic accent on arcane and archaic allusions, nor is there deliberate obscurity or the pilfering of other languages so as to make the verse 'politically correct'. This is not an extended exercise in pretentiousness.

Instead we sight some outstanding imagery throughout. Let me quote some examples, albeit shaken

by me into isolation from their surrounding boughs:

a wind last seen, sliding its forked tongue  
through a net

windmills dotted for miles,  
the quixotic territory of love

only the wooden eye of a table stared back

the hours closing down for the night

Only the sun  
being the star she is, and  
too quick to ignite,  
folds her coppery tongue  
in envy and does not speak.

the bones of the house shaken  
by winter's Voodoo priest

to startle the fading eyelids of the day

Outside trees take deep breaths,  
clothes on a line grieve for bodies  
they will never own.

Excellent.

There is also here, even more predominant than the reflections on falling leaves and the daubing of concomitant natural hues flecked with appearances of New Zealand native birds, a steady series of ruminations on what it is like to be a recent immigrant to Aotearoa-New Zealand: for Cullinane is an Irishwoman now faaaaaar from home. Indeed, this book is published by Salmon Poetry, County Clare.

Cullinane misses her *turangawaewae* (place of origin, genesis) quite badly; she is now 'the orphan leaf, tossed from a branch'; wonders why she is in a home where there is:

Nothing here of beginnings,  
of extraction, or nation; the curled fern frond  
on the deck as unconvinced as I ...

& pines stringently for her Northern climes, her Northern pines:

But you wanted to say it straight,  
talk your way out of unbelonging, whisper yourself  
into the leaves, the branches, the bark of a familiar pine,  
to the call of birds flying northward.

Entire poems in this succinct collection cry her earlier home – 'Not So far Behind' and 'Rooms', for example, and especially, 'A Distant Shore' with its pangs and pains of being so far asunder:

No more fuss from kakas [sic]  
parading the trees in crimson collars and dark-edge feathers,  
no rain on a corrugated iron roof, tap, tapping into her heart.  
an old heart map she clings to,  
bays and inlets from another hemisphere impressed there.

A stranger in a strange land indeed. Robert Heinlein would be proud.

There are other reflections here, of course – pregnancy and impending birth; butterflies, butterflies and more butterflies, even to the extent of incorporating that mighty lepidopterist, Vladimir Nabokov; Irish

mythologies and traditions, but nothing as potent as this wistful alienation. Let me quote one more poem, here in its entirety:

### **Pohutukawa**

Suppose I ask of you  
cliff-dweller,  
what you make of me  
walking this clover grass,  
tasting the salty  
periwinkles of another  
hemisphere  
in my mouth?

To borrow from Mike O'Leary, *kia ora* begorrah Majella. Despite your angst you are well on the way to full integration into the antipodal Aotearoa lifestyle. These are fine poems, real poems, honest poems. Foster the fires and warm yourself in that Kapiti home as Autumn drifts down to see his brother Winter. Keep guarding that flame. For, as you state it so well yourself:

the interior  
of flame is the matador's cloak enticing a charge,  
just as in this room now shadows are charged with light,  
and the rain that would drench the skin damp,  
will later arouse the blood to warmth and glow.

*Kokako 15, 2011* eds Patricia Prime and Joanna Preston

*Seren Fargo*

The first haiku in this issue of *Kokako* was a clever opening choice. Welcoming me right in was a one-liner (note the effective use of spacing between words):

morning sun the open arms of a crossing guard  
*Roland Packer*

From there, I was taken into the tender moment expressed in this haiku:

the pulse  
in her throat  
tui song  
*André Surridge*

This journal includes a well-rounded variety of poetic forms: haiku, linked forms, tanka, and haibun. It concludes with two reviews: the book, *Capering Moons*, by Anatoly Kudryavitsky, and the journal, *Eucalypt 10, 2011*, edited by Beverley George.

For me, there seemed something lacking in the visual appeal of the haiku and tanka pages. My attention was drawn to the blank spaces, although I could not put my finger on why. Perhaps bringing the authors' names in closer to the poems might remedy this.

The first section contains twenty pages of haiku, including one-liners and visual haiku. I found many well-written pieces throughout; however, I think there could have been additional trimming in this section.

Here are my favourites:

distant thunder  
the duck departs  
with some of the lake  
*Quendryth Young*

I was drawn to this haiku for its unique perspective. Young uses an aspect of the scene (the water clinging to the flying duck) that would usually go unnoticed. Another appeal is that each succeeding line brings the reader from a broad image to a very specific one.

tea tree  
the shape  
of an ocean  
breeze  
*André Surridge*

Although some visual haiku tend to rely too heavily on the visual effect, without enough focus on the haiku itself, Surridge's haiku is not one of them. It stands alone as a well-written haiku, while using line positioning for added emphasis.

I was also grabbed by this intense haiku:

busy road  
the rest  
of this seagull  
*Cameron Elliot*

In addition, there are some light and delightful pieces in this collection:

heatwave  
trying to keep up  
to my ice cream  
*John Soules*

and

a new date  
for the rapture  
fireflies  
*Roland Packer*

In the section containing linked forms, my two favourites were 'Passages' by Anne Benjamin and Jan Foster, and 'Tan Renga' by Czandra and Grant D. Savage, both having strong final stanzas: "the clock ticks on / hands move steadily / forward / taking you to a future / where I may not be" and "grass never looked / so like hair / as we pick out bits / and again fall / into love making".

I was tickled by some of the humour in the tanka section, particularly:

I ride behind you  
on the merry-go-round  
as always  
your horse rises  
as mine sinks  
*Jan Foster*

There were several thought-provoking pieces in this section as well:

yesterday's wind  
still pressed in the grass -  
what I know  
now measured by  
what no longer is

*Shona Bridge*

I found many of the haibun to be a pleasure to read. The first one, 'Geibi Gorge', by Beverley George, took me back to a similar experience I had during a trip through Milford Sound: "... sitting on the river's surface" and "Mountains rise sharply either side". Three haiku accompany this haibun, my favourite being:

foreign tongues  
the relief of not knowing  
everything that's said

Beverley George effectively captures the emotions one might feel during such an adventure: wonder, awe, humour, fulfilment. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

### ***Haikai Corner***

*haikai café* – **Call for submissions** for a special edition of *haikai café* (March 2012 issue) to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the 2011 earthquakes in Christchurch (22 February) and Japan (11 March). Please send up to five haiku and/or tanka for consideration to [kirsten.cliff@gmail.com](mailto:kirsten.cliff@gmail.com) with 'HAIKAI CAFE' in the subject line. Unpublished poetry is preferred, but previously published works will be considered (if credit supplied). Deadline: 31 January 2012

### ***Straight From the Haijin's Mouth***

I asked long time friends and poetry writing buddies Catherine Mair and Patricia Prime, "Where has your reading and writing of haiku taken you over the years?"

**Catherine Mair's answer:** It was the late 1980s and I had just started writing poetry. Because of the economical, rural/ nature content it was suggested that I might find an affinity with haiku.

I'd never heard of haiku. Upon expressing my ignorance I was sent a few notes on the basics of this genre. In 1993 the first New Zealand Haiku Anthology included five of my haiku and the second Anthology (1998) included a number more. My interest in haiku lead me on a number of journeys, the most far flung being a jaunt to Romania for a haiku conference hosted by Ion Codrescu. Picton was another very enjoyable destination.

The succinct way of haiku suits my natural brevity and because of a busy lifestyle the idea of so much in so little really appealed to me. Haiku satisfied several leanings. I'd been very interested in painting but farming in partnership with my husband and bringing up four children left little time.

Over the years I've met some superb people. Haijin seem to share a relatively humble outlook and an acute sensitivity to nature, including human nature.

There is something about haiku which is spiritually satisfying. Something which seems akin to creation.

**Patricia Prime's answer:** As co-editor of the New Zealand haiku journal *Kokako* for the past 15 issues, I am privileged to have come to know and correspond with editors and writers throughout the world. I wrote my first haiku in the 80s and have submitted work to journals in the USA, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, India and Ireland. What better way is there to make friends than through poetry?

Martin Lucas says in the Introduction to his book, *Stepping Stones: a way into haiku*, that "Haiku is not a *descriptive* poetry, it is a *reflective* poetry, and we need to understand that distinction." Haiku in its own way is self-counselling; it is a pleasure to read other people's work and to study their methods and it is

beneficial to write about one's own feelings. Haiku is a form that blends sensitivity with realism, using simple language and clear images and I hope my poems are accessible to most readers and that they can identify with them in some way.

I've spent half a lifetime in Auckland, where I've lived, worked, brought up my family and found poetic inspiration and motivation. I've also made trips to China, Tibet, Macau, Australia and the South Island. These were enchanting journeys and have since lent themselves to my poetry. Writing haiku has been a long journey; some haiku had their beginnings long ago, others are very recent. Old memories supply material for my haiku, as do places I've visited, nature, friendships I've made and my family.

In a spiritual sense haiku can be a release for emotion, can range from the lyrical to the haunting, or be touched with humour or sadness. A lightness of tone, memory and imagination are all part of the spiritual reality of haiku.

Do you have a question for one of New Zealand's accomplished haikin? Send it in to [kirsten.cliff@gmail.com](mailto:kirsten.cliff@gmail.com) with 'HAIJIN QUESTION' in the subject line and it could be answered here.

### *The Haiku Help-Desk*

Guest-edited by Margaret Beverland.

### **The Shaping of a Haiku**

I was down by the river, wondering if the long, cold, wet winter would ever end. A fleeting shadow that followed the contours of the riverbed into the depths and up again caught my attention. I had a haiku and returned home to capture the image on paper.

I worked on it for some weeks, and although not satisfied I presented this to my haiku peers for comment:

falling  
rising  
with the stream bed  
the shadow of a swallow

The initial reaction was silence accompanied by puzzled faces. I was not alone in my dissatisfaction.

The haiku at this stage was a statement of my observation. The group agreed the image was a good starting point, but a lot of thought and the sharpening of many pencils were needed to shape it into a poem.

For poets new to haiku, that a few syllables arranged in 1 to 4 lines can take hours, days, or weeks to perfect is often incomprehensible. What can be so hard? I thought like this when I began. Sometimes an observation does come in an almost ideal form. Others, like the example above, take time. I consigned this one to run in memory background, where it niggled me constantly.

A year later, I returned to the river. My neighbour stood on the jetty, deep in thought. He shared that his wife had died a year ago that day. At that point my haiku flashed in neon.

I realized I needed to concentrate on either the 'falling' or the 'rising'; to find layers on an emotional level. I recalled my melancholy of the previous year. I thought of my neighbour grieving; of a darkness that can consume us in times of crisis, and wrote:

deeper  
deeper  
    into the stream  
        the shadow of a swallow

I sighed with contentment and entered the NZ Poetry Society Competition 2009. Although not among the winners, the haiku was published in the anthology *moments in the whirlwind*.

Recently, the *Lilliput Review* on-line site *Issa's Untidy Hut* accepted this haiku for the Wednesday Haiku

feature. Before sending it, I reviewed my haiku again, and made a decision, backed up by a haiku peer group, that it would be better with the definite article removed from the last line to read:

deeper  
deeper  
into the stream  
shadow of a swallow

My haiku, after two years, is now finished.

Do you have a haiku that could use some help? Send it in to [kirsten.cliff@gmail.com](mailto:kirsten.cliff@gmail.com) with 'HAIKU HELP' in the subject line and it could be discussed here.

## MEMBERS' POEMS

### Tunnel Vision

Horn blower in the tunnel  
did you feel the oppression  
of a mountain of earth above  
and let your mechanical voice scream  
a searing emission of release  
as entombed with us  
in this thrombotic artery  
we waited for a green light  
somewhere where the air  
was unclogged with exhaust  
and our exhaustion and clear  
where breath could be breathed  
generously and brain reprieve  
from a polluted injection  
of recycled fumes and fear  
while a tight chest heaved  
and contracted in bronchial fight  
then at last a slow crawl in the dark  
to distant arc of day on the pendant  
of ceiling lamps and your ecstasy  
loud in relief to reverberate  
as we, expelled from the tunnel  
inhaled the fresh fast day  
like the first cry of the neonate.

*Suzanne Herschell*

Language is like a malleable glove, you put it on to sculpt and fashion your thoughts and feelings,  
you wear it when you enter the ring and fight for your life.

*Marshal Gebbie*

## Convergence

*after editing the memoir of Dr David Jennings, 1900-1982*

Your voice, his voice.  
Finishing his sentences  
like a long-time lover, languid,  
anticipating the very breath, the essence,  
among the rumpled sheets – yellowed pages,  
dermatome slices, tissue-thin. You decipher  
random hieroglyphs, each depicting  
his world and view: mountains and passes,  
in tense, in hue, naming ...

recall

that limitless Te Anau night:  
black water  
magnesium-flare of celestial bodies  
lying together  
touching  
infinity

*Karen Zelas*

## Performance

*a found and enhanced poem*

Your silhouette in black and white creates  
dynamic shifts of exotic beauty  
embracing us  
in a million kisses to our fervid skin.  
From here to there  
in a momentous swoop, dip and swirl  
of love and humanity, sharing life's  
humility at the ordinary, so too  
your song in the dark, with style, rhythm  
and tireless energy, fluidly passing  
its meticulous theme  
from dancer to dancer.  
Its boldness  
capturing the inner soul  
entrances, nourishes, rejuvenates  
spirits, as we watch in awe  
our Royal New Zealand Ballet.  
Encore. Encore. Encore.

*Debbie Williams*

## **Mummy**

She lay, obediently, soon smoke, like clay.  
A remnant for remembrance, supine  
and heat-still with drawn, wax  
eyes, drawn lovingly to simulate  
pared death, a dormancy, mere interval.

We entered, all entered into compensatory  
pretence, making her more comfortable  
by tucking in her quilt, each  
giving up his seat, each hushed and  
reverent, to sanitize her peace,  
feeding sparrows her final bread,  
while trolley-clank leant normalcy to grief.

*Fred Simpson*

## **Windsurfing**

*'But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near...'*

Poised  
on a slender bow-wave's edge  
she leans against her red sail's  
fickle strength, silver tresses  
wafting – a cypsela  
in a wayward breeze.

## **Skimming**

Lake Taupo's shimmering cloak  
she sees the three mountains  
illusions of eternity  
as she surfs the currents, rides the wind  
while a caldera churns below.

## **Smiling**

she scatters waves of plenitude  
that rise and fall and rise again,  
muses of ripples on a farther shore  
while Time stands  
still.

*Thakshan Fernando*

MARCH DEADLINE IS 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

## **Facescape**

I glimpse my face in the wing mirror

Straight ahead wind-lashed grassland  
clothes the Wither Hills  
Clumps of vegetation cling  
to the layers of loess over greywacke  
that built these jaundiced mounds

Beneath a coiffure of nimbus curls  
walking tracks network shadowed valleys  
skirting historic scars of over grazing and erosion

The föehn wind ruffles tufts of tussock  
on the brow and flushes hot across the plains  
kissing the lips of the wide mouthed Wairau River

Turning left towards Blenheim  
we leave the deeply weathered Wither Hills  
but not the facescape in the wing mirror

*Mary Bell Thornton*

## **Waikato Mist**

Outside a thick Waikato  
mist is swirling.

Inside my head  
voices are waging war:  
voices from my past  
voices from friend and foe.

Each voice declares  
itself, head tilted  
tongue wagging  
spear raised.

But I have no quarrel  
this Sunday morning  
so I ask them to move on,  
and stand up to get on with  
the most ordinary of tasks.

*Anne Curran*

**For Anne Bradstreet (d.1672)**

and see here, she bends, to glory  
in the rightness scratched from  
yet another grandchild's death

a pious woman's place is primly set  
at table, in the kitchen, by the wet  
wide grave that eats her future's hope: humble,  
trim her low candle, and meek; heart trembles  
subdued, nightly grinds her nib, each worn page  
pricking earnest at her membrane of rage,  
frustration's sister, a pious order  
that defeats common sense, a rough border  
on the shroud that, yet living, she must wear  
so Men can stroll above her in free clear air

Anne, you don't fool me,  
your bubble rises hard;  
the throb of your heart  
beating right through your art

*John Adams*

**Today**

Today I will walk away  
to be in my self alone  
with the silence  
of my own sacred twisted  
tangled tousled early morning self.

I do not have to  
relate in the appropriate way  
or pretend to be interested  
or trick you into thinking I am normal.

Just for today though.  
Tomorrow you can have me back.

*Kristina Jensen*

An old racetrack joke reminds you that your program contains all the winners' names. I stare at my typewriter keys with the same thought.

*Mignon McLaughlin*

## Thirst

the sphinx's grip whitens  
but it does not feel snow  
in a bubble

a parched manner bears even upon  
numerous sandy grains and one  
conjunction lengthens this even more

I like to work long  
words in order  
to show off  
my regard  
for them

this ear is for forgetting

a pyramid presses heavy  
from onset onto well  
beyond dusk

it does not know what it is  
it may retain a granularity of feel  
it could bear that stench of rotten potatoes

do you believe you could?

one touched me once and it seemed  
blue this one is a copy  
but intact at that

do you remember this ear?

*John Adams*

I like poetry, though I don't read as much of it as I might wish to. And I have a secret when it comes to reading contemporary poetry. This trick also works for modern art. I will share it with you now. The trick is: Don't try too hard to understand it. It's that simple! Laboring over hidden meanings, unlocking layers of symbolism and allusion – that stuff is not really all that fun, I've found. But anyone can enjoy the flow of language, the weird or pretty or startling turns of phrase in good poetry. For those of us who don't have to write term papers anymore, it's perfectly fine to finish a poem saying, "Gee, that was good. I wonder what it was about?"

*Abraham Smith*