



Newsletter July 2005

New Zealand Poetry Society *Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa*

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☞ This Month's Meeting ☞

**James Brown and Geoff Cochrane
will read Wellington poems and talk
about being writers strongly influenced
by living in Wellington.
At Museum of City and Sea
21 July 7.30pm**

Haiku and Zen

Richard von Sturmer

Since the Middle Ages, Zen Buddhism, with its emphasis on simplicity, naturalness and austerity, has been a predominant force in Japanese culture. We will look at nine qualities inherent in Zen and how these qualities relate to the writing of haiku.

1. Oneness

Zen teaches that people's suffering arises from a sense of separation, from feeling 'alone and afraid in a world I never made.' The practice of haiku can dissolve this feeling of separation by enabling us to experience the unity of our own nature and the nature of everything around us. As Bashō wrote in a letter to a disciple, 'Learn about pine from the pine, and about bamboo from the bamboo. The poet should ... enter into the object so that the poem forms itself when the poet and object become one.'

*the sound of hail—
I remain, as before,
an old oak*

Bashō

2. Intimacy

Intimacy means not pulling back, but drawing nearer, and with haiku we're always drawing close to things.

When we stop fixating on personal concerns, we can give ourselves over to the world. For writing haiku this means being completely in tune with our environment, whether we're walking down a busy street or talking quietly with a friend.

*they spoke no word,
the host, the guest
and the white chrysanthemum*

Ryota

3. Emptiness

When Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen, was asked, 'What is the fundamental teaching of Buddhism?' he replied, 'Vast emptiness and nothing holy.' This revolutionary statement has reverberated down through the ages, and its truth is now confirmed by quantum physics. Atoms – the basic stuff of the universe – are 99.999 percent emptiness. That is the way things are. And we need to be empty so that the things of this world can reveal themselves to us.

*midnight – no waves, no wind
the empty boat is
flooded with moonlight*

Dogen

4. Suchness

Tathatā is a Sanskrit term meaning 'suchness'. The great mystery of the universe is that out of fundamental emptiness arises such a staggering variety of forms. As Yasutani-roshi, a modern Zen teacher, puts it, 'The original face of universality moves briskly in detailed particulars.'

*the spring is cold –
the puppeteer
keeps coughing*

Suiha

5. Uniqueness

R H Blyth affirms that ‘Haiku record what Wordsworth calls those ‘spots of time,’ those moments which for some quite mysterious reason have a peculiar significance.’ Haiku also celebrates the uniqueness of ordinary things and, at the same time, shows how that uniqueness contains the universal.

*spring rain—
a rat is lapping
the Sumida River*

Issa

6. Impermanence

This world is astonishingly mysterious and beautiful and sad because it is constantly changing. Nothing lasts; everything is in a state of flux. The truth of impermanence does not diminish but rather enhances the uniqueness of each thing, each person. Life is precious because it is so fleeting. Haiku poets, perhaps more than any other group of writers, are reporters on the transitory nature of this world.

*the owner of the cherry blossoms
turns to compost
for the trees*

Utsu (his death verse)

7. Naturalness

In both Zen and haiku there is an appreciation of the unadorned, the worn and the weathered. When writing haiku, we pay attention to what is usually overlooked, to what is on the margins, to what people so easily miss in the hustle and bustle of daily life. Naturalness means being one with nature, and in harmony with the seasons and our own changing circumstances.

*the wind brings
enough fallen leaves
to make a fire*

Ryōkan

8. Attentiveness

One day a layman said to Ikkyu, ‘Master, will you please write for me some maxims of the highest wisdom?’ Ikkyu took his brush and wrote the word *Attention*. ‘Is that all?’ asked the man, ‘Will you not add something more?’ Ikkyu then wrote *Attention Attention*. ‘Well,’ remarked the man rather irritably, ‘I really don’t see much subtlety in what you’ve just written.’ Then Ikkyu wrote the same word three times: *Attention Attention Attention*. Half angered, the man demanded, ‘What does that word ‘attention’ mean anyway?’ Ikkyu answered, ‘Attention means attention.’ This dialogue about sums it up: haiku is the art of paying attention.

*peeling pears—
sweet juice drips
from the knife blade*

Shiki

9. Responsiveness

We live in a dynamic universe and we are called on to respond. As haiku writers, we respond to the world through our writing. Haiku, by revealing the hidden affinity between things, confirms the interconnectedness of all life.

*each time the wave breaks
the raven
gives a little jump*

Nissha

The raven becomes one with the waves, and we return to where we started in our list of Zen qualities.

Richard von Sturmer is an Auckland poet who has lived in the Rochester Zen Center in New York.

☞ From the Editor ☞

There are days when it’s impossible to get away from poetry. If you walk past a primary school, you’ll hear chanting in the playground. Any approaching train or truck will be carrying the rhythm of a Tuwhare poem. If you’re lying awake in the middle of the night with your eyes on stalks, you’ll turn on the radio and hear Hinemoana Baker’s programme ‘Waiata’ followed by the Marine Weather Forecast. The days when you are ambushed by poetry at every corner are not always the best days, but on the other hand, they are the days to be most thankful for. Here’s a poem (stolen from Janette Winterson’s website) by one of my favourite poets, Carol Ann Duffy. The last two lines of the poem refer to the Shipping Forecast.

Prayer

*Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer
utters itself. So a woman will lift
her head from the sieve of her hands and stare
at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.
Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth
enters our hearts, that small familiar pain;
then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth
in the distant Latin chanting of a train.
Pray for us now. Grade 1 piano scales
console the lodger looking out across
a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls
a child’s name as though they named their loss.
Darkness outside. Inside the radio’s prayer –
Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.*

Carol Ann Duffy

☞ From the Committee ☞

BREAKING NEWS: The future of the New Zealand Poetry Society's Wellington public events programme has been saved: Neil Furby will run the Wellington meetings. Details to be announced soon.

MONTANA POETRY DAY: To celebrate Montana Poetry Day in October, the Society will create Poetry on the Pavement: a series of 12 poems chalked on the pavement in Wellington's central business district. Poetry postcards will also be given away. We want to curate a range of poems and poetic fragments that best represents the diversity of Wellington City.

AWARD: The Society is proud to announce that the second Lauris Edmond Memorial Award for Poetry (supported by the NZPS) will be presented at the 'Five New Zealand Poets' reading of the Christchurch Arts Festival – Applaud 2005. You can view this at: <http://www.artsfestival.co.nz>

OTHER NEWS: We are very pleased to advise members that the second AGM had well over a quorum and elected a new president, James Norcliffe, and committee members: Gillian Cameron, Kathryn Carmody, Neil Furby, Laurice Gilbert, Harvey Molloy and Margaret Vos. New annual membership rates were approved: \$25 for individual membership and \$35 for joint membership at the same address. The overseas annual membership rate will be \$35. These rates will be effective from 1 April 2006.

The last quarter has seen continued improvements to the Society's newsletter and website. Finally, competition judging is now underway. The AGM was followed by an excellent panel discussion and readings from Harry Ricketts, Anna Jackson, Chris Orsman and Stephanie de Montalk.

Helen Heath – Administrator

☞ Upcoming Events ☞

Montana New Zealand Book Awards

The finalists in New Zealand's celebrated Montana New Zealand Book Awards have been announced. Close to 200 books written by New Zealanders and published during the 2004 calendar year have been read and debated by the judging panel during the past five months, with assistance from a team of category advisors.

'And what a joy it was,' said the convenor of the judging panel, former publisher Graham Beattie. 'The calibre of the books submitted for this year's Montana New Zealand Book Awards proves that the local book publishing industry is in good heart, fuelled as it is by many talented writers, both new and experienced, across

all genres.' Beattie is joined on the panel by Wellington writers and critics John McCrystal and Laura Kroetsch.

The poetry finalists for the Deutz Medal are:
Fool Moon by Murray Edmond (published by Auckland University Press)
Nice morning for it, Adam by Vincent O'Sullivan (published by Victoria University Press)
The Red Tram by C K Stead (published by Auckland University Press)

The key dates are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Friday, 15 July 2005 | Voting for the Readers Choice Award closes at 5pm |
| Friday, 22 July 2005 | Montana Poetry Day Winner of Deutz Medal Poetry Category announced |
| Monday, 25 July 2005 | Montana New Zealand Book Awards ceremony in Wellington |
| Tuesday, 26 July 2005 | Winners event at the Westpac St James Theatre is open to the public |

For further information contact Sandra Noakes, Media Co-ordinator, Montana New Zealand Book Awards 2005, phone 09 411 9908, mobile 027 228 7013, or email: sandra.noakes@xtra.co.nz
www.montananzbookawards.co.nz

Montana Poetry Day 2005

The New Zealand Poetry Society is proud to present two exciting Wellington events for Montana Poetry Day 2005:

Thursday, 21 July, 7.30pm, Museum of Wellington City and Sea, Queens Wharf: James Brown and Geoff Cochrane will read Wellington poems and talk about being writers strongly influenced by living in Wellington. Participants from June's Writing Workshop will also read.

Friday, 22 July – Montana Poetry Day: Keep an eye out for Poetry on the Pavement and Poetry Postcards brightening up the central city.

For further information, contact Helen Heath, Administrator, New Zealand Poetry Society, PO Box 5283, Lambton Quay, Wellington, or Email: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/>

This year's Montana Poetry Day will take to the streets, cafes and airways on Friday 22 July. Since 1998 Montana Poetry Day has given New Zealand poets a forum for their work. It has also given New Zealand's poetry lovers a huge range of work to enjoy.

Highlights this year include open mike sessions in Orewa, Auckland, Waipu, Hamilton, Tauranga and Christchurch.

Auckland will enjoy performances by Paula Green, Witi Ihimaera, Anne Kennedy, Selina Tusitala March and Bob Orr. In Henderson you can listen to Reimke Ensing and John Yelash. Raewyn Alexander will be reading in Tauranga; Hinemoana Baker, Jackie Sturm and Wanjiku Kiaria will be reading in Otaki.

In Wellington current Poet Laureate Jenny Bornholdt will share the stage with James Brown, Geoff Cochrane, Bill Manhire, Gregory O'Brien, Chris Price and Ashleigh Young. Sam Hunt will be in concert with Irish duo Finn McCool in Upper Hutt.

Dunedin will host Diane Brown, Jenny Powell-Chalmers, Sue Wootton and Peter Olds. Cilla McQueen will launch a new collection, *Fire Penny*, in Gore.

Singer Anna Rugis and poet Jack Ross will debut a performance piece 'Alterations of Darkness and Light' at the Auckland City Gallery. In Wellington the New Zealand Film Archive will screen *Poets to Go*, a 50-minute programme of cine-poems. Also in Wellington the Poetry Society will create a poetic journey made up of 12 poems chalked onto the pavement.

There are a whole range of activities for children, including competitions, performances and one inventive hour where children will use poems to create wall-hangings.

This year for the first time, the winner of the Poetry category in the Montana New Zealand Book Awards will be announced on Montana Poetry Day. The finalists are *Fool Moon* by Murray Edmond (Auckland University Press), *Nice Morning for it, Adam* by Vincent O'Sullivan (Victoria University Press), and *The Red Tram* by C K Stead (Auckland University Press). Edmond and Stead will be reading from their collections at an Auckland event organised for Montana Poetry Day by NZEPC (New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre).

We have again produced a Poetry Sampler which features poems by the three finalists and the winners from the previous two years – a copy is included with this issue. If you would like additional copies of the Poetry Sampler to distribute on the day, please contact Holly Robinson: holly.robinson@booksellers.co.nz or 04 478 5511.

It's not too late to register an event. If you would like to register an event contact Laura Kroetsch at laura.kroetsch@paradise.net.nz or by phone on 04 475 8589. For a complete list of events visit www.montananzbookawards.co.nz

Winter Readings by Leading NZ Poets and Exciting New Voices

Presented by Headworx Publishers, Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop, Kwanzaa – The Afrikan Shop and Writers International.

Thursday, 4 August 2005, 7.30–9.30pm, *Where the Streets Have No Name*: Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, Meg Campbell, Yilma Tafere Tasew and Harry Ricketts (plus launch of Meg Campbell's *Resistance*). The MC will be Harvey McQueen.

Wednesday, 10 August, 7.30-9.30pm, *With or Without You*: Michael O'Leary, L E Scott, Joy McKenzie and Bill Dacker. The MC will be Iain Sharp.

Wednesday, 17 August, 7.30-9.30pm, *Desire*: Mark Pirie, Richard von Sturmer, Vivienne Plumb and Helen Rickerby (plus launch of Mark Pirie's *London Notebook*). The MC will be Neil Wright.

Wednesday, 24 August 2005, 7.30-9.30pm, *Mysterious Ways*: Tim Jones, Robin Fry, Amelia Nurse, Scott Kendrick and Therese Lloyd. The MC will be Moira Wairama.

Venue: St John's Community Room, St John's Church, corner of Willis/Dixon Streets, Wellington. Admission to all readings is by koha.

Sylvia Plath Play at Circa

The US screen actress Angelica Torn and Sylvia Plath biographer/director Paul Alexander will perform the acclaimed one-woman production *Edge* in Wellington in July.

Compellingly written and masterfully performed, *Edge* tells of the life and death of troubled poet and author Sylvia Plath. Set on the day in 1963 when Plath died, *Edge* offers her dramatic and poignant self-told story, evocatively etching the events and people that shaped her life and work. Angelica Torn received brilliant reviews in New York and London for her outstanding performance as Plath.

The play is being brought to Circa direct from New York by Mary and Peter Biggs and will run for one week only. '*Edge* affected us deeply because it's a compelling account of the fragility of the creative life and the story of one person's struggle to live deeply the life of the soul amid the complexities of everyday life,' said Mary and Peter Biggs. 'This play is about the person and the poetry – and how the two are inseparable. The words and life of Sylvia Plath have fascinated us for years. *Edge* is a gem of a play. Bringing it to Wellington from New York is our gift to a city that has given us so much.'

The production is dedicated to Geraldine Page (1924–87).

Workshops: Hot Wired in the Pacific

The 2005 NZETA (NZ English Teachers Association) Conference, 'Hot Wired in the Pacific,' runs 14–17 July at Botany Downs College, Manukau City. It will focus

on information and communications technology, and Pacific and Asian literature in New Zealand classrooms. Workshops include:

- A presentation from Auckland poet, Janet Charman, based on her recent collection *snowing down south* (AUP)
- ‘Manukau Poetry’
- ‘ICT and Poetry, a Junior School Approach’
- ‘Visual Interpretations of Poetry’
- ‘Hone Tuwhare – the Return Home’: Touring and filming with one of New Zealand’s greatest poets through Northland. An insight into Hone Tuwhare’s creative personality, his work and his philosophy about writing from filmmaker Michelle McGregor.

There will also be keynote speeches, an International Literary Quiz and a Panel Discussion on Asian and Pacific Literatures.

Report from AUP

Workshop for Pacific Writers

The Pacific Arts Committee of Creative New Zealand is offering a free one-day workshop in Auckland on Saturday, 9 July to assist with the development of emerging and established Pacific writers.

The *Second Draft* workshop will provide Pacific writers with information about writing practice, markets and how to get published; funding opportunities through the Pacific Arts Committee; and how to build networks and stay in touch with other workshop participants.

The workshop is a follow-up to the Pacific Arts Committee’s successful *First Draft* workshop for emerging Pacific writers, held in 2003. Participants must have previous writing and/or publishing experience and be a New Zealand citizen or resident of Pacific Islands heritage.

The full-day workshop will be held at AUT (Wellesley Street Campus) from 9.45am to 4pm. The number of participants is limited to 30 writers. Prospective participants must register with Creative New Zealand by 5pm, Friday, 1 July 2005.

Registration forms can be downloaded from the resources section of Creative New Zealand’s website: www.creativenz.govt.nz or by contacting Joanne Andrews: joannea@creativenz.govt.nz

Report from NZSA

Going West Books & Writers 2005

From 2–25 September Waitakere City will be hosting the tenth anniversary of the Going West Books and Writers Festival.

The 2005 programme features an exciting mix of word-based events, including a weekend of literary presentations, the Going West steam train journey, theatre, rare and second hand book market, poetry slam and family storytelling day.

The Going West Poetry Slam will be at the Titirangi War Memorial Hall, Waitakere City, 3 September 2005.

To go on the mailing list contact:

Lesley.Smith@waitakere.govt.nz

Send your name and address to:

www.goingwest.co.nz

Writers at the Taranaki Festival of the Arts

Leading New Zealand writers Charlotte Grimshaw, Deborah Shepard, Gregory O’Brien, Hinemoana Baker, Patricia Grace, Harvey McQueen, KellyAna Morey, Steve Braunias, David Hill and Elizabeth Smither will feature in a weekend-long Book Talk/Special on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August. For more information on the Festival go to: www.artsfest.co.nz

Report from NZSA

Poetry Day in Manukau City

Montana Poetry Day will be marked by a celebration of the anthology *Manukau in Poetry* on Friday, 22 July, 6.30pm at the Ronwood Avenue Library Information Centre. Some of the poets who feature in the collection will read a poem each and other poets are invited to bring along a poem or two to read.

Report by Bernard Gadd

Haiku in the Hills

An opportunity to talk poetry as you walk to Cedar Flats and Top Toaroha. This is a classic West Coast tramp with hot pools and the majestic Southern Alps and West Coast bush as muse and backdrop.

The proposed date for the trip is 22–24 (Labour Day) October. This gives two nights in the hills with the option of a different hut each night and a long walk on the last day, or two nights in the first hut. The track is 20 minutes’ drive from Hokitika. It is relatively easy for a West Coast tramp and offers a variety of landscapes and vegetation.

For further information, contact: Donald Buglass, 47 Livingstone St, Hokitika, 027 482 1983.

☞ A Warm Welcome to . . . ☛

Michelle Durey – Auckland
Adrian Croucher – Auckland
Lynn Gray Kohen – Nelson
Stephanie Spite – Masterton
Laurence Sinclair – Christchurch
Sheila Hughes – Auckland
Julie Ryan – Auckland
Jennifer Murray – Christchurch
Ralph Proops – Wellington
Iain Trousdell – Napier
Grace Francis – Cambridge
Nancy Byrne – Woodville
Christopher Hart – Auckland
Lucy Revill – Wellington
Alistair Pain – Kapiti
Maggie Writer – Dunedin
Carolyn McCurdie – Dunedin
Raylee Van Leeuwen – Mosgiel
Althea Barr – Auckland
Wendy Baker – Wanganui
Kathleen Henderson – Christchurch
David Gregory – Lyttleton
Irene Mosvold – USA
Kathleen Inkster – Wellington
Joanna Dixon – Auckland

Quotation of the Month

‘The voyage of discovery lies not in finding new
landscapes, but in having new eyes.’

Marcel Proust

☞ Other News ☛

Bursary Awarded

Victoria Broome of Christchurch has been awarded the 2005 Louis Johnson Writers’ Bursary, worth \$18,000. This will enable her to write a collection of poetry.

Griffin Poetry Prize Winners Announced

Roo Borson’s *Short Journey Upriver Toward Oishida* and Charles Simic’s *Selected Poems 1963–2003* are the Canadian and International winners of the fifth annual Griffin Poetry Prize for first edition books of poetry published in 2004. The CAN\$100,000 Griffin Poetry Prize, the richest poetry prize in the world for a single volume of poetry, is divided between the two winners.

Meet the Settlers

The event ‘Whalers, Jailers, Poets and More: Extraordinary People from Dunedin’s Past’ is being organised by the Otago Settlers Museum. This guided walking tour will visit locations throughout the city centre and introduce participants to a fascinating range of characters who helped shape Dunedin’s history. It will begin at 2pm on 5 July 2005. For bookings, call the Otago Settlers Museum 03 474 2728.

Report from NZSA

New Zealand Book Council Moves Office

The New Zealand Book Council is pleased to announce that we now have a new home. We have moved from Old Wool House on Featherston St and our new physical and postal address is Level 7, Navigate House, 69 Boulcott St, Wellington.

Our phone number and fax number remain the same, ph 04 499 1569 and fax 04 499 1424. We welcome visitors to our new office.

Honorary Degrees for Two Cultural Icons

Two of New Zealand’s cultural icons, the painter Ralph Hotere and the poet Hone Tuwhare, have received honorary Doctor of Literature degrees from the University of Auckland.

The degrees were conferred at a special ceremony in Port Chalmers, Dunedin, by the University’s Pro-Chancellor, Jenny Gibbs, in the presence of their friends and members of the artistic community.

Professor McCutcheon described Hone Tuwhare as New Zealand’s finest living poet, the author of more than a dozen volumes which dated back to his first, *No Ordinary Sun*, in 1964.

Paekakariki Posse at Porirua Poetry Café

(from) ‘How to find your way home’

*...Now you stop, stare at her picture, memorise it,
the line of her brow, her heavy lids.
Replay the old stories she told you
How do you find your way home?
Look closer
those eyes
your new daughter.*

Know: you are home now and she will leave you.

Helen Heath’s poem, ‘How to find your way home’, sums up some of the themes and preoccupations of the poetry we heard at the Poetry Café at Kelly’s Place last month. Tina Regtien, Apirana Taylor and Helen Heath are the Paekakariki Posse, and together gave a memorable performance.

Apirana, interspersing poems with guitar and a haunting nose flute, explored issues of place and

belonging in a variety of powerful poems. Tina and Helen both read some strong and sometimes funny poems about domesticity and parenting. The performance was energetic, fresh and generous. The poems made journeys back to and away from the familiar. They seemed to be writing about real life and real people: all the colour and chaos of it.

Lynn Davidson

☞ Publications ☞

Denys Trussell's seventh book of poems, *Speaking to the Islands of the Ancestors*, published by Brick Row Publishing, was launched at the Auckland Writers' and Readers' Festival.

121 New Zealand Poems: This new anthology is edited by Bill Manhire and published by Random House. It showcases the 'top' 121 New Zealand poems (but includes only one poem by any single poet). Works featured range from the country's earliest poems to work by the new poets of the 21st century. The historical ordering by subject matter gives a sense of New Zealand as a place which grows and changes over the years. It includes poems by Glen Colquhoun, Kate Camp, Anna Jackson, Anne Kennedy, Emma Neale, James Brown, Chris Price, Kapka Kassabova and Sonja Yelich. The RRP is \$29.95.

Takahe 54 is now out.

Jacket 27: New material has been added to the current issue of *Jacket* (Guest Editor: Pam Brown) including Michele Leggott's 'Journey to Portugal'. For further information, see: <http://jacketmagazine.com/27/legg.html>

Report from AUP

Cover Stories, published by Victoria University Press, is the third volume of poetry from this year's Victoria University/Creative New Zealand Writer-in-Residence, Stephanie de Montalk. De Montalk will read from *Cover Stories* and present a preview of her novel-in-progress in the 'Writers on Mondays' series, which kicks off on 11 July at City Gallery Wellington with an international guest.

Report from IIML

Leaves of Light is the fifteenth collection of poetry by the internationally celebrated poet Ron Riddell. Published in Los Angeles by Caza de Poesia in June this year, it is this poet's third bilingual volume (English/Spanish). The poems were written in New Zealand and Latin America between 2000 and 2004.

Leaves of Light has been awarded 'The House of Poetry International Award (USA)' for 2005. *Leaves of*

Light is a fresh, lively and lyrical collection of poems, which celebrates the natural world. It also deals with themes of oppression and exile.

☞ Submissions ☞

Writers' Café Looking for Submissions

The Writers' Cafe in the UK is looking for submissions from New Zealanders of any ethnic origin to feature on a Kiwi writers web page. Stories of no more than 500 words (though links to longer pieces will be considered), poems and other frippery can be sent to: kiwiwriterscafe@yahoo.co.nz

Report from NZSA

Calling all Indigenous Women and Girls

Submissions are wanted for an anthology entitled *Father Tongue*. Send your submissions and queries to indigenuswomen@hotmail.com The closing date is 28 July.

Biennial Prize in Modern Letters

To obtain a nomination form, see: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/activities/prize-in-modern-letters.aspx>. The closing date is 29 July.

106.7 BROTHERLUV FM

Wanted: original poetry in CD form to play on my low power FM Radio Station. For further information, contact Steve Brother Majik, 0800 625 451, or send to PO Box 47, Wanganui.

☞ Congratulations ☞

Congratulations to these New Zealand poets who were highly commended in the 'Logan Writers Guild International Poetry Competition 2004':

- Charlotte Hardy of Auckland for 'Road Trip in Eastern Province'
 - Suzanne Morning of Warkworth for 'Being'
- Paul Vanderloos, founder of the Mackay Writers Group, said that 'The highly commended entries ... showed a gamut of emotions, from the sombre through the contemplative to good humour.'

Haiku prize

Congratulations to Earnest Berry whose haiku was one of thirteen winning poems in the Haiku Villages, Inc. Prize. Earnest's winning haiku:

*autumn wind
she runs away
with the leaves*

Milk and Honey by Michele Leggott
(Auckland University Press, \$27.95)

All of Michele Leggott's previous books of poetry have been substantial works, and this is perhaps the most substantial yet. At 105 pages long it is about twice as long as most poetry books. It is full of sequences and series so that every page has poetry down to the end of the page.

It's nicely presented too, with the large square format and the cover photo of clowns in gorgeous honey tones, although like many people I find clowns as disturbing and embarrassing as some people find poetry. Presumably the image is not intended to disturb or embarrass. In the first poem, positioned as an envoi, she writes 'I hope I'm not disturbing you' and the book, addressed to the fellow traveller, the constant reader, will surely not disturb the many readers in New Zealand and all over the world, who will have been looking out for anything new by Michele Leggott.

Readers familiar with her work will expect an element of difficulty; will look for the ways she plays with language; will be ready for the way experience dissolves into language, memory into past tenses, body into words, self into confetti. They will anticipate the question 'the string you called love is broken/was it nothing but words?' and they will understand as a declaration of love the line 'I lose my suffix to you.' At the same time, they will expect the lyricism for which she is celebrated, the sensuality which also characterises her work.

This collection is in fact perhaps the most lyrical and the most sensuous of all her collections so far. It celebrates love from a dazzling array of perspectives. Love is 'a steamboat ticket/to anywhere you want to go'; it is 'tropical ricochets' and 'birthday wine'; it is 'oils from the lip of As If'; it is 'a thousand and one nights'; it is 'a beautiful intimate hotel.' Love is dripping with language, with all the words that have ever been said about it.

Many of Leggott's words come from elsewhere in the world and from other times. Most ravishing of all, for me, are the *Cairo Vessel* poems, which, as the prefatory note explains, are free variations on a fragmentary text from ancient Egypt. Much of the imagery is foreign, but it is the kind of foreign that already reads as familiarly sensuous within our literary tradition of translations and retellings of Middle Eastern texts: the date-cakes, the lilies, the river setting, the fringe of reeds, the lotus flowers and the temple girls. But there are contemporary phrases mixed in as well: feelings that travel 'fastpost,' dizziness that swings the world round 'like a camera on a trolley,' a wish to be on call like 'her pizza boy.' Even

the promise the girl makes to be 'your spice girl' has pop-culture connotations these days.

The reach of Michele Leggott's poetry is such that she can write about anything at all, employ any imagery, use any word and make it absolutely her own. This book is a 'beautiful intimate hotel' that makes you feel at home as it spins you all over the world and through time.

Wellington poet, Anna Jackson, lectures in English Literature at Victoria University.

Along Blueskin Road by James Norcliffe
(Canterbury University Press, \$24.95)

This is James Norcliffe's fifth collection of poems and contains new work conceived during his time as Burns Fellow, as well as poems previously published in New Zealand and abroad.

From start to finish the work is that of a polished and confident writer who loves words, is sensible of the world around him and sympathetic to its inhabitants whether real or imagined.

The reader is willing to follow where the words and lines lead. The walk may be revealing of the world, evocative of the reader's own experience or it may be pure quirky fun. There is a good dollop of humour. There is always grace and a rightness of shape and pace. The collection is in two parts: 'along Blueskin Road' and 'conspiracy theory'.

Reading from the beginning it feels as if one is on a train that gathers momentum. The passenger has no desire to gaze idly out the window. The destination will often surprise. Be not afraid. The reader is in good hands and will want to return to the beginning and repeat the experience. It is difficult to pick favourites because after reading and rereading most of the book goes into that category.

There are many strong images, like this from 'sandflies/epithalamion':

*we stop by a stone church
squatting on the landscape
a bare-armed bride
adjusts the sugary veil*

There is the deceptively simple:

Twenty deer standing as statues

There is lyrical expression of grief in 'califont':

*but now you are a bell
I hardly hear any more
except occasionally afterwards
when I find myself wondering
was that the quarter-hour
which just sounded
or the half.*

As in 'califont', Norcliffe is neither coy nor self-protective. Nor is he self-indulgent.

Besides the visual images he exercises our senses of taste, smell and sound. We eat fish and chips with him in 'lemon pepper':

*I stand by a vaguely familiar car
in a crinkle of rain pepper lemon
and faint suggestion of oyster*

We hear the bubbles of the fish tank in 'the seahorses at Portobello':

*in a jet stream of petals
folding and unfolding
in a gulping rhythm
of grey and worried pink*

Poems set in the United States are great fun. In 'kissing the sky' we visit a highway diner:

*...and here's Billy and Wyatt with legs like
wishbones easing off the gas tanks and moseying
along...*

In 'the young governess' Norcliffe is inspired by an oil painting and, as he does in 'plug' and 'sleep, sleep', he points to the importance of space to visual artists.

'The Greatest Show on Earth' closes the collection with a series on those curious people who inhabited P T Barnum's circus world. Not topics of fun but ones that evoke our empathy.

This is a wide-ranging and delightful collection by one of our leading poets.

Cheri Pinner is a writer living in Greytown.

☞ Out & About ☜

WELLINGTON

Wellington Windrift, May 2005

Autumn mist still swirled across the valley as Windrift members gathered in the early afternoon. Mist drifted into haiku too. Jeanette Stace quipped:

*autumn morning
cleaning the misty window
to see the mist*

Our haiku bowl contained pine and rose, shell and jellyfish, mosquito and sunset, and even a witch. Some haiku triggered instant laughter, others careful reflection. We confessed 'enlightenment' after the group's gentle critique. 'It's mine and I never dreamt it was so ambiguous,' said one poet. (That haiku was full of resonance!) Feel the electricity in this haiku by Irene Ruth:

*towering pine
my ex's
legacy*

A catalyst line, 'any day now,' not only elicited news of births and deaths but also inspired this from newcomer Neil Whitehead:

*Hamlet's doubts hurt me
Kierkegaard pains me
'Any Dane – OW!'*

Haiku/Senryu. Or should that be haiku and senryu? We focused. How about this haiku by English writer, Stuart Quine:

*into the busker's cap
a chill wind blows
bronze leaves*

We thought it worked well: vivid image, feelings elicited, concisely written, a clear link between 'bronze' and 'coppers'. Haiku? Senryu?

Englishman Brian Tasker writes: 'The way I see it is that haiku and senryu are defined by attitude. Haiku are without attitude towards their subject. Senryu reveal an (often unconscious) attitude towards their subject.' He views Stuart Quine's haiku as tipping into senryu.

If you're interested, join us 1pm, on Thursday, 21 July at Jeanette Stace's home, 50 Cecil Rd, Wadestown. For further information, contact:

Jeanette Stace 04 473 6227, njstace@actrix.gen.nz;
or Nola Borrell 04 586 7287, nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz

Report by Nola Borrell

PICTON

Picton Poets' June Meeting

Ernie presented an updated version of his 'Xaga of Buntox' poem, which is in the Lewis Carroll 'Twas Brillig' genre – and a very unsquare meal! I don't think we've heard the last of this one! Kathy did a rhyming rude kitchen moan, and Julie, a serious poem about the Shapelle Corby dilemma. Yours truly, inspired by the 20-minute *Hamlet* touring the country, stumbled through a similarly abridged *HMS Pinafore*. The timing was spot-on, but ... And to cap it all, this heartfelt contribution in her unique acrostic-triolet verse form, from Anne:

THE TRUTH

*Trembling I step on the scales
Have I lost any more?
Eating less sometimes fails
Trembling I step on the scales
Recalling a reference to whales
Unkindly spoken before
Trembling I step on the scales
Have I lost any more?*

Report by Sandy Arcus

KAPITI

Montana Poetry Day Event

An evening of *Poetry Treats* will be held to celebrate Montana Poetry Day at Paraparaumu Library, from 6pm Friday 22 July. Actors Tina Regtien and Jed Brophy will read poems by well-known, contemporary New Zealand poets. Kenyan actor-poet Wanjiku Kiarie will perform her recent work, and there will be a Whiteboard Menu. Cover charges: \$10, \$7 unwaged, \$15 couple. Enquiries to: Judith Holloway: 06 368 2221, pukehou@paradise.net.nz or Gill Ward: 04 902 1718, gillii@xtra.co.nz

KATIKATI

Kauri Dam Haiku

Katikati Rotary has built a replica kauri dam as its gift to the community to mark the Rotary International's centennial year.

Early on the morning that I was to fly to Wellington to take part in Haiku Festival Aotearoa, there was a knock on our back door.

'Where do you want the boulder?' Rather taken by surprise I asked, 'What boulder?'

'The boys say you'd like a boulder near the kauri dam.'

Unwilling to let a chance like this go, I asked for a few details.

As the local paper reported, 'The blank face of a boulder beside the replica kauri dam is waiting for a little poetry.'

Then I said I'd call in at their working bee as soon as I returned from Wellington. This I did and by lunchtime a slab-faced rock had been selected and the arrangements for trucking it from the quarry completed.

A haiku competition was arranged and five were selected from the 71 entered. The Rotarians voted and chose a verse written by a local reporter, Elaine Fisher.

*pent-up waters
unleashed
severed kauri
surge to coast*

As Elaine said, having a piece engraved on a stone must be the ultimate in being published. Haiku writing is part of the first assignment for her Massey University extramural creative writing paper.

The 'rotary boulder' is now directly across the main road from the entrance to Katikati's Haiku Pathway.

Report by Catherine Mair

DUNEDIN

Upfront – Spotighting Women Poets

May's Upfront was well supported, with a number of new faces taking the opportunity to read at open mike sessions. The featured poets were Meg Davidson and Emma Neale. Meg began writing poetry after moving to the Catlins ten years ago, and being 'shamed into it' by Hone Tuwhare, for whom writing is 'like breathing, essential for well-being,' and who 'asks if you are writing in the same way that mothers ask if you've had breakfast.' Meg read a sequence of love poems, beginning with 'Sea Song.'

Sea Song

*Here
where the sea
shifts
under its silver skin*

*let me beach you see
your sides pour silver*

*lay my length along you
feel dry ribs*

*spring
to that same alchemy
sends me
sardine-slippery*

*alive and electric
quick, flick, gone*

Emma Neale writes poetry to unriddle the 'riddle of being.' She says that while some people talk about writing as an escape from life, she is never more alive than when she is trying to 'articulate experience.'

Newborn

*His mouth a small red hearth
we crowd around
drawn like man-moths
to its light and warmth.
When its suck and flicker at the breast stops
we blow cool breath on the soft black coal of his head
to make its wet spark dart again.*

*A scarlet trapdoor with tiny clapper
that knocks and knocks at our dreams and enters,
his mouth springs open
like the lid of a surprise
to loosen translucent birthday balloons of
Ah, ah,*

*I, I.
We stand here and watch them rise;
like the night crowds at fireworks
make of our own mouths a kind of mirror:
Oh. Oh. You.*

Report by Sue Wootton

TAURANGA

Practice Makes Perfect: Poetry Workshop

9 July, Mokoia Campus Waiariki Institute of Technology, Old Taupo Road, Rotorua:

How to edit and revise your poems to a publishable standard. With writer and editor Jenny Argante. \$20 + BYO lunch.

Enquiries: Annabel.Schuler@waiariki.ac.nz, ph 07 346 8828

Montana Poetry Night

22 July, Tauranga City Library 7–9pm: With performance poet Raewyn Alexander from Auckland; Marcel Currin, songs and poems; Belisha Dance interpret the poems of Rumi; Poets Parlour, the Word Wizard and Open Mike. Free entry. Poems wanted for display in shops and offices – please contact Jenny Argante 07 576 3040 or info.bravado@xtra.co.nz

☞ Competitions ☞

Meridian Energy Katherine Mansfield Fellowship

Email: info@creativenz.govt.nz for details. The closing date is 14 July.

Bravado International Poetry Competition

Email nzsa@clear.net.nz for entry form and rules. The closing date is 30 August.

Yellow Moon Competition Seed Pearls

<http://www.yellowmoon.info> for entry form and rules. The closing date is 31 August.

☞ Websites ☞

New NZEPC Author Pages that have gone live:

Michael Harlow:

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/harlow/>

Bernadette Hall:

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/hall/>

Ursula Bethell:

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/bethell/>

The FUGACITY 48-hour Anthology is now online:

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/features/fugacity/fugacity05.asp>

And see LeafSalon: www.leafsalon.co.nz for a report on FUGACITY 05 by poet Graham Lindsay.

Report by AUP

More Foetry:

<http://chronicle.com/free/v51/i37/37a01201.htm>

Gumshoe foetry:

http://www.mobylikes.com/Gumshoe_v_poet.html

Brain poetry:

<http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?chanID=sa003&articleID=000BE01D-E7E3-1294-A7E383414B7F0000>

☞ Talk Poem 15 ☞

‘searching 4 a kaleidoskope of kolours’

Audrey Brown

29

1234567

1975

anniversary of charles & di
(6 years minus)

nb: due 2 circumstances of celestial circumference
tragically
constellation no more

once upon a time

@usp

relations with

samoa

on suva campus fiji

(un-known 2 the latter)

987654321

tupapa

rarotonga hospital

tupapa

auckland airport in a new land of long white cloud

a rose kisses a baby

bye-bye
prophecy shall prevail the
eternal question

met upon arrival by

pepe will ask y?
mum & dad & sister
the baby unaware
grows a memory of her new
beginning

accidentally

forgetting

the past

(almost)

From *Threads of Tivaevae: kaleidoskope of kolours* by Audrey Brown & Veronica Vaevae (Steele Roberts Ltd, 2002).

I first encountered this poem by the Cook Island/Samoan poet, Audrey Brown, in 2002 in the word and image anthology she did with Veronica Vaevae: *Threads of Tivaevae: kaleidoskope of kolours*. I remember thinking at the time how fantastic it was to lay the words out wherever you wanted to on the page and make the readers’ eyes have to work instead of treading the familiar ground of left – right – back to the left and so on

down the page. As I revisit the poem now, with a different set of eyes, I am strongly drawn to the depth of personal story that Brown has laid out carefully for the reader to find. When I read it a number of times a story grows in my mind and I see people, journeys, some things passed on and some things forgotten.

I enjoy where this poem comes from, places that I know: Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand, bits and pieces of the Pacific. This is why this poem gives me so much as a reader: I know the smell of Samoa, the heat of Fiji and grew up just down the road from Auckland Airport in Mangere East. Writers such as Tusiata Avia and Sia Figiel get to me for that reason too: I have a sense of familiarity with the landscape that they tread.

I guess it is this same familiarity that leads me to believe that this poem is a story about one family giving something special to another family: a child – ‘a rose kisses a baby bye-bye’. The palangi side of me will never understand giving the most precious gift of a child and so I struggle with the simplicity of it here. Yet my Samoan side reconciles this with the last word of the poem – and my favourite – ‘(almost)’. This is where the overarching theme of searching really kicks in for me and, as I come to the end of the poem and think about that notion of searching, I reconsider the title and what a ‘kaleidoscope of colours’ might be. Is it all the journeys our past takes to get to the here and now, and all the people and places that colour who we are along the way? Or could it be simply rediscovering where your dna comes from? At the moment I am satisfied for it to be all those things and more, as Brown reminds me with her most Pacific-like ‘(almost)’ that the past always has something for us.

Leilani Unasa lives in Wellington with her partner and children. Aside from poetry, Leilani is currently having a crack at writing for the stage and screen.

☞ Poetry Advisory Service ☞

Set up to provide writers of poetry with a written critique of a sample of their work, PAS offers focused and constructive feedback from an individual member of an experienced and published panel of poets selected for their proven teaching skills.

For further information, contact:



Poetry Advisory Service NZPS
PO Box 5283
Lambton Quay Wellington.
info@poetrysociety.org.nz

☞ Kiwi Haiku ☞

*Curio Bay -
lovers embrace
on a stone log*

Karen Peterson Butterworth
Otaki

Please submit KiwiHaiku, preferably, but not essentially, with a New Zealand theme, to the Editor at PO Box 5283, Lambton Quay, Wellington.

August DEADLINE is 17 August