

a fine line

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

ISSN 1177-6544 (PRINT)

ISSN 1178-3931 (ONLINE)

JULY 2013



NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY
Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa
REGISTERED CHARITY: CC20250

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LAURICE GILBERT

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WELLINGTON MEETINGS
are held on the third Monday of the
month, Feb-Nov, at Poets' Corner:
The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St,
Thorndon.

Starts at 7.30pm with an open mic,
followed by a Guest Poet.

**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING:**
Saturday 20th July, 2pm-4pm
upstairs at the Thistle Inn

**DEADLINE FOR
SEPTEMBER ISSUE:**

7 August

A Potted History of the NZ Poetry Society, and some other matters

Laurice Gilbert

A full history of the New Zealand Poetry Society (NZPS) has been attempted several times, and I don't intend to go into great detail here. There is a wealth of material sitting in my office, waiting for a future historian to fossick through, and perhaps one day that particular project will see completion. In the meantime, here's my brief and inadequate summary.

Irene Adcock, mother of Fleur Adcock and Marilyn Duckworth and a writer herself, was responsible for the foundation of the New Zealand Poetry Society (NZPS), which in its early days was known simply as The Poetry Society. In 1973 Irene organised a meeting at her home to talk about setting up a regular event for poets to share work. Attendants at that meeting included Denis and Lyn Glover, Alistair Campbell, Earle Spencer (not Princess Diana's brother, I suspect), Dennis List, Harry Orsman, Marilyn Duckworth, Dan Donovan, Tilly Hunter, Bernard Kemp and "others", with a 'best wishes' phone call from Sam Hunt during the meeting.

The Inaugural General Meeting at The Wellington Settlement (Willis St) in May 1973 unanimously elected Irene as the first President, and she remained in that position until 1975, returning in 1977, 1979, and 1981. During the in-between years the position was held by Peter Read, Lauris Edmond and Denis Glover, with Alistair Campbell taking over from Irene in 1982. He was succeeded by Harry Ricketts in 1987 and in 1989 Harry oversaw the formalisation of the organisation as an Incorporated Society, when it became The New Zealand Poetry Society. He was followed by Bill Sewell, Tom Beard, Cyril Childs, Vivienne Plumb, Nelson Wattie, Chris Orsman, Johanna Aitchison, Gillian Cameron (twice), Margaret Vos, James Norcliffe and Laurice Gilbert (since 2007). I am honoured to have followed in the footsteps of such an illustrious line-up. In my time as President we have achieved charitable status, and the NZPS is registered with the Charities Commission (Internal Affairs), which is why you can claim a tax rebate on donations over \$5.

We've also had some impressive Patrons. I haven't been through all the documents so I can only tell you the ones I know of: Ruth Dallas, Lauris Edmond, Alistair Te Ariki Campbell and Meg Campbell, and currently Dame Fiona Kidman and Vincent O'Sullivan, DCNZM.

Though the founding group's objective was simply to hold local poetry readings, the projects completed over the years have featured many New Zealand poets, and been mutually beneficial for visiting international poets. It was in Harry Ricketts' time that the open mic was introduced, an unusual idea back then, and various members of the committees over the years have provided a wide variety of public services: national tours by both local and international poets, many workshops with widely-published poets (both independently and in the context of adult education programmes), two national

haiku anthologies, Poetry on the Buses (Wellington), a Poets in the Workplace pilot which saw poets attached to the Wellington Botanic Gardens and Wellington Hospital, and (with the Canterbury Poets Collective) the introduction of the Lauris Edmond Award for Distinguished Contribution to Poetry in New Zealand.

The website was started by Margaret Vos in the early 00s as a Yahoo group and has gradually developed into the resource-rich independent site that it is now. Thanks to previous administrator Helen Heath we have free hosting, which includes a content management system that's easy to use. Our website-based connection with the international haiku community, established in 2005 and finely managed by Sandra Simpson, ensures visitors to the site from many diverse countries, and we average over 2000 unique visitors every month – more in competition season. Our mission to promote New Zealand poets and poetry is very well-served in this way.

In 1999 the Society suffered a huge financial shock when the Treasurer defrauded us of over \$12,000, of which about \$9,000 was eventually recovered. This event reflects two matters that are relevant to us today. The first is that the NZPS was financially healthy prior to the fraud, thanks to the work of those who regularly made successful applications to the Arts Council (now Creative New Zealand). We were well-supported from within the Council, and there was always financial assistance available for the work the (unpaid) committee members carried out to further the aims of the Society. For the last five years we have been functioning largely without that assistance, and expenses have (mostly) been covered by subscriptions and the Society's activities – a small amount from the competition and anthology, with the occasional workshop thrown in.

The second matter is that from 2000 the handling of the Society's finances was out-sourced to a paid bookkeeper and monitored by the committee to ensure transparency.

While there was a willing and enthusiastic committee all proceeded well. However, as you no doubt realise, volunteers have gradually become harder to find over the last decade, and by 2005 the bookkeeper wasn't the only paid worker for the Society. The newsletter (as it was then), website, and secretarial work also became paid jobs. The competition and anthology production were outsourced as well, but at least paid for themselves in entries and sales respectively. In 2006, everyone but the bookkeeper resigned more or less at once, and I was offered the job of administrator in charge of every committee function (except Treasurer). Which brings us neatly to today.

When I accepted the job as National Coordinator, my job description covered: management and secretarial services, website services, fundraising, publicity and promotion, magazine production, Wellington event management and coordination with other poetry groups around the country. Along with arranging committee meetings and the AGM, hidden in "management" was

the somewhat surprising role of ensuring compliance (ie fulfilling our responsibilities to the Companies Office and later to the Charities Commission). I soon proved to be inept at fund-raising and gave that up, taking a pay cut in the process.

I was already running the annual competition, which is self-funded, and added overseeing the production, sales and distribution of the anthology to my workload. For the last three years I've also been in charge of membership, and this year I took on the role of Treasurer as well, after our last one didn't work out. All in all, what was a 16-hour a week job has become almost full-time, with a significant number of extra hours around the end of the competition.

Please don't read any of this as a complaint. I have loved this job, as evidenced by my carrying on doing it at a pay rate that makes the minimum wage look overly generous. I have especially relished contact with the poets and other literary figures I've met around the country – people I wouldn't have had the pleasure of meeting if I hadn't resigned from a lucrative health career to focus on poetry. However, it's coming up to seven years now, and I'm ready for a break. I have advised the Committee that I am resigning as National Coordinator, effective after this year's anthology launch in November.

When I first started, our then President, James Norcliffe, described the creation of the National Coordinator position as an "elegant solution" to the reduction in available volunteers and mass resignation of the paid help. Now it's time to look for another solution. There might be someone out there willing to take over directly from me (I have no succession plan), but I'm not optimistic about that, unless you're a great deal better at delegating than I am and have an independent income (or are good at fund-raising!).

However, I know there are now members who weren't around seven years ago, willing to take on individual jobs – one who's prepared to manage the memberships, another who's willing to be Treasurer (after I get our Xero account up and running well). Perhaps it's time to take another look at the original working Committee model, or perhaps you can think of another way to run the Society that we haven't tried before. I've worked hard to promote the Society and though our membership numbers haven't risen significantly, the longstanding members we have retained and the new ones we have attracted are loyal and supportive. I have had the immense pleasure of accompanying many of our members along the path of poetry development, and am confident the NZPS has many more years ahead of it to continue this awesome work.

With email and Skype, you don't even have to be in Wellington to contribute (except for the Secretary, who needs to be able to get to the PO Box). I urge as many of you as possible to attend our AGM at 2pm on Saturday 20th July, at The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Thorndon, to discuss the future management of the NZPS, and where we go from here.



About our Contributors

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

Mary Cresswell is a Kapiti poet whose work appears in a variety of print and online journals.

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

Laurice Gilbert is President and National Coordinator of the NZPS, with many poems published locally and internationally. She is the current Featured Poet International at Muse-Pie Press, and released her first collection in 2012.

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

Keith Westwater lives in Lower Hutt, New Zealand. *Tongues of Ash* (IP, 2011) was his debut collection of poetry and received the publisher's 2011 IP Picks Best First Book prize. More of Keith's poems and where to buy *Tongues of Ash* may be found on his blog *Some Place Else*.



A Warm Welcome To:

Hayley Baines Auckland

Catherine Bullock Waihi

David Chadwick Otaki

David Nicoll Wellington

Epsom Girls' Grammar School Auckland

GM Friesen Christchurch

L Anne Kilgour Waiheke Island

Marna Fyson Wellington

Peter Adams Wellington

Shane Cave Kapiti

Winter downpour -
even the monkey
needs a raincoat

Matsuo Bashō

Congratulations

Valeria Barouch has had a couple of successes recently: Late last year she won 1st Equal in the 20ème Prix Artistique de la Commune de Meyrin, Catégorie Poésie, (Switzerland) with a Fibonacci poem in French, and at the beginning of this year won 2nd Place in the 16th Mainichi Haiku Contest.

Ernie Berry won First Place in the Robert Spiess Memorial Haiku Award Competition for 2013, with:

midsummer
under a leaf
hidden from

Nola Borrell had a haiku published alongside two Chinese translations, at <http://neverendingstoryhaikutanka.blogspot.ca> The subject of the haiku is the late Jeanette Stace, friend and long-time stalwart of the NZPS.

Diana Brodie's collection, *Giotto's Circle*, will be published in July by Poetry Salzburg. So far this year she has had poems included in the anthologies *Poised in Flight* (A Kind of Hurricane Press) and *When the Tramp Meets the King* (Ek Zuban Press). Also in the UK journals *Interpreter's House* and *Weyfarers*. A further poem is forthcoming in June, in *Obsessed with Pipework*.

Kelvin Fowler's book of Christian poetry, *Verses for the King*, has been published by Vineyard International Publishing, and he reports that it is selling well. <http://www.supper.co.nz/verses-for-the-king.html>

Vaughan Rapatahana has had a submission short listed for the 2013 Erbacce Prize in Poetry.

Gus Simonovic was invited to perform at a Festival: <http://viseoglyrikk.no/> (website not in English). He tells me his payment for a 15-minute appearance is more than he's ever earned for any of his poetry or poetry-related activities, combined! We can all dream about being snapped up by a properly funded arts event.

Jo Thorpe (along with James Brown, Holly Painter, Ashleigh Young and Maria McMillan) have recently had poems translated into German for publication in an anthology featuring poets from the US (including Mark Strand), Germany, Denmark, France and NZ. The publication is a 270-page volume entitled *Lyrkosmose 3*, published in Germany, 2013.

The Caselberg International Poetry Competition (judged by Greg O'Brien) was almost a clean sweep for the NZ Poetry Society. The Winner was **Tim Upperton** (for the second time in a row), and **Laurice Gilbert** came Second. Four of the Highly Commended Poets were NZPS members: **Natasha Dennerstein**, **Nicola Easthope**, **Janet Newman** and **Sandi Sartorelli**. The two winning poems were published in *Landfall* 225 in May.

Landfall 225 also contains poems by: **Ruth Arnison, Owen Bullock, Wes Lee, Martha Morseth, and Karen Zelas.**

Poetry NZ #46 contains work from NZPS members: **Ruth Arnison, Owen Bullock, Sue Fitchett, Charles Hadfield, Trevor Hayes, Don MacLennan, Janet Newman, Joanna Preston, Jereemy Roberts, and Bill Sutton.**

Takahe 78 includes work by **Ruth Arnison, Natasha Dennerstein, Catherine Fitchett, Laurice Gilbert, Janet Newman, Patricia Prime, Joanna Preston, Bill Sutton, Rowan Taigel and Jo Thorpe.** Janet Newman also has a poem in *Snorkel* #17 (Australia).



Noticeboard

REMINDER - AGM

The 2013 AGM of The New Zealand Poetry Society Inc. will be held upstairs at The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Thorndon, Wellington, at 2pm on Saturday 20th July. The Minutes of the 2012 AGM were published in the May issue of *a fine line*. If you are planning to attend, please bring your copy with you, to save the time and expense of printing them out for an indeterminate number. No nominations have been received for any of the Committee positions. Nominations will be accepted from the floor. We have the room for two hours, which should give us plenty for discussion.



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NOMINATIONS CALLED FOR NEXT POET LAUREATE

Deadline: 15 July

Accomplished poets, resident in New Zealand, who have made an outstanding contribution to poetry, are eligible for nomination to become the next New Zealand Poet Laureate. Offered for a two-year period between July 2013 and June 2015, the Award has a monetary value of \$80,000. During their tenure the Laureate is supported to participate in events that promote the writing and reading of poetry, and to produce a book of poetry.

Links to background information and nomination forms are available through the National Library website at: <http://natlib.govt.nz/about-us/scholarships-and-awards/poet-laureate>



Regional Report

WINDRIFT - APRIL

Penny Pruden

It was a pleasure to welcome John Ross (all the way from Palmerston North) when seven members gathered in Brooklyn for the afternoon meeting with, as usual, three categories to test our observation and imagination: Open, 'mould', relationships between people. Contributions were placed separately in bowls and taken at random for comment. As sometimes happens, the subjects interacted - to the extent that one contributor never seemed quite sure which bowl his pieces should be in!

The first theme produced haiku ranging from neighbours, to fruit, to weather - which so often, at this time of year, produces mould! A good example of the interaction of a free choice and the relationship theme emerged immediately with Bevan Greenslade's

three words in my neighbour's tongue
three steps alongside
now we share bread

We were pleased that no mould was suggested as being part of the shared bread! - which immediately referred us to the second subject, and Ernest Berry's one-liner:

baching my bread grows a beard

Back in category one, Bevan suggested that Ernie's 'click of lemons' could have introduced a new collective noun:

west wind
the click of lemons
coming together

Lacking any crossover to decay or human relationships was Karen Peterson Butterworth's

new hearing aid
the forgotten music
of the loo

As examples were read, the need to know more of the background and circumstances prompting certain haiku was emphasized, with the suggestion that the senryu form could better fill out the detail. One example was John Ross's memory of a friend lost in the mountains, whose body he helped recover:

Mount Hector summit
from his chilled moustache
I flicked snow

John agreed that the background to that tragedy needed to be included, while avoiding the past tense if possible.

As we started on the second subject, decline rather than decay seemed to be in the mind of corresponding member Jenny Pyatt:

reclining moon
glows in black
sky

It was suggested this could be presented as both a one-liner and in two lines. Karen emphasized that a third line normally needed contrast or a wrench to complete the poem, but that three lines were not essential.

Woken in the night without the compensation of a fresh newspaper to read, a weary John Ross had produced

five in the morning
a dozen stars
no newspaper

A much more hopeful rearrangement of the lines was suggested by Nola Borrell, who said repeating the wonder of "a dozen stars!" as the final line could express a more positive feeling. It was interesting to note Harumi Hasegawa's comment that the 12 Zodiac signs could even be a connection to the horoscope in the looked-for newspaper.

Closer to the subject Karen contributed:

low pollen count
now powdery mildew -
ah choo!

Rather than today's allergies, ancient DNA was on Bevan's mind as he reminded us that all DNA is linked.

faint spores in the rock
glassy beneath frost
echoes in my DNA

The final theme of human relationships brought our thoughts back to the present, while Harumi Hasegawa still reminded us of the earlier discussion:

my named marmalade
an invisible corner in the fridge
hiding from my brother

Other attempts were discussed and explained at length, with one producing the humorous comment: "That's not a haiku, it's an Epic!"

Family attachments, though, were touchingly expressed in Nola Borrell's
under my pillow
a letter
from my granddaughter

It was agreed that my own effort in this group needed more work:

young man walks up the hill alone
he comes back with a companion
they are holding hands

but, as this meeting ended and we realized that it would truly be winter before the next, I hoped that my earlier piece fitted the bill:

I pull out late broccoli
dig in the mildewed remains
of summer



haikai café

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

Kirsten Cliff

Sulphur Point
a wave of yellow fennel
across the bay

~ Haiku by Jenny Fraser

Listening

I've always found it incongruous that our early settlers rhapsodised about bird song at the same time they were clearing the forests. Up here in Northland the journals of those out in the logging camps where the kauri was being almost wiped out, often mentioned how lovely the morning chorus was.

sun shines red
through closed eyelids
distant traffic

~ Haibun by Maureen Sudlow

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

Competitions & Submissions

Cyclamens and Swords Call for submissions (Israel)

Must be received by: 15 July

Online literary journal edited by Israeli poets Helen Bar-Lev and Johnmichael Simon, seeks poetry, stories and artwork for their August issue. Poems should be on the theme of "Birds". Prose and art submissions for this issue can be on any theme. Send 1-4 poems, maximum 60 lines each, or 1-2 stories, maximum 5,000 words each. Enter online only: <http://cyclamensandswords.com/submissions.php>

The 2013 Rattle Poetry Prize (USA) Postmark Deadline: 15 July

Annual Poetry Prize offers \$5,000 for a single poem, to be published in the winter issue of the magazine. Ten finalists receive \$100 each and publication, and are eligible for the \$1,000 Readers' Choice Award, to be selected by subscriber and entrant vote. Additional poems from the entries are frequently offered publication as well. In 2012 we published 19 poems that had been submitted to the contest from over 1,800 entries. Judged blind by the editors to ensure a fair and consistent selection; entry fee is simply a one-year subscription to the magazine - and now a large Readers' Choice Award to be chosen by the writers themselves. We've designed the Rattle Poetry Prize to be one of the most writer-friendly contests around. Entries are accepted by email or hard copy. For full guidelines, or to read the winning poems from previous years, visit www.rattle.com

80 lines Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 July

Prizes: 1st - £100 plus publication. Runners-up - publication. Entry Fee: £3. Website: <http://www.thinkspublications.co.uk/competitions>

Tupelo Press - July Open Submission Period (USA)

Closing date: 31 July (postmark or online-submission date)

Throughout July, Tupelo Press holds open submissions for book-length poetry collections (48-90 pages) and chapbook-length poetry collections (30-47 pages). Selected manuscripts will receive publication by Tupelo Press, a book launch, and national distribution with energetic publicity and promotion. Please read the complete guidelines before submitting your manuscript: http://www.tupelopress.org/july_guidelines.php

The July Open Reading Period is open to anyone writing in the English language, whether living in the United States or abroad. Translations are not eligible for this prize, nor are previously self-published books. Employees of Tupelo Press and authors previously published by Tupelo Press are not eligible. Poets submitting work for consideration may be published authors or writers without prior book publications.

NZPS publication a fine line - call for submissions

Deadline: 7 August

The editor welcomes your contribution. We currently make a small payment for Feature Articles and reviews. See publication guidelines for these and other sections of the magazine at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutsubmissionguidelines>

Tupelo Quarterly Inaugural Poetry Contest (USA)

Deadline: 15 August

Entry fee: \$20; First prize: \$1,000; Judge: Ilya Kaminsky. General Guidelines: Please send us up to five stunning, unpublished poems of any style or sensibility. Your attachment must include, in one document: a cover sheet including your name, address, email address, phone number, and the titles of the poems you are submitting. Do not put your name or any other identifying information on the pages bearing the poems themselves.

The editorial team of *Tupelo Quarterly* will review all submissions and forward 20 individual poems to the contest judge, Ilya Kaminsky. At no time will he have any identifying information about the authors. From the 20 finalists, he will select a winning poem and three Runners-Up.

Simultaneous submissions are welcome as long as you notify us immediately if the poem is placed elsewhere. Submissions will not be returned, and submissions may not be changed after entry.

The author of the winning poem will receive \$1,000 and publication in the inaugural issue of *Tupelo Quarterly*. The three Runners-Up will have their selected poems published in the inaugural issue of *Tupelo Quarterly*. All 20 finalists' names and the titles of their nominated poems will be listed in the same issue, and all finalists will also be considered for publication in the inaugural issue.

All poems submitted to the contest will be considered for publication either in the inaugural or later issues of *Tupelo Quarterly*.

For remaining guidelines and to enter online via PayPal, please see: <http://tupeloquarterly.com/2013/06/03/tupelo-quarterly-inaugural-poetry-contest-guidelines/>

RHINO - Call for submissions (USA) Postmark

Deadline: 31 August

RHINO is an award-winning, eclectic, independent, internationally-oriented annual poetry journal of 37 years. They accept unpublished poems, flash fiction (750 words maximum), and poetry translations that compel, experiment, inspire, provoke, and/or sing. Online submissions preferred. See website for guidelines: <http://rhinopoetry.org/submit/guidelines/> RHINO also sponsors a poetry prize in the fall.

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.

Douglas Adams, 1952 – 2001

The Toolangi C. J. Dennis Poetry Competition

(Australia) Closing date: 7 September

Three adult categories, and primary and secondary school categories. 2013 marks the centenary of the publication of C. J. Dennis' first book, *Backblock Ballads*. It is also an election year. With both these points in mind, the themed category for this year is a poem inspired by 'The Bridge Across the Crick', from *Backblock Ballads*.

Winners will be announced at a ceremony to be held at 'The Singing Gardens' in Toolangi (Victoria) at 2pm on Saturday, 26th October. The Toolangi C. J. Dennis Poetry Festival will take place over the weekend of Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th October. There will be a concert on the Saturday evening, featuring members of the C. J. Dennis Society and their friends, with a special guest appearance by the Society's Patron, legendary Northern Territory story teller and singer, Ted Egan.

Further information can be found at: <http://toolangi.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/CJ-Dennis-Poetry-Comp-form-20131.pdf>

OPEN SUBMISSIONS

Hoot (USA)

\$2 submission fee, shared amongst successful entries.

A literary magazine on postcards! That's HOOT.

Postcards are small, so we are seeking small work: poetry, fiction, <150 words. Guidelines: <http://hootreview.com>. We publish one piece in each issue (monthly). Our authors are paid a percentage of the contributions we received in the month prior. We also publish 1-4 pieces online monthly. We are happy to give you feedback before (yes, before!) you submit in our free (yes, free!) online Wednesday workshops. <http://www.hootreview.com/workshops> [This is a great website - worth exploring thoroughly; Ed.]

Iota (UK)

Iota welcomes and considers submissions throughout the year. They also welcome annual subscriptions from individuals and institutions as well as purchases of single issues. Further information is available on the *Iota* website: <http://www.iotamagazine.co.uk/> email: info@templarpoeetry.co.uk

Neon (UK)

Neon is open to submissions all year round. If you like what you've read and think your work would fit with the magazine, check out the guidelines at http://www.neonmagazine.co.uk/?page_id=116 and send something in. Response time is usually less than a week, and if you've subscribed or purchased a sample copy the editor will try and provide some feedback on your work. <http://www.neonmagazine.co.uk>

Other Poetry (UK)

<http://www.otherpoetry.com/> *Other Poetry* is published three times per year, welcomes new and

established poets, and accepts e-mail enquiries. Writer's guidelines are online and payment is £5. There is no restriction on theme, subject, length, or style. Allow six weeks for a reply.

Palooka (USA)

Palooka is a nonprofit literary journal open to diverse forms, seeking fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, plays, graphic short stories, graphic essays, comic strips, artwork, photography, and multimedia. Print and electronic versions of the journal are available for purchase and samples of the published materials appear online. Always excited to see new work! Happy submitting! www.palookajournal.com.

Poetry24 (UK)

... is a contemporary current affairs poetry blog, launched by Martin Hodges and Clare Kirwan. The aim is simple: to publish news-related or topical poetry that reflects what's happening in the world, or current affairs. See details at: <http://poetry-24.blogspot.com/>

Poetry Sz: demystifying mental illness

Submissions accepted year-round. We are calling for original, previously unpublished poetry written by people who have experienced mental illness. Poems of all topics and styles are welcome. Website: <http://poetrysz.blogspot.com> Submission guidelines at <http://www.poetrysz.blogspot.com/2006/04/submission-guidelines.html>

Send 4-6 poems and a short bio in the body of your email to poetrysz@yahoo.com

Prole Books (UK)

Prole Poetry and Prose is open to submissions all year round. We consider fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry in all its forms. Prole is read around the world and we pay our writers a royalty based on profits. We keep on top of submissions, normally responding within three weeks.

Full submissions guidelines can be found at: <http://www.prolebooks.co.uk/page3.html>

Shot Glass Journal (USA)

Shot Glass Journal accepts submissions year-round and will publish accepted submissions in three issues to be published over the course of a calendar year. Send poetry that is under 16 lines to musepiepress@aol.com Short poetry can include short form poetry, free verse and prose poetry. Prose poetry should not exceed ten lines. All poems must be the original, unpublished work of the submitter. Make sure that you send your best work.

Please type in the subject line "For Shot Glass Journal." Submit the poems only in the body of the e-mail in plain text. No submission e-mails will be accepted with attachments. www.musepiepress.com/shotglass



Featured Poet: Keith Westwater

The leper's bed

It's Easter Saturday.
The room has six berths – four taken.
There's dull green lino
green painted walls.

Across the corridor, a bathroom for all –
one cubicle shower, two loos
a hand basin
lost hospital equipment.

A tube in his arm fires torpedoes
at the enemy in his lung. He has
an oxygen mask, a business class bed
and economy food.

His emergency cord doesn't work
and can't be fixed till Tuesday.
He's told to use somebody else's
and given a bell as well.

The ordinance of clowns

I heard a man on the radio say
there's more to clowning than
oversize bow ties, banana skins
bandanas, braces, and
button hole flowers that spray.
No, the Whiteface, the Hobo
the Character, the Auguste
(the one with the big nose)
have slapstick codes to uphold.
Unruly tomfoolery
gives clowns a bad face.
True clowns, he said
hose down each other
not the crowd.

How funnily sad, I thought
how comically ironic.

You can't just bend the rules
when clowning around.

Dance lessons

I didn't join the blue-dressed, barefoot girl
as she pranced alone upon her toes
at the after-wedding dance
her male and female partners coming, going.
Neither did I sidle up beside the five men coalesced
each dancing self-obsessed with Saint Vitus
nor crib some space among the solo swayers
nor nudge aside the twos and threesomes.

But this odd menagerie of motion
led me to a dance floor long ago
where matrons with a record player
showed spotty boys and girls with sweaty palms
where to place their feet and hands
should a waltz be struck up by the band.

In the nation's bookshop chains

First, forced relocations
lower lodgings in some
draughty cul-de-sac
less room, less light.

All the while
unexplained disappearances
James K, Hone, Ruth, others
gone, gone and not replaced.

Those left behind, thin-spined
less popular, lean on each other
take bets on who will be
the last one standing.

Finally, denial of identity
removal of signs
pointing to pleasure troves
proclaiming different-ness.

Survivors now suffer
mass assimilation and burial
in short stories, non-fiction
literature, or classics.

Poetry? Nah mate
don't stock it any more
waste of bloody space
nobody buys the stuff.

Let us kneel and pray for the Belsen twin

Let us kneel and pray for the Belsen twin
From age one we trained her inner critic
We good as killed her saying good was slim

She could not stand to see her mirror-skin
You are obese and ugly answered back
Let us kneel and pray for the Belsen twin

Being fat we said's a deadly sin
Slender body image is the ticket
We good as killed her saying good was slim

Fashion, ads, and media all weighed in
Next the Food Police helped to make her sick
Let us kneel and pray for the Belsen twin

Our culture says size zero is not thin
A minus BMI is just the trick
We good as killed her saying good was slim

Triumph over fat was a pyrrhic win
Being thin was what she could not lick
Let us kneel and pray for the Belsen twin
We good as killed her saying good was slim

Saturday night fight

It's one a.m. Tonight's
viral party house
has spewed
its excess occupants
onto the lawn outside

Whirling bodies
which not so long ago
cuddled teddy bears
clutch cans of alcopop
to their sides

Police arrive
(too late, too few)
but soon retreat, driven back
by rocks and bottles
knowing there are knives

Down the street
an ambulance stands by
waiting for a truce
so they can bag the body
lying on the drive

Road Cricket

Driving through town
listening to the cricket
I saw a man
in the road's grassy middle
about to thread a three-lane needle
with his body

glass, metal, flesh, blood

He danced ahead
like a batsman at the bowler's end
just before the leather leaves
the bowler's hand
then scuttled back
to bide another chance

walk, run, dive, swallow

You fool, I thought
you bloody bunny
as my own life's risky runs
replayed for me right then
though I knew on his far crease
there was no-one looking out to call

YES! NO! WAIT! ...sorry

A wing and a prayer

The fundamentalists board the flight
bearing crosses. Grim-faced, grey-haired women
scarved, not one low décolletage in sight
eyes averted, deferring to their men
the way old handmaidens do. The men got
through security somehow, clay tablets
taped to their chests, bags full of brimstone pots
stones for casting clicking in their pockets.

Silently, on drop-down video screens
Goldenhorse's female lead is singing.
The clip zooms in to pink, lip-glossed lips, green
long-lashed eyes shadowed black, hair flaming.
I pray they'll not ask their God to smite her down
after our plane unshackles from the ground.



Reviews

***Three Days in a Wishing Well* Kerrin P. Sharpe (VUP, 2012) 71pp. RRP \$28.00 ISBN**

Rangi Faith

Don't be fooled by the unappealing front cover design of this book. This is good poetry. As you read, image after image rises out of each poem. This is poetry that lives and breathes. It is exciting, refreshing work that squeezes the life out of vocabulary and idea, and stretches the limits of language. A cooking analogy springs to mind. Using a deft brush, the poet bastes the poems carefully and slips them into the old coal range for a further, delicate baking.

There are over 54 poems in the book, divided into three sections. Virtually every poem has a memorable quote that needs no explanation. In the poem 'overseeing the moon', "the sky fills a bath/ with cups of lightning". In 'the embalmer's son, " he throws a case sheet/ over the house". In 'mining the heart', "the cardiologist/ removes his davy lamp/ and closes the valve". The poem 'joining the circus' is a clever play on the use of words that have been rejected by publishers: "after/ years of/ rejection slips the poet decided/ his words should join the circus". The poet's prose-poetry deer stories are poetic folk tales – with woodcutters, macramé, a barber, folk-dancing, and the richness of a German baritone.

The poem 'flame in the cup' sees the poet as an observer of people: "when you wake/ your name enters/ the room as pollen". The poet's words on Antarctic exploration give it a new slant. In 'the guardian ponies' she says "Siberian ponies/ photograph themselves/ in 3-D snow glasses/ wearing polar medals". Also, in 'cape evans photo shoot', "on hobby wheels/ the ponies model/ their 1910 winter collection".

Even the titles of the poems are poetic – for example 'waiting on an island for the missing balloonist' (p. 41); 'washing his name with stone' (p. 42); 'sleeping with a pukeko' (p.29).

How pleasant it is to read poetry with no commas, and no full stops. If it was obviously the intention of the poet and publisher to have no punctuation, it's a good move. I'll be very pleased to add this signed copy to my collection of New Zealand poets. Keep a sharp lookout for this poet's next collection.

***Beauties of the Octagonal Pool* Gregory O'Brien (VUP, 2012) ISBN 9781869405793 RRP\$27.99**

Vaughan Rapatahana

Greg O'Brien is a fine poet, who also has a further ability to draw: both talents are here apparent and – at times – confluent throughout this, his first collection for seven years.

This collection needs to be read carefully and multiple times as O'Brien has thrown a lot of tackle into this thick (118 pages) ocean of words. New denizens emerge from

the depths of his work here after every trawl through the pages – such is the density of imagery and wordplay of much of his verse.

Divided into eight sections, each fronted by its own black and white sketch, O'Brien's poems range from long to very short; from prose to infrequent rhyming couplets such as "the field mowed, the boat rowed" to sprays of concrete poetry; from fondly recalled scenarios of his youth through to fondly recollected scenarios encountered in his manifold World travels to Raoul Island, Fiji, Russia, Italy, Monaco, France, Waiheke Island et al. – and always an obsession with fish. Fish, fish, fish in great schools swimming through the shoals of this book.

For O'Brien seems to have fish, fishermen – as word anglers and as apostolic archetypes – and water, on the brain; in well over 50% of the poems here represented (and I did count them) an image of un poisson or un pêcheur and/or a body of water somehow flows throughout this corpus like an artesian bore. Take as just one typical catch – hauled from the depths of 'Ode to Futuna Chapel' – sea, tide, anemones, madrepores, frigate birds, cast, adrift, rock pool, waters, float, Crab-footed, sea-bed, reef, swimming, diving birds, sunfish, sargassum weed, swimmer, swim, floating, Lagoon, sea-bed, waves, Sunfish, moonfish, coral, beach, canoes, vessel, island... all in the net in this long drifting dream-like surf through stingrays, religion and writing.

Even as an angler, however, O'Brien is not fully in these poems, is in no way a 'confessional poet': "personal without being self-obsessed" wrote Mary Cresswell correctly in her *Takahe* review, but for this reviewer he is not sufficiently 'enough' in the poems either, for, or more likely because of, all his oblique angles. What might be here generalized as characteristic of several Wellington poets per se, e.g. Bill Manhire, whom the poem 'A small ode to faith' is dedicated to (O'Brien loves dedications too. He is a very dedicated poet, methinks) – this step away from full immersion is succinctly summed up, albeit unconsciously, by lines from this selfsame poem:

It was not
their small minds we were drawn to
but their shining fuselage

held like a pen in one hand – a model
proposed for us: well-schooled, and rendered

in great detail, expelled from their
natural element

All very fishy once more, but more than a little frustrating in that this poet most certainly has the weft and intelligence to bait his hooks for taniwha and not just pursue red herrings.

Perhaps a bit more rage, more fulmination about societal wrongs and a bit less playfulness with words and word echoes – as in the quite cunning 'Solidarity with the

anchovy' – and the continual multiple metaphors and/or what I would call parallelism of metaphor, whereby entire poems are cascades of three or more images intertwining repeatedly throughout; so much so in some cases that the very same word is brought to the surface again and again – and again.

Thus we have, all in this selfsame poem, not only the literal fish steadfast in tins and thus the continued references, of course, to oceans, midstream, fishnets, but also allusions to authorship - "black ink, do you read me" and more – to death also, thus "souls, I wrap this sheet around you" – a trait which washes similarly through a good many of the poems here, many of which culminate in some sort of conjoined (wave) crest. A clever and skillful hallmark, but some thin skein of impersonality still stretches over most of the body of water here.

It is almost as if the poet deliberately chooses to display his unquestionable poetic adroitness, but steadfastly refuses to dissect himself, bones and all, on the page. Sometimes O'Brien is a little too abstruse too, and there are a couple of Stillwater patches where he caught me napping and the catch got away from me entirely, as for example in 'The Ailing Wife' and 'The invisible fathers'.

That said, I am duty bound to stress that there is a serious wistfulness at times and several loving casts at his adolescent pangs and at his adult spouse, Jenny Bornholdt, as in the 'commencement' poems of 'The lake of first girlfriends' with its Ophelia-like sense of loss and 'Whangaparoa, 1975'. Then there is the quite charming 'A consort of lower parts - for Jen', where fish (inevitably), writing and relationships are all streams, currents, tides merging into a paean to their still head-above-water married lives. Let's also not forget the poet's manifest sense of humour as in the syncopated canter of a poem that is 'Dylan Thomas (2003)', 'Coolmore Stud', 'New South Wales'.

Maori too are inevitably invisible except for the fine third part of the elegy of 'Three elegies', where O'Brien seriously and sympathetically surprises with his heart-felt maimai (lament) for Te Miringa Hohaia – which is a lovely poem replete with a form of postmodern play with te reo Māori – karaka, karakia indeed. This is fine work and reveals O'Brien to be – if there ever had been any doubts – a fine poet. More such actual living, breathing emotion throughout would have been ka nui te pai, nē rā.

That said also, there are some great stand-alone images, some of which strike home runs of reminiscence in me e.g.

The Peddlers playing 'Girlie'
at a Martinborough vineyard

Long-winded night
bragged on

and its first cousin several pages on:

Long-winded summer
bragged on

A ledge

just inside the ear on which music like melting
snow is stored.

the old anxieties
gather like untuned guitars
with no one to play them.

At the far end of the long bay
of fatherhood.

which, as in just about every poem here, alludes and elides
back to another similar image, as here –

down the long corridor
of your eye.

and one or two excellent entire poems, for me the best one being 'Coral', which shows O'Brien's knack of Nature inversion, which is a reversal of an image from humanistic to anthropomorphic (or indeed just personification per se) – something indeed he does rather frequently. I quote it in full here:

Coral

The bamboo pavilion is remembered
but only for its lawn
of yabbering frogs. The lagoon

has already forgotten us, the smallest
brightest fishes disappearing
back inside the brain.

Brilliant in its concise filleting of the scene. And short, to the point, excellent, eh. Catch of the day.

There is no titular poem in this collection either, by the way. One that got away, eh.

Stream of consciousness pervades throughout too, especially in the lengthy 'Ode to Thought', which meanders much as its subject matter does in a concertina of concatenation of watery reflections and reflections on – of all things – items of furniture and the repeated word 'head' eight times. Yet this loooooong poem 'works' because of this melting-pot of echoing rebounds. It's all one strewn pinball game where everyone is the winner. For as Terry Locke cogently critiqued, a central idiosyncrasy of O'Brien is his consistent: "free association associated with surrealism". In some ways the poems write the man – all rather Kubla Khanish. So as another critic – here Nicholas Reid – can muse, amused: "Coherent? Not exactly."

A final confession: I have not yet mentioned the nuanced reflections about Catholicism and prelates and priests ... Churches and chapels and Irish names dawdle around the edge of the octagonal pool on quite irregular

pilgrimages too. Let's recast our rods to those anchovies and repent that we omitted to mention the saint at the finale, where the fish and the dead and penmanship all conjoin in a sanctified shroud. In other words we are all fish in cans, even as we write. "Do you read me?"

As earlier noted, another such catechism is the 'Ode to Futuna Chapel' whereby sea, church and books all similarly interpolate and surf toward the final wave, while here and there like spiky coral reefs are here resurrected 'A small ode to faith' as well as 'The Surfer's Mass' and 'The non-singing seats'.

All in all, there must be some very interesting and droll synapses frolicking in the brain of Greg O'Brien – as witness his doodles – and I do hope that he continues to test the waters of Aotearoa's poetry for years to come. Well worthy of a dip into his swells, given you won't be submerged in anything more socially subversive than,

But it seemed, instead, we had chosen the silver
fish in its splendid isolation-

a banker in his private
vault

as a reflected image of piscine politics in Aotearoa.

***Snow White's coffin* Kate Camp (Victoria University Press, 2013) ISBN 978 0 86473 888 2, NZ \$25**

Mary Cresswell

Not so much a wind blowing
as a large and steady quantity of space
arriving and arriving
from a much colder location.

('Everybody has to be somewhere')

All around, light was travelling at the speed of light
back and forth, and in the machine of the eye
was processed into a living knowledge

that was how movement occurred
bones and solid limbs carried through space
as a great crane outside the window

('Everything is a clock')

This collection reads as a film noir with the poet as camera (not as director), and it reads very well indeed.

The departure is shown in a short introductory group of poems: from the beginning we see through the lens into a fractured world.

If this song ever saw the light of day it would fade
real quick.

('The loneliest ol' song in the world')

This is the way you will travel through the world
on feet, on arrangements of bones and body parts.

('There is no easy way')

The sliding and clanging of doors yes the sounds of
captivity

just as they are in the movies, and we are looking
back

('The sea is dark and we are told it's deep')

We arrive in the city – not shown as long stretches of concrete and building frontages but as a dynamic, working machine, huge and uncompromisingly urban – there are a few dead leaves and grasses, but otherwise it's grey, grey and grey (bar a bit of dark green and flashes of red or gold).

You have seen a time-lapse film of building
how the crane turns here and there
scaffolding fluttering up as all the while the sun
flops wildly from one side of the sky to the other:

('The world's most impractical machine')

There is not much whole or human in this city. The poems (written during Camp's 2011-12 Berlin residency) trap us in a disjoint and fragmentary world. The human eye – often damaged, and always very much aware of itself – is specifically mentioned in many of the poems. Through it, we see very few living bodies; people are shown as paintings or sculpture in museums in Rome, Paris, Berlin. The sculptures are distorted or incomplete, as at a museum in Rome:

Statues holding their heads
in their arms, in helmets, like loaves of bread.
Statues that are copies of other statues
that aren't even real

('The Sleeping Fury')

and in an annunciation by van der Weyden we focus only on the Virgin's hand as she waves dismissal "with the gesture of one refusing flyers in the street."

The machine is rarely quiet, rarely still. A pause in a train journey, at a major rail hub in Poland, gives only an illusion of stillness:

Stopped at Kutno. Our very stillness
makes us seem to slide quietly backwards.

Perhaps we are that ceaseless boat
and these black birds the current

but look, they are stopping now
their heavy shapes inhabit the leafless trees

as in a picture. This is a diagram of the world,
this world.

('Kutno')

Throughout the book, we find ourselves in a shattered, dangerous machine, hemmed in by angles and shadows. Are we forever at a junction between one line and another,

or is there something vaguely approaching hope? Read the book – and you decide.

***Glass Wings* Fleur Adcock (VUP, 2013) ISBN 978-0-86473-887-5 RRP \$28**

Laurice Gilbert

I took Fleur Adcock out for morning tea a few years ago while she was in NZ to receive an Honorary D.Lit. from Victoria University. (I'm name-dropping, but bear with me.) I'd invited her to read for us while she was here, on the grounds that her mother founded the NZPS (see Feature Article) and she'd graciously agreed; I needed to meet her before introducing her so that I wouldn't come across as a gibbering idiot in the presence of poetry royalty. For the record, she was charming, drank green tea, and complained about the weather like any English visitor.

I told her that her stepmother, Ngaire Adcock, was my all-time favourite ever university lecturer back in the day, and commented that I love how we are all connected so closely in New Zealand. "That," she replied, "is why I left."

In *Glass Wings*, Fleur (it seems somehow disrespectful to refer to her by her surname, now that we're tea buddies) seems to have put aside her aversion to connection, at least to the extent of exploring her genealogy in some detail. Perhaps it's to do with aging. There are more than a few poems in this collection that deal with that sticky subject – "...how can someone younger than me/ have osteoporosis..." ('Match Girl') – emphasised by commissions for special occasions ('For Michael at 70'; 'An 80th Birthday Card for Roy') as well as poems for the descendants ('Epithalamium', 'A Novelty', for her son and great-grandson, respectively).

The first section, untitled, contains an ordered miscellany of poems that reflect Fleur's familiar detailed observations on day-to-day life, with the devastating (and deceptive) simplicity she has always brought along for the ride:

Across the road the decorators have finished;
your flat has net curtains again
after all these weeks, and a "To Let" sign.

I can only think of it as a tomb,
excavated, in the end, by
explorers in facemasks and protective space suits.

('The Belly Dancer')

This straight after 'The Saucer', in which she follows a flying saucer "along Fortis Green,/ to the High Road" noting that "normal people don't look up at the sky".

The aging process appears in this section, from, "Suddenly I've outlived my grandfather" ('Alfred'), through "...we've not yet turned to sepia" ('Alumnae Notes'), and "the word skipped briskly into my head, / impatient at having been kept waiting" ('Nominal Aphasia'), to the absurdly amusing 'Macular

Degeneration'; the litany of degenerative changes to be expected over time is somehow never downbeat. I'm reminded of the resignation at the end of 'For a Five-Year-Old' (which hangs on my kitchen wall, signed and framed) – "But that is how things are..."

The section ends with two 'death' poems: 'Charon' – "Life was OK, but it went on too long" – and 'Having Sex with the Dead', a picturesque reminiscence of past lovers, not specified by name, but nevertheless quite distinctive.

Part two, Testators, is the genealogy section. It includes eight poems named for specific forebears ('Robert Harington, 1558', 'Alice Adcock, 1673', 'James Heyes, 1726', etc.) based on their wills, which must have been fun to research. 'Luke Sharp, 1704' was particularly controlling, even post-mortem, insisting that

if my daughter Elizabeth Sharpe
be married to Mr Kempe of Oakham

...

she shall have but one shilling for her portion.

Fortunately for us, Elizabeth "knuckled under", marrying instead Mr William Lacer, and "became an ancestor".

'William Dick Mackley' was a bit of a find:

For 'general dealer' read 'fence': he served
a year in Warwick jail for receiving
'12 tame fowls, feloniously stolen'.

'The Translator' is a long narrative history in memory of Robert Tighe, d. 1616, whose claim to fame lay in having been one of the translators of the King James Bible. He has "merged into a composite", due to his having left no written records of his own, "even his will declared invalid and lost."

Part 3, entitled Campbells, opens with 'Elegy for Alistair', a moving tribute to first husband (and "... kind and dedicated/ father for our children") Alistair Te Ariki Campbell. The poems are wistfully nostalgic and cover holidays, the 1950s, 'The Royal Visit', and setting up home (though that phrase doesn't do sufficient justice to the family dynamics evident in 'The Professor of Music'). 'Coconut Matting', the title reflecting a sad metaphor for the breakdown of the relationship, longs for the closure of forgiveness.

Finally, we get to the section called My Life With Arthropods. Though the first poem in the book, 'At the Crossing', introduces the wings theme ("The tall guy in a green T-shirt... has fairy wings on his shoulders"), it is the arthropod section that delights and edifies, as well as giving the collection its name (in 'Blowflies'). European and kiwi creepy crawlies consort with crayfish and bats, recalling childhood adventures and allergies, superstitions and rumours – a whole world in the domain of the small and sometimes vicious creatures that inhabit it. In a collection of precious gems, these poems are the crown jewels. There are elements of wickedness:

One excellent quality of the flea
is its capacity to embarrass
(‘Flea)

and schadenfreude:

....my naïve young friend,
wearing a woolly hat in summer,
who told us he’d caught some from his wife,

who told him she’d caught them (oh really?)
from her social work with the homeless.
But in fact I think those were head lice.

(‘Unmentionable’)

as well as a kindness that speaks well of her humanity:

That part of Karori is green with bush.
I carried them respectfully on the dustpan,
still in their embrace, to a matching tree.

(‘Stick Insects’)

Fleur is clearly in love with nature, though this shouldn’t be a surprise. It’s just that these poems radiate unexpected good will towards even those with whom she has a right to take umbrage (human and multi-legged), though Derek, with whom she entrusted her pets while on holiday as an 11-year-old, is a close call (‘Caterpillars’).

And after all these years of suspecting that Fleur was a merciless killer when not with her children (back to ‘For a Five-Year-Old’), I can breathe easy. Her paean to spiders (‘Orb Web’) is nothing less than glorious, and her life with arthropods is, after all, almost preferable to that with people. This Adcock groupie is dazzled by every facet, each re-reading invoking another bubble of joy.



Mini Competition

Boy, is my face red! Along with mis-spelling two names in the last issue of a *fine line* (sorry Gus and Don), I managed to miss several entries in the limerick competition. The fault arose in my setting up a new email address for you to submit them to, and promptly forgetting I’d done so and never looking at it again. Many thanks to Debbie for emailing me to find out what happened to hers.

So here are some more limericks, featuring my favourite from each of those who submitted. You all get a poetry book for your efforts.

There was an old guy with a yen
for woodturning now and again
Despite all the dust
woodwork was like lust -
made him feel a prince amongst men

Anne Hollier Ruddy

There was an old man from Leeds
Who scoffed a whole sack of seeds
He began to feel frail
When he sprouted a tail
And his nostrils dangled wild weeds

Rosie Jones

A Toucan said to his dame
“Our love life is always the same.
I’ll get someone new”
She replied “Well, me too -
Toucan play *that* little game!”

Stephanie Mayne

Have some Madeira, My Dear.
We can sip as we read Baudelaire.
If we do nothing worse
Than read his prose verse
We’ll be a most celibate pair.

Beverley Teague

There once was a fellow called Ruud
an announcer with great attitude
he said when you’re planting
try sneezing and chanting
for peas that are podded and nude

Debbie Williams

(Debbie’s alternative offering was entertaining, but my name doesn’t rhyme with “police”.)

So that’s it for the limericks. I’ve got rid of that email address, so there won’t be any more confusion!



Poetry stories from the web

Poet in residence at San Jose’s Hammer Montessori helped students publish poetry book

There are few poets who can claim first being published when they were in fifth grade and fewer still who were in kindergarten. That’s not the case with the 316 students of Hammer Montessori Elementary School in Willow Glen.

Every student has at least one poem and most have two in the newly published *Hammer Montessori Anthology of Poetry 2013*.

Read more: http://www.mercurynews.com/san-jose-neighborhoods/ci_23447629/poet-residence-at-san-joses-hammer-montessori-helped

Poetry Matters: A Lifelong Conversation in Letters and Verse

One of the great modern American literary friendships was between the poets Robert Lowell (1917-1977) and Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979). They met in the late 1940s and remained friends, despite some turmoil, until Lowell's death in 1977. Bishop only survived him by two years, passing away suddenly on the day she was to give a rare public reading at Harvard University. Rare, because Bishop was very shy, especially when it came to crowds, unlike Lowell who was voluble, more than a little manic, and quite the great man of American letters.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their contrasting temperaments they bonded over poetry. It was a literary friendship in two senses: they were both fiercely committed to their craft and it was a relationship that was conducted almost entirely by mail. They were rarely in the same part of the world at the same time, not least because Bishop spent almost two decades in Brazil, living with her partner Lota de Macedo Soares. So the friends grew close by writing letters to bridge the physical distance between them.

Read more: <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/aroundthemall/2013/06/poetry-matters-a-lifelong-conversation-in-letters-and-verse/#ixzz2X0KnmDmI>

Can reading poetry help dementia patients?

Dementia affects more than 600,000 people in the UK - a figure which is set to double over the next 30 years.

While there is no cure for the condition, there have been significant developments in projects to help sufferers.

Reading traditional poetry such as Wordsworth or Keats is thought to be particularly beneficial.

Read more: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-22775438>

You Can Say That Again: On Poetry Reading(s)

Invite someone to a poetry reading and, even in today's verse-enlightened times, they'll generally say 'No, you're alright' – meaning 'I would rather shoot myself.' And you understand because you know how it can be, trapped in the audience of a bad reading. Now and then people are obliged to faint and the whole row helps them out to fresh air.

Since the advent of The Beatles (and therefore the Liverpool Poets and therefore Carol Ann Duffy), many readings are actually great places to be, and audiences, rather than consisting of just the organizer and two men and a dog, are often quite full. Because when readings are brilliant, you are changed for the better. You have lived for that time to the full, just sitting there, just being part of the poetry.

But I want to talk here about neither of these extremes, not the purgatory nor the paradise, but instead about the majority of readings ...

Read more: <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/06/you-can-say-that-again-on-poetry-readings/>

Members' Poems

Indisposed, Wellington, 1950s

i

The past seeps through floral curtains:
I am eight, in bed, but not too sick to savour
the intimacy of illness, of having Mother

to myself the whole day through. She tucks
me up and soothes, clucks and smooths, presses
lemonade upon me, and my favourite foods;
sheets tight across thighs, extra pillows at my back.

She smiles that worried smile that lets me know she
cherishes

my limbs and heart, my eyes and mind, the way
I walk, talk, run and learn; that I am me
and always will be.

All I need now is three penn'orth of blackballs

ii

When I'm ten, she places on the bed
a book I've never seen, a plain book; a cover
that looks like crushed wine biscuits. Inside
a boring story about birds and seeds and eggs,
a drawing of half a woman's body, cut through,
only one leg showing, and a baby growing,
and I have to take their word
for how it got there, but it seems
pretty unlikely and quite disgusting.

I need another blackball

iii

At twelve, she tries to tuck me in.
I ward her off, blackball bulge
inside one cheek, head
in *Classic* comics from our shop,
Superman, and *Donald Duck*,
concession to my menstrual state.

Then the house begins to shake. I hear
her feet pound on the stair, lie there
swaying; she bursts in – *Don't panic!*
– grabs my arm and tugs me out,
feet trapped in sheets

– *Don't*

panic! –

And I tell The Scarlet Pimpernel,
I think I'm well enough for school.

Karen Zelas

On the Rails

Julius Feurich Leipzig
calligraphed on the upturned lid.
Three elegant turned legs on brass castors
support the French polished body for almost a
century.
Acoustic tiles line the wall to dampen
all notes even played con fuoco.

The piano occupies as significant a portion of our
lounge
as my life. Practice morning and evening.
Lessons after school twice weekly in Thorndon.

Routine cycle across town
wrestling tram lines in
Cuba Street and Lambton Quay.
Slick in the wet testing reflex
treating the rider to a rodeo ride
through curving tracks and potholes.
In my panniers Frederic
Ludwig Johannes or Wolfgang
hang on for my tentative
presentation to Mr Charles Martin.

Back along Willis Street Riddiford Street...
into the hills and home overlooking
Cook Straight and Evans Bay.

Occasionally a basso continuo
courtesy of the Sunderland
winging over from Sydney.
Fortissimo wind can rattle windows
with tremolo walls. The Baptist minister
bravely emulates Gabriel
on the next hilltop –
in the elements for his practice.

My accomplishments cop terse remarks
or guarded praise on good days.

Don MacLennan

Midnight Visitors

Night scented stock, delicate incense
threading through the warm room.
The lanky, buttoned stems
Reassuring.
Wake up,

visit the shadowed years passed.
Call up the decades
of decayed youth.
Tendrils of perfume
have lassoed
fragments.

Soft moon-white clusters of petals,
snug in their lime green sockets, lure
moth memories.
Flutter in vain.

Linley Edmeades

A Choice of Hands

Delivered to you in a high quality velvet case,
your baby's hands will reach you
in perfect condition, resting

on lovingly handsewn silk cushionettes,
made in charming Chinese villages
we have personally visited.

The process of taking the cast,
done in your own home,
is almost entirely painless.

Click the link to see examples of our craft:
in polished marble, are "Rory's hands",
clutching at the air in a most meaningful way.

If you prefer lead crystal, you will love to see
how "Marianne's hands", priced
at only £939, miraculously catch the light.

Although you may think that
small bubbles within the glass
are a defect in the glassmaking,

they are in fact a metaphor
for the uniqueness of your child.
Prices on application. Use Paypal.

Special reductions apply if ordering
both hands and feet in cold cast bronze.
Pet paws are also available.

Diana Brodie

Published in *Rialto 67*, Summer 09; also in the anthology,
The Iron Book of New Humorous Verse (ed. Eileen Jones); to be
published in *Giotto's Circle* (Poetry Salzburg, University of
Salzburg, Austria) in August 2013.

