



a fine line

July 2007

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND POETRY
SOCIETY *Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa*

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The New Zealand Poetry
Society Inc.
PO Box 5283
Wellington 6145

Patrons

Dame Fiona Kidman
Vincent O'Sullivan

**President and National
Coordinator**

Laurice Gilbert

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JULY MEETING

Dora Malech, IIML

preceded by an open mic.

Thursday 19th July 7.30 pm
at Fellowship Room, St John's Church
cnr Willis and Dixon Sts.

AUGUST MEETING

Sue Wootton, Dunedin

preceded by an open mic.

Thursday 16th August, 7.30pm
at McKenzie Room, St John's Church
(as above)

Feature Article

"Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal."

(From: 'Philip Massinger', T.S. Eliot)

Tim Upperton

Eliot should know. The arch-Modernist was steeped in the literary tradition, and that tradition was not an inert heritage: he plundered it and modified it. Eliot's thefts are eclectic. He delighted in the music-hall and the Marx Brothers as well as the French Symbolistes. "He do the police in different voices", (a draft title of what became *The Waste Land*) he stole from Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*; "desiring this man's gift, and that man's hope" he lifted from Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29" ("When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes ..."). But as Eliot goes on to say in the essay on Massinger, "bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different." The actual quote from Shakespeare's sonnet is, "Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope"; Eliot stole it, but he also changed it.

He might have added that good poets, unlike out-and-out plagiarists, don't hope to conceal their crime. Eliot wants his reader to recognize the line's original provenance; its wrenching from that context becomes part of its new meaning. (His accomplice Ezra Pound deploys this disorienting effect over and over in the *Cantos*.) The original source hovers like a shade over its new incarnation in ways that are enriching and ironic.

Unlike other kinds of larceny, literary theft is exhilarating to discover. I remember the first time I read Ted Hughes's "The Thought-Fox", and the sense of shock and yes, familiarity, as I murmured its opening line: "I imagine this moment's midnight forest." Where did that sense of familiarity come from? Then I remembered: "I caught this morning morning's minion," – the beginning of Hopkins's famous sonnet, "The Windhover". In both

lyrics, a harbinger from the natural world prompts the speaker's intuition. That's a simplification: the creature *is*, in the act of describing it, the intuition; the two are not separable. The fox is of course the unconscious, but it is also an animal, a mysterious other, not to be reduced to symbol. In Hopkins's poem, the falcon is a symbol of pride, of everything the Jesuit poet (I conflate poet and speaker here, because I can't not do it) should renounce; but it is also an irresistibly beautiful creature. I can't read "The Thought-Fox" now without Hopkins's poem somehow alongside, and my reading of Hopkins's poem also gains by the association. The tradition is modified.

A personal example: one that errs, I'm afraid, on the side of imitation, in Eliot's sense, rather than theft. Some years ago, I read Sylvia Plath's poem, *Medallion*, the one where the speaker comes across a dead snake on the path. What primarily struck me in this poem was its technique. Plath employs seven-syllable lines divided into tercets, the whole locked, or rather interlocked, with a *terza rima* rhyme scheme. Said like that, it sounds rigid and cumbersome, but Plath's touch is light, and her rhymes wonderfully unobtrusive:

Medallion

By the gate with star and moon
Worked into the peeled orange wood
The bronze snake lay in the sun

Inert as a shoelace; dead
But pliable still, his jaw
Unhinged and his grin crooked,

Tongue a rose-colored arrow.
Over my hand I hung him.
His little vermilion eye

Ignited with a glassed flame
As I turned him in the light;
When I split a rock one time

The garnet bits burned like that.
Dust dulled his back to ochre
The way sun ruins a trout.

Yet his belly kept its fire
Going under the chainmail,
The old jewels smouldering there

In each opaque belly-scale:
Sunset looked at through milk glass.
And I saw white maggots coil

Thin as pins in the dark bruise
Where innards bulged as if
He were digesting a mouse.

Knifelike, he was chaste enough,
Pure death's-metal. The yard-man's
Flung brick perfected his laugh.

My immediate, unworthy thought was: *I can do that*. And so I set to the task, imitating what Plath had done:

Seasonal

One morning it's all over.
Tomato vines nod vaguely
above their sticks. They never

thrive here: if it's not early
blight it's late blight, or shield-bug,
the fruit garish and nearly

good - a curate's clutch of eggs.
Those knotted, speckled beans, brown
like an old man's fingers. Dig

them all in. Dig in the corn,
that all summer shook and kept
its thin hands in its sleeves. Down

with them, the burst, purple-topped
carrots, the peas' drunken row,
the blackened, small courgettes sapped

by a single, vast marrow:
the hopelessness of neglect.
What does a vegetable know?

Decay's slow, indifferent fact,
the groundward pull that pulls you.
Oh, everything's spoiled, wrecked,

the cabbage drilled through and through.
This is the slug's rank kingdom.
This is the one thing that's true.

I don't expect anyone reading my very different poem (published here in *North & South*, and in *Agni* in the US) would recognize my debt to Plath, but I certainly do. Of course *terza rima* predates her, its history going back to Dante's *Inferno*, and probably further. Dante no doubt stole it from the troubadours he heard out his window. Plath's deft use of slant-rhyme was influenced by the practice of her husband, Ted Hughes, and both learned from the 'pararhyme' of Wilfred Owen. Call it imitation, call it theft: we're all the richer for it.

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

The NZPS International Poetry Competition has closed for another year, and the entries, as usual, came thick and fast on the last day and beyond. Congratulations to the winners, who are listed later in this issue. In previous years I was able to take two weeks off work to cope with the twelve-hour days of registering, numbering and organising the gratifying volume of poetry that comes through the PO Box, but that wasn't an option this year. There was something of an airport quality at our house, with all members of the family living and working in different time zones. We got through it though; the entries were duly dispatched to the judges to deadline, and then I spent a day in bed recovering before moving on the next major demand – organising the AGM.

A grateful **welcome** from me to new committee members Bernard Gadd and Helen Lowe, and a huge vote of thanks to retiring member, Gillian Cameron. Only those who have been on the committee can know just how hard Gillian has worked for the Society for the last (at least) 8 years, including 2 stints as President, and she deserves a retirement filled with much writing.

Bernard is in Auckland, and Helen is in Christchurch, so I'm happy to say we now have representation outside Wellington, even if committee meetings will be a bit more challenging to manage. You'll find the President's report later in this issue, and it has also been posted on the members' page of the website, along with the minutes and audited accounts.

The Wellington meetings have yet another new venue. Finding a new permanent home has proved a challenge, and I thank Wellington members for their patience. Please continue to support our guest poets, who are the main reason for us to meet.

As always, if you have any comments or questions about the committee's activities or any aspect of the Society, please email me at info@poetrysociety.org.nz

Readers' Poll Results

For bimonthly issues of *a fine line*: 1

For monthly issues of *a fine line*: 0 In view of this majority opinion, we'll keep it at bimonthly for now.

In this issue:

Feature Article – **Tim Upperton**

President's Report – **James Norcliffe**

Regional Reports – Neil Whitehead, Sandy Arcus

Reviews – **Gillian Cameron, Bernard Gadd, Laurice Gilbert, Jessica Le Bas, Harvey Molloy, Heidi North**

Haiku NewZ – **Nola Borrell**

Talk Poem – **Joanna Preston**

Members' Poems - **Barbara Bailey, Helen Bascand, Fiona Kidman, Catherine Mair, James Norcliffe, Karen Peterson Butterworth**

About Our Contributors:

Nola Borrell is a Lower Hutt poet, practitioner of haiku, and past member of the NZPS committee. She regularly collates the Haiku Newz.

Gillian Cameron is a Wellington poet and past President of the NZPS. She is currently studying at Victoria University.

Bernard Gadd is an Auckland writer and publisher who contributes regularly to *a fine line*. He is a new member of the NZPS committee.

Laurice Gilbert is a Wellington poet and artist, National Coordinator of the NZPS, and newly-elected President.

Jessica Le Bas is a reviewer for the *Nelson Mail*. Her first poetry collection, *Incognito*, came out in May.

Helen Lowe is a Christchurch writer who is also a new member of the NZPS committee.

Harvey Molloy is a Wellington poet and secondary school teacher, who is a past member of the committee.

Heidi North has been a regular reviewer for *a fine line*, and has now left New Zealand for her OE.

Joanna Preston is a Christchurch poet. A selection of her work was published in Carcanet's *New Poetries IV* anthology.

Tim Upperton tutors creative writing, travel writing and twentieth century literature at Massey University.

Quotation of the Month

All we need to know about a writer's life is in the work. The rest is gossip.

R.S. Thomas

A Warm Welcome to:

Carl Anson, Nelson

Bett Angel-Stawarz, Australia

Barbara Bailey, Auckland

Karen Belk, Auckland

Glynis Bieleski, Auckland

Sarah Broom, Auckland

Sydney Bougy, USA

Adèle Chapman, Nelson

Margie Clark, Takaka

Lyall Clarke, Christchurch

Amanda Clifton, Ohaupo

Gail Collier, Christchurch

Carol Cooper, Wellington

Kevin Dobbyn, Wellington

Raschel-Miette Eesa-Danes, Gisborne

Cliff Fell, Motueka

Lindsay Forbes, Wellington

Barbara Griffiths, Hamilton

Alice Hooton, Auckland

Isabelle Hudson, Christchurch

Craig Ireson, Wellington

Ruby Jones, Wellington
Marian Morgan, Australia
Andrew Morrison, Paraparaumu
Frankie McMillan, Christchurch
Anne McPhail, Wanganui
Moya Pacey, Australia
Deborah Palmer, Waiuku
Robert Phillips, Auckland
Vivienne Plumb, Wellington
Beverley Pollard, Opotiki
Jessie Reese, Wellington
Sue Reidy, Auckland
Helen Rickerby, Wellington
Heather Royle, Whangaparaoa
Angela Sampson, Christchurch
Elizabeth Smither, New Plymouth
Ginny Sullivan, Greytown
Mike Timms, Ireland
Frances Townsend, Waiuku
Alice Trim, Whangarei
Bryan Walpert, Palmerston North
Kate Waterhouse, Australia
Pat White, Masterton
Alison Wong, Wellington
Tania Woodhouse, Hamilton
Helen Yong, Christchurch

Many of our new members were inspired to join us through entering the competition. May they enjoy the benefits of the Society. We especially welcome the opportunity to introduce our international members to New Zealand poets and poetry.

President's Report

June 19 2007

Our Patrons

I would very much like to thank our patrons, Vincent O'Sullivan and Dame Fiona Kidman, as always for their continued support of the Society. We are especially privileged this evening that following this meeting, Dame Fiona will be our guest reader.

The Committee and Workers

It is somewhat axiomatic that poetry is a solitary art. I'm not sure that it is entirely appropriate, though, that the administration of the Poetry Society has itself become something of a solitary endeavour. It is nevertheless the current reality. 2005 - 2006 saw such a falling away of committed committee members that the very survival of the Society was only ensured by a complete change of governance. The elegant solution, initiated and proposed by our previous President, Gillian Cameron, was to rationalize almost all of the previous portfolios, both contracted and voluntary, under the broad aegis of a single co-ordinating administrator. Laurice Gilbert subsequently was appointed to the position of National Coordinator and has in the course of her term picked up almost all of the responsibilities, including not only day to day and financial administration, but such major roles as managing the web-site, editing the newsletter and administering the competition. I have to say that we were very fortunate that Laurice, who as a long-standing committee member combines a deep knowledge of the workings of the society and considerable administrative expertise, was in a position to take on this role.

That all of the things the Poetry Society has traditionally done by way of ministering to the needs of its membership have continued so fluently, is a tribute to the flair and organising skills of Laurice, and I thank her on behalf of the society for all of her efforts during this past transitional period.

Meanwhile the attrition has continued. Helen Heath, who has been a tireless committee member for many years and who has offered not only her skills, but also her home on many occasions, to the committee has resigned. And Gillian Cameron, whom the Society cannot thank enough for her many years of enterprise and governance, foreshadowed at last year's AGM that she will step down once the governance changes have formally set in. As I have intimated, the changes have now been successfully implemented and Gillian's long work is over. Thank you, Gillian, for your leadership and wisdom not just during this period of change, but for many, many years of service to the Society.

While these committee members have been or are about to be lost, I am sorry to report they have not been replaced during the course of the year.

If you have been counting on your fingers, this means that the Society is currently run by the National Coordinator with only the President to refer to. This is not of course a satisfactory state of affairs, as well as being unconstitutional: while a committee as such is not a constitutional necessity, the constitution does demand – and I'm sorry for the non PC language - we have a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary and treasurer. So a "committee" effectively of two is not really an option.

The National Coordinator has made this suggestion: have committee members from other parts of the country for consultation purposes, so that she has people to discuss decisions with. Instead of having 4 committee meetings a year, have one strategic meeting annually (soon after AGM / election of officers) to meet each other and to discuss direction for the next year. The trade-off for this would be the cost of transporting up to four people to Wellington once a year, instead of one person four times a year. The rest of the routine business (mainly approving expenditure) could easily be done by email, plus occasional conference calls if talking seems necessary.

I would very much like to endorse this proposal. It recognises current realities and addresses many of the problems. Moreover, it does more faithfully reflect the fact that the NZ Poetry Society is a national organisation.

The Members

At 31 March 2007, the end of our financial year, our membership was at 250, and a further 50 new members joined while entering the competition. This is much the same figure as at this time last year.

The Magazine

This is now published bimonthly by the National Co-ordinator, who has introduced several new features: Letters to the Editor, doubled KiwiHaiku, Tanka Moments, inspiration ideas for poems, Members' Poem Page. Despite the new design features foreshadowed in this report last year, we are still using the old format, because of changes in the charitable status legislation process currently under way. By the time of AGM, registration will have been submitted, but we will not know the results until after 30 days from submission date. The appearance of the magazine though has improved, however, and there is now a single-column email version, much easier to read on screen for those who subscribe.

Competition / Anthology: 2006

Entry numbers continued to rise, and judges Chris Orsman, Anna Jackson, Cyril Childs and Catherine Mair were thoughtful and timely in their work. For the first time, the same person (John O'Connor) won both Open and Haiku. We should probably make John judge next year, if he does well again. The editor, Margaret Vos, did a superb job of the anthology, aided by Annabel Henderson Morrell on layout. The launch was moved to a Saturday to allow attendance of out-of-towners. It was very successful, though still too close to NCEA exams, so some Junior place-getters were unable to make the trip. There was a giant cake to celebrate the 25th birthday, and a silver "25" sticker inside first 100 copies sold.

Wellington meetings

After a slow start in 2006 the Wellington meetings got going again this year – moving back to Turnbull House after a brief stint at Southern Cross bar, which was not really suitable. We have branched out to include Toi Poneke / Wellington Arts Centre, as it is tonight, as this venue is considerably cheaper than Turnbull House

Guests since last the AGM include Cilla McQueen (at City Gallery, in association with IIML), Bernadette Hall, Chris Price, James Norcliffe, David Eggleton, Tony Chad, Lynda Chanwai-Earle, and tonight our extra welcome special guest, Patron Fiona Kidman.

Poets in Workplace

Despite a lot of work and repeat calls by Gillian, no residencies were arranged this year. Several possible organisations expressed interest and all backed out after considerable time spent by Gillian negotiating. Gillian will continue to work on the Poets in Workplace project, and we will ask CNZ for an extension as this was an initiative funded by CNZ.

Financial

The Society operated at a loss this last year. This was perhaps not entirely unexpected, given the uncharted waters we were sailing in, but it is hoped that with increased membership and further funding initiatives, this situation will not obtain this coming year.

Grant funding

Once again we are very grateful to our funding partners for their support. These include Creative NZ as usual; and Asia:New Zealand Foundation, still generous with regard to the Junior Haiku competition. The Trusts Charitable Foundation granted us the major proportion of funds required to buy a decent portable amplification system that we can use at any of our venues, particularly at anthology launch time. Last year 70 people attended, and children's voices didn't carry well.

James Norcliffe

President 2006/2007

2007 International Poetry Competition – Major Prize Winners

Open (702 entries)

1st *Aubade* by Bryan Walport, Palmerston North

2nd *Greenfinches* by Jeffrey Harpeng, Australia

3rd = *Apology* by Bryan Walport

3rd = *Bell* by Laura Routti, Finland

Open Junior (505 entries)

1st ∞ by Charlotte Trevella, Christchurch

2nd *Conjugating* by Emily Adlam, Auckland

3rd [untitled] by Jessie Evernden, Christchurch

Haiku (630 entries)

1st Quendryth Young, Australia

2nd Jim Kacian, USA

3rd Joanna Preston, Christchurch

4th André Surridge, Hamilton

5th Jeffrey Harpeng, Australia

Haiku Junior (807 entries)

1st Harry Frentz, Tauranga

2nd Harry Frentz

3rd Sophia Frentz, Tauranga

4th Charlotte Trevella, Christchurch

5th Ana Blakelock, Christchurch

Heartiest congratulations to all our winners. A full list of place-getters will soon be posted on the NZPS website, along with the Judges' reports on this year's competition.

Congratulations

- to **Helen Lowe**, Christchurch, who won both First (*Argos*) and Second (*This is My Heart*) prizes in the Poetry Section of the Alpha2Omega Short Story and Poetry Competitions (Australia). The winning entries may be published in *GROW - Under the Southern Cross*, an anthology that will feature writing for 8-14 year olds.

- to **Michele Amas** (*After the Dance*, VUP) and **Alison Wong** *Cup* (Steele Roberts), both of Wellington, for having two of the three short listed works in the Best First Book category of the 2007 Montana New Zealand Book Awards.

- to **Vivienne Plumb**, Wellington, for receiving the inaugural Rotorua Writer's Residency.
- to **Michael Harlow**, Alexandra, for receipt of a NZ Book Council 2007 international travel grant, to enable him to attend a world poetry festival in Venezuela.
- to **Jessica Le Bas**, of Nelson, Second Prize; **Helen Lowe**, Christchurch, Highly Commended; and **Barbara Strang**, Christchurch, short listed; in the South Island Writers' Association Short Story competition.
- to **Nola Borrell**, Lower Hutt, who had a haiku accepted for publication on the home page of *tinywords*, changed daily, at <http://tinywords.com/haiku/2007/04/24/>
- to **Tim Upperton**, Palmerston North, who won first prize in the NZSA Central Districts short story competition

Noticeboard

For a complete rundown of regional events, and to find the poetry meeting in your town, please go to our website: www.poetrysociety.org.nz . Please email updates, additions & changes: info@poetrysociety.org.nz

NZPS WORKSHOP

Sunday 29 July and Sunday 5 August, 1-5pm. Fee: \$80

At: Museum of Wellington City and Sea (Sponsor), Waterloo Quay.

Tutor: Lynn Davidson. Lynn is the writer of one novel, *Ghost Net*, (Otago University Press, 1999) and two collections of poetry, *Mary Shelley's Window*, (Pemmican Press, 2003) and *Tender*, (Steele Roberts, 2006). Her short stories and poems have been widely published in literary journals and in 2003 she was awarded the Louis Johnson Writer's Bursary. She currently teaches poetry and short fiction in the Whitireia Creative Writing Programme. Email the National Coordinator to register for this workshop: info@poetrysociety.org.nz, or write to PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145.

WRITERS ON MONDAYS, WELLINGTON

16 July - 10 Sep 2007

<http://www.feelinggreat.co.nz/readers-and-writers/11224-writers-on-mondays-series.php>

This is the IIML's annual series of readings and interviews with local and international writers, in partnership with the City Gallery. Look out for Dora Malech, who is our July guest poet, and who is an accomplished and vivacious poet and teacher.

MONTANA POETRY DAY – 27 JULY

The full programme for Montana Poetry Day 27th July can be found at http://www.booksellers.co.nz/mpd_upni.htm
Some events to look out for:

Waitakere City 9am - 5pm

Events at all public libraries.

Corban Estates Arts Centre 11.30am - 2pm

Corban Winery Estate, Henderson, Waitakere City

Entry: \$2 (bookings recommended) The floor will be open for anyone who would like to share an original poem, or you may just like to listen. Light snacks and beverages will be available. For more information or bookings contact CEAC. Ph: 8384455

The Gus Fisher Gallery, 74 Shortland Street, Auckland 12pm: Alison Wong reads from her 2006 collection *Cup*

Dunedin City Library, 4th Floor 7.30pm

Featuring poet Kay McKenzie Cooke, with guests Kath Beattie, Rhys Brookbanks, David Eggleton, **David Howard**, Cy Matthews, Martha Morseth, Emma Neale **and Sue Wootton**. Live music by Haunted Love.

Mayfair Theatre, Upper Hutt 8.45pm

Featuring guest poet Sam Hunt.

EXHIBITION, CHRISTCHURCH

not EMPTY not SILENT not WHITE

Wednesday 25 July - Sunday 13 August

At Arthouse, Christchurch. This is **Claire Beynon's** multi-media exhibition based on time spent working as part of a scientific team in Antarctica. Photography, painting, collage, posters and poetry all bring the continent to New Zealand.

POETRY ON AIR

The Voices You Know and the Voices You Want to Know

Canterbury's Women on Air (Plains 96.9 FM) has restarted its women's poetry feature, with **Helen Lowe** interviewing a range of established and emerging women poets. Interviews to date include **Joanna Preston**, Bernadette Hall discussing **Helen Bascand's** new collection *Into the Vanishing Point* (Steele Roberts), and three poets from Christchurch's School for Young Writers, all with work in the latest Redraft anthology *Tennis with Raw Eggs*. Although the focus is on Canterbury poets, Helen is also keen to keep listeners up to speed with national trends, voices and collections, so she would love to hear from women poets who are visiting Christchurch, especially when giving readings or poetry in performance. Helen can be contacted via email at snowscape@paradise.net.nz or by writing to PO Box 26-043, North Avon, Christchurch 8148. (Please include an SASE for reply if you don't have email.)

Surfing the Web

<http://www.wellingtonwriters.com/viola/>

- submissions wanted from writers with a sense of humour

<http://www.slate.com/id/2166947/>

-What font do you use to write your poems in? Thanks to the NZSA newsletter for this snippet.

<http://c-for-blog.blogspot.com>

-Rachel McAlpine's poetry blog.

<http://www.ethicalpoetry.com>

- free online poetry book

<http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/membership/mempoems/>

- the UK Poetry Society's members' poems page

<http://www.nzetc.org/iiml/bestnzpoems/BNZP06/t1-front-d1.html>

- the Best New Poems of 2006, edited by Anne Kennedy and Robert Sullivan, under the auspices of the International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University. NZPS members included: **Cliff Fell**, **Elizabeth Smither**, and **Alison Wong**.

Publications

New arrivals on the NZPS book shelf since the last issue:

Here Comes Another Vital Moment by Diane Brown (Godwit, RRP \$24.99) Another beautiful blend of poetry and travel memoir, brought to you by the creator of the fantastic *Before the Divorce We Go to Disneyland* (1997 winner of the Montana First Book Award).

Autumn Leaves by Rosalie Carey (Earl of Seacliffe Art Workshop, RRP\$5). The latest addition to ESAW's mini-series.

Becoming Someone Who Isn't by Jill Chan (Earl of Seacliffe Art Workshop, RRP \$18) The second collection of poems by the editor of international e-zine *Poetry Sz: demystifying mental illness*.

The Pop-up Book of Invasions by Fiona Farrell (AUP, RRP\$25) was written while Farrell held an inaugural Writers' Residency in County Cork, Ireland. I enjoyed it very much.

End Of the Snapshots by **Bernard Gadd** (Sudden Valley Press, RRP \$18) Another collection from the tireless and prolific Bernard Gadd, combining his long experienced haiku-style observation with poetic imagery in a gallery of interesting moments.

incognito by **Jessica Le Bas** (AUP, RRP\$25) is the poet's first collection of poetry, written with the assistance of a Creative NZ grant which enabled her to work on it full-time. It is a montage of her last five years' work, and includes some poems that have appeared in a variety of publications. This includes the wonderful *and I have something to expiate*, her prize-winning poem from the 2003 NZPS International Poetry Competition.

Villon in Millerton by **James Norcliffe** (AUP, RRP \$25) is James's long-awaited sixth collection, containing deceptively accessible poetry that is nevertheless complex and technically enviable. Very well reviewed by Mary McCallum (Radio NZ National on 28 June).

Blame Vermeer by **Vincent O'Sullivan** (VUP, RRP\$25) Came in, went out. You can read the review later in this issue.

Contemporary New Zealand Poets in Performance ed. Jack Ross and Jan Kemp (AUP, RRP\$45). Read the poems! Hear the poets read them! Poems from poets who came of age in the 60s and 70s, with personal and publishing notes on each one. .

Dear To Me - 100 New Zealanders write about their favourite poems. Published by Random House to coincide with Montana Poetry Day 2007, this book is the outcome of a project by the Amnesty International group at Auckland Girls' Grammar School to find out which poems are important to well-known New Zealanders. It includes a letter from our Patron **Dame Fiona Kidman**, and poems by our other Patron, **Vincent O'Sullivan**, our late Patron Lauris Edmond, and members **Elizabeth Coleman** and **Alison Wong**. There's an inspiring variety of both contemporary and classic poetry, and local and international poets. All royalties from sales of the book will go to Amnesty International. Worth buying.

Regional Reports

Readers are invited to submit reports on local events as they occur. Post to: NZPS, PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145, or e-mail to: editor@poetrysociety.org.nz

WINDRIFT, WELLINGTON

Neil Whitehead

Unusually present at our autumn meeting were two children, who sacrificed a few hours from their holiday to contribute haiku with considerable promise, and striking images. We hope we didn't bore them, but encouraged them!

raining coloured leaves
smudged puddles for jumping
gently whispering
Jake Reid (age 11)

blossoming smile
as light as autumn garden
early evening
Phoenix Reid (age 5½)

Other members still could not resist the guilty pleasure of puns:

spider in gutter
sluiced down the pipe
de luge
Bevan Greenslade

Ernest Berry also entertained us with several 'punku'. The term is perhaps unfortunate, meaning 'punk' in Japanese, which perhaps serves us right!

Some of our seasonal haiku:

leaves hairdresser's
blustery wind
a swirl of autumn leaves
Irene Ruth

gust in park -
leaves start to fall
small birds fly up
Veronica Haughey

bare sheep pasture
big skies
back in the Bay
Kerry Popplewell

And from another popular set theme, water:

mirror lake -
the mountain snow caps
shiver
Karen Peterson Butterworth

Among the miscellaneous haiku:

gin trap
the possum's eyes
wide open

stroke
another blossom
loses its grip
Ernest Berry

We noticed that the emotional impact of some modern haiku seems much stronger than classical models, and wondered about modern Japanese reactions. Neil Whitehead, a group member, leaves for 9 months' scientific research in Japan and it would be appropriate for him to enquire which directions the form is taking.

And a tanka:

flounder -
immobile in a net
of sunlight
I bask in our love
for each other
Karen Peterson Butterworth

Karen explained this was perhaps destined for her next wedding anniversary. As usual, there were too many haiku riches to fully convey here.

LIVING A CLICHE . . .

Meal time's starting to become a quite intolerable chore.
The Bottle on the Shelf, with a cross on top, the taste of rain
from a barrel.

Peter Pan, Wendy, Olive Oil and Sweet Pea
& Peanuts - and The Menace! with lots of bears
and goldy locks 'n Mick 'n Minnie 'n Don Duck,
full of ice cream, sugar sprinkled and creamy.
The meal progresses with Little Orphan Annie, the slow one, trailing.

Baby joins in "I felled over."
"Where does it hurt?"
"Under the plaster."
Our warrior has come home

Captain Hook scoffed his victuals like a shark,
with shirt hanging out, smoking long curvy pipe.
His jaws moved fast, impatient till his throat could bolt
an upside-down future cookie which only tells him
what happened yesterday!
And one day, before them all, he dared to clean his teeth.
And like a fiend he swore, "Whose turn for the dishes?"
For he was made of sterling stuff.

. . . **life goes on for Picton Poets.**

Residencies & Awards

THE ROBERT BURNS FELLOWSHIP

The Robert Burns Fellowship was established in 1958 to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of Robert Burns. The Fellowship aims to encourage imaginative New Zealand literature and to associate writers with Otago University.

Applications close on the first working day of August and successful applicants will be provided with an annual fellowship, which will be the first step of the [Lecturers' scale](#), as well as resources such as an office or studio. For further information contact: Nicola Richmond: Phone: 03 479 5793; Email: nicola.richmond@otago.ac.nz Postal: Nicola Richmond, Division of Humanities, University of Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin.

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY – URSULA BETHELL RESIDENCY IN CREATIVE WRITING

Designed to foster New Zealand writing by providing a full-time opportunity for a writer to work in an academic environment, the position is open to writers in the fields of creative writing: fiction, drama and poetry. Applications are called for in August/September each year. Contact: Human Resources Department, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch.

Competitions & Submissions

For a full list of competitions and submissions please go to the NZPS website at: www.poetrysociety.org.nz

Upper Hutt Poetry Competition

Closing date: 13 July

Theme: The Heritage of Upper Hutt. Free entry, up to four poems no longer than 32 lines, and the winners will be announced at a Montana Poetry Day evening, 27th July. There are three prizes (book tokens for \$200, \$100 and \$50) plus a year's subscription to *Valley Micropress*, and a selection of entries will be published in a commemorative booklet. Entry forms available from the [Upper Hutt website: http://www.upperhuttcity.com](http://www.upperhuttcity.com)

WinterWitch Poetry Competition (UK)

Closing Date: 31 July

First prize of £250, with four runners up prizes of £30. Entry fee: £3.00 per poem. The short-listed entries will also be displayed on the website for at least 6 months and may be included in future anthologies published by WinterWitch Books. The theme of this competition is Changes. Poems can be in any style or theme, but must be 40 lines or shorter in length and must not have been published or accepted for publication. Enter online at <http://www.winterwitch.co.uk/news.html> or by post to WinterWitch Books, 3 Stoneybeck Cottages, Broughton Cross, Cockermouth, Cumbria. CA13 0TX.

Blinking Eye Poetry Competition for over-50s. (UK)

Closing date: 7 August. All entries must be received by last post on that date.

Here's one for all us oldies - entries may be on any theme and in any style. The overall winner will have a collection of their poems published by Blinking Eye and will receive 100 copies of the book. An anthology of commended poems will also be published by Blinking Eye. It's a little more expensive (at £13 for a block of 5 poems) to enter as an "international" poet than it is for UK residents, but with the \$NZ at an all-time high, what better time to do it? You can enter (and pay) online at: <http://www.blinking-eye.co.uk/pages/competitions/poetry-competition.php>

Bravado 4th International Poetry Competition

Closing date: 31 August

Judge: Elizabeth Smither. 1st Prize \$500; 2nd Prize \$250; 3rd Prize \$100; plus 10 Highly Commended Prizes of \$50 each. The entry fee is \$5 a poem or \$10 for three entries and [entry forms are available from the website](#) <http://www.bravado.co.nz> or by [e-mail: bravado.info@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bravado.info@xtra.co.nz), or send a stamped self-addressed envelope to: Competition Secretary c/-Bravado, PO Box 13-533, Grey Street, Tauranga.

Reviews

Sol, Andrew Johnston, Victoria University Press, 2007

Gillian Cameron

Being something of an avid cryptic crossword puzzler, I immediately warmed to *Sol*, Johnston's fifth collection of poetry, and its allusive and elusive use of language, his playful and agile linguistic acrobatics a delight to eye and ear, the way he teases you into attention and rewards you for your efforts.

The title poem *Sol* is a case in point. With minimal brushstrokes, Johnston sketches a sunny courtyard. The "swallows in pairs" in the centre couplet at first seems curious until you realise swallows mate for life, often staying or returning to the same area to nest. The phrase thus arches back to the previous "shines on us here" and then forward to the next couplet "but it stays, and stays, / and is connected". This sense of connectedness radiates to the poet, at once both connected in space (the courtyard) and in the imagination to the "straight white line .../ flying, in the mind, towards the sun". This last 'sun' brings you back to the "solitude, solace, consolation" (my emphasis) of the opening line – with its sense of being on one's own in the writing craft (*plane*). A postmodern Icarus perhaps?

The poem also sets up the recurring motifs of *sun* and *white* which connect and reverberate with others in the later poems: *sun-flowers*, *light*, *shade* and *darkness*. A key may perhaps be located in the poem *The Orders of Night* written in response to German painter Anselm Kiefer's painting of the same name. In Kiefer's works sunflowers are indicators of time passing, a source of light and life as well as darkness and death. In many of the poems here there is a similar preoccupation with a fragile, paradoxical existence, with life-in-death.

The double sestina *The Sunflower*, an elegy for Johnston's late father, is truly impressive. I particularly liked the clever use of the end word 'thee/the-' with its implied intimacy/fracturedness. The sunflower presides over the

poem like the Wicked Witch of the West's hourglass. The dissonances in the father/son relationship, the sense of loss and of being at a loss are mulled over as the sunflower counts down time and starts, in time, to push forth new signs of hope:

...The astonishing flower,
head full of edible seeds, bows down dead:
this is the credible sense of its death,
that here, where its turning is done
other journeys begin.

The extended sequence *Roundabout* brings to mind Colin McCahon's *Noughts and Crosses* series. On one level it is a game – "if you're not sure" you can "carry on round, enjoy/the view, the/changing light". On another there is the darker side of living in a post-Christian world where Roundabout Man has replaced Crossroads Man:

as the love of certainties
gave way to approximation...
living, as he did, half in darkness, half in light..

Johnston is at his best in the short pithy poems that draw you into the fragmentary moment. Like *Three White Doves* which pulls you into the taxi waiting at the lights on a "homicidal boulevard". Similarly, *Hypermarket* amusingly recreates that feeling of being all at sea, when you go into a mall looking for "a clock or a pear" and emerge hours later "with a deck chair" and in search of a car that seems to have been disappeared into some parallel universe.

If I had to choose a favourite it might be *The Days*. Like the writer, the days

..... one after another,
that seem to insist

are only trying
to make things clear -

shifting the light around,
summoning rain.

Then again, it might be *Robins* or *In the Cemetery*... Actually I can't choose one favourite – there are just too many!

Tennis with raw eggs: the sixth in the Re-Draft series. Edited by James Norcliffe and Alan Bunn. Clerestory/School for Young Writers, 2007. \$29.99

The aim of the Re-Draft series, published by Christchurch School for Young Writers, is to publish the best teenage writing in New Zealand. Each year, teenagers are invited to make submissions to the Re-Draft anthology with no restrictions of genre, length or style. Re-Draft avoids the pitfalls of a competition with its inevitable winner and runner-ups; rather the anthology works like a journal of teenage writing in New Zealand. Since the demise of the AMP pages in *The New Zealand Listener*, teenagers have had few opportunities to publish their work.

As a teacher working with teenage writers, I find that a lot of young adult writing suffers from being over emotional (or 'emo' as they say) and somewhat formless. Teenagers are committed expressionists and they often see the meaning and value of the work as residing in the act of expression rather than in its formal properties. The pieces in *Tennis with Raw Eggs* exhibit none of these traits: instead of outpourings we find control, restraint, understatement and craft. At the same time, the poetry doesn't suffer from the cool, often frosty, minimalism of saying as little as possible *sotto voce*. The poems take risks and aren't afraid of showing an emotion or two. The short prose encompasses a variety of styles and genres. I noticed that in contrast to many NZ journals and magazines, much of the writing doesn't feel overly compelled to address contemporary local issues and concerns. It's OK to write about Greek gods and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Tennis with Raw Eggs would be a welcomed addition to any school library and a great gift for any teenager who has an interest in writing. The book is well designed with a striking cover photograph by Kevin Clarke. At the back is included an entry form for submissions for Re-Draft 7. The book is available from The School for Young Writers. To find out more email young.writers@xtra.co.nz

News of the Swimmer Reaches Shore. By Gregory O'Brien. Published by VUP. ISBN 978 0 86473 532 4. 2007. RRP: \$30.

Heidi North

News of the Swimmer Reaches Shore is part essay, part travel memoir, recalling O'Brien's time spent in the South of France while his wife Jenny Bornholdt was in residence as the Katherine Mansfield Fellow in Menton. O'Brien is a poet, art curator, and essayist, and all these things combine, as he muses on the relationship between France and N.Z.

Dream-like and surreal, the book presents as an underwater exploration of both the real and imagined. Swimming underwater in the vast blueness of the Mediterranean, a host of characters emerge. The infamous Dominique Prieur, the French Secret agent who bombed the Rainbow Warrior, Henri Matisse, several other artists and famous paintings, and some more quirky additions, like Captain Nemo from *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*.

O'Brien is a skilled poet, and his images are at times beautiful: "The sea horse, like a figure of speech, prances backwards into the brilliant pond of light," and some of his anecdotes about people really work. His passage about the courageous 19th Century nun, Mother Suzanne Aubert, who swam naked through rivers with her clothes on her head in order to reach her charges, was sharp and engaging.

But at other times people, and things, are described as question marks: "Here on the Côte d' Azure we find ourselves in a world abundantly punctuated with question marks." This is a recurring image, and poetic, but I found that keeping people as question marks weakened the experience. I wanted more of those people who remained shadowy. Choosing to keep his wife, referred to only as J, and his children "the two small boys" as well as his adult son, out of focus, left me feeling the book lost a bit of heart. It lacked a definite narrative and this was difficult.

News of the Swimmer Reaches Shore is a collection of moments that are all valid, and certainly people who are interested in art will find O'Brien's exploration of that interesting, but in trying to capture the experience of his holiday and hold onto it, it becomes almost too much. The book begins to resemble a summer holiday that seems to drift and wander forever.

It certainly invoked place, the blueness of the Mediterranean, and the feel of being there. "When you live by the Mediterranean you want the colour blue in everything you do..." and the people and experiences woven in and out were well researched, but overall I felt it could have been tighter.

Blame Vermeer Vincent O'Sullivan, Victoria University Press, 80 pages, \$25

Jessica Le Bas

Vincent O'Sullivan is one of New Zealand's most accomplished literary all-rounders. Besides his plays and short stories, O'Sullivan's novels have received high praise. Poetry collections *Lucky Table*, and more recently *Nice Morning for it Adam* (2004) have also received acclaim, the latter again winning the poetry category of the Montana NZ Book Awards (2005).

No doubt I have conjured an overly romantic persona for Vincent O'Sullivan, though his new collection of poetry, *Blame Vermeer*, comes with unashamed overtones of romanticism. The cropped shot of Johannes Vermeer's painting 'The Kitchen Maid' on its cover, rending up Hollywood's voluptuous Scarlett Johansson, only adds to this poet's allure. The title poem breathes a new realism into a moment the old painter captured.

A woman of thirty pours the inch or so of milk
left in a jug, sets the jug high on a shelf
inside a small cupboard because the children
from next door are to stay the night, she'll
not risk their picking at its precious glaze.

(Blame Vermeer)

Vincent O'Sullivan's poetry is riddled with a mixture of fun and finger poking, intellectual banter and clever twists of observation. The poet takes pleasure in putting his spin on old histories, breathing contemporary air into the old masters.

Michelangelo coming down for his midday bolognese,
disturbed that cameras had been let in so early,
avoided the glib statements, as any sonneteer would.

And that clever juxtaposition of realities...

He excuses himself brusquely. His nose mashed as though
rugby were already invented, he avoids the mirrors...

And always the twist, the grand finale of intent...

Only the simplest eye might take in so much,
to extend the normal so we are not ashamed.
(So that's the point, Maestro?)

O'Sullivan spins more narratives with age, circular anecdotes that turn back on themselves, and bring the reader face to face with wisdom and insight. Here's the beginning of a haunting poem that opens this collection.

He told the child, 'Listen, when you give
a secret away it's like taking off something
you wear and handing it to someone else...
(Not one to let on)

Vincent O'Sullivan is the poet I'd like most to meet. He is intelligent and whimsical. His imagery is wise and seductive.

The starling that moved all summer
on its single wire of greed and instinct,
its tinny yack in the yew tree, its sleek
trajectories whittled as we watched...
(How things are)

In this fine collection the poet takes us to Carterton for New Year's Eve, to Nelson in *Out Mahana Road*. He puts us "on the Eastbourne bus/behind a young girl", and we watch "the mothers at the endless/ business of mothering". Central Otago too, gets a splendid viewing.

We stand watching the Hawkduns sink to late
velvet, the constellations arrive, the stars of the show.
(Sizing up the Bones)

Read O'Sullivan slow, and often. There's always a new window of understanding opening, a little nuance that intrigues, and that rare and clever quirk that makes you laugh out loud.

O'Sullivan just keeps getting better! *Blame Vermeer* poises to dominate literary prize lists.

Little Rock, Rosetta Allan; illustrated by Martin Popplewell; Boheme, ISBN 976-0-473-11791-7 \$28, available from:
rosall@xtra.co.nz

Bernard Gadd / Laurice Gilbert

This is the author's first collection of poems. The topics are drawn from her own life and the world and society around her, as in *The Desert Road to Hawkes Bay*, *Love Marketed*, *His Time*, and the poems' length ranges from short lyrics to works of several pages.

It opens, before even the dedication and the table of contents, with the title poem:

A LITTLE ROCK
can soak in the warmth of the palm of a hand,
ripple the surface of a pond,
or break glass windows.

which goes on to a satisfyingly surprising ending, via further concrete details. However, this sense of thing-ness is not sustained, and too many of the poems are reflective rather than illustrative. The book suggests a writer with little familiarity with contemporary poetry. There are even a few lines using 'do' as in "the face that once did shine". More noticeable is the employment of abstractions: the mundane surround of chores ...the immediate needs

of children ...the noise of technology. Many of Allan's images are too abstract to be really engaging, and the frequent religious references also tend to act in this distancing fashion.

The risk inherent in releasing a first collection comprising poems written over a decade, as Allan has done here, is that it will include un-reworked poems from the earliest stages of the poet's development. Nevertheless, every now and then Allan pushes the wordiness aside and gives us little, spare, sometimes wryly enjoyable pieces:

Something
on the tele

No-one
on the phone

Food
in the cupboard

Gas
in the car

And knowing
the mortgage
will go through
tonight.

(Friday Night Bliss)

Or lines when the abstractions and church vocabulary work well too:

I want to cleanse my world in the washer . . .

Clean, renewed and sanctified -
alas I'll have to wear her

(Life Cycle)

or a sudden brevity: I need my bra! / Where is it?

There are poetic moments that are not sustained through the poems, but show that the potential is there:

For the last sleep train left while I tossed in bed
(Day Break)

I remember travelling ladies / bright eyes, guilty feet
(Suddenly Older)

I heard the music / it cleared a path / to my ears...
(Pink Tutus & Fur Elise)

The poems' titles are cleverly thought out and intriguingly apt, though one successful poem has the simple title *Home*. With its pleasing alliteration and mysterious horses, it has a simplicity missing from some of the longer narrative poems in the book. Both concrete and specific, it still leaves space for the imagination of the reader.

HOME

Living on a precipice
among a parade of precarious trees.
White horses try to climb
the face, but they're hooved.
And the moon's reflection shimmies
with celestial beings at night.

This beautifully presented collection shows an emerging poetic voice that is, as yet, a little undercooked.

Now that she's taken the step of getting her work into the public eye, hopefully Allan will go on with the job she has started, of refining and solidifying her images.

Concert Review

NZSO: Made in New Zealand

Wellington Town Hall, 25 May 2007

Laurice Gilbert

This was an evening of live entertainment that left me wishing I could rewind it and live through it again. The NZSO offered NZPS members their 'Friends' discount because the concert included a piece by Bill Manhire – *These Arms to Hold You*. Commissioned by Plunket to celebrate its centenary, the poem was set to music by Eva De Castro Robinson and sung by Kelburn Normal School's Lyrica Choir, directed by Nicola Edwards. I took advantage of the discount and attended with my youngest daughter and a friend, both of whom were as delighted as I was with the opportunity to experience what proved to be a superlative performance.

The concert opened with Ross Harris' *Cento*, a sort of NZSO in-joke – a patchwork of their favourite pieces that was complex, multi-textured and mostly recognisable. It was an enjoyable introduction to both the orchestra's versatility and its rather attractive conductor, Hamish McKeich. This was followed by Alfred Hill's *The Moon's Gold Horn*, a pretty, melodic piece which provided a relaxed contrast to the boisterous *Cento*.

Next up was *These Arms to Hold You*. Right from the start, when the children ran down the aisles from the back of the Town Hall laughing, it was a vivid celebration of infancy and childhood. The poem, incorporating a variety of moods (birth, welcome, lullaby, blessing and thank-yous), as well as familiar comments copied from old Plunket books, was printed in its entirety in the programme, so I got to keep it. The exuberance with which the choir performed served it well. The orchestration was utterly charming, the young sopranos were confident and steady, and the complexities of the multiple parts accompanied by such a professional backing as the NZSO made it a performance to treasure.

After an interval, the orchestra continued with a tribute to the (very recently) late David Farquhar with pieces from his *Ring Around the Moon* suite: a lovely waltz, by turns energetic and remarkably languid, and the spirited Finale. This was followed by a very long piece, Lyall Cresswell's *Ylur*. A sort of reflection of the Emo lifestyle, it clearly had musical qualities that as a non-musician I found hard to fully appreciate, and I assumed it was the obligatory piece the orchestra includes to introduce its audience to more difficult works.

The highlight of the evening, though (sorry, Bill) was the final work: John Psathas' *Saxophone Concerto No. 1 Omnifenix*, with soloists Nathan Haines (sax) and Ron Samson (drum kit). I have heard Haines live before, in his own métier, and am not a jazz buff, but the Concerto was gripping and enervating from beginning to end. The blend of improvised jazz and classical dynamics lived up to its programme description as a "sonic roller coaster ride". Haines was nothing less than awesome in his interpretation of the "directed improvisation", and Samson created an instant drummer groupie out of my cultured teenage daughter. Our humming machines were set on "Jazz Man" and "Baker Street" for hours afterwards. Thanks, NZSO, for a memorable occasion.

Haiku NewZ

Nola Borrell

CONGRATULATIONS

- to **André Surridge** for first prize in the Jack Stamm Haiku Awards. André had another haiku in the finalists, as did **Nola Borrell**.

- to **Ernest J Berry** for first prize in the Robert Speiss Awards. You can see his haiku at :

<http://www.modernhaiku.org/spiessawards2007.html>

- to André Surridge for Second prize and an Honourable Mention in the Robert Frost Haiku Contest.

- to André Surridge and Ernest J Berry for Honourable Mentions in the Betty Drevniok Award.

- to **Patricia Prime** for haibun online in Contemporary Haibun Online (and in the print issue), online in Simply Haiku, and in print in the Haiku Canada Anthology. She has haiku in the latest *The Heron's Nest*. Several of her tanka have been chosen for publication in the *Streetlights Anthology* (USA).

- to (yet again) Ernest J Berry for 4th and 5th placings in *Kukai #6* - a peer-reviewed contest via email.

COMPETITIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

July 31 Basho Festival. Limit of 10 haiku. Cost: Free. Results on October 12, anniversary of Basho's death. Send to: basho-bp@ict.ne.jp. Or: The Basho poetry offerings supervisor, Basho-o Kinenkan (The Basho-o memorial museum), Ueno Marunouchi 117-13, Iga city, Mie prefecture, JAPAN 518-8770.

July 31 Harold G Henderson Award. Limit of 10 haiku. Submit each haiku on 3 separate 3' x 5' cards, two with haiku only, the third with contact details in upper left hand corner. Designate as haiku. Cost: \$US1/haiku, US funds only. Cash prizes and winning haiku in *Frogpond* and on HSA website. Send to: Henderson Haiku Contest. c/o Marlene Egger, 7527 Brighton Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84121-5316, USA

July 31 Gerald Brady Memorial Award for Senryu. Limit of 10 senryu. Submit each senryu on 3 separate 3' x 5' cards, two with senryu only, the third with contact details in the upper left-hand corner, Designate as senryu. Cost: \$US1/haiku, US funds only. Cash prizes, and winning haiku in *Frogpond* and on HSA website. Send to: Brady Senryu Contest, c/o Marlene Egger, 7527 Brighton Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84121-5316, USA.

August 1 British Haiku Society Haibun Anthology. 100 -2000 words including haiku. Each haibun should be given a title. **Three copies of each haibun, with each copy starting on a separate A4 sheet. One copy with contact details.** Cost: 5 pds/\$US8 for first haibun; 2 pds/\$US4 for each additional haibun. Anthology to be published by December, 2007. Send to: BHS Haibun anthology, 95 Winns Avenue, London, E17 5HD, UK.

August 1 WHA Junior Haiku Contest 2007. Under 18 yrs. Cost: Free. 3 haiku, one in each section (with themes of love, peace, friendship). Book prizes. Winners published in *World Haiku 2008*. Email English haiku to: Jim Kacian, redmoon@shentel.net Or post to: PO Box 2461, Winchester, VA 22604-1661, USA.

August 31 Mainichi Daily News Haiku Contest Limit of 2 haiku in international section. Include a seasonal element. Cost: Free. Book prizes. Children's section. Worth checking website to see style of haiku. Send entries to: "Haiku Column," Editorial Dept., Mainichi Daily News, 1-1-1 Hitotsubashi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8051, Japan or via the website.. Limit of 10 haiku. Free entry. Email to: basho-bp@ict.ne.jp. Or post to: The Basho Poetry Offerings Supervisor, Basho-o Kinenkan, Ueno Marunouchi 117-13, Iga city, Mie prefecture, JAPAN 518-8770. Children's section. Send entries to: "Haiku Column," Editorial Dept., Mainichi Daily News, 1-1-1 Hitotsubashi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8051, Japan or via the website: <http://mainichi-shuppan.com/concours/index-e.html>

HAIKU FESTIVAL PLANNED FOR 2008

Barbara Strang, Steering Committee, Haiku Festival Aotearoa 11, reports: We are now planning a repeat of the very successful festival on Haiku and related forms held in Wellington in 2005. We hope to assemble a programme to appeal to beginners, experts and everyone in between, also a chance to meet and catch up with haiku friends. We will give people the choice of living in or attending during the day for some or all of the programme. We have made a booking at Bishop Julius Hostel, 90 Waimairi Road, Ilam, Christchurch, for the weekend 18-20 April, 2008. This is a student hostel which is modern, secluded, with all the facilities we need, with beautiful gardens and a park adjacent, and close to Christchurch Airport.

We welcome suggestions and comments about the programme or any related matters. Please contact Barbara Strang: bhstrang@yahoo.com, Judith Walsh: njw@clear.net.nz, or Anne Edmunds: aged@paradise.net.nz

HAIKU NZ SHOWCASE

Thanks largely to Sandra Simpson and the NZPS National Coordinator there is now a special section within the haiku pages of the NZPS website which showcases individual haiku writers. Included so far are Ernest J Berry, Bernard Gadd, Patricia Prime and Barbara Strang. There's information on the Katikati haiku pathway too. Ernie's fine artwork heads the section.

RICHARD VON STURMER

Richard gave a fine presentation, 'Dreaming with Words and Images', at the National Film Archives, Wellington, in May. He included his 26 short tanka films and the 1980s 'Humanimals', performed by Richard with Amala Wrightson, and based on slides taken by his travelling great aunts in the 1960s.

continuous rain,
as a moth is sleeping
on the stem of my razor
I decide
to remain unshaved

ROCKING ON!

Sandra Simpson

Another three boulders have been engraved in Katikati, this time a stone's throw (pardon the pun) from the main pathway. The Landing is an historic site for this planned Ulster Irish settlement (the only one in the world apparently) and features one of the town's famous murals as well as a wooden statue of Humphrey, a sea-elephant who made the Uretara Stream and Tauranga Harbour one of his ports of call for a while.

Now there are also three haiku boulders there, set among a group of boulders beside a small wooden platform (decking) and a park bench which faces the river. The new poems are by Laryalee Fraser (Canada), Jacek Margolak (Poland) and Peter Yovu (US). They have been engraved by Papamoa sculptor Peter Cramond and funded largely by Creative Communities grants.

The Katikati Haiku Pathway Focus Committee, chaired by Catherine Mair, hopes the 'outriders' will encourage people to make a circular walk along the pathway and through town taking in the murals, and that they will also act as advertisements for the main collection. The Haiku Pathway project poem-boulders now numbers 30.

KiwiHaiku

Rangiatea Church -
even my tinnitus
quietens

Karen Peterson Butterworth

walking behind
my mother
a glimpse of the future
Catherine Mair

Please send your KiwiHaiku submissions to: Richard von Sturmer, 18 Crocus Place, Remuera, Auckland. Email address: rvonsturmer@yahoo.com

Tanka Moments

Members are invited to submit unpublished tanka, even if you've never tried one before, to bernard.gadd@xtra.co.nz Those published will also appear on the beautiful Anglo-Japanese Tanka Society on-line site.

using newspapers
to clean windows
if only I could
clean away
the war

poems to
guide us
through the mirage
to the desert
we're really in

Tony Beyer

Talk Poem

Joanna Preston

Its Face

By Imtiaz Dharker

from *The Forward Book of Poetry 2007* (Forward Press; London, 2006)

A woman getting on a plane.
This is how it will happen.
A bird that has stopped singing
on a still road. This is how it will sound.

This cloth belongs to my face.
Who pulled it off?

That day I saw you
as if a window had broken.
Sharp, with edges that could cut
through cloth and skin.

You wrapped my mouth in plastic
and told me to breathe in free air.
This is how it will feel.

I remember heroes.
Figs, dates, a mango.
This food, your enemy's food.
This is how it will taste.

It will not come
slouching out of the ground.
It walks along a street
that has a familiar name.

This is how it will look.
It will have my face.

This is a two-faced poem. Deceptive. It begins with that simplest of actions: a woman getting on a plane. We are told that *This is how it will happen*, which sets up the structure of the poem to follow. We are never explicitly told what "it" is – the ending of a relationship? Or something darker?

The poem works by a series of statements. In twenty-three lines, there are seventeen full stops and only one question mark. Only six lines *don't* end sentences. The poem is stark: simple, declarative sentences, suggesting that these are simple facts, no discussion needed (or tolerated). The enjambed sentences are all concerned with elaboration, but even here they are kept in tight check. It begins with *a woman getting on a plane*. Leaving somewhere, or someone. And it will sound like *a bird that has stopped singing/ on a still road*. A sudden, ominous silence. No movement. Nothing to tell us (yet) why the bird has fallen silent.

The second stanza sets a puzzle. What is the cloth? Is the "who" a genuine question, or rhetorical (verging on the accusatory)? The connotations here are of secrecy and exposure. Its removal means that she is revealed, exposed, unmasked. Visible. And vulnerable. But also (potentially) powerful – think "barefaced". Which certainly fits with the tone of her question. This exposure may not have been of her own doing, but she's not shrinking from it either.

The third stanza tells us that there was a definite act, a moment of decision: *That day I saw you*. The unspoken "as if for the first time" links back to the idea of revelation. And things are topsy-turvy – she doesn't "see" until the window (however metaphorical) has been broken. Again we are reminded of cloth and face: this time, the

glass *could cut/ through cloth and skin*. Damage has been done, (and more is threatened,) but something is also revealed. Pain and/or danger are the cost of clarity.

Stanza four makes the threat real. *You wrapped my mouth in plastic* – to muffle her? To threaten her? (The plastic only wraps her mouth, not face or nose). She is told *to breathe in free air*, implying that she may at some stage be free again. But that decision is not hers. And her captor is cruel.

The fifth stanza's reference to heroes is disturbing – following on from threatened suffocation, it brings martyrs to mind. *Figs, dates, a mango*. Fruit of the Middle East. *This food, your enemy's food*. Eating your enemy's food could be shameful (accepting charity), or an act of power – of devouring your enemy's sustenance. "It" will taste familiar, and sweet.

The penultimate stanza echoes Yeats' "The Second Coming": *and what rough beast, its hour come round at last/ slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?* But this is not how this "it" will appear: there will be nothing obvious, nothing to mark it as an agent of catastrophe (remember the *still road* in stanza 1?). It will walk *along a street / that has a familiar name*. Somewhere we've been, or almost know. And *It will have my face*. It will be here, real and present.

Published in a collection called *The Terrorist at my Table*, it's impossible to escape the political connotations of this poem. One recurring question in the wake of the London bombings has been what could make young men turn against their own country? In the play of personal against violence, familiarity against danger, this poem offers an answer. Just as a loving relationship between two people can become bitter and harmful, it is possible to become estranged from an entire culture/ country. And what frightens us more than our neighbour (or lover, or parent) turning against us?

Whether you read the "I" of this poem as a woman escaping a violent relationship, or a terrorist addressing their country, or an entire section of society addressing the rest, this poem is about power, and taking power back. About threats, and restitution. As dangerous as Yeats' beast. As simple as a woman getting on a plane. As herself: no mask, no veil. Her own face.

Footnote: Imtiaz Dharker was born in Pakistan, raised in Glasgow, and eloped to India. She divides her life between Mumbai and London. She has published four books of poetry; *Purdah* (Oxford University Press, 1989), *Postcards from God* (Bloodaxe, 1997), *I Speak for the Devil* (Bloodaxe, 2001; Penguin Books India, 2003) and *The Terrorist at my Table* (Bloodaxe, 2006).

MEMBERS' POEMS

Wearing Katherine Mansfield's shawl

It felt like love at the Hôtel
d'Adhémar the moment you placed
the silk skein around my shoulders,
the dim red and rusty green fabric
its fringe gliding like fingertips
over my arm, a draft of bitter
scent, naturally Katherine's
illness, Virginia's sarcasm,
and, yes, a trace of wild gorse
flowers and New Zealand, not
to mention the drift of her skin
and yours during the photograph.

Fiona Kidman

(First published in *Backstage*, the newsletter of Downstage Theatre.)

Waimarama

From my kitchen
I could see a sea higher
than me.

Cupboards creaked
at the tide turn.

Mornings
there was bedrock
then sand
then rolled pebbles.

Concrete steps
moved
next door.

At the Spring tide
locals gathered
and watched
as tarmac
was pounded
and undermined.

This
pinprick event
encapsulates
the big picture.

Erosion!!
Now showing at beaches near you.

Barbara Bailey

Butterfly

it may not be what you think
this death
wind ruffles through dead wings

flings its cargo of colour
over marigolds

Helen Bascand

(from: 'into the vanishing point', pub. Steele Roberts, 2007)

How to Dress For Peace

unbuckle your ammunition belt
undo your scabbard
and remove your holster

unlace your military boots
and peel off your khaki socks

unbutton your flak jacket
pull off your pullover
take off your shirt
and lower your trousers

fold your underpants neatly
and place them (with your singlet)
in the dumb-waiter

if you have a dog tag
hang it on the hook
on the back of the door

beside the bed you'll find
a long silk shift
it is white and has been
neatly ironed

pull it on
there are no
buttons zips or ties

on the dresser
there is a small yellow harp
don't leave without it

James Norcliffe

(from: "Villon in Millerton", pub. AUP 2007)

Members are invited to submit their published or unpublished poems to editor@poetrysociety.org.nz for this page.

September DEADLINE is 6th August