

a fine line

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY
Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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WELLINGTON MEETINGS
Poetry @ The Thistle Inn
3 Mulgrave St, Wellington Central
Starts at 7.30pm with open mic.

Monday 18th February:
Guest Poet: Colin Patterson

Monday 18th March:
Guest Poet: TBA

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207 pieces of Licorice, or how to publish your first e book

Charmaine Thomson

Having sat and listened to other poets at NZPS talk about their publications, I thought it was time to have the experience of self publishing an e-book. I did this partly to discover more about the publishing process, partly to be the proud owner of a shiny, new ISBN or two and partly to test how many readers would download a free e-book.

I tested the waters with Amazon and Lulu.com and decided that the expense of working through those channels outweighed the return on investment for an unknown writer. So I chose www.smashwords.com because it is a free e-publishing service with two substantial distribution approaches. The standard catalogue reaches over 4 million readers through iPhone, Aldikoo (an e-reading app for Google Android and Word Player). If your e-book meets the premium catalogue standard, Smashwords will distribute it through iBookstores, Barnes and Noble, Sony, Kobo, WH Smith (UK) and many more US outlets.

I liked the fact that you can download the e-book in multiple formats, e.g. PDF, Kindle, Epub etc and add links to your website, blog, Youtube account, Facebook, Twitter, Googleplus and many other media channels.

The critical thing I learned is the value of hiring a designer. I leveraged my networks to find a graphic designer who had already delivered multiple e-books. My graphic designer, Anne Johnston, sourced the art work, did all the formatting (Smashwords has a 72 page style and formatting guide!) and hyperlinking magic required. Absolutely worth the money. Do not try this at home unless you are either a designer or a web ninja. The conventions about hyperlinks and bookmarking were not explained clearly in the style guide until very late in the piece. This was a little frustrating because it meant that my designer had to redo nearly all of the links and formatting. The submission portal (the interestingly named “meat grinder”) kept corrupting the links back to the table of contents.

Anne and I had a huge amount of fun selecting the artwork. There are many cool stock photography and graphic websites where you can download images for a nominal sum. We used www.Dreamstime.com for the cover image.

I wanted something abstract so that the book would look interesting on a tablet screen and not date. I also wanted something that would reflect the nature of the poems i.e. contemporary forms. Anne merged a few images to make the final cover. To add a bit of interest between the sections of poems, we bought images from www.youworkforthem.com.

The hardest part was getting a decent author shot. In the end, the author shot that worked was when I was not looking at the camera, and leaning on a piano, which represents a lot of the subject matter that I write about. I hired a photographer for the author shot. We got the shot in less than one hour. I thought about the actual size of the author image on screen and would recommend a head and shoulders shot (unless you are a model).

I was very lucky to secure some testimonials from both Doug Poole, Editor of the Blackmail Press, and Laurice Gilbert, National Coordinator for the NZ Poetry Society. This was quite a tactical move because I was highly aware that I was an unknown author and having some quotes from credible editors might encourage readers to download the book/purchase the print version.

Getting an ISBN for both the e-book and the print version was straightforward. You simply download the forms from the National Library website, pay your money, and the nice librarian sends you the numbers within a few weeks.

My designer uploaded the book via the submission portal. It took about three weeks for formatting checks by Smashwords. You can always re-edit and re-submit your e-book. We found that some of the links back to the contents page did not work in some formats and this has meant more tinkering with the links. The PDF version downloads fastest and looks the best on screen.

Overall, I think Smashwords is a great channel for a first book. As a free publishing service it has a lot of merits, including a significant US and UK distribution reach.

If you want to view the e-book *Licorice* please go to <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/151670>

The print version is available for sale for \$15 (printed on demand by Printstop) by emailing the author at charmainethomson195@gmail.com



From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

First of all, best wishes for the holiday season to everyone, whatever your choice of celebration (we look forward to Eskimo Pie Day in our family). This issue comes to you between chapters of the novel I am writing for NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month), the annual challenge that sees thousands of people all over the world attempting to write a 50,000 word novel in the 30 days of November. I did it again for the first time since 2006, when I lost the last 30,000 words in the Great Computer Crash. I’ve learned a lot about backing up my work since then. Sharing my progress on Facebook, I was delighted to discover another member was doing the same thing. Did any one else give it a go in the secrecy of their own PC, laptop or iPad? I found it a very liberating experience - it loosened up all those tightly bound adverbs and adjectives I banish from my poetry, as well as giving me the opportunity to expand at great length (more words!) on my opinions, prejudices and hobby horses. Great fun all round.

The other Good Thing I managed to fit into November was Vivienne Plumb’s poetry workshop (though I haven’t yet done it at the time of writing). Workshops are great value when it comes to getting inspiration and ideas for approaching the craft of writing from another angle - the facilitator’s. I confess the poem I managed to have selected for this year’s competition was one I wrote after reading Viv’s collection, *Nefarious*. As I was reading it I found myself thinking, “I can do that”, and wrote a poem nothing like anything Viv would write, but a poem from a different place in my own skills repertoire. That’s the real value of workshops, I think - they bring out latent poems that might not otherwise see the light of day.

Vivienne, a past President of the NZPS, has been Writer in Residence at the Randell Cottage in Wellington for six months, and will be returning to Auckland at the end of her residency. If she offers you the benefit of her experience once

back in Auckland, take it.

As is traditional (at least I've tried to make it so) there are a lot of reviews in this issue of the magazine. I hope you will find something of interest to persuade you to buy a poetry book (or two) for someone - anyone - for Christmas. The e-book business is great (see our Feature Article), and gives us a sense of access that we haven't had before, but I'm still Luddite enough to carry a real book in my bag for when I'm in a bank queue, on the bus, or waiting for the dentist. I want the print publishing business to thrive for a bit longer yet.

Best wishes for a productive and poetic 2013.



About our contributors

Jenny Clay was runner-up in the 2012 IWW Kathleen Grattan Prize for her sequence of poems on Chagall. Outside of poetry she is working on a biography of James Tannock Mackelvie.

Kirsten Cliff lives in Matamata and blogs at: <http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.com/>

Natasha Dennerstein is a Melbourne-born writer who lives in Wellington. She completed her MA at the IIML at Victoria University in 2011.

Rangi Faith is a Rangiora-based poet who has been widely published in both New Zealand and overseas. He is currently completing a new collection of poetry.

Vaughan Rapatahana is a poet, educationalist and language activist who lives in Hong Kong and considers the small town of Te Araroa near the East Cape of Te Ika a Maui to be his home.

Charmaine Thomson was born in NZ, raised in Australia, and is a little bit of a global traveller. She admires NZ composition, especially Lilburn piano concertos. She drives a BRG Mini Cooper in the style of Jensen Button.



A Warm Welcome To:

Beverley George Australia

Cherllisha Silva Pukerua Bay

Chris Croft Kurow

Katherine Raine Wyndham

Ella Lamont Christchurch

Linda Liddicoat Christchurch

Reihana Robinson Coromandel

Richard Ngo Auckland

Sue Gee Auckland



Congratulations

Jenny Clay was runner-up in the 2012 IWW Kathleen Grattan Prize for her sequence of poems on Chagall.

Wes Lee's poem 'Tokyo' has been selected as a finalist in Aesthetica Magazine's Creative Writing Competition 2012, and will be published in their Creative Writing Annual in December. "Aesthetica is one of the UK's foremost arts and culture magazines ... it has over 60,000 readers and is exported to 20 countries worldwide, including New Zealand." Finalists: <http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/creativewriting>

Bryony Jagger, Deryn Pittar and **Aalix Roake** have poems in *Fib Review* # 13. Aalix was also a finalist in the 2012 Science Fiction Poetry Association contest (Dwarf Stars category).

The NZPS 2012 anthology, *Building a time machine*, edited by **Owen Bullock**, was successfully launched on the 3rd November. It contains work by many of our members: **Rowan Taigel, David Mark Williams, Mary-Jane Grandinetti, Jo Thorpe,**

Kerry Popplewell, Sunil Narshai, Nicola Easthope, Janet Newman, Ruth Arnison, Alexandra Fraser, Lynne Kohen, Nola Borrell, Laurice Gilbert, Siobhan Harvey, Margaret Vos, Paula Harris, Gillian Cameron, Gillian Roach, Katherine Raine, John O'Connor, Catherine Moxham, Andre Surridge, Gail Ingram, Aalix Roake, Richard Ngo, Ella Lamont.

The 4th *Kokako* Tanka Competition prize list, judged by Tony Beyer, is dominated by NZPS members.

First Place: **Andre Surridge**, with:

night's
illuminated manuscript . . .
this waning moon
the first initial
of her name

Second Place: **Barbara Strang**; Third place: **Helen Yong**; Highly commended: Kevin Goldstein-Jackson (UK - past member), **Elaine Riddell**, David Rice (USA); Commended: **Beverley George** (Aus), Tracy Davidson (UK), **Barbara Strang**. (*Results supplied by Patricia Prime.*)

Shot Glass Journal #8 is now online, edited by **Mary-Jane Grandinetti**. As well as a good sampling of Australian poets, some of our members have got work in there: **Ruth Arnison, Anne Hollier Ruddy** and **Charmaine Thomson**. It's Anne's first time, and hopefully not her last. See: <http://www.musepiepress.com/shotglass/index.html>

The 2012 *Takahe* competition, judged by **Kerrin P Sharpe**, was won by Rachel Sawaya. NZPS members took the rest of the places. **Karen Butterworth** won second place and **Janet Newman** and **Jo Thorpe** were the two Highly Commended runners-up. Great going! The winning poems will be published in the December 2012 issue of *Takahe*.



Noticeboard

Call for registration of interest in a Self-publishing Workshop Opportunity, Wellington

In the November issue of *a fine line*, PrintStop offered our members a special book printing workshop for a very good price, and so far no-one has contacted them about the offer. I used Printstop for my own collection, and I can recommend their process as a low-cost and relatively easy option for self-publishing. (Please note that this is not an endorsement by the NZPS, but the personal opinion of the National Coordinator.) Once you have the know-how, you can publish as many books as you want.

The workshop offers:

- 1: Training on setting up your text template in Word
- 2: On the spot cover design (provide your own cover images: one profile picture and one cover image)
- 3: Access to PrintStop's online site, and training on how to navigate the site.
- 4: 50 printed A5 40 page + cover Poetry books

All for the one off price of \$320 + g.s.t. [\$368, or \$7.36 per copy for this initial run. Reprints are then cheaper].

The workshop does not require a minimum number to go ahead, and will be held for anyone who wants the training opportunity, with 50 books to show for it. It will be held on a Saturday at their offices in Grenada North. Members can bring their own laptops or there will be several machines available for use.

The only pre-requisites are that the text will be proofed and ready to go on a Word file, and the images need to be 300 DPI. If you are not sure what that means, email Christine and ask.

To register your interest, contact Christine Borra: Christine.Borra@printstop.co.nz Check out the website at: www.printstop.co.nz

If we let ourselves, we shall always be waiting for some distraction or other to end before we can really get down to our work. The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavourable. Favourable conditions never come.

CS Lewis

Competitions and Submissions

Anderbo Poetry Prize (USA) Postmark Deadline: 15 December For up to six unpublished poems. Winner receives \$500 cash and publication on anderbo.com Reading fee: \$10. Guidelines: www.anderbo.com/anderbo1/anderprize2012.html

The Gregory O'Donoghue International Poetry Competition (Ireland) Closing date: 15 December. Entry fee: €5 per poem or €20 per batch of five. Prizes: 1st €1000, publication in *Southword* and a trip to Cork, Ireland*. 2nd: €500 & publication in *Southword*. 3rd: €250 & publication in *Southword*. 10 runners-up to be published in *Southword* and receive €30 publication fee. *(Travel costs for the winner up to €600 and hotel accommodation and meals for three days during the Cork Spring Poetry Festival.) Submission guidelines and all other details are on the website at: <http://www.munsterlit.ie/Gregory%20ODonoghue%20International%20Poetry%20Competition.html>

Magma Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 16 December. 1. *Magma* Judge's Prize. Judge: Gillian Clarke. For poems of 11-80 lines. Prizes: 1st £500, 2nd £200, 3rd £100. 2. *Magma* Editors' Prize. Judges: a panel of *Magma Poetry* editors. For poems up to 10 lines. Prizes: 1st £500, 2nd £200, 10 special mentions at £10 each. As part of the prize, all 15 winners will have their poems published in the Spring Issue 2013 and be invited to read alongside Gillian Clarke at *Magma's* prize-giving event early next year. Entry Fee: £5 per poem / £15 for four poems for non-subscribers. £3 per poem / £10 for four poems for subscribers. See website for full details: www.magmapoetry.com/competition

Best New Zealand Poems 2012. Deadline: 17 December. Calling all NZ Poets, regardless of where you live - published anything this year? Send your work to the IIML for consideration in this year's Best New Zealand Poems selection by Poet Laureate Ian Wedde. You can find all the details and submissions guidelines at: www.victoria.ac.nz/modernletters/ [NB Any work published by the NZPS - either in a *fine line* or in the annual anthology - is automatically submitted.]

Caselberg Trust International Poetry Prize for 2013. Closing date: 31 December. Entries are invited for the Third Caselberg Trust International Poetry Prize. The judge is poet, artist and curator Gregory O'Brien. 1st: \$500, 2nd: \$250, and 5 Highly Commended awards. The 2 winning poems and the Judge's report will be printed in the May 2013 issue of *Landfall*, and all 7 award-winning entries will be published on the Caselberg Trust web-site, copyright remaining with the authors. For the Conditions and Entry Form please go to the Caselberg Trust's web-site: <http://www.caselbergtrust.org/>

Dorset Prize (USA) Postmark or online submission deadline: 31 December. The annual Dorset Prize is an open competition for a poetry manuscript, with a \$3,000 prize. Poets submitting work for consideration may be published authors or writers without previous book publications. Submissions are accepted from anyone writing in the English language, whether living in the United States or abroad (translations are not eligible for this prize). Reading fee: \$28. Guidelines: <http://www.tupelopress.org/dorset.php>

Flash 500 Humour Verse Competition (UK) Closing date: 31 December. Entry fee: £3 for the 1st poem, then £2.50 for each poem thereafter. Line Length: Up to 30 lines. Prizes - 1st: £150 plus publication; 2nd: £100; 3rd: £50. The results will be announced within 6 weeks of the closing date and the 3 winning entries will be published on the website: http://www.flash500.com/index_files/humourverse.html

Holland Park Press "What's your history?" Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 December. Free entry for poems about individual histories with universal resonance. 50 lines or less. One poem per entrant. For poems in English OR Dutch. Prize £100 plus online publication. Please see website for full details: <http://hollandparkpress.co.uk/index.php>

Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ) Poetry Competition Closing date: 28 February. Judged by Emma Neale. 1st prize: \$175; 2nd prize: \$150; 3rd prize: \$125. *The Star* best unplaced Dunedin poet prize: \$75 (All prizes will be book vouchers). 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: \$5.00 per poem or \$10.00 for up to three poems. Each poem should be typed on one side of A4 paper and posted to: Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ), 19 Hunt St, Dunedin 9013, to be received no later than 28 February 2013. No email entries please. For full entry conditions please check online at: waitingroompoems.wordpress.com

Snowbound Series Chapbook Award (USA) Postmarked or uploaded between 1 December 2012 and 28 February 2013. The 11th Annual Snowbound Series Chapbook Award is an open competition with a prize of \$1,000 and twenty-five copies. Submissions are accepted from anyone writing in the English language, whether living in the United States or abroad (translations are not eligible for this prize). Reading fee: \$23. Guidelines: <http://www.tupelopress.org/snowbound.php>

Red Booth Review (USA) Reading period closes: 31 December. Submission Guidelines: No reading fee. Poems should be sent in batches of 3-10. Email via the website, at: <http://redboothreview.blogspot.co.nz/>

Thynks Pop a Poem on a Postcard Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 December. Poems up to 14 lines. Judged by the Thynks team. 1st £100, 2nd £50, 3rd £25 (All 3 prizewinners will have 10 postcards with their winning poem printed on them). Entry Fee: £3. Website: <http://www.thynkspublications.co.uk/competitions> Email: thynkspublications@yahoo.co.uk

16th Annual Robert Frost Foundation Annual Poetry Award (USA) Postmark/email deadline: 1 January. For poems in the spirit of Robert Frost (16th Annual Award). Prize: \$1,000 and the opportunity to read at a Frost Foundation event. Please submit two copies of each poem, one copy with contact information (name, address, phone number, email address) and one copy free of all identifying information. Reading fee: \$10 per poem (send fees via regular mail, please). Make your check payable to The Robert Frost Foundation. Mail your entry to: The Robert Frost Foundation, Attn: Poetry Award, Lawrence Public Library - 3rd Floor, 51 Lawrence Street, Lawrence, MA 01841, USA. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) or an email address if you'd like to receive the contest results. Email submissions are accepted at frostfoundation@comcast.net if you send your entry fee by regular mail. You may submit up to three poems of no more than three pages each. Both published and unpublished works accepted. See the complete contest guidelines at www.frostfoundation.org

Kent and Sussex Open Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 January. Entry Fee: £5 per poem. 3 or more poems: £4 each. 1st: £1000, 2nd: £300, 3rd: £100, then 4 x £50. See website for full details & online entry: www.kentandsussexpoetry.com

Songs of Angels Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 January. Entry Fee: £3. 1st £100 plus pamphlet publication, 2nd £50 plus pamphlet publication, 3rd £25 plus pamphlet. (Prizewinners and runners up are to have poems published in a small book) Judging by the Thynks Team. Website: <http://www.thynkspublications.co.uk/competitions> Email: thynkspublications@yahoo.co.uk

Ben Cauchi: The Sophist's Mirror. Closing date: 1 February. City Gallery Wellington invites you to produce an original and imaginative poem inspired by the exhibition 'Ben Cauchi: The Sophist's Mirror'. Entry is free. To enter: Poems must be no longer than 50 lines. Entries limited to two per entrant. Poems must be the entrant's own work and not have been published, self published, published on a website or broadcast. Entries cannot be returned. Alterations cannot be made once entries have been submitted. Entries must not have the writer's name or identifying marks on them. The entry form must be filled out in full and submitted with the poem at the time of sending it. No correspondence can be entered into as the judge's decision is final. Acceptance of the rules is implied by entry. 10 finalists will be selected and their works published anonymously on the City Gallery Wellington website (www.citygallery.org.nz). These finalists will be eligible for the People's Choice Award which will be announced, along with the winning entry, on Friday 15 February. Voting for the People's Choice Award will be open February 8-14. Winners will receive a copy of the VUP publication *These Evening Hours*, edited by Aaron Lister, and an annual City Gallery Friends membership worth \$45. Judge: current Randell Cottage writer-in-residence Vivienne Plumb. Winner announced on City Gallery Wellington's website www.citygallery.org.nz and social media networks on Friday 15 February. Please download the entry form from: <http://www.citygallery.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Ben-Cauch-Poetry-Competition-Entry-Form.pdf> and send your entry to citygalleryadmin@wmt.org.nz

NZPS publication 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 for these and other sections of the magazine at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutsubmissionguidelines>

Aotearoa - Found in Translation. Call for submissions Deadline: 15 January. Printable Reality, in association with Auckland Multicultural Society, wants poetry from around the world. We are looking for anything that has any connection to: belonging, identity, travel, arrival, settling in, community, family, landscape (land and emotional), memory, ancestry, vision for the future. We have all come from somewhere else (or our ancestors did); look at this through the eyes of an immigrant or a traveler and email us any material that resonates with you in terms of that. It doesn't even have to be a poem; it can be narrative or monologue or flash fiction or an essay or a song. All submissions would preferably be supplied in both the original language and English translation - if you can't find the original, English is good enough. Everyone who submits a poem will be acknowledged. All the authors of original material that make it to our final selection, will be acknowledged. We cannot include all the material submitted in our final selection. If you submit your own work, please understand and agree that it might be (and probably will be) altered to fit other text for stage performance, to be performed in Basement Theatre, Auckland, March 2013. Submissions to be emailed to gus@printablereality.com

Rattle #39 Call for Submissions (USA) Deadline: 1 February. While we always accept and publish submissions of poetry in any style, on any subject, from anyone, each issue features a themed section. Theme for this issue: Poets Down Under (Australian and New Zealand poets). Rattle: <http://www.rattle.com/callsforsubs.htm>



Regional Report

WINDRIFT, OCTOBER

Nola Borrell

For our final meeting for the year we focused on: Free choice, a spring plant/ tree, time and/or tide. As usual, the open category produced a wide range: Reality TV and mountain folds, a cygnet's feather and resuscitation, seagulls and scrabble.

scrabble player
her casket covered
with words

Nola Borrell

This, a reluctant entry, was described as a 'greeting' haiku, a Japanese custom, by Harumi Hasegawa. I frequently give haiku, (though not this one!) but hadn't thought of this practice under this label.

sunbath
spraying water everywhere
blackbird

Annette de Jonge

Comments included: 'Like the picture.' 'Is 'everywhere' too long?' 'Nice surprise' at end. 'Adroit,' said one. 'sunbath' - nice word' said another.

We relaxed into the constraints and possibilities of spring. "passionate crimson/ code for the azaleas/ self-restraint" perplexed us until we replaced 'code' with 'symbol'. Then the humour was very apparent. Yet, strictly speaking, 'code' is correct usage. More language and usage challenges.

passionate crimson
symbol for the azaleas
self-restraint

Harumi Hasegawa

Another spring symbol, cherry petal, was used to marked effect in the following haiku. Harumi said that the petal from Mt Taranaki had come home with her.

the cherry petal
on the car mirror
reflecting the whole holiday

Harumi Hasegawa

But, spring is not all beginnings and light.

scent of jasmine
each spring I recall
how it mingled
with the reek
of his cancer

Karen Butterworth

Here are two thoughtful haiku, both evocative, one explicitly so.

glazed by sun
ripples ebb
with the tide

Jenny Pyatt

"Clear visual image," we said. "Gives effect of time passing." "Lovely in itself." "I like <glazed>." "Perfect," said one member at the end. Though the possible question lingers: Is it limited to description?

watching the sea
in the moonlight
no looking back

Penny Pruden

We were attracted by both image and poignancy, but were undecided about the personal concluding line. What do you think?

Windrift was not the same without Ernie Berry's humorous - sometimes zany - contributions. We wish him well as he deals with the upheaval of moving from Picton to Blenheim.



haikai café

Your bite-sized serving of haiku, senryū, tanka and haibun

Kirsten Cliff

filtered through
the trellised brickwork
squares of moonlight

~ *Haiku by Debbie Williams*

magnolia tree:
the full-bodied
white blossoms ...
amongst the confetti
this first kiss

~ *Tanka by Anne Curran*

Enslaved

We cross the river by ferry, then ride down the dusty road to the plantation. When we finally get there, we park in the gravel by the semi-circle of tabby huts. A park ranger gives us a tour of the white house on the water. He tells us slaves are buried in the sand somewhere between the tabby huts, made from ground oyster shells, lime, and sand, and the white house. I find myself listening for their voices. I want to say: thank you for the years of back breaking labor in these scorching indigo fields. They are hard to understand. Maybe it is just the wind in the cedars.

noontime shade
the sound of ice cubes
in tall glasses

~ *Haibun by Paula Moore*

Submissions: Please send your best three unpublished haiku, senryū, tanka and/or short haibun for consideration to kirsten.cliff@gmail.com with 'HAIKAI CAFE' in the subject line.



Reviews

JAAM #29 (JAAM Editorial Collective, 2011)

Vaughan Rapatahana

It's always pretty good to receive a journal to review, because there always will be something interesting and/or excellent somewhere inside as it will not be the mahi of just one writer who is sometimes uniformly dull and/or lost in some colonialist haze. There will also be, of course, a share of dross, but the Anne Kennedy edited JAAM 29 doesn't disappoint. Indeed she's managed to get herself out of a jam by spreading the knife far and wide into an array of jars with their varieties of sweet fillings.

I could utilize clichés like 'curate's egg' or 'pot pourri' to describe its contents, but I think an analogy to the best poem

in the book (Leilani Burgoyne's 'How to Make a Colonial Cake') is the one. 'Best' because it's cleverly constructed as an extended metaphor and has especial relevance for Indigenous – here Polynesian – folk. It satisfies this writer's (my) tastebuds because it nourishes bloody well his own predilections for cohesively and holistically writing differently qua stylistically and thematically. And it reverses the roles for once too.

Thus, we have here a mass of diverse ingredients – from music scores (what to say about an excerpt by John Psathas except why not, eh) to photographs to drawings to short stories. That's good in itself, as the mixture cements into a relatively well made gateau overall, with a slight piquancy in places, although there is perhaps far too much dryness when one bites into parts of the crust. There are also some small areas to avoid where a writer has overwritten and lapsed into pretentiousness, or has left us with a piece with as much life as a beached whale. You just got to chew these few bad bits up and spit them out and then feast yourself on the main repast.

We have a diverse thematology also – what was ostensibly an issue to be based around notions of 'The Pacific', extended into reflections on the Christchurch earthquake and its sadness, as reflected in Tusiata Avia's sad homage to Rhys Brookbanks. We also find a sprinkle of colourful hundreds and thousands within the concoction, which have no relation to anything else in the mix, such as Craig Cliff's very excellent short tale entitled 'The Bartender's Glass'. Eclectic to say the least. Which is not a bad thing either, eh: a reader can jam on the brakes and switch gears to something more edifying at anytime.

The contributors too are a jam-packed bunch – 'well-known' constant contributors to the pages of Aotearoan literary publications like O'Brien and Smither and Walpert and Wendt (none of whose work is especially tasty one has to say) through to more esoteric voices from Hawai'i and the Philippines, such as Kenneth Quilantang (whose super story reminds me of my many visits back home to Pampanga and my in-law's backyards replete with fighting cocks) and Blaine Tolentino, so as to ensure this construction is not an Antipodean exclusive (and this induces a wider perspective), through to less well-known writers like Medb Charleton and Susanna Gendall and Erin Scudder.

Then there are the variegated poetic morsels. 'Traditional' fare (meaning rigidly stratified layers of stanzas and exact line lengths – even with measured rhyme in places) served up along with the minimalism of some of Frankie McMillan's poems, as well as dollops of experimentalia in format such as Sam Sampson's 'Wig' and Avia's 'Finding Sepela: 22 February', and in language as for example Selina Tusitala Marsh's 'Old towns, new cities' with its condimental English, such as:

What does afakasi mean?
Asks the screen at Answers dot com.
Why, it mean a she or he
Of de samoan and de palagi descent,
Strictly speakin'

All good too, eh.

& so are some splendiferous lines in patches here and there, spattered like raisins throughout the compote. BANG on the very first page is Fiona Farrell's fine line or two, which jam your eyes wide open

Our roof is broken.
When the rain falls it
will scribble decay on
the ceiling. We will lie
in our white bed and
read above our heads
the end of things.

And what about Paula Green's cherry-on-the-top whizzbanger of: "The water is like a dog's tongue at the shore".

& sticking with poetry for a second before the timer goes off, I gotta mention Kelly Ana Morey's fine 'Mother's Day'. Damned yummy and shows she's gotta stay in the poetry kitchen. This poem has got it all – flavour, crafting, strong aftertaste. Similar to Murray Edmond's gutsy bursts of taste here too – some fine touches from the man here, as in Matakaitaki 1822:

the river blossoms like a finger
that beckons through the rain

Real icing on the cake stuff, eh. Pakeha writing like Polynesians, and Polynesians – in some places here – writing like white folk. Ka nui te pai.

Kennedy as a chief chef is here spot on: “So I am delighted that *JAAM 29* has a range, not only across genre, with poetry, fiction and non-fiction, and including established and new writers, but across the expanse of this vast region we slosh about in [the Pacific.]”

One would expect Mark Pirie would be a happy guy with this latest incarnation of his original babe. He’s probably out there now rubbing the new ball on his upper arm, getting ready to launch the next over.

Jammy bugger.

Selected poems Bill Manhire (VUP, 2012) ISBN 978 0 86473 762 5 \$35.00

Mary Cresswell

What do you take
away with you?

Here is the rain,
a second-hand miracle,
collapsing out of Heaven.

(“The prayer”)

This fluent collection is a memoir of Bill Manhire’s poetry from 1972 to 2012. It’s attractively produced and reads as a whole book (rather than chronological bits); in reading it we see themes Manhire has been loyal to over his working life.

The earliest poems are sparse and almost calligraphic. They line out prayers, spells, oriental pavilions, the soft beginnings of love. By the end of the book we have left behind prayers and spells and are faced with the concrete, painted with a much heavier brush: dogs, a cave, a schoolbus, the snowfield on Mt Erebus, striped pajamas. The poems are longer and tougher.

I enjoyed Manhire’s craftsmanship all the way through this book: phrases are repeated and balanced, stanzas reflect each other’s structure, ballads come and go in the background, words link with each other as they do in the oral tradition and in other ways, as well. Rhyme and slant rhyme move back and forth. “The oral tradition” gets a fine poem of its own.

Look at the following (quoted complete): each couplet has three and then four accent beats, except for the next to last one – there are two and three beats only, just as the rungs grow wings, our feet stutter ... and losing a couple of steps is inevitable until we recover ourselves.

The ladder

Too short to reach the roof,
too short to threaten important windows,

the ladder lies on its side
behind the house, out of sight.

The ladder lies in the grass,
a different grain in each of its rungs

(and wings on each rung
so where can you place your feet?).

And, as you can see, it is rotten.
Nevertheless, it longs to be lifted.

There is alliteration of consonants and of vowel sounds: reach/roof, ladder/lies, house/out, wings/rung, it longs to be lifted. ... And the last word, “lifted”, is not only the title of the book in which the poem appeared but – most importantly – figures in the well-known ‘Erebus Voices’ (also included in this selection).

“The Ladder” (too short and rotten) illustrates a recognition of frailty – of fate? of the primordial cussedness of things? – that develops in later poems. I see similar development in Manhire’s use of the image of snow, which takes on an increasing intensity. Early on, snow is neutral, showing “tracks in the whiteness/ left by animals late at night” (“Summer”).

Then it is intimate: “Under the snow, the hands and chest/ are draped, and with them the belly” (‘What it means to be naked’). Then snow is sinister: the poet glimpses the Emperor “through snow” (‘Hirohito’), and ‘Antarctic stone’ has no need to speak the word at all. Instead, we’re forced to see beneath the snow to a “dark ridge of earth & bone/ then inclines and heights/ and sudden drops” leading us, unwillingly, to Mt Erebus.

These are certainly not the only themes of interest, but I have a word limit here. When you get your own copy of the book you’ll see more. If you do read Manhire’s poems already, you’ll appreciate these selections; if you don’t, this is a good place to start:

And here is the true charred text.

See how the ruin rides among riddles

– anchor and inkhorn and loom –

bumping against whatever happens next.

(‘The ruin’)

Working in the Cracks Between Jenny Argante (Ocean Books, 2012) ISBN not supplied. RRP \$19.95 (print); \$7.95 (e-book).

Vaughan Rapatahana

Jenny Argante’s thick new collection of poems reveals a poet who likes to use a lot of words: her poems are generally verbose. They congeal the pages in massive dollops and one gets the distinct impression that the poet herself is also larger-than-life, for not only are her poems spread on the poetry sandwich as lambasted in massive helpings by a big-bladed knife, but her thematic stance is also right up front – and fair enough too, given the sinisterness of what she is often writing about such as in ‘crack baby’ and ‘Zimbabwe’. Argante is a real heart-on-the-sleeve writer – sometimes overly so, for some of the many poems about dysfunctional male-female relationships & marriages gone way sour, are almost too personal for the so-called ‘average’ reader. They tend to turn-off because of the specific detailing that can only be of relevance to the director and the directed as written about within – generally some male afflicted by the very fact that he is a man: “perpetual male, always more trouble than they are worth.”

There are several poems concerning females having hard times, generally at the behest of some male figure who is violent, ignorant, violently ignorant, ignorantly violent, and sometimes these ‘work’ / sometimes they do not – an accolade I would grant the entire collection, for there is a tendency throughout to go for the overwritten jugular. Example:

Why let the buried multitudes enchain

Tomorrow, and constrain the future

Masking it with stain

Of unsought failures?

Wow!

Argante is also not a poet who displays a preferential penchant for metaphor – except in small doses; hers is a full frontal verbal assault, not always with succinct imagery to parlay her points. Rhyme is a spasmodic guest at the party too, whilst other than the found poem, ‘a flawed precept’, innovation has largely stayed away.

Now Jenny has informed me via email that this collection is indeed her “life’s work” her “heart and soul”, but I do question the need to lay it on so thick, eh, and to be so over-the-top self-possessed on occasion. Her best poems – and make no mistake she can and does write well in places – are less self-focused and less wordy and do contain ‘succinct imagery’. Examples of well-crafted poems in this large collection are: ‘cactus flowering’, ‘a man alone’, ‘communication’, ‘windows’ – which, to give the big lie to my earlier point above, does revolve cleverly around metaphorical nuances; whilst examples of evocative imagery are: “Their breath wrote words he didn’t understand” and “I keep hearing her cry, each space is an ache” and “burned out by some interior explosion, dry-boned and witless.”

Finally I will return to a frequent complaint I make when reviewing the work of reasonably recent immigrant poets now resident in Aotearoa, even if it was not their place of nascence: that there is bugger all reference to anything remotely reminiscent of the poet actually being in the country, let alone – God forbid – to any aspects of multiculturalism. Given that Argante is self-confessedly, “mundanely English” (“there are no Maori warriors”) one would expect at least some more local place names, some referral to New Zealand mores, some portrayal of the adopted country per se; but – except for a few poems towards the end of the collection – there is no such: these poems could be written anywhere BUT in/about Aotearoa actually, as many so obviously refer to Shropshire and Wolverhampton.

Does this matter? Well, yes. Given the poet being the editor for the new Bay of Plenty publishing house Ocean Books, with a manifesto to the effect: “One of our primary aims is to connect with our local Bay of Plenty reader market”, this lack of such connection – to me, at least, admittedly – is a bit of a worry, eh. For I am most definitely such a reader, being

ensconced on the East Coast for many years.

Ultimately then, while I most certainly share Catherine Mair's opinion that "Isn't that the point of writing [to be accessible and not shallow] rather than to show how clever or inventive the writer is", I cannot agree with Mair that "Argante's [confessional] work comes into the top drawer category."

Not yet anyway, eh. Not enough of the "work in secret, in the cracks between" from the titular poem and ironically, from the same poem, too much of the "laying down [of] thick slabs."

Flaubert's Drum Sugu Pillay (Interactive Press, 2012) 105 pp ISBN 978-1921869-94-5

Rangi Faith

The novelist Flaubert commented that human language was like "a cracked kettle on which we beat our tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we long to move the stars to pity". It is an apt description of Sugu Pillay's poetry. In addition to this, Gertrude Stein's quote gives an indication of the direction the book is taking. She says: "Writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really." This poetry is culturally multi-dimensional.

Characters and events from Indian, Greek, and Maori legends are layered inside individual poems - and as a whole contribute to the world where the poet belongs.

Sugu Pillay is of Sri Lankan Malaysian heritage. She has written short fiction (*The Chandrasekhar Limit*, 2002), and plays (*Serendipity*, 2009 and *Salaam Pukekohe*, 2010). She has postgraduate degrees from Victoria University of Wellington and the University of London, and is presently living and writing in Christchurch, after several years in Wellington.

The poems reflect the wide background and historical reading of the author and her desire also to include and recognise Maori myth and Te Reo. In 'Assimilation of History' she talks about Bishop Selwyn walking to Kohimarama Mission:

the Bishop catches his breath
light & water bouncing off each other
the entire coastline aflame.

In the poem 'History & Cultural Relativity' the poet refers to the New Zealand Wars:

Meremere.Rangiriri.Orakau
ka whawhai tonu ake! Ake! Ake!
would the breach ever be healed?

The poet's knowledge of things South Asian is transposed into the New Zealand writing landscape - as in 'Waking up in Stanley Place, Akaroa:

I wake up in sweet
recognition
each syllable a Buddha-heart
stirring & rising.

There is a wide range of images in the poems but the ones I see the most are those associated with the sea, water, and the stars. The poems tend to float - either in water or in the air. There are sails and there are boats - it is this fluidity, this feeling of moving through the poems and the book itself. In 'The Museum of Art',

there's a boat
longing for the sea

in the abandoned geographies
of the universe.

In the poem 'In Medias Res',

the sea collects
stories from shore to shore
drawing in with a kiss
running out with the tide.

In 'Dark of Heart, Dark of Mind',

love, be that raft
when craft & lyric fail.

Adding to the fluid nature of the poems is a vocabulary of movement – flying, leaping, floating, running, flapping, bouncing. They are action words. Indeed the poet refers to Mandelstam's "verb on horseback" which "gallops round the peninsula". The poet is using these poems to search for the 'heart' of poetry. In 'The Purple Rose of Cairo' she asks: "So what's a good poem". In 'Stirring Dull Roots' this is extended: "Does this force you to think about language?" In 'Tradition & the Poet I' the poet comes close to the answer when she says: "white sails dip in dip out picking up the good phrase".

Cities and towns throughout New Zealand are locations for many poems. In 'The Cairnmuir Terraces' there is an eye-opening description of the "dark hollows" of Bannockburn. In 'The Cathedral', the poet describes the desolation of the empty Chalice in Cathedral Square, Christchurch. In 'Lindis Pass', language and sentiment are explored - you can almost feel the summer heat and the nor'west wind:

Handed moments like this
Driving through Lindis Pass
Washed hot gold
& blinded with cathedral wonder...

The poem 'Kowhai Gold' is a dramatic rendition of a citizenship ceremony. The kowhai refers to the young tree each new citizen plants to symbolize their new beginning:

seated between a Sri Lankan & a Vietnamese
one who speaks and one who doesn't

I think of landfall & the contest for space...

The poetry in *Flaubert's Drum* is meant to inform as well as delight you. To this extent there is a useful Notes section at the end of the book where locations, characters and events are explained more clearly.

This book of poetry entertains you as reader, but it also challenges you to look behind the poems, to look behind other cultures, and to recognise a poet who has brought a new cultural dimension onto the New Zealand literary landscape.

***Night's Glass Table* Karen Zelas (Interactive Press, 2012). 105 pp. ISBN 9781921869914**

Rangi Faith

The front cover image by Henry Zelas shows a moon over a headland, the reflection shining like a dagger into the bay. This is sharp, dramatic poetry with many rooms. The introductory poem 'My Home Has Many Rooms' links each section of the book with a line from the poem. How clever is that! The poetry deals with love, youth, children, war, death, earthquakes, art, fruit, godwits, fireworks, ice, and birthdays. It has a sense of heartfelt poetry offering solace and comfort from a confident writer.

The moods of the poems are dark, light, and many shades in between. 'Dealing with It' shows a human, sympathetic touch, while 'Summer in Ossetia' and 'Dawn Parade' reflect the poet's views on war. In the latter poem you can almost smell the heat, the rain, and the mud. 'Wings' is an intensely dark poem about death – it is "A magpie-swoop of hard, black wings..."

A wide range of images abounds in the collection. In 'The Weight of Calves' the breaking-off of ice (the calving) is compared to the actual birth and weight of the animal itself. In 'This Is How It Feels', written after the September 4th 2010 earthquake in Christchurch, the writer illustrates some ways that we all become faced with the unexpected. There is also the idea of the poet as observer, as in 'Moscow Underground', 'Approach', and 'Migration' – showing the journey of the godwits to the Arctic Circle. In 'Azimuth' there is a good description of an eclipse of the moon:

A widow's veil muted her flushed complexion,
thin luminous smile growing as if a flame
were held beneath her chin. Sinister.

What I liked too are the 'folksy' poems; about the Stephens blue-black ink (which I used at school); poems about an adult swinging on a child's swing; the memories evoked from touching an old coat; or simply playing with your toes. In the latter poem, 'On Your Toes', the poet comes up with some powerful lines:

I'd have it
no other way and I tell you this.

There are some poems that stand out in the book. 'Out of Shadow' is one. Like the morepork, it is that "sob that carries in empty air". The poem is trim and controlled:

I say there's
always one more place
at night's glass table...

The piece 'Small Islands of Difference' is an example of good descriptive poetry:

night has stolen the day
slipped luminous
mother-of-pearl in its pocket.

"What Is Yet To Come" is a group of poems on Antarctic exploration. Ponting, Hurley, Scott, Shackelton, and Mount Erebus are referred to in five crisp, dramatic poems. The images are well-known and quite clear:

... the sickening shriek of splintering skin
mast, spars, like kindling rise...

Keep a copy of this book on the coffee table at your holiday bach. Bring it out to read while the sun sets into the Tasman Sea. Read 'Out of Shadow' and 'Deafness In The Garden of the Blind'. Follow them up with 'Dealing with It' – one of the strongest poems in the book.

The poet has included a Notes section at the back of the book showing how some of the poems originated. Although not entirely necessary I found it useful in finding new work from other writers. It does beg the question – just where do we get our poetry from? The real beauty of it is that poets are always trying to find that gem, that single, original poem that somehow doesn't have an origin – it just is.

***The Cheese and Onion Sandwich and other New Zealand Icons* Vivienne Plumb (Seraph Press, 2011) ISBN 978-0-473-19606-6 RRP \$20**

Jenny Clay

Vivienne Plumb is an award-winning poet, playwright, and fiction writer. Her poem 'tapping the tank' won the 1999 NZPS poetry competition and gave its title to the anthology. I'd heard Vivienne perform poems from the book, long before I sat down and read it. There is a series of bite-sized prose poems in *The Cheese and Onion Sandwich and other New Zealand Icons*. Plumb has chosen topics idiosyncratic to New Zealand, such as mutton birds, South Island tramping, and white-baiting. She picks out easily identifiable features, and uses forward slashes within the paragraphs to break up the lines. In 'Te Ware Whare/ The Warehouse', "you forget what you came for as soon as you walk in the door/ over the intercom *Shanelle could you please go to the storeroom*".

Plumb builds up pictures with small details with a satirical edge. In 'the intercity', "one passenger wipes the steamed-up window with her ugly turquoise window curtain/ I knew those bus curtains were good for something". She mixes the mundane with a new take. In 'luncheon sausage', "you can eat a smiley face out of it", it "was very pink" in sandwiches in school lunches, but slices are no longer offered in the deli free to children "as several elderly persons have been for a bit of a skate on the discarded pieces/ so it is now considered a fully fledged supermarket slip hazard."

She can be very specific as to place. In 'speed cameras' the busiest one "in the whole of New Zealand is on Great North Road between Kirby and Awaroa Streets/ Glendene" which issues "over ten thousand tickets a year". She finishes the poem with "yes they are doing this entirely for the sake of our safety". In 'the cheese and onion sandwich' the place the best one was made "at the Golden Crust Café that was once in the main street of Dunedin", where they had an intense understanding of the cheese and onion sandwich "all-knowledgeable/ and with more cheese".

Plumb tells her short stories with a sense of humour. This can be in stating the obvious and subverting it. The poem 'bargains' is about the solidification of a bottle of Jif that "under normal conditions... should be used within two years of manufacture", yet producers offer this customer as recompense half a dozen more with a "new Jamaican lime scent" for her solidified Jif. In 'Ngauruhoe/ on the Desert Road' the mountain is personified as exhibit and unpaid actor: "perfectly cast as Mount Doom in the lord of the rings but never paid a penny/ although Ngauruhoe repeatedly performed well and ultimately became a worldwide hit".

Complete stories can be compacted into the paragraph poems. '128 Abel Smith Street' used to be a nursing home, and we learn of a police raid on the inhabitants, who are described as opposed to the "traffic bypass they fix bicycles and grow vegetables and rent out their front room for community and political functions". In 'fish' we find the woman selling the fish in the evening at Rotorua Pak'n Save is also a teacher, her husband is out of work, and she has spent the day in court with two of her students. They "had bashed a man/ Mihi said it was not looking good for anyone". Plumb finds the

individual voices inside the stories. In 'youth hostel' there is the "kiwipicker who snores a grandmother who is paranoid about fluoridated water", and a Japanese tourist who "snaps a photo of her stuffed pink panther toy sitting tucked into her bunk bed" and has at every New Zealand youth hostel she's visited. One of the people exploring the Kerikeri mission house described it in the visitor's book as "almost as good as my neighbour's house".

There is a sense of history underneath the quirkiness. One of the prose poems is based on an epistle from James Kemp in 'early missionaries/ 1823'. The 'bluestone kerbing' poem describes how it used to come from Mount Wellington quarries, but now comes from China. It says some of the original kerbs have been replaced by concrete and are suspected of being relocated to the "more upmarket suburbs". In Crown Lynn the pottery comes with "exotic names on their undersides" and she follows their journey from railway cups to op-shop sales to collectors' items.

Vivienne Plumb observes detail, and listens for voice, giving her stories a twist, and making us give a wry laugh at the things we know. *The Cheese and Onion Sandwich and other New Zealand Icons* contains 39 prose poems that will engage poetry buffs and those who seldom take a walk with a poem.

***The Bengal Engine's Mango Afterglow* Geoff Cochrane (VUP, 2012) ISBN 9780864737618 RRP \$25**

Natasha Dennerstein

The latest collection by legendary Wellington poet Geoff Cochrane is full of literary allusion and sublime language. Cochrane is an alchemist, turning the quotidian into gold by the methods of his poetic wizardry. He takes clutches of words, turns them around in his mouth and spits them out, transformed. The title of the collection is a case in point. It is so sensual to say, with those soft and hard 'g's bouncing off each other and the lovely rhyme of "mango" and "afterglow". It comes from one of a pair of Basho poems, 'The Last of Basho'. The Japanese poet is one of several who stalk through this collection.

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The snide sirens dive and the rain catches fire
but what of the Bengal engine's mango afterglow?

That streak of warm mango is gorgeous. Cochrane has a way with colour. "A milky sky with voids of vivid teal" is extracted from the poem 'Alien Breathers'. "He rides through rain/toward a ruby smash" explodes in 'Basho Begins'.

Allen Ginsberg also appears, in a vignette about his daily life, 'Ginsberg's Window', with excerpts that may or may not be Ginsberg's own words about his routines as a mature poet. These may or may not also relate to Cochrane's own routines as a mature poet: there are parallels. The wild, subversive, intoxicated poet becomes the health-conscious, sober man of letters. Some other writers fleshing out Cochrane's roll-call are Ann Carson, Michael Ondaatje, Joe Orton, Lawrence Durrell, Leonard Cohen, William Burroughs and Samuel Beckett, all either quoted directly, named or alluded to via characters/titles from their works.

Cochrane is a poet at the height of his powers, stitching together in this collection a patchwork quilt of vivid octagons constructed from history, memory, the everyday and the ether. Dispersed throughout the collection are numbered 'Pinksheets' which seem to be jottings, gathered phrases, television sound bites, quotes and snippets of poems in progress. These snippets read poetically, in themselves and collectively.

'Pinksheet #8' bounces off the pharmaceutical drug Hemineurin, a sedative anti-convulsant. The poet describes the drug, dissects the origins of its name, relates its use in the prevention of alcoholic seizures and intersperses these comments with gorgeous quotations from Hart Crane: "O minstrel galleons of Carib fire", and "The seal's wide spindrift gaze towards paradise." (The poet Crane was a problem drinker who jumped to his death from a moving ship at the age of thirty-three.) The nexus between poetry and booze is well-known and Cochrane is not one to shy away from discussing his own battles with the bottle. Alcoholism is not a popular topic: a disease of denial in which those who most need to discuss it, won't. Cochrane's poetry is full of references to his earlier dangerous drinking and now long-term abstinence, both of which have profoundly affected his life and work.

One absolutely killer phrase is "... of having behaved vilely" from 'Pinksheet #2'. All those h's and v's pivoting around that b. Another is "...and go with the glow, amigo" from 'Pinksheet #3'. The standout, though, has to be "... a gorgeous killer armed with a claw-hammer", from 'Beautiful Rapist'. The half-rhyme of "killer" and "hammer", the contrast of "gorgeous" and "claw-hammer". Absolutely killer.



We must always work, and a self-respecting artist must not fold his hands on the pretext that he is not in the mood. If we wait for the mood, without endeavouring to meet it half-way, we easily become indolent and apathetic. We must be patient, and believe that inspiration will come to those who can master their disinclination.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

American Life in Poetry: Column 298

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

At any given moment, there must be 100,000 of us trying to fit in, and finding it next to impossible. Here's a wonderful portrayal of that difficulty, by Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz, who lives in Astoria, New York.

At the Office Holiday Party

I can now confirm that I am not just fatter
than everyone I work with, but I'm also fatter
than all their spouses. Even the heavily bearded
bear in accounting has a little otter-like boyfriend.

When my co-workers brightly introduce me
as "the funny one in the office," their spouses
give them a look which translates to, Well, duh,
then they both wait for me to say something funny.

A gaggle of models comes shrieking into the bar
to further punctuate why I sometimes hate living
in this city. They glitter, a shiny gang of scissors.
I don't know how to look like I'm not struggling.

Sometimes on the subway back to Queens,
I can tell who's staying on past the Lexington stop
because I have bought their shoes before at Payless.
They are shoes that fool absolutely no one.

Everyone wore their special holiday party outfits.
It wasn't until I arrived at the bar that I realized
my special holiday party outfit was exactly the same
as the outfits worn by the restaurant's busboys.

While I'm standing in line for the bathroom,
another patron asks if I'm there to clean it.

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Notes from the Net

Syrian rebel commander finds solace in poetry:

A report from the BBC's Middle East News website highlights the importance of poetry to men fighting on the Turkey-Syria border in September 2012.

"Abu Azzam's poetry is a reminder that few of these men are professional fighters. They are normal people with hopes and dreams.

"They were students, engineers, doctors and journalists who did not expect to be fighting a war that now ravages the country." <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19729956>

Poetry prescriptions: verse to cure all ills

For Britain's National Poetry Day in October, "poetry evangelist" William Sieghart went online at *The Guardian* Book Blog for an hour, prescribing poems for existentiail ailments. Example:

Dear Dr Sieghart,

I am suffering poetry withdrawal due to writing (not watching) too much television. My Underwood Portable lies silently on the upstairs desk. I need a quick injection of soul (not plot) for this existential torpor.

I await your cure.

Dr Sieghart's remedy:

Existential torpor, eh? You have come to the right place. I find it hard to guess if you are male, female or intersex, but - regardless - this poem by Adrian Mitchell ought to cheer you up

When I am sad and weary

When I think all hope is gone

When I walk along High Holborn

I think of you with nothing on.

http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog/2012/oct/02/national-poetry-day-william-sieghart-poetry-prescription?CMP=tw_t_gu

What Poetry Teaches Us About the Power of Persuasion

US poet Dorothea Lasky writes in *The Atlantic* about the importance of poetry in any school curriculum area. Excerpt:

"In a book entitled *The Having of Wonderful Ideas: And Other Essays on Teaching and Learning*, Eleanor Duckworth explains that the most important thing a teacher can do is to give his or her students the space to have a new idea and feel good about having it. She argues that this is the key to intellectual development. I would argue that there's no more natural space for a teacher to value a student's idea than in a poem. Because in a poem, a student not only has the freedom to express a new idea, but to do so in novel language he or she has just created. More so than any other type of writing, a poem takes into account the indispensable dimension of well-chosen words.

"Learning about poetry (how to read it, write it, and appreciate it) is an integral part of teaching students about all forms of writing. A poem is not just a place to present a student's grammatical knowledge (in fact, it is often the space to subvert it!). Poetry, more than any other form of writing, trains students to take into account the style of language. This close looking and listening is crucial to writing well in any manner. It would be hard to say that any outstanding essay does not involve meticulous word choice or the ability to persuade a reader through sheer aesthetic prowess. Poetry teaches students how to do this."

<http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/10/what-poetry-teaches-us-about-the-power-of-persuasion/263551/>

Tom Hanks Performs Slam Poem About "Full House"

For die-hard fans of Hanks only. See an Actor perform poetry in the Spoken Word style:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfWluyimme50>

For a far better performance (despite poorer production values), watch Ali Jacs, New Zealand's own National Poetry Slam Champion, at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CypXtNYFHow>

Daniel Day-Lewis gives poet dad's work to Oxford

While we're on the subject of celebrities:

"Actor Daniel Day-Lewis is donating papers belonging to his father, the poet Cecil Day-Lewis, to Oxford University.

"The archive, which fills 54 boxes, includes early drafts of the poet's work, as well as letters from actor John Gielgud and famous literary figures such as W.H. Auden, Robert Graves and Philip Larkin.

"Daniel Day-Lewis stars this year in the much-anticipated film 'Lincoln', about the assassinated U.S. president. He and his sister, Tamasin, said Tuesday they are thrilled that their father's papers will be housed at Oxford's Bodleian Libraries and become accessible to students and researchers.

"Cecil Day-Lewis, who studied classics and became poetry professor at Oxford, was appointed the U.K. poet laureate in 1968. He also wrote mystery novels and stories under the name of Nicholas Blake. He died in 1972." (*The Seattle Times*)

Deconstructing poetry on the radio: Can discussing poetry make good radio programmes?

UK poet Ruth Padel discusses (in *The Guardian*) a Radio 4 initiative to talk to and about poetry workshops.

“Radio is brilliant for poetry because poems are sound: the “ear” is crucial. But you need the eye, too. Readers take in a poem through a delicate triangulation of ear, brain and eye. The white space around words on a page is visual silence. It shapes the poem like barometric pressure, or like a musical pause. Criticising, properly responding to poems, involves rereading. How could we do that for listeners without a text? We could put the poems on the website, but the producer had to make programmes people could enjoy while lying in the bath or driving down the motorway.

“We decided to try to record where each group normally met, and to suggest different themes. And because reading poems is the first step to writing them, we’d also read and discuss a poem by a published poet associated with the region.”

Find out how it went at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/nov/02/ruth-padel-poetry-on-radio>

Some websites that provide great resources for poets

General -

<http://www.writersdigest.com/> - heaps of information and resources, including a weekly (Wednesday) poetry prompt

<https://www.writers-online.co.uk/> - another resource site

accrispin.blogspot.com - an industry watchdog group keeping writers and publishing professionals up to date on the latest scams, hoaxes and schemes circulating around the industry

duotrope.com - THE market place database and submission tracker

fundsforwriters.com - for information about grants, fellowships, contests and other ways to get paid to write

writergazette.com - another site offering easy access to contests, markets, advice and job postings. And it lives up to its name with extensive offerings of free articles on virtually everything writing-related.

winningwriters.com - free e-newsletter with info on about 150 different writing contests. Consider a paid membership (USD9.95 quarterly) to get access to more than 1,250 other opportunities.

Poetry-specific -

poems.com - *Poetry Daily* is an anthology that shares contemporary poems by a wide variety of poets. Each day, it features a new poem from recent books and literary journals; a year’s worth of previous content is archived.

ronsilliman.blogspot.com - There are lots of poetry blogs available for those interested in poetry, and this one features extensive advice to both novice and experienced poets.

<http://www.poetrylibrary.org.uk/> - London-based and supported by the UK Arts Council, this site is everything I’d love the NZPS website to be, if we had the wherewithal to update it (and the staff to run it!)



Members' Poems

Flogging A Dead Horse In Deep Water

Never flog a horse in deep water

Never return from unsavoury past events

Never revisit the dead

And don't bother phoning me

Cause you'll only

Be flogging a dead horse in deep water

No point in raising the past

No point in staring in the ball

Never is crystal

Same with your memory too

Done is done
Long dead and buried
Don't come back to done
There is no point
Same as there is no point
In flogging a dead horse in deep water

Don't come around and visit me
Especially in my memories
Don't you haunt me with your past
Don't deal with the issues of yesterday

Lest you want to
Flog a dead horse in deep water

Can't go across the bridge
That was burnt
Can't go back
And make happy the hurt

Got the walls up now
Real safe behind it
Can't even imagine it now

Flogging a dead horse in
Deep water

David Clarke

Go Rabbit Go

The rabbits ate their last supper on Wednesday.
Green for go,
one way or another.
Take the pot shot from the window
or a slow green bilious
dragging of the guts.
It's a good time to do it,
breeding season.

This morning, we recognised the frantic squeal.
Bob rushed out
and rescued it from the cat.
Cupping it in his hand, he felt the heart pound
and the warm quiver.
We let it go of course.
Green for go,
Go rabbit go.

Susan Howard

Evocation

Come together, shuffle through the undergrowth
of my dream garden by the sea.

I need you shy words, sly words freighted
with arcane messages & forgotten meanings.

Caught in branches of trees
in the plunging depths of green valleys

running away from the wind on hilltops
you are the sky divers of my song.

Slumbering animal brains
rehearse their cadences!

Fold them into the patterns
of rugs woven in old palaces

finger the golden cheeks
of nectarines

roll the red-fleshed plum
into a single syllable!

I wait for their magic carpet journey
for without those wandering words

where is my gold leaf, my catalogue of joy?

Robin Fry



Submission deadline for next issue:

7th February 2013

