

# 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

NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY

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WELLINGTON MEETINGS

Poetry @ The Thistle Inn

3 Mulgrave St, Wellington Central

Third Monday of the Month, Feb.-Nov.

Starts at 7.30pm with open mic.

To find out who the Guest Poet is, please see:

[http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/  
comingevents](http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/comingevents)

**DEADLINE FOR  
MARCH ISSUE:**

**7 FEBRUARY**

## *The listening ear, the singing world*

- how learning attentiveness led to my first collection

Anne Carson

My first full-length poetry collection, *Removing the Kimono*, had a very long gestation. The last ten years have involved concentrated writing time; building both skills and a publishing history. But for the seven previous years I was also acquiring necessary skills.

About seventeen years ago I felt a desperate need to change my life. I'd been working in the Domestic Violence field for about a decade and was totally burnt out. I felt a desperate need to create something after all the brokenness and destruction I had seen. So I took the radical step of selling my house and moving to a rented mudbrick cottage in St Andrews, in rural Victoria. This cottage was beautiful but small – one space served as kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and lounge room. It had no electricity or flush toilet. There was no mains pressure water – it was, by choice, extremely primitive.

Set on a beautiful property with forest on three sides and a vineyard on the other, there was also the main dwelling and two studios, a swimming pool, tennis court, and veggie garden.

I hoped that by taking myself outside consumer society, by losing the city's distractions and easy entertainments, in the silence and necessity of the bush, I could learn the skills which would lead to creative expression. I wanted to do a Thoreau and thought my chosen art form would be writing.

A few weeks after I moved to the cottage I was outside enjoying the late afternoon. My eyes drifted to the distance and suddenly I saw far-away mountains topped with a tower. I was amazed that I hadn't noticed them before. For the first few weeks my eyes and looking had automatically stopped at the point which would have been the equivalent of my backyard suburban fence, where for the past, how many years, they had been forced to stop. Now I'd moved to the country where there was no physical impediment to prevent me from seeing all the way to the far off mountains, but still they stopped at this habituated place.

I was particularly helped in my explorations by studying Aboriginal spirituality. In Western spirituality a seeker does meditative practices which are focused principally inside the practitioner, but in Aboriginal spirituality the looking is externalised into the world around, to tune into the environment in all its diversity, distinctiveness, detail and change.

I took this to heart as I drew and painted and photographed what was around me. I tracked the flowering of native orchids and fungi, then made some very inept attempts at tracking animals. However slow and careful I was, I never could get very close at all, but at least closer than I was at the beginning. What I found in this practice, in seeing and hearing and smelling, was a deepening capacity for attentiveness – the foundation stone on which all creativity rests.

I lived in the cottage for seven years – pumping my daily ration of water,

tending to the fires and the woodpile. Perhaps it took that long to rid myself of the political dogma and slogans which had filled my mind over the previous decade.

But in what turned out to be my last year there, I started to write. I began writing a memoir about my advocacy for and friendship with a woman with an intellectual disability, and there seemed to be an overflow of material that didn't belong in the book. I recognized metaphors and similes. Even though I hadn't studied poetry I knew these to be some of the building blocks of poetry. Once I started to write I felt a need to return to the city and mix with other writers and to discover what contemporary poetry was. It wasn't long before circumstances transpired and I was packing my bags.

I grew to love that cottage, and was devastated when it and the whole of the beautiful property was totally destroyed in the Victorian Black Saturday Bushfires in 2009 – luckily without, on this property at least, loss of life.

I wrote a long poem about the cottage and my time there – my song of praise and lament. I was thrilled to find the title 'The Crucible' for that poem, because a crucible is both a vessel used in a chemistry lab to heat chemicals for transformation, and alchemically it represents the transformation of the psyche of the person undertaking the experiment.

There's no doubt that my psyche was revolutionised by my retreat. All the poems in this collection have their genesis in the attentiveness I learnt to practice and refine in and around the cottage in the bush at St Andrews. Whether they are poems about the natural environment or about love and desire and loss, I owe so much to that small, beautiful poky dwelling without ceilings, nestled in its square of bush.

### **Poetry Sampler**

From **The Crucible**

IV

All the hand-hewn, knobbly timbers have gone.  
The hand-made mudbricks; I loved them

as if it was my thumbprint which marked them, my palm  
which had shaped them. I gave up everything to live between

the pale ochre-rendered walls which once held hope over me.

I staked my future on growing into an artist here.  
For seven years,

I stoked the creative fire, heaped up coals in the hearth.

The house heated; an alembic, bubbling with chemistry.

Each night I lay down pulling dreams and fears towards me,

holding them close the night long. The unceilinged roof

let the dust and debris of the universe in, let in the numinous night

and its minions. Insects favoured the mudbrick for nesting,

the chinks for egress. Frogs hopped under the dresser,

an echidna into the water-bowl I left out for birds.

In the light of ecumenical candles, witnessed by foraging rodents,

my longing took the long journey of translation into practice

of the craft, the work. Other self-sufficiencies followed;

swinging a decent axe, stacking a sturdy woodpile.

I returned to the city, newmade, leaving the mudbrick cottage

to its fate.

### **Corvid**

A colloquium of crows crowds into the valley.

Hundreds fill the floodplain – the only venue big enough to host them. Some gather in the old pines, forty-foot-tall pavilions.

Below, ewes and wethers shelter, sheep-coats the same calico colour as the bleached branches.

The congress lasts for days. We don't know what they discuss but they start early.

A wall of sound reaches us on the salt-fresh air:

harsh, rudimentary articulations shredding the dawn silence. Mid-morning and dozens

line the fence down the Sand Road, pepper the hill with black blotches. The atmosphere is charged

with concentration. At the last minute they notice our approach, rise with one mind, one wing;

a dark seam wrinkling the air. They fall

like a jagged breath, back to earth. A diva

in batwing sleeves flings herself into an updraught, towards another bird in tails. They fly into

each other, shoulders glancing, a caution-thrown -to-the-wind dance, practising a savage ballet.

## The sound of absence

Air particles shift in waves through walls  
and space, towards me, the air displaced  
  
by your car, plowing a path through traffic.  
Next door a woman's heels knock on floor-  
  
boards. I feel it in my body, not noise but  
vibration. The blade of absence hones me.  
  
With closed eyes, feet up, I wait. Fern-frond  
shadows drift across my lids, a watch on a  
  
chain, taking me deeper, deeper. I turn  
aural. Sounds become equi-valent; rich,  
  
intricately textured. The fridge's groans and  
shudders no less pleasing than the liquid  
  
melody of the magpie or the whistle of wind  
in the elm. Underneath sound, stillness so  
  
alive it thrums. Things utter themselves  
into silence.

It's hard not to be biblical.

The listening ear, the singing world.

*Removing the Kimono* (published by Hybrid Publishers)  
was launched in November in Melbourne, Australia

Contact the author for NZ purchase details:  
am.carson@optusnet.com.au  
www.annemcarson.com



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## QUOTATION FOR THE SEASON

Tizzy squawked, and he bounced like a ball on the floor.

"I completely forgot; Santa said something more.

He said that a book gives your very thoughts wings,

That carry you off to see wonderful things,

That lift you aloft, throughout time, throughout space

To every era and every place!"

*Dorothea Jensen, "Tizzy, the Christmas Shelf Elf"*

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18604096-tizzy-the-christmas-shelf-elf>

## From the President

Laurice Gilbert

We've had two anthology launches again this year. The first was held in Wellington, as usual, which made it possible for some of our South Island contributors, including Open Section First Prize winner Carolyn McCurdie, to attend. The second was in Auckland, thanks to the contacts of Auckland rep. Gus Simonovic, who arranged a session for us prior to the regular inside.out open mic night in Ponsonby, organised and run by Anita Arlov. Thanks to everyone who came to the launches and shared their work with a wide audience.

The anthology itself is, of course, the result of the efforts of many people - the poets who enter our annual competition, the judges who select the outstanding work, the editor who gets to select the best of the rest. This year our editor was once again Owen Bullock, who brings vast experience of both verse and haiku to bear when making his choices. He also managed the whole production process with panache, and the books were delivered in plenty of time for the launch, which is always a relief for me, as the Wellington launch organiser. As a bonus, Owen's son Thomas created the beautiful cover, and it was great to have Thomas at the Wellington launch.

The anthology makes a fabulous present for anyone in love with poetry, as we all are, but it also works for non-poetry readers, giving them a glimpse of contemporary poetry in a really accessible way. You'll find an order form with this issue of *a fine line*, or you can order it through PayPal on our website, at: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/2013anthologyorder>

In other news, the committee members are settling into their new roles, now that I have released my grip on the Poetry Society's work. The handover is a slow and protracted process, as all the jobs that were done by individuals before I took over have become entangled, in the way work does when there's just one person doing it all. I'm gradually teasing out the strands so they can once more be made into discrete jobs, and I will almost certainly master the art of delegation (eventually).

For those who have followed the work of the Society for many years, the good news is that the Constitution is finally going to get a good going over. This is a job that successive committees were finding too hard to contemplate long before I was in the National Coordinator role, and at last we have someone willing to take it on. Watch this space - there are going to be changes. They have to be approved by the members, of course; nothing can change without your knowledge and acceptance.

Finally, I wish everyone the best for the summer, and hope that you get plenty of time to follow your heart's desires. Whether it's blobbing in the sun (suitably screened), enjoying summer sports - live or on TV - or simply sitting around with a supply of cold drinks and some poetry books (my plan), have a great time.



## About our Contributors

**Anne M. Carson** is a Melbourne writer and visual artist, published both in the USA and widely in Australia. She teaches poetry to adults, is a trained Social Worker, and also works as a Creative Writing Therapist.

**Kirsten Cliff** is a writer with a love of all things haiku. She was the 2013 NZPS competition judge for the junior haiku section, and has recently featured in *A New Resonance 8: Emerging Voices in English Language Haiku* (Red Moon Press, US). Be part of her creative journey at Swimming in Lines of Haiku: <http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.co.nz/>

**Natasha Dennerstein** is a Melbourne-born writer who completed her MA at the IIML at Victoria University in 2011. She is currently doing her MFA in Poetry at San Francisco State University.

**Rose Lilian** considers herself a flying free-range Kiwi as she has spent her life travelling; she currently resides in Brisbane, Australia. Her work has been accepted by the *4th Floor Literary Journal* and *The School Magazine*.

**Heidi North-Bailey** is an Auckland writer and freelance editor. In 2007 she won the Irish Féile Filiochta International Poetry Competition. She is currently completing an MA in Scriptwriting and Directing for Film at Auckland University

**Joanna Preston** is an Australian-born Christchurch writer and teacher, whose first poetry collection, *The Summer King*, won both the inaugural Kathleen Grattan Award and the Mary Gilmore Prize.

**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.



## A Warm Welcome To...

**Brigid Barrer** Auckland

**Debbie Johnson** USA

**Hariharan Karuppasamy** Wellington

**Jodie Dagleish** Wellington

**John Ewen** Christchurch

**Kathleen Kozyniak** Napier

**Ludmila Sakowski** Kaiapoi

**Margaret Moores** Auckland

**Marshall Gass** Auckland

**Nigel Jackson** Wellington

**Sudha Rao** Wellington



## Congratulations

**Valeria Barouch** won third place in the David Burland Poetry Prize 2013, with a Pantoum in French.

**Nola Borrell** has had a haiku published as a Tuesday poem: <http://smallmarks.blogspot.co.nz/2013/12/tuesday-poem-oystercatcher-haiku-by.html>

**Owen Bullock** has been accepted to do a PhD at the University of Canberra, beginning early next year.

**Janis Freegard's** poem 'Various Annunciations' is in *North* 51.

**Laurice Gilbert's** poem 'Haze-covered Islands' has been nominated by Muse-Pie Press for the Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses. [http://www.musepiepress.com/shotglass/issue10/laurice\\_gilbert1.html](http://www.musepiepress.com/shotglass/issue10/laurice_gilbert1.html)

Laurice also had a poem, 'Before you', shortlisted in the *Ariadne's Thread* Poetry Prize, publication imminent.

**Wes Lee** was a finalist in the Troubadour International Poetry Prize, judged by George Szirtes and Deryn Rees-Jones. The annual Troubadour Poetry Prize (£2,500) is administered by Coffee-House Poetry, and this year received over 3,300 entries from around the world. Wes won £20 for her poem 'Outside the window the wild world still calls...' <http://www.coffeehousepoetry.org/prizes/>

**Maris O'Rourke** was runner up in the 2013 Kathleen Grattan Prize for a Sequence of Poems, run by International Writers' Workshop NZ Inc., with her sequence 'Wanderings'.

**Beverley Teague** has a poem in *fib review #16*, the only New Zealander in this issue. <http://www.musepiepress.com/fibreview/index.html>



## Noticeboard

### Poetry at Times of Grief

*Now You Are Gone*, by Beth Voogd

ISBN 978-0-473-26889-3

Beth Voogd started writing in her late seventies by joining an autobiographical writing course with **Bronwyn Bryant** in Howick, Auckland.

When an opportunity arose to join Bronwyn's Sliced Bread Poetry group as well, she took it. She found writing poems a way of organising a confusion of thoughts after her husband's death in 2008 and, encouraged by the reaction from friends and fellow writers, she agreed to publish some of them. *Now You Are Gone* is a small book, easily slipped into a pocket for ready access.

The poems are moving without being sentimental. Beth has unselfishly made them public in the hope that they will be a comfort to others who grieve.

The book is available for \$10 from: [slicedbreadpoetry@gmail.com](mailto:slicedbreadpoetry@gmail.com)

## Poetry Competition Judges wanted

<http://www.thebigidea.co.nz/work/jobs-opportunities/writing-publishing/poetry/137213-poetry-competition-judges-wanted>

Calling on all experienced poets, writers, educators, editors, critics:

In 2014 Printable Reality, in association with The New Zealand Poetry Society and Splice, is presenting 'Poems4Peace 2014', a literary project that will include a poetry competition, live poetry events, workshops and a publication.

We would like to offer the opportunity to two experienced judges to select the best poems from the entries. Successful candidates will be given further instruction and a week in March to make their selections.

Please email a short bio by 5pm, Wednesday 15th January to: [poems4peace2014@printablereality.com](mailto:poems4peace2014@printablereality.com) and tell us why would you make a perfect candidate for this role.

## Page2Stage 2014

Mentors and Mentees wanted for artist development programme.

This exciting year-long artist development programme will provide a platform to inspire, educate, and encourage writers and spoken word artists to write and perform a solo performance piece. Talented artists will be partnered with experienced writers and performers as mentors, and you'll be taught all the necessary tools to be able to create and present your own solo show and become a more professional arts practitioner.

1) Are you an established writer, poet, spoken word artist; or maybe a recognised tutor, workshop leader, theatre practitioner or a well-known comedian, performance artist, dramatist, producer? Do you have skills necessary to inspire and guide a talented artist to the next stage of their career? Apply NOW for Page2Stage Mentor role: <http://www.thebigidea.co.nz/work/jobs-opportunities/theatre/136376-mentor-page2stage-2014>

2) Are you a talented writer, poet, story-teller, spoken word artist? Are you dreaming of sharing some of your best work on stage? Apply NOW for Page2Stage 2004 Mentee: <http://www.thebigidea.co.nz/work/jobs-opportunities/theatre/136377-mentee-page2stage-2014>

For more info, go to: [www.printablereality.com](http://www.printablereality.com)

## Regional Report



## WINDRIFT HAIKU GROUP – OCTOBER

*Penny Pruden*

For the final meeting of 2013, seven of us arrived at Nola's to consider three themes: Open; Tension; Compassion.

We happily welcomed new member Julie Adamson, returned to New Zealand after many years overseas, as well as a now slightly less-pressured Laurice, attending after a morning helping friends both feathered and human. Our new member contributed the first haiku:

sleepless  
in the small hours –  
the moon is too loud

*Julie Adamson*

Everyone enjoyed this, with Nola's caveat: "Are we going to allow a comment in a haiku?" Some of us felt that comments emerged all the time! Julie explained she had always tried to keep to a 5-7-5 format and had branched out for this. Laurice suggested it would make a good one-liner – and the possibility of making some subsequent contributions into one line continued during the meeting.

Karen was unable to attend, but contributed:  
red plum tree  
from my armchair taller  
than the mountain

*Karen Peterson Butterworth*

It was suggested the lines be changed around to give more surprise, but that the image was perfect. Harumi's contribution followed:

silence and a spring breeze  
between 2 people  
on the smartphone

*Harumi Hasegawa*

At first we were puzzled about what was intended, and comments suggested various scenarios. Harumi later explained her impression of silence between the two people, who didn't really want to talk. The double-tasking of modern life was also suggested by:

checking McDonalds' menu -  
free wi-fi

*Laurice Gilbert*

and the inevitable disappointment some of us (but seldom this corresponding contributor!) feel, by:

old pond  
my frog poem  
flops

*Ernest Berry*

Masculine input continued, with:

no.8 wire latch  
man-shed's undercoat  
celebrating the near-enough

*Bevan Greenslade*

while the other gender's preoccupation was within the home, and harked back to a women's magazine and a well-

read column of earlier days:  
over the teacups  
two sisters discuss  
which inherits the tea-set

*Kerry Popplewell*

Introducing the second theme, Tension, the effect of colours on different emotions within various cultures prompted discussion:

hospice visit  
the colour of kowhai flowers  
soothes my mind

*Harumi Hasegawa*

No improvement could be suggested for this, but there were suggestions about the next contribution on tension:

after the incident  
each awaits an apology:  
two weights in balance

*Kerry Popplewell*

Despite being asked if the third line could be omitted, Kerry was reluctant to abandon her attachment to the assonance she had so enjoyed using! Another take on tension was provided by a corresponding member:

lambs and dogs  
lead their owners  
pet day

*Jenny Pyatt*

Another of Karen's was next:

interview ante-room  
she fights a hiccup  
all eyes on the floor

*Karen Peterson Butterworth*

The group could see a very clear picture here, although after suggesting that lines two and three could be swapped, some felt the third could be omitted altogether. The final one of this group elicited one positive comment: "I loved the picture!" (Thank-you, Julie!):

from the bush  
a smothered rose  
reaches up

*Penny Pruden*

The response to the third theme, Compassion, produced a variety of associations. Tragedy was invoked with:

overloaded boat  
in sight of land  
the unyielding sea

*Penny Pruden*

A very different and comforting image appears in:  
helping the owner  
feed the birds  
we thank each other

*Laurice Gilbert*

and, despite the seriousness of the subject, laughter all round finished the meeting:

precipitous track  
the 90 year old hauls up  
a young guy

*Nola Borrell*



## *haikai cafe*

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

*edited by Kirsten Cliff*

frosty morning  
the dog howls  
half-hearted

~ *Haiku by Barbara Strang*

my friend  
in a hospital bed  
paralysed  
I stay in bed  
my anger unmoving

~ *Tanka by Anne Curran*

### **below the cliffs**

The sea is boiling today, white foam and spray against a leaden sky, swept sideways in giant plumes by the wind. It poured all night. Water lies in all the hollows. We shifted Nancy's goats in case they drowned. Rod had to put an auxiliary drain over the top of the first one, which couldn't cope with the torrent. He boasts that, like the Romans, he has made water flow uphill. The animals are skulking indoors.

in the dark  
the sound of the wind  
is louder

~ *Haibun by Maureen Sudlow*

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



## Competitions & Submissions

### **Ballymaloe International Poetry Prize (Ireland) Closing**

**Date: 31 December.** Entry Fee: £9 euros per poem. Judge: New York State Poet Laureate Marie Howe. Prizes: 1st 10,000 euros, 2nd 2,000 euros, 3rd 1,000 euros. *The Moth* magazine teams up with Ballymaloe Cookery School. You can enter as many poems as you like. The winning poems will appear in the spring 2014 issue of *The Moth* and the winners will be invited to read at a special award ceremony at the Ballymaloe Literary Festival of Food & Wine in Co. Cork, Ireland. For further details go to: [www.themothmagazine.com](http://www.themothmagazine.com)

### **The 2013 Dorset Prize (USA) Deadline: 31 December.**

The Dorset Prize is open to anyone writing in the English language, whether living in the United States or abroad. Translations are not eligible for this prize, nor are previously self-published books. Employees of Tupelo Press and authors with books previously published by Tupelo Press are not eligible. Poets submitting work for consideration may be published authors or writers without prior book publications. A reading fee of \$US28 must accompany each submission. \$3,000 Prize; Final Judge: David Wojahn. For full guidelines: <http://www.tupelopress.org/dorset.php>

**Hue and Cry** Deadline: 31 December. Literary slash art journal & publishing press based in New Zealand accepts unsolicited submissions. Submit online (but ignore the deadline on this submission page - it hasn't been updated for a while): <http://hueandcry.org.nz/index.html>

**Kind of a Hurricane Press Editor's Choice Poetry Award (USA) Deadline: 31 December.** All styles of poetry are welcome. There is no specific length or subject requirements. Just send us your best work. First Place receives \$200 (US) Payable via PayPal. For details see website at: <http://editorschoiceaward.blogspot.co.uk/>

**LONE STARS Magazine 20th Annual 'SongBook' Lyric-Poetry Contest (USA) Deadline: 31 December.** Entry Fee \$2.00 per poem. Prizes: First Place - 50 % of fees collected; Second Place - 30 % of fees collected. Winners published in LONE STARS Magazine; Winners receive 1-year Subscription to LONE STARS Magazine. Lyric Poems on any Subject, as per Guidelines: Submitted the way you want to see it in-print; 3-4 line Verses, 1-4 line Chorus. Enter via email and/or US Mail; PayPal account - [lonestarsmagazine@yahoo.com](mailto:lonestarsmagazine@yahoo.com) Checks payable to LONE STARS Magazine, 4219 Flinthill, San Antonio, TX 78230 U.S.A.

**The Poetry Box Dark & Horror Poetry Magazine Monthly (UK) Deadline: 31 December.** You are invited to submit up to 4 poems for consideration for publication in the January 2014 Edition of 'The Poetry Box Dark & Horror Poetry Magazine Monthly'. Guidelines for poetry submission: up to 4 poems may be submitted

per month for consideration; preferably maximum of 60 lines. (However, we do consider longer length poems for 'serialisation' over several editions of the magazine); typed in single spacing, Calibri font 14 pitch preferred, aligned to the left hand margin (not centralised).

Subjects/Themes: Gothic, Gothic-Horror, Horror, Fantasy, Surreal, Sci-Fi, Satire. We do not publish unsavoury material concerning children in any way.

We prefer to receive poems via POST - Postal Address: The Editor, The Poetry Box, 'Ramshackles', 2 Downview, Nyewood, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 5JA, United Kingdom. Please ensure you include your contact details with your submission. If selected for publication, we may ask you to re-send selected poem/s in the body of an email.

If submitting via email - PLEASE SEND IN THE BODY OF AN EMAIL AND NOT AS AN ATTACHMENT. Please ensure you include your contact details with your submission as well as in the body of the email. [www.ThePoetryBox.co.uk](http://www.ThePoetryBox.co.uk)

### **What's Your Place? Poetry Competition (UK/**

**Netherlands) Deadline: 31 December.** UK-based publisher of Dutch literature offers this free contest with a small prize for poems about a neighborhood. Enter by email only. Top Award: 100 pounds each for best English and Dutch entries. Winner also published in online magazine. This competition invites poems in English or Dutch, so Dutch poets please read the Dutch instructions.

The Task: We invite you to write a poem about a neighbourhood that's important to you. It could be the place you grew up in, the area you live in now, or a neighbourhood which influenced your life in a particular way. It could well be a place you visited on holiday, or city that made a big impression on you, or equally a place that has blighted your life ever since. It could be a house, a café, school or a park, a neighbourhood, a motorway, railway station, any place that defines the neighbourhood. We'd like to read your sense of place expressed in a poem. It's about your take on the place but at the same time we're looking for an individual vision that has a universal resonance; in other words, a poem which uses the literary form to say something more, and which is not just about yourself. We want to be moved by your poem, excited by its images; we love to see wonderful use of language and striking metaphors. Above all the poem about the place that defines you should be written from the heart and you should feel it had to be put on paper.

See website for examples: [http://www.hollandparkpress.co.uk/magazine\\_detail.php?magazine\\_id=255&language=English](http://www.hollandparkpress.co.uk/magazine_detail.php?magazine_id=255&language=English)

**Writing @ Sea (UK) Closing Date: 31 December.** Free entry. Theme: Life at Sea. Maximum word limit 80 lines. Prize £1000. Further details about the competition here: <http://www.marine-society.org/writingatsea#>

To enter by email: [competitions@ms-sc.org](mailto:competitions@ms-sc.org)

**List of opportunities continues on page 10**

## Featured Poet: Rose Lilian

### Falling

She didn't like red autumn  
leaves crunching under tyres  
her old corolla clunker  
thumping backwards  
stuck in mud.  
I am livid with jealousy  
as I watch us  
on the edge of the seat  
dropping debris, flying feet—  
we think of nothing then.  
There is only the fresh  
the sharp, immediate March  
— just another day  
like grey stone concealing  
bloody rubies.

### Just Your Luck

Oh  
dear  
I must have  
thrown  
out your shirt by  
accident  
all that brown  
piping  
lost  
We  
can buy  
a blue one  
Sorry  
such a silly  
mistake  
it did make  
you look  
sickly

### Those Lines

Some moments are a line—  
you cross them  
and with that tiny transition  
you are changed. If only it were a line we could see  
coming, but a dark movement  
against a dark sky  
is very hard for the eye to pick up on.  
I think on this while devouring a cherry.  
It's purple in this light. Looks  
like black blood. Like  
the blood within me that must be black.  
You were my oxygen and now  
you are gone, see  
all this black blood pumping—  
a waste, a waste of plumbing.

### The Moon, The Orchard

The moon over the orchard.  
The limes, the lemons  
under spotlight— silver light— winking up  
magnetised by their beloved, curling round  
to the one they so long to emulate.  
Then, the air is as black as an ocean.  
Passing cloud drapes over trees  
shrug shoulders and hunch  
together, each their own lonely cloak—  
umbrellas pinned by the moon fall.  
The air is alive, abounding movement calls  
to the deepest part of souls  
and they run with it—  
the wind— the glow—  
the scent of citrus— it is too much—  
So in these moments  
let us undress mortality  
let us roll with the rolling  
lemons and breathe fruit and light  
and the darkness that passes  
touch the crinkled limbs  
(don't let the moon bowl past us)  
and let us call it what it is:  
running one  
with our own divinity.

## The Poet's Market

At the poet's market you'll find  
a medley of devices.

Thought for food in thousands of  
racks of flavour and colour.

"What will you give me  
for a rhyme?" cries a seller.

"Could I offer you  
a metaphor?" says another.

"I'll give you a simile  
for a smile."

But you smile anyway.  
Because your pocket is full  
of onomatopoeia.

BANG!

is no payment for a verse  
but it is worth its weight in surprise.

And while they are distracted  
you steal

some embellished words  
to adorn your parchment

a rhythm, to set the mood  
and (you've still got time)

you take hyperbole;  
if practiced rightly

it's an eye-popping defence  
against our dark arts.

Even adverbs get trapped  
in your catchment

but you can use them later  
to line the bin.

You cloak yourself in  
ambiguity

then you stroll to the café and relax over idiom soup.

## Saplings

We think to fill a void by gain—  
that chasm— the casting out, a yearning—  
would be no less empty with an endless supply of  
anything.

To spread out on grass in soft repose  
soon finds us pained by hidden grooves within our  
earth.

What could satisfy everybody?

The word here is gone—  
it leaves us  
in the minor key, mournful

Bring back skin against skin.  
Your hand felt more real to me  
than a bed already warmed by a sleeping body.

Then— it didn't matter— doesn't matter—  
we are both here, braided by luminous strands.  
As if we come from opposite banks of a river—

We bleed away, like water into roots, all abstract  
things.

We move beyond the thoughts batted between us;  
perhaps the fruit that tore us down, can actually  
save us.

## Swatting Poetry

At dusk they fall  
and crawl from crooks  
into the awaiting cradle of dark;  
bugs tangling in my hair.

I grab a brood  
between my fingers  
and squish it  
onto the page.

Blood pools  
under the crescent moon  
but the book is comforted;

I want someone to love  
the night with.

*(Swatting Poetry was first published by Darker Times Fiction,  
December 2012)*

**Voices Israel 2014 Anthology - Call for Submissions (Israel) Deadline: 31 January.** Voices Israel announces the opening of submissions to the 2014 Annual Anthology (Volume 40). There is no fee for submitting poems to the Anthology. Paid up members of Voices Israel will receive a copy of the anthology once it comes out, whether their poems are published or not, shipping fees included. Non-members may order a copy for NIS40 (US\$ 20) shipping inclusive.

**GUIDELINES:** Submissions for the Anthology are accepted until January 31. Poems will be sent to the editorial board, reviewed, selected, and notices sent out to contributors. Early submissions are welcomed and recommended. Submit a maximum of 4 poems on any subject. Poems should not exceed 40 lines. We prefer unpublished poems. However, poems previously published in the last 12 months will be considered as long as they have not won prizes in contests. Fancy or unconventional formatting is not encouraged. Full guidelines and submission details at <http://www.voicesisrael.com/anthology.htm>

Judging is anonymous and the poems will be forwarded to the editorial board without names. No revisions of poems will be accepted after submission.

**Prole Laureate Competition (UK) Closing date: 1 February.** Fees: £3.00 for first entry, £2.00 for any subsequent entries. First Prize: £140, Publication in *Prole 13* in April 2014 and publication on the Prole website; 2 x runner up prizes of £30, possible publication in *Prole 13* and publication on the Prole website.

Entries will be anonymised before being sent to the judge. Winners will be announced in issue 13 of *Prole* in April and on our website by April 20th.

Details: We are, as ever, completely open: free verse, blank verse, highly formed verse. You name it, we're looking for it. We want poems that epitomise the editorial values of *Prole*: to make writing engaging, accessible, entertaining and challenging. Quality is all. All work must be the original work of the writer and be unpublished.

How to enter: Via our website and email - preferred. Make the correct payment using PayPal on the competition page: <http://www.prolebooks.co.uk/page6.html>

Email your entry, including the text and PayPal transaction number, within the body of the email, to: [poetrycompetition@prolebooks.co.uk](mailto:poetrycompetition@prolebooks.co.uk)

Any profits made from our competition help to support the work we do at *Prole*. We are independent; we receive nor seek funding. Website: <http://www.prolebooks.co.uk>

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

**Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ) 2014 Competition Closing date: 28 February.** Poems in the Waiting Room (NZ) is a Dunedin based arts in health charity. We supply free poetry cards every season to medical waiting room patients, rest home resident, hospice patients and prison inmates.

The 2014 poetry competition will be judged by Helen Lehndorf. 1st prize: \$175; 2nd prize: \$150; 3rd prize: \$125. The UBS Dunedin best unplaced Dunedin poet prize: \$75 (All prizes will be book vouchers).

Unpublished poems of up to 25 lines on any theme 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 two copies 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 see: [waitingroompoems.wordpress.com](http://waitingroompoems.wordpress.com)

With thanks to our sponsors: Booksellers NZ and University Bookshop, Dunedin.

**The Typewriter, Call for Submissions Deadline: 28 February.** We are now reading for volume v of *The Typewriter*. If you are a poet from New Zealand, Australia or the wider Asia-Pacific region, please send us your poetry! We are really excited to enter the summer reading period for the next issue and are looking forward to delving into some inspiring creative work. Send your poems in the body of an email to [typewriter.editor@gmail.com](mailto:typewriter.editor@gmail.com) - for an idea of the type of thing we are after, have a gander at volumes i-iv: <http://thetypewriter.wordpress.com>

**The Yogic Path Poetry Prize (UK) Closing Date: 28 February.** (In conjunction with [poetrypoetics.com](http://poetrypoetics.com)) The Yogic Path is repeating its Poetry Prize for poems on Yoga. Yoga philosophy offers surprising insights into language. It states that conceptualization is based on language and independent of reality. And so poetry, which involves the art of words coupled with inspired imagination, finds an explanation in Yoga. Click here for the Application Form and rules: <http://www.yogicpath.com/images/downloads/competition/poetryprize.pdf>

The competition is open to all. Prize: Publication in *Yoga and Health* magazine; Publication on The Yogic Path website; Three signed books by Mira Mehta. Judges: Mira Mehta and Adrian Brown.

For further information please visit [www.yogicpath.com](http://www.yogicpath.com)

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I've always written. When I was in school, the only teacher who ever liked me was my creative writing teacher. I used to enter poetry competitions, and I don't think I ever lost one. So I had the idea for a while of being some kind of poet.

*Justin Townes Earle* (Singer/Songwriter)

## Reviews

**At the White Coast** Janet Charman (AUP, 2012) ISBN 978-1-86940-728-5

Heidi North-Bailey

Janet Charman's latest collection is dedicated to her grandmothers, both expats from that murky white coast of England, the landscape where the narrator finds herself in these poems. *At The White Coast* is a collection of travel poems – a young woman travelling from London and Europe, soaked in dreams, but shot through with gritty realism. She journeys through unfamiliar landscapes and the complicated relationships that accompany travelling:

do i need a boyfriend?  
he says the flight was early  
i let him in  
i want him  
(‘tenancy requirements’)

In 2008 Charman won the Montana NZ Book Award for poetry with *cold snack* (AUP, 2007) so I had high hopes from her latest collection. There is no denying that Charman has a masterful grasp on the use of words; the poems shine with tight lines, the fun spark of rhythm, and playful syntax. Each poem is a tight little delight.

The poems chart the narrator's haphazard course from grand old rooms with “cavernous ceiling” to bedsits, from confectionary selling to social work, boyfriends to feminists, from snatched moments of hope:

shall I remember this? view from the tile window:  
autumn plum leaf  
beaten sun  
cast from the tree transparent in rain  
(‘i admit it’)

to a sense of accepted despair e.g. in ‘work from home’:

but it won't last  
he's not  
getting any  
younger

There is a sense of both the real and imagined, as these poems loosely follow a young woman's journey from her arrival at the white coast, back to her uneasy homecoming. And while I liked this sense of narration, at times I also felt excluded from the poems. The voice was consistent and then there were jumps I felt were inconsistent. I also felt the journey was dated, which perhaps just shows my age, but it seemed to me that

the narrator was travelling through the '80s-early '90s and I did wonder why this book had just been published now. While I wanted to enjoy them, some of the political overtones and references left me cold.

However, there are some beautiful poems to savour. One of my favourite lines comes from ‘point of difference’:

when something's lost and the thought of its  
absence gnaws  
words i write can recover it  
but not this

*At The White Coast* is a sensitive, honest collection of poems by a skilled writer, but perhaps it has more appeal to a generation familiar with London in the '80s-'90s themselves.

**Nice, Pretty Things and others** Rachel Bush (VUP, 2012)

Natasha Dennerstein.

These are nice, pretty poems set in domestic life in ordinary provincial New Zealand. There are poems of childhood reverie (‘Like Streamers’, ‘Between the Lines’, ‘Spill’) and poems of old age, both from the first and third person perspective (‘Trellises’, ‘Birthday’, ‘Sometimes I Lie.’) There is also a series of poems in hospital settings (‘Tyler, Lily and Mozart’, ‘A Photo, a Ward and a Heavy Load.’)

Unfortunately the arrangement of the pieces does not play up the thematic links: that is left to the reader. In this collection, there are hospital poems, followed by old-age poems, childhood poems and memory poems shuffled like a deck of Tarot cards and allowed to fall where they will. A chronological array from childhood to death would be too obvious. The poems feel like they are calling out to be ordered into perhaps five distinct sections: childhood, middle-age, memory, hospital and nursing home. These are Bush's five major concerns in this collection.

These are ‘relatable’ poems: they will appeal to a wide range of kiwi readers who enjoy the poetics of the quotidian, the lyricism of a well-lived life.

One of the strongest pieces is ‘Wind Rose’, which works well on a visual level as a pair of film stills. The title contains two delightful double entendres and two meanings of “wind” and of “rose” are used within the body of the text. These are two words really ‘earning their rent’ here. This is a gorgeous and lush little poem.

When wind rose it abandoned  
petals almost like letters  
that are speckled with meanings  
we cannot quite read.

Another strong piece is saved to the ultimate place – perhaps one piece of evidence for ‘deliberate’ arrangement – and is entitled ‘Opening’. In this muscular wee poem the narrator is about to ‘go under’ anaesthesia and her/his final focus is on books and reading. There are literary and

sub-consciousness themes clearly at play.

A quick anaesthetist broke  
the tip of a vial, tipped it  
through the luer and I fell from  
myself....

The subtle rhyme of “quick anaesthetist” and the double use of “tip” are poetic techniques used effectively here.

There is a minor theme within the collection: that of the act of writing poetry. Poems such as ‘Pig-hunting’ and ‘Just Now’ comment lightly and humorously on the subject of writing within the domestic setting.

Form is unobtrusive throughout; language is plain and simple; literary and classical allusion are kept at bay. Various poetic ‘tricks’ are kept to a minimum in this plain, clear writing.

***Gleam Sarah Broom* (AUP, 2013) Pb, 52pp. RRP\$24.99. ISBN: 978 1 86940 770 4**

*Joanna Preston.*

When Sarah Broom died at the age of only 41, *Gleam*, her second poetry collection, was just going to press. Having been utterly smitten by her first book (*Tigers at Awhitu*), I couldn’t wait to get my hands on this one.

What I loved about ‘Awhitu’ was its musicality, its strangeness, and how Broom used surprising imagery to deepen and explore meaning. ‘Those are pearls’ does exactly that, using a stunning conceit to describe her lung cancer as “a sheaf of dry, golden grass / [...] lodged in my chest” (the Reaper, anybody?), with lines like, “I laugh with the husky/ recklessness of someone/ whose throat is wholly/ overtaken” and “my mouth is crowded/ with soft waving spears”. Or there’s the beautiful ‘because’, which captures the headiness and turmoil of love with images of broken clocks and windows that have to “hold themselves so tight just to stay”. Gorgeous.

Where *Gleam* falters for me is the overuse of images that are close to being poetic clichés – references to the sea, the moon, stars, birds, bones, the heart. Appropriate images, maybe, and individually, not a problem. But repeated, they start to feel like symbols that Broom has reached for without thinking. Waiting for the next reference to the sea (or the stars, or the heart, or ...) distracts from the poem itself. Had Broom used the images cumulatively, she could have given the recurrences extra meaning by developing them, poem by poem, throughout the book. But she hasn’t – the moon stays just a moon – and they stop being meaningful, and become written tics.

Another surprising stumble is an issue with some of her endings, with poems striving for extra poignancy and drama by the overuse of late stanza breaks. Some examples: “and heading up, straight up, / fishbone thin in

a thin blue sky // and then gone” (‘breath’); “when tears come/ my bones turn to water // and I sleep” (‘tender’); “the air in the room/ suddenly warm,/ aromatic/ // and I remember // to breathe” (‘roses so close to the sea’); “The dead tread/ the blank heart // the fading out” (‘Couplets’). In each case, allowing the last line to follow naturally on from the previous line would have had a less forced, more understated effect. Another example of this sort of authorial overstatement is ‘on not being very zen about it all’, which begins:

the branch when it is leaned on  
bends deep, and cracks when it has to

the sodden earth lets itself be flooded  
time and time again  
and does not rise up in anger

which is beautifully understated, and moving. And is followed by:

but the gashed hare writhes  
in the mouth of the dingo  
  
the bird screams and flails  
under the claws of the cat

Even if the point of the poem is that “we are flesh and blood after all // and we do not like to die”, that’s a very unobvious way of telling us.

Sarah Broom’s untimely death was a tragedy that overshadows this collection. It was a brave thing, to write about her experience of facing her own life’s ending. And it’s also perhaps understandable that she wasn’t as ruthless with these poems as she was when editing her earlier work. But sympathy for the poet is not relevant to the question that a review asks, which is do you think this is a good book? And much as I wish I could say yes, I don’t. *Gleam* is well named – there are glimmers in there. But for the most part, it’s a collection that leaves this reader saddened for the wrong reasons.

***this hill, all it’s about is lifting it to a higher level* Vaughan Gunson (Steele-Roberts, 2013) ISBN 9781877577840**

*Vaughan Rapatahana*

Congratulations to Vaughan for this, his first published collection of poetry. It’s always a source of pride for a poet with a track record such as his – as evidenced by warm references by Alistair Paterson and Siobhan Harvey on the back cover – to have this happen. Kia ora e hoa.

Congratulations also, of course, for having such a great name, Vaughan.

Gunson is a somewhat deceptive poet, but definitely never deliberately so. Deceptive because at a first rather

cursory reading, a large majority of poems contained within come across as somewhat banal; but after further closer readings, they reveal more and one realizes that first impressions were rather incorrect. This poetry grows after several sittings – and here we recall Gunson is also a painter. And these poems are easy to read, for they are not rammed full of esoteric references and clever-dick word play for the sheer sake of it. Indeed there is not a lot of word play per se.

For the key to Gunson is that he is very humble. He displays a complete lack of any pretence as to what his role as a poet is and as to what his roles in life are, chief perhaps among them being father and husband, followed closely by being a seeker of egalitarian social justice; he has been politically active in a number of grassroots campaigns in New Zealand over the last 15 years. “He is currently the national chair of Socialist Worker ... and is actively engaged in trying to bring about greater left unity in Aotearoa” – to quote from one of several websites about him. His craftsmanship reflects his honesty and simplicity. His is an unassuming and unpretentious oeuvre, as reflected in samples gleaned from several poems here, such as:

putting my children to bed  
 does not command  
 the language of ideals...

(from ‘a right lineage’)

Gunson is certainly not a fish floundering in the IIML school; “I don’t get regular payments from a trust”, he notes in his poem ‘at work’. His details concern ‘only’ what others might describe as ‘small’ things in his life, yet for this poet are the essentials of any edifice:

...as small things  
 can suddenly  
 make a difference

(from ‘dialectics’)

- it’s true  
 I’ve never really been interested  
 in getting  
 ahead.

(from ‘from the other lane’)

More, as he noted himself about his own poetry in this collection: “One of the recurring images is of sunlight.” He is a particularly positive poet as liberator throughout:

sunshine  
  
 releasing us  
 from mannered fashions  
  
 of constraint.

(from ‘sunshine’)

There is a definite sequence of poetic themes in this collection, with a glut of poems about writing poetry per se e.g. ‘the gumdigger’ concerns the titular hero’s work (mahi) as a strenuous and unrelenting parallel to Gunson’s own digging for and digging out glumps of worthy poems, while ‘there’s a few I’ve lost’ is a register of reference to the poet’s own poems – the first, early and late in his career; from the not so good right through to the precious. Then there’s the patient comment:

...writing is a horse you must  
 stay on,  
 you’ve got to follow it  
 until it comes in

(from ‘at work’)

Other sequences concern concise portraits of compact local scenes, such as in the poems ‘visiting Auckland’ and ‘a short walk’ and ‘over the fence’, while depictions of Gunson’s own kids and family (including their dog) during their diurnal living also dominate. More, there are lines which touch on wider social issues that are relevant to where he lives (Hikurangi, near Whangarei) such as in ‘all our directions home’, with the accent there on different ethnicities sharing; given that a couple of poems do touch on specific overseas miscarriages of justice and social malfeasance, as in New York in 1741 (‘perspective’).

Overall, then:

the lines aren’t tragic  
 or epic  
 & don’t go very far  
  
 they start where they are  
 & go no further  
 than the love that’s there

(from ‘a right lineage’)

Just as Gunson is generally not big on overarching philosophical themes and is in fact best when he leaves them well alone, he also is not big on clever poetic devices and extended tracts of figurative language either, although, of course, he can flick a clever few our way every so often, such as the following lines from ‘somewhere else’ and ‘just a point man in the ocean’ respectively):

you cry everything,  
 your face  
 turns to plasticine.

and

the black island rocks, their skirts  
 of white foam billowing up  
  
 like Marilyn Monroe’s dress  
 long ago...

All are short pieces too, thus enabling one to whiz quite quickly through the entire volume, without being bogged down in acres of dense verse. Sam Hunt springs to mind here as an influence as regards being thankful for small mercies and – more especially in the later Hunt poems (think of *Chords and Other Poems* from last year) – in writing very simply about supposedly simple things. Gunson has also cited elsewhere that Charles Bukowski, Pablo Neruda and Bob Dylan are key influences on his writing.

Maori as identifiable individuals or as iwi are essentially missing from most of the pages; there is the one poem with a few common token Maori words chucked in, although there is in the longer piece ‘waiting’ definite allusions to the flag of tino rangatiratanga and to Pakeha police members and fat cats as social nemeses. This is not a criticism either: as pointed out earlier, Gunson concentrates on what he has experienced, what he knows. Fair enough. And he definitely knows all ain’t equal in Aotearoa-New Zealand society, eh, if we quote from this same alliterative poem:

she remembers  
the pushing, the sharp yells,  
the clatter of battered skin & muscle;  
the panic  
pressed  
in the eyes  
of the pakeha suit –  
dirt of generations thrown

However – and here is my only prod of pickiness regarding this collection – too many poems focusing on domesticity, locality, literality, could lead to complaints from some critics that Gunson’s horizons are too limited; while a few poems especially are a little over the top in terms of sweeping ‘philosophical’ statements, such as ‘red balloon’ and ‘I saw rhombuses that looked like diamonds’ and ‘is there an explanation’ – where the poet aims at a profundity that doesn’t quite pump on through – at least for me.

To clarify, by referring to the title of this collection, Gunson is at his best when he aims at lifting us all to a higher level from the very bases of domesticity, locality and lack of literary pretentiousness as mentioned earlier. Besides which, I suspect he is pretty bound by the rigours of childminding and fund-finding, which impinge a bit on his being able to eat, let alone to find time to digest and share his poems at all!

no time – stuff the rest  
of my lines in my mouth  
run back to the kids  
(from ‘portrait of the artist as a parent of young children’)  
I will conclude this review with a complete poem

which is the standout in this collection and which displays a clever extended metaphor and as such is markedly different in this respect. Here the poet’s eye, his writing hand and some time and space to pen all gel into a little masterpiece of a poem.

### fastfood workers

they burst from the paper bag  
running like salt from a shaker  
scattering flecks of taste  
  
they gush like soft drink  
push the button & they gurgle & froth  
with youthful bubbles over the rim  
  
they burn & sear like burger patties  
on the grill, hot anger spits  
from their mouths as they yell  
  
they ooze like ice cream  
filling every corner, every gap  
compact with cold determination  
  
they have sizzled in the fat  
crisp as you like, now they’re  
blocking arteries in the street.

All in all, then, a promising and accessible collection. Here is a man who knows his limits and who has mostly made a conscious decision to stick to them. Again to quote from the man himself: “My experience is that the poems do speak to people outside of the poetry world because they’re not academic or obscure. Hopefully, people can relate to them and reflect on their own life experiences.”

Tika tau korero (Too true.)  
A bit of a son of a gun, eh.



## Around the Interweb

**Poetry is all about** making new discoveries and expressing the unexpressed, noted Indian poet and writer Arundhati Subramaniam has said...

“The spine of a poem lies in silence, which probably is the only form of a language that is not confined within the punctuations,” she said.

“Poetry to me was all about making new discoveries. It expresses the unexpressed and accommodates even in the uncertainties,” the 40-year-old said. “Poetry is a dark art that leaks through the lives of the people.”

Subramaniam was speaking at a literary event - the Eighth edition of Voices, an interaction programme organised by the Indian Embassy in association with the BP Koirala India Nepal Foundation in Kathmandu...

Read more at: [http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/poetry-is-all-about-making-new-discoveries-113120700506\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/poetry-is-all-about-making-new-discoveries-113120700506_1.html)

**The poets and writers** of the so-called Beat generation are apparently endlessly fascinating to film-makers. Among the many films these cool young mavericks have inspired are last year's 'On the Road', a fictionalised account of the adventures that led to Jack Kerouac's novel of the same name, and 'Howl' (2010), starring James Franco as Allen Ginsberg defending his best-known poem in a 1957 obscenity trial. These writers lived colourfully and wrote radically, making them natural subjects for the screen. Yet the films they inspire tend to be lazily presented, too convinced of their subjects' innate appeal. 'On the Road' was too frantic; 'Howl' too reverential.

'Kill Your Darlings', which offers a glimpse at the early university days of Ginsberg, Kerouac and their friend Lucien Carr (who ends up murdering a man in love with him), is more successful than its predecessors, perhaps because it treats its subjects as men, not gods.

Read more at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2013/12/qa-john-krokidas>

**To experience 'Frolic Architecture'** is to enter into a world that feels both familiar and bizarre. The piece, a collaboration between composer David Grubbs and poet Susan Howe is a delicate sound collage, rich with layers, solemn, and mildly, comfortably disjointed. At times it evokes a church; at other times, a summer evening; at still others, something so basic and pre-language that it suggests the existence of a unifying human voice, tentative but true.

Howe, whose textual art exhibition recently closed at Portland's Yale Union (and who has work in the upcoming Whitney Biennial), is a poet of the eye as much as of the ear. On the page her work is difficult to read in any standard sense, made up as it is of fragments and snippets of other preexisting texts. What gives the YU show coherence is the installation format: the pages are arranged so that the viewer can walk around them, building a story through the experience of the room rather than simply allowing the story to unfold as a book might present it. Movement makes sense of the work.

Read more (and see the photos) at: <http://hyperallergic.com/97949/an-architecture-of-poetry-and-sound/>

**Dissertations are long and boring.** By contrast, everybody likes haiku. So why not write your dissertation as a haiku? Here's an example:

Growing new tissue  
Cells need a scaffold for growth  
PHEMA can be used

Stefan Paterson, University of Western Australia

Thesis Title: "The synthesis of PHEMA-based materials for tissue engineering applications".

For more: <http://dissertationhaiku.wordpress.com/>

## American Life in Poetry: Column 404

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE

The first winter my wife and I lived in the country, I brought a wild juniper tree in from our pasture and prepared to decorate it for Christmas. As it began to warm up, it started to smell as if a coyote, in fact a number of coyotes, had stopped to mark it, and it was soon banished to the yard. Jeffrey Harrison, a poet who lives in Massachusetts, had a much better experience with nature.

### Nest

It wasn't until we got the Christmas tree  
into the house and up on the stand  
that our daughter discovered a small bird's nest  
tucked among its needled branches.

Amazing, that the nest had made it  
all the way from Nova Scotia on a truck  
mashed together with hundreds of other trees  
without being dislodged or crushed.  
And now it made the tree feel wilder,  
a balsam fir growing in our living room,  
as though at any moment a bird might flutter  
through the house and return to the nest.

And yet, because we'd brought the tree indoors,  
we'd turned the nest into the first ornament.  
So we wound the tree with strings of lights,  
draped it with strands of red beads,  
and added the other ornaments, then dropped  
two small brass bells into the nest, like eggs  
containing music, and hung a painted goldfinch  
from the branch above, as if to keep them warm.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2011 by Jeffrey Harrison, whose most recent book of poems is *Incomplete Knowledge*, Four Way Books, 2006. Reprinted from *upstreet*, No. 8, June 2012, by permission of Jeffrey Harrison and the publisher. Introduction copyright © 2012 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.

# Members' Poems

## the rights of men

Having him known as Uncle  
Tom was odd, yet we  
half-knew he half-  
was, that Grandfather  
begat him. We all half-  
knew that Mother's slave  
Sally was her half-  
sister, that Father was having them  
both. Mother would have kept  
silent all along; women of her  
class knew their duty, to  
not know what they all  
knew. After Mother died  
Sally became our half-  
mother. We half-  
knew her four children were our half-  
siblings, yet they were slaves, had to  
work at something. We were stylish  
wealthy Virginia gentry.  
I'm now quite old, and Dixie is half-  
over, which is a half-shame.

*John C. Ross*

## Scene from a boat

1A  
Bare branches on shore nudge each other  
as if sharing a joke  
that cannot be heard over water.

1B  
I'm writing postcards to the sunshine;  
you are below, with the children,  
pretending to do chores.

1C  
Rocking gently I fall asleep in a narrow cot  
wondering if this is how babies feel.  
I dream of my mother's death.

1D  
I've already sailed to Byzantium.

*Margaret Vos*

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Open Section. Published in *Given an ordinary stone* (ed  
Owen Bullock, NZPS anthology, 2013)

## Destination

'In two hundred metres turn left.  
In four hundred metres bear right.  
You have reached your designated road.  
You are now at your destination.'<sup>1</sup>

If only the directions for living were as simple;  
There aren't many t-intersections,  
who has the courage to make a u-turn  
'take the fourth exit at the round-about'<sup>1</sup>

At a t-junction right and left would be opposites  
Buy a Nissan, don't buy one  
Mazda, Volkswagen not considered.

A u-turn would mean going backwards  
along a familiar route, driving a manual  
returning to childhood; riding a bicycle,  
instead we keep trustingly going straight on  
with the illusion that we turn at 'the second exit'<sup>1</sup>.

Buying a new car seems like a new start  
until it needs cleaning just like the old one.

Bear right or left to follow the route pre-set for you.  
Perhaps we are always in unknown territory  
following our designated road.

<sup>1</sup>the voice of the NAVIGON app.

*Maryrose Doull*

## Political Immunity (editorial and quotes)

from *The Listener* - a found poem

I don't really remember  
smoking crack  
so no need to submit a resume  
economists have a sense  
that they were the people  
but the police say  
they have insufficient  
evidence to prosecute  
within two standard deviations  
they play a regulatory role  
in the functions  
of the immune system  
while morals and diplomacy  
are words that sit uneasily together

*Maureen Sudlow*