



Newsletter

New Zealand Poetry Society

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

With the Assistance of Creative NZ
Arts Council of New Zealand *Toi Aotearoa*

ISSN 1176-6409

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☞ This Month's Meeting ☜

Thursday June 17th
Turnbull House Bowen Street
A.G.M. 7 – 8 p.m.

Guest Reader
Helen Jacobs

Arriving Late to Poetry

Growing up in a noisy, rambunctious family of boys meant that most of the poetry recited in our house was of the variety of 'The boy stood on the burning deck' or 'There was a young lady from Luton'. Class was evidenced by being able to recite *A Barfime Lament* all the way through without having to look at the words.

There wasn't much space for a little girl's fancies; or for dreamy poems about fairies and flying horses – and besides, if I'm honest, I have to say I enjoyed roaring out Hilaire Belloc's *Jim* as much as my brothers did:

He hadn' t gone a yard when - Bang!
With open jaws, a lion sprang,
And hungrily began to eat
The boy: beginning at his feet.

Great fun. But in my family, when it came to 'real' poetry, I was on my own. And for all the times at school my writing received an A or Excellent work! from teachers, any lambent interest in things poetical disappeared the day my brothers found my secret book of poetry. Oh, the humiliation. 'Nuff said.

The funny thing about poetry is that it's a fish-hook that embeds itself deep. As a teenager, I refused to appreciate a finely turned phrase or a lyrical image. I slapped myself silly when I heard myself quoting *The Ancient Mariner*. Yet in spite of this determination not to like the damn stuff, poetry was reeling me in.

With lines like 'She walks in beauty like the night', for instance, that an early boyfriend tried to flatter me with. From his point of view it didn't work, but poetry had its way. I couldn't help it; I was struck, not by *her* beauty or Byron's romanticism, but by a new vision of the night.

As an adult pathetically afraid of the dark, I suddenly saw with new eyes. And then the boyfriend, the rotter, came up with Alfred, Lord Tennyson's 'Come into the garden, Maud/ For the black bat, night, has flown'. Failure again from his point of view – I did not go into the garden – but I was struck again. Ah, night. Night as beauty, night as a bat. Illumination and delight: and poetry put in another hook, with all those romantic odes.

Rod McKuen was also a tool of the enemy. Yes, I too was seduced by *The Sea* and remember lying prone, in the dark, with Rod's mellifluous voice washing over me.

Almost caught. Hooked, I swallowed the bait and started writing. Not very well, it's true. Quite bad stuff. In fact, *very* bad. Angst-riddled melodramatic rhyming drivel that billowed like the waves did roll. Indeed.

Fortunately for me, Helen Steiner Rice raised her dewy pen about then. She wrote worse than I did! With a great sigh of relief I realised I was saved. I fell out of poetry's net.

Not quite. Two things happened. I watched a film or TV series set in Japan. In it there was a scene where several fierce, warrior-like men sat one evening and had a haiku contest. What struck me was not so much the poetry itself, but the joy and intensity of the soldiers involved. Something re-awoke in me. What was it about a few words that could inspire such passion? The question nagged at me.

Then a friend dragged me along to a reading by some visiting poets. I went reluctantly, only to be utterly captivated by Cilla McQueen standing before us and reading about a saint of fractured light, her face glowing, and her words exquisite. That was it. The real thing. I was caught hook, line and sinker.

I started reading poetry books that I found second hand or got from the library. I nearly stole a collection of the English Romantics - I was the only person in over two years to take it off the shelf – but my conscience wouldn't let me.

I got serious and started *buying* poetry by local writers. I started rolling phrases off my tongue and murmuring lines in the bath, pinning verses on the walls. I revelled in the Yes! moments poetry inspired in me, I listened to poets argue and I read *ten poems to change your life* by Roger Housden. Learned how you can write exquisitely about something as mundane as a pair of socks.

I didn't dream, though, that I would ever write a decent poem of my own. I remembered the rubbish, oh too well. Except, the thing about poetry is it wants more than an audience. It wants a conduit. And the more I listened to poets, the more I read their work, the more I wanted to be able to be part of this craft.

A few months ago I surrendered completely to poetry. And began to write.

Sue Emms

(Read & enjoy Sue's poem Equinus on page 8.)

☞ From the Committee ☜

Love literature? Potty about poetry? Crazy about contributing? Then we need your passion, ideas, and commitment for the NZPS.

Our Committee is a working committee and we are looking for new, active members to keep us moving forward and improving our services. Members can be from anywhere in New Zealand and can be elected at the AGM, or co-opted onto the Committee during the year.

If from Wellington, Committee members meet for a few hours about 10 times per year, and if outside Wellington, members would be expected to attend at least 3 meetings per year...and after the hard work, we do manage to squeeze in some fun!

So what do you get for your dedication, time, and commitment (besides free coffee, tea and biscuits)? You get to work on important projects, add your individual voice to the NZPS, represent your genre/ interests/ community, advance the interests of New Zealand poetry, and support the arts all at the same time. Plus you get to work with fun, interesting, and (dare we say) talented poets!

Can't pass up an offer like this? Great, just contact us at info@poetrysociety.org.nz or ring Margaret Vos, President, at 04 478 5662 to express your interest.

We look forward to working with you ...

☞ From the Editor ☜

I've been thinking about deadlines, which, like the prospect of hanging, concentrate the mind wonderfully. Our deadlines are important if you're sending in news, views and reviews. Some good stuff gets missed, simply because it comes in too late. Some event planned for early July should probably have been notified to us before the third week in May.

Competitions, too – which I like, because you end up writing to a deadline, a word count or numbered lines, and often to a theme. Even if you don't win – and the odds aren't that good, especially when there's no entry fee – you have still created a piece of work that didn't exist before.

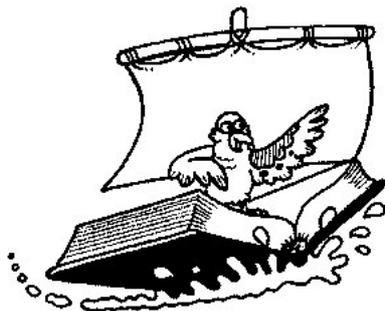
I got my entry for the Commonwealth Short Story Competition 2004 in just five hours before the deadline (UK time, fortunately, is well behind ours!)

Deadlines are like birthdays and anniversaries. Write them down, and write down a reminder a week or two beforehand so you can plan and prepare. Otherwise, you'll be buying chocolates or flowers in the Mobil garage on your way home. And don't think your partner won't guess how little thought went into that!

Don't think an editor won't know if you haven't given yourself time to read over your work cold (as reader, not writer) and make all necessary adjustments and amendments *before* you send it out.

That story I e-mailed to the Commonwealth Broadcasting Authority? A hasty edit of a freehand exercise done on Short Fiction 2, Whitireia. Not the story I meant to write about a Tamil woman dying in childbirth. Because I needed time for research, too – on the right kind of name for her, celebrations for a male child, even what kind of bed she expired on ...

A deadline plus, in fact.



Quotation of the Month

"Don' t expect to understand the modern poem... Just let it explode in your face." - *William Carlos Williams*.

Waiata

Anyone who attended the March AGM of the Northland Branch of the New Zealand Society of Authors) will recall Glenn Colquhoun talking about his interest in and writing of waiata.

They are Maori songs which relate to the European tradition of saga, ballads, and lullabies, and the following excerpt describes them in more detail .

"Waiata, or song, is a medium through which sacred and profane knowledge is passed from one person to another, or from one generation to another. It was one of the principal methods of teaching and learning in the Kura Wananga or school of sacred knowledge, and ranked along with genealogy and incantations as a principal means of disseminating prized knowledge.

Waiata were performed on many occasions, for formal events and for entertainment, and there are many types, some of which are songs of lament, epic songs, lullabies, and love songs. One of the famous love songs is *Pokarekare*.

The oriori or lullaby was sung to children, which as well as comforting them, was meant to instil important ideas and messages about the lives of their ancestors. Oriori contain information on genealogy, family ancestry, special incantations, and beliefs concerning the gods, famous people, and memorable events in the life of the tribe.

A number of waiata have been collected and published in the four volumes of *Nga Moteatea*, the work of two eminent scholars, Sir Apirana Ngata and Dr.Pei Hurinui Jones. These volumes give the texts, an explanation and interpretation of their meaning, and the social functions of each."

In many ways waiata are comparable to some of the more ironic English ditties that were developed to describe events, e.g. Humpty Dumpty (the fall of Cardinal Wolsey), Ring a Ring o' Rosies (the plague) and Lucy Locket (one of Charles the Second' s discarded mistresses.)

The main difference between waiata and the songs of the European tradition is in the satire, a form which many writers used so that they could make comment without fear of being put into gaol!

Further reading:

(1991) Barlow, C. [Tikanga Whakaaro: Key Concepts in Maori Culture](#). (New Zealand, Oxford University Press.)

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Lavender Sansom

Upcoming Events

AUCKLAND

NZSA Writer's Critique Workshop Saturday 19th June

Come and hear critiques - of poetry, fiction, and children's writing submitted by members of NZSA - by a panel of three experts comprised of authors, publishers, agents or editors.

Use this opportunity to see how your knowledge of 'How to make good writing great writing' compares to that of those who make their living from this business.

Submit a sample of your work, then hear what our panel has to say about it. Our experts will have reviewed your work *prior to* the event.

As all submissions will be posted to the NZSA website, you can review, and then critique the submissions that most closely match your own style of writing, or fit with the genre you are most interested in. On the day, you will be able to see how your opinions and knowledge compares with that of our experts.

All submissions will be available on the NZSA website in the weeks leading up to the event. Start looking from 23rd May. You will be able to print the entries and perform your own critique. The order of submissions will be available on the website closer to the event, and/or in the weekly e-mail update. So, either come for the whole day, or just for selected submissions. Fifteen minutes will be allocated for each critique, so allow for a turnover of 4 to 5 per hour.

To submit your own work

- Fiction or children's writing to a maximum of 1,500 words.
- Poetry to a maximum of three poems up to 40 lines each.
- A fee of \$10 (waged) & \$5 (unwaged) will be payable for each submission.
- E-mail submission to stephend@slingshot.co.nz ((sorry, no exceptions.)
- Send payments to: Critique Workshop NZSA c/- PO Box 47-307 Ponsonby.
- Submissions preferred in MS Word format, 12-point font, double-spaced with 2.5cm margins. Or RTF. Choose (RTF) Rich Text Format as file type when saving document.
- Limit of one entry per genre per member. If you prefer, you may enter your work under a pseudonym, although you need to identify yourself to us, so we can; check you are a member, and if necessary contact you.
- Identifying yourself to the panel at the event is preferable but not mandatory.

For further inquiries contact: Stephen Dalley (ph 09 629 0244 or 021 783 743) or Louise Maich (ph 09 817 3878)

Venue: Old Government House, Auckland University Grounds, Princes Street, Auckland City

Open to: NZSA members and guests

Entry fee: \$5 - Includes coffee/tea - BYO Lunch

Times: 10 a.m. – 12 noon & 12.30 - 2.30 p.m.

AUCKLAND

Bloomsday on again

This year is the centenary of Bloomsday, that one day of June 16th 1904, wherein James Joyce's great comic novel *Ulysses* is set. It's the fifth year Bloomsday has been celebrated in Auckland. In the year 2000 New Zealand was the first country in the world to kick off the annual celebrations when it commenced a midnight-to-5 a.m. broadcast of *Ulysses* over Auckland's access radio station, Planet FM.

In 2001 a dramatised Irish-Jewish song-and-dance *Ulysses* was launched on an unsuspecting public and the following year the wild thing sold out a week before being performed to a cheering Auckland café. In 2003 the celebration shifted to The Dog's Bollix Irish pub, top of Newton Rd, the new venue necessary to accommodate the multitudes-with their bodhrans and bagels, shillelaghs and schnorrers.

Come June 16th this year, observers and celebrants will be gathering once more at the Dog's Bollix (cited by no less an authority as the James Joyce Centre in Dublin as, "The most memorably-named Bloomsday venue around the world"). Dublin actor Brian Keegan will be reading from the holy text. Chanteuse Linn Lorkin will be putting it about as Molly Bloom. The Jews Brothers Band will perform riotously. Opera duo Lamppost Farrell Cleary and Yuko Takahashi will attempt to add some refinement, as will political commentator and baritone Chris Trotter who will do lamentations for James Connolly of the Irish General and Transport Workers' Union.

Dog's Bollix, top of Newton Rd, Wednesday June 16th 8 p.m. The bar will be busy.

CHRISTCHURCH

Poetry in Performance (Canterbury Poets' Collective)

This is to be held throughout June and July in the Elizabeth Kelly Room of the Arts Centre of Christchurch on Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. (Function Centre: upstairs, corner of Hereford Street and Rolleston Avenue). BYO Poetry & Guest Poets as follows:

June 3rd

Helen Bascand~Victoria Broome~James Norcliffe
John O'Connor~Barbara Strang~Judith Walsh

June 10th

Claire Hero~Steve Thomas

June 17th

Catayst Poets~Gareth Lochhead

June 24th

Harvey McQueen~Rangi Faith~Catherine Fitchett

July 1st

Bob Orr~Cliff Fell

July 8th

No reading due to unavailability of venue

July 15th

Ron Riddell~Saray Torres~Jessica Le Bas

July 22nd

Richard von Sturmer~New Takahe Poets

CHRISTCHURCH

The Press Christchurch Writers Festival Books & Beyond

Monday 30th August to Sunday 5th September

The festival is now a biennial spring event that will bring visitors to Christchurch when the city is at its loveliest. The new date allows organisers to link up with the Melbourne Age Festival and bring more international writers across the Tasman.

This year most events will be held at Rydges Hotel and Our City. The official festival programme will be available later in the year, but already confirmed from overseas are master thriller writer Frederick Forsyth (UK), foreign correspondent Aidan Hartley (Kenya), crime writer Karin Slaughter (USA), cartoonist and social commentator Michael Leunig (Australia) and novelist with a passion for the apostrophe Lynne Trusse (UK).

There will be tributes to two of New Zealand's finest writers, author Janet Frame and her friend and biographer, historian Michael King, and a diverse and exciting line-up of New Zealand's finest writers, artists and commentators will also be in Christchurch, among them Claudia Orange, Tom Scott, Gordon McLauchlan, Lawrence Jones, Joe Bennett, Keri Hulme, Jim McAloon, Geoffrey Rice, Fiona Farrell, Owen Marshall, Michele Leggott, Jenny Bornholdt, Rangī Faith, Kevin Ireland, Jenny Patrick, Lloyd Jones, Vicky Jones, James George, Gavin Bishop, Powhiri Rika-Heke and Catherine Chidgey.

The festival's new director, Reima Goldsmith, has taken up the reins with verve and energy. For more information, contact her on booksandbeyond@xtra.co.nz

OAMARU

Waitaki Writers

Waitaki Writers, with the assistance of Creative Communities, Oamaru, will be presenting a workshop weekend for writers on 17th & 18th July. (National Poetry Day). As well as workshops by journalist David Loughrey and children's writer Bill O'Brien, poet Jenny Powell-Chalmers will be taking a workshop called 'Enjoy and enhance your poetry writing.'

Cost of the weekend will be \$20. For out of towners accommodation will be available at the historic Empire Backpackers Hotel for \$20 per person per night.

Further information and enrolment forms are available from Marie Gibson katiejim@es.co.nz or Waiata Dawn Davies; waiata.davies@inforgen.net.nz

TAURANGA

Poets Parlour will be meeting at 12.30 p.m. in the Robert Harris Café, State Insurance Arcade, off Grey Street, Tauranga. (Contact: Jenny Argante, ph 07 576 3040, jenny.argante@xtra.co.nz)

This month the challenge will be to respond to art postcards taken randomly from a bowl and hopefully begin, if not complete, a poem.

Poets Parlour is also helping with this year's Montana Poetry Day – one scheme is to get a poem in every shop window for the week. We have also been asked to do regular Sunday readings at Browsers Bookshop. More on this anon.



WELLINGTON

Helen Jacobs

(NZPS Monthly Meeting – June)

On Thursday June 17th the Poetry Society's AGM at Turnbull House, 11 Bowen Street will take place from 7 – 8 p.m., followed by guest reader Helen Jacobs.

Helen Jacobs is the writing name of Elaine Jakobsson of Christchurch. She lived in the Eastern Bays for 35 years and many Wellingtonians will remember her in such public roles as Mayor of Eastbourne, President of the NZ Women Writers' Society, and member of the Women's Electoral Lobby.

Helen's poems have been published in a wide variety of literary journals. Her books include *This Cording, This Artery* (1984, Blackberry Press), *Wind Quick* (1994, Hazard Press), *Pools Over Stone* (1997) and *The Usefulness of Singing*. (1999), both from Sudden Valley Press.

Helen is an active member of the Canterbury Poets' Collective. In *Wellington Revisited (Takahe 35, December 1998)* Helen wrote:

The point of going away
is always to come back –
thrice deny, and you
come back

...an old love affair
with the harbour playing you in

The old love affair may have a better chance if Wellington has one of its occasional lucid blue days on June 17!

(*Nola Borrell*)

Meeting DBC Pierre

The New Zealand Book Council and Penguin Books (NZ) are pleased to announce an evening with Man Booker Prize Winner of Fiction 2003, DBC Pierre.

Pierre has led an eclectic, sometimes dangerous life. He's been shot at, nearly killed in a car accident and fell into drugs, gambling and severe debt. Few would expect his next step would be to win literature's greatest prize.

Yet *Vernon God Little*, DBC Pierre's first and only novel to date, set the astonished literary world alight. A visceral account of a young man thrown into a whirl of murder, exploitation and television cameras, was compared to a modern day Huck Finn or Eminem's Stan. Rarely has an author made his lead character work so hard, to battle forever 'congenital handicaps of sensitivity, meekness and low ambition' - the product of a life weaned on Dr Phil and National Enquirer headlines.

Join DBC Pierre for discussion of his diverse life and brilliant work with Cliff Fell at St Andrews on the Terrace, 30 The Terrace, Wellington, 6 p.m. Wednesday 9th June. Tickets are on sale now.

For more information and/or tickets please contact Jasmine De Boni, ph 04 499 1569, or e-mail events@bookcouncil.org.nz.

Windrift

Next meeting: Thursday, July 15th at 1 p.m. at Jeanette Stace's home, 58 Cecil Road, Wadestown. (Please note the earlier time.)
Contacts: Jeanette Stace ph 04 473-6227 or by e-mail to njstace@actrix.gen.nz or Nola Borrell (ph 04 586-7287 or nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz).

The Tupelo Hotel Readings

The HeadworX/ Earl of Seacliff winter reading series continues at Tupelo on Sundays 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. The title 'Tupelo Hotel' comes from the Doors album 'Morrison Hotel' and the readings will feature an anthology with a take of The Doors' album cover by Michael O' Leary and Mark Pirie.

This time the pair are filling in for Ray Manzarek and Jim Morrison - something that may emulate their earlier appearance as John Lennon and Paul McCartney of The Beatles on the JAAM 21 'Greatest Hits' cover in February.

Tupelo Hotel Readings as follows:

June 13th with Mike O' Leary, Jenny Powell-Chalmers and Iain Sharp. MC: Harry Ricketts

June 20th with Robin Fry, Harvey McQueen and Moshe Liba. MC: Michael Harlow

June 27th with Mark Pirie, Emily Dobson and Jack Ross. MC: Moira Wairama.

July 4th with Helen Rickerby, Neil Wright and Basim Furat. MC: L. E. Scott

☪ Welcome ☪

... to Rosemary Adler, Palm Beach, Waiheke Island
... to Paulette Bartlett, Kaipoi
... to Steve Booth, Newlands, Wellington
... to Phyllis Gibson, Takapuna, Auckland
... to Lawson Hale, Whangarei
... to Judith Dell Panny, Ashhurst

☪ Other News ☪

Montana Poetry Day 2004-

Poetry groups, bookshops, librarians and community groups are invited to take in Montana Poetry Day 2004 to be held on Friday 16th July. The day recognises and celebrates New Zealand poetry. Recent years have seen a huge increase in the popularity of poetry among New Zealand book lovers.

Your involvement in Montana Poetry Day will provide a unique opportunity for your organisation or business to build its profile through participation in a national event. Our aim for Montana Poetry Day 2004 is to make it a truly inclusive celebration – to involve communities at a variety of levels. Our goal is to run events that will delight both the poetry lover and the poetry novice. I am happy to discuss any ideas you have about ways you could join the celebration.

If you would like to be involved in Montana Poetry Day, please contact me at laura.kroetsch@paradise.net.nz or by phone on 04 475 8589 or 021 102 615 50. I will ensure you are sent a registration form and an updated set of Event Guidelines. If required, I can also send an application for funding as there is funding available to assist with events; \$300 for eight regional areas and \$450 for the four main centres.

Laura Kroetsch, National Coordinator, Montana Poetry Day.

Vivienne Plumb gets Iowa residency

Poet, novelist and playwright Vivienne Plumb has been selected to represent New Zealand at the 2004 International Writing Program, a three-month writers' residency at the University of Iowa in the United States. The Wellington writer will travel to the United States in late August to take part in the International Writing Program, a partnership between the University of Iowa and Creative New Zealand through the Arts Board. Creative New Zealand contributes \$10,000 towards the residency.

The International Writing Program includes writers from more than 20 countries, who will all have the opportunity to give public readings and appear in panel discussions.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to immerse myself in writing and writers for three months," Plumb says. "I'm looking forward to meeting writers from other parts of the world and taking part in all the activities. It sounds like there's a lot of interesting things happening all of the time."

Plumb has published two collections of poetry, a novella and a novel, *Secret City*, which was published last year. Her play, *Love Knots*, has been translated into Italian and excerpts will be performed in a theatre in Rome next year. A new collection of poetry will be published later this year.

"As well as all the networking opportunities, I'll be making the most of the time to write," Plumb says. "I'll be focussing on my second novel but will also be finalising my poetry collection and will probably write some new poetry as well." In the final two weeks of the residency, she will take part in a period of intensive writing at the KHN Centre for the Arts in Nebraska.

Other New Zealand writers who have taken part in the International Writing Program in Iowa include writer and broadcaster Gordon McLauchlan, children's writer Vince Ford, novelist and historian Stevan Eldred-Grigg, children's writers William Taylor and Sheryl Jordan, and poet Bernadette Hall.

For more information please contact Iona McNaughton, (ph 04 498 0715, or by e-mail to ionam@creativenz.govt.nz)

Watermark Fellowship for Writing on Nature & Peace

One of the most exciting outcomes of the highly successful 2003 Watermark International Nature Writers' Muster is the endowment of a Fellowship for an emerging Australian or New Zealand writer of nature and place. It will be offered in the Camden Haven, the home of the Watermark Literary Muster and awarded in alternate years, starting in 2004.

The Fellowship provides accommodation in the Camden Haven, travel assistance, a living allowance and mentoring. In 2004, its inaugural year, it will be for three months between August and December.

The Watermark Literary Society has adopted the Australia Council's definition of an emerging writer (see the web site - www.ozco.gov.au/grants/grants_literature/new_work_2004/)

Writers wishing to apply for the 2004 Watermark Fellowship can submit an application electronically or by post. The application form and eligibility criteria can be downloaded from the website: www.watermarkliterarysociety.asn.au/fellowship.htm.

Kiwi critics in US publication

Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, Vol 134 (pub. by the Gale Group) contains essays taken from New Zealand and overseas literary journals and publications including both the *Oxford Companion* and the *Oxford History of NZ Literature*.

The New Zealand entry, as described by the editors, '... considers literature indigenous to New Zealand, including Maori literature'. The opening pages of this prestigious publication indicate that it is aimed at 'school, public, college and university libraries' throughout the world. The New Zealand section of the book is preceded by a list of 'Representative [New Zealand] Works'.

The essayists included are: Terry Sturm (on New Zealand poetry and popular and romantic fiction), Bridget Orr (Maori writing in the context of New Zealand's writing history), Howard McNaughton ('emergent drama'), Heather Roberts (women characters in the New Zealand novel between 1920 and 1940), Joseph Jones and Johanna Jones (expatriate NZ writers), Leonard Wilcox (post-Modernism in NZ literature), Alistair Paterson ('*Trends and Influences in NZ Verse*'), Andrew Johnston ('*Six Contemporary NZ Poets*').

PEN campaign for review of USA Patriot Act

With the endorsement of more than 700 writers and artists worldwide, the PEN Campaign for Core Freedoms is inviting members of the public to sign a statement expressing concern that the U.S.A. Patriot Act, passed shortly after 11th September 2001, threatens free expression, harms democracy and disregards international law. PEN is also inviting individuals to write letters to President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry urging a review of the U.S.A. Patriot Act. Bush is pushing Congress to renew and expand the Act, which is due to expire in 2005.

Under the U.S.A. Patriot Act, authorities have expanded their ability to monitor the daily activities and communications of American citizens and residents, says PEN. In the name of fighting terrorism, they have weakened the ability of citizens to monitor government action and have restricted access to information. Authorities have also shown a willingness to violate Constitutional protection and international human rights standards.

Ironically, since 11th September, many governments whom the United States routinely criticises for suppressing free expression now point to the U.S.'s anti-terrorist moves to justify new levels of repression, says PEN.

At the same time, PEN's case list of persecuted writers and journalists has grown by more than 50 per cent.

<http://www.pen.org/corefreedom/action.html> for campaign website. PEN's global survey of anti-terrorism laws is at: <http://www.pen.org/freedom/antiterror2003.htm>

Online & classroom courses at Whitireia Community Polytechnic

Enrol now for July courses in Short Fiction, Poetry and Screenwriting on line. Applications close June 21st. Each course costs \$525.00 and is worth 20 credits towards the Diploma in Creative Writing. Courses have been written and designed by Adrienne Jansen, James Brown and Susy Pointon.

Each course involves part-time study over 18 weeks. You receive weekly notes and exercises and discuss your work with small groups of writers. Tutors offer detailed feedback at specified times throughout the course. On completion you will have a portfolio of short stories or poems or a short film script. Contact Anna Lim for further details - a.lim@whitireia.ac.nz, ph 04 237 3103, Ext. 3762.

Places also available for classroom modules in:

Poetry	May 24 th -July 2 nd
Tutor: Lynn Davidson	
Scriptwriting	July 20 th -August 27 th
Tutor: Pip Byrne	
Writing for Children	Sept. 6 th - Oct. 29 th
Tutor: Norman Bilbrough	

Publications

Bravado

Bravado No.2 is now on sale, and includes a special insert with all thirteen prizewinning poems from the inaugural 2004 *Bravado* Poetry Competition, 'Ocean~Spirit~Earth'. You can also read the judges' report by Catherine Mair and Owen Bullock, as well as *Bravado*'s usual eclectic mix of poetry and prose.

Submissions of poems for No. 3 are now invited and should be sent to the Poetry Editor, Owen Bullock: e-mail bullocktrail@xtra.co.nz. Fiction editor Sue Emms is also on the look-out for short stories that are 'bold, innovative and contemporary'. Writer's guidelines are available and submissions can be made to fictionbravado@xtra.co.nz. You may submit by snail mail, too.

A single copy of *Bravado* costs \$10 or you can take out a subscription for \$15 (two issues). Please send cheque with order to: *Bravado* PO Box 13-533 Grey Street Tauranga."

Kokako

The 2004 issue of *Kokako* will be edited by the usual editors, Patricia Prime & Bernard Gadd. (bernard.gadd@xtra.co.nz) We do accept haiga or other artwork where the poetry is integral so long as it's no larger than half an A5 page and is black and white but can't at present accept colour art except for the covers.

To enter the next *Kokako* haiku contest mail any number, two copies of each haiku one with name and contact details, and the \$NZ5 entry fee. Entry is for New Zealanders and Kiwi expats only. The deadline is January 1st 2005. The judges will be the editors plus Catherine Mair and Ernest Berry.

NZPS Survey

A couple of months ago we printed a survey questionnaire in the Newsletter.

Only a small sample of readers answered the four questions put to them (shame on you.) This leads me to assume a bias towards favourable answers. I have no reason for this, just a gut instinct.

The total respondents were 19, and the maths was complicated so, being dyscalculic, I enlisted the help of a mathematically competent friend. (Thanks, Jim.) Here's the verdict:

To the question "Have you bought one or more poetry books in the past 12 months?" 90 % said Yes. (*This was extremely gratifying.*)

To the question "Have you borrowed one or more poetry books from a library in the past month?" only 50 % said Yes. (*But it's probably better for the poets concerned if you buy, not borrow.*)

To the question "Have you read any poems from a book or magazine in the past month?" 90 % said Yes. (*I am assuming that most people do read the poems in the Newsletter ...*)

To the question "Have you written one or more poems in the past month?" 84 % said Yes. (*But how many of those poems were haiku, I wonder?*)

Editor

☯ Congratulations ☯

... to **Bernard Gadd** who came first in the inaugural Bravado Poetry Competition, Ocean~Spirit~Earth with *Cptm J. Cook RN ruminates*; to Tracey Slaughter who came second with *photographs of open water*, and Jessica Le Bas who came third with *for that extra distance*. Highly Commended were **Helen Bascand**, **Glenda Fawkes**, (Christchurch) **David Fraundorfer**, (Tauranga), **Bernard Gadd** again, with *for Arpad Pusztai* and *Miltonic daughters*, **Leonard Lambert** (Tauranga), **Richard Love** (Palmerston North) and **Sugu Pillay** (Christchurch). The winning poems are published in a special insert to *Bravado 2*, now available.

... to **Tony Beyer** who came first in the 5th Annual Paper Wasp Stamm Haiku Award 2003, and who was also Commended, as was **Ernest J. Berry**, who also got an honourable mention in the Kaji Aso Studio 2004 International Haiku Competition:

... to the New Zealand writers who featured so prominently in the Yellow Moon 2004 Seed Pearls Haiku Competition. **Nola Borrell** of Lower Hutt was Highly Commended. **Patricia Prime** (Auckland), **Catherine Mair** (Katikati) and **Ernest J. Berry** (Picton) were all Commended.

... and among the finalists were **Veronica Haughey** of Wellington, with two haiku; Catherine Mair and Ernest Berry, and **Nyle James** of Blenheim. Ernest Berry was also Highly Commended for his haiku sequence. Well done, all of you.

☯ Reviews ☯

Over the Waters - Moshe Liba

Over the Waters is Moshe Liba's latest collection of poems in English and is the Israeli poet, artist and former diplomat's tribute to New Zealand and the Pacific before he leaves this region.

As his line drawing on the cover attests Dr Liba can capture a scene in a few simple and telling details. The collection begins with his prize-winning title poem and ends with man-made icebergs *Under the Surface*. His poems are subtle overviews and understandings, many enlivened with an open and merry humour that, in the best sense, could appeal to a child (his 48 published works include textbooks and book for children).

A take-away café that is taken away, a colouring-in book description of *The City of Sails*, *Twilight Road* and *Summits* – all found in the first New Zealand section - are examples. Though still playing games with words Moshe Liba's tone is more sardonic in such poems as *Hanging*. He continues his word play in the Pacific section with its stories of cannibalism and the old, cruel ways. This ends with *Pearl Harbour* visited just one day before 11 September 2001. "We have learned the lesson," said the tourist guide, "not to be attacked by surprise/ never, ever again!"

Some of the poems seem to land from the air as this observant traveller passes through. The Nelson tourist bureau could well use his poem written en route from Moutere to Nelson to promote the variety of that region's attractions and amenities. Australia, however merited just one senryu.

The travelling poet found rich word pictures in Asia – from a night safari in Singapore; mini love hotels in Hanoi; different languages spoken by four generations in Vietnam to the stone ruins of Angkor clutched in the jungle's embrace. China, as is fitting, has large fish, red and plentiful, and the police watching over the terracotta warriors are 'guardians of the guardians.'

The apparent simplicity of Moshe Liba's style is often subverted to offer wider associations and new perspectives.

(2004) Liba, M. Over the Waters. HeadworX @ \$19.95

Recessional - Harvey McQueen

To read through this, Harvey McQueen's sixth poetry collection, is to sample a full life whose trajectory took the poet in and out of training for the Presbyterian Ministry in Dunedin; into a career in education; through several decades of modern New Zealand history; and to time spent overseas.

In one of the first poems he claims that history is part of his 'mental furniture' and his is indeed a well-furnished mind. Birds, his cats, the weather and the seasons of his garden are threaded through the work but even his most domestic poems are starting points for some meditation on history, contemporary conflict or change.

This habit of mind serves to give his everyday life its poignancy and richness – the importance of planting and harvesting even in the shade of global war. Ordinary scenes are conflated with the knowledge of what is happening half a world away as in the small narrative of coming across a madonna in the Gardens, and 'a skyhawk let loose from Ohakea' shattering the peace of a sun-drenched beach holiday.

The importance of relationship is celebrated in the second section, *Friends & Family*, *My Stepfather* portrays a capable, gentle countryman. There is a poem for his friend Bill and their shared love of organ music.

Time Out notes his heightened awareness driving to a friend's funeral:

'...as after an art
gallery, the senses are at
full alert in grief's shared fellowship ...'

While you were away combines a storm; an empty house; the movement of money and munitions overseas and the death of R.S. Thomas:

'... a poet's
passing provides an alibi for fears and restlessness.'

There are many reminders of friends - 'Friendship thrives on laughter & exuberance/ & can survive separation.' Such reflections also occupy the book's third section *The Interior Mind*. In regretting 'a continent unvisited' the poet reminds himself that if he had gone to Lima:

'then I wouldn't have seen
three large stick insects
lured out by a false spring.'

His witty *Winter's Tale* bears intimations of mortality.

"With life in the slow lane", he writes in his poem *Intimacy*, "detail adds to the intimacy." There is time to read and to watch, to savour the spices his partner is preparing but then – a friend diagnosed with cancer. "It's all a mixed bag, really."

McQueen at times charts 'progress as loss' and in his long poem *The Week The Office Ended* he asks:

'do I risk boredom
or poverty?
well, freedom – of a sort I trust
tiredness is all.'

This is not the last word however. There is *Time Overseas* and *Literary Life* still to come. Harvey McQueen shares his life generously in this collection. It is one that celebrates the sentient mind, the pleasures of perception.

(2004) McQueen, H. Recessional. HeadworX @ \$19.95

(Reviews by Robin Fry)

🌀 Websites 🌀

KiwiPoet is a site for New Zealand poets or residents. Expats, disabled and rural poets especially welcome among this community of poets who share poems and receive feedback in a supportive environment. Registration is required, so please send a poem and sign on. For further info, e-mail nirvanasouth@hotmail.com. KiwiPoet can be found at <http://groups.msn.com/KiwiPoet>.

evasion offers more updates at www.evasion.co.nz this month thanks to guest editors in the poetry section. The rambunctious Paul Vincent offers up some new work, and some accompanying critiques. **evasion's** other guest is Michael Arnold. It was Mike's short story that appeared in the very first printed issue of this magazine with fully one page of text missing. He's back to right some wrongs, and will be the guest editor-at-large for the next month.

And finally: it might not have the huge cash rewards of the KFM short story competition, but it sure sounds mighty - the Hankins award is up for grabs again, and entries close at the end of this month!

Visit www.evasion.co.nz/main/competition/index.html for details.

🌀 Submissions 🌀

Literary Atlas of New Zealand

Steele Roberts Ltd. is in the advanced stages of preparing a 'literary atlas' planned for release in September/ October this year. The publishers and editor Nelson Wattie would be grateful for suggestions and recommendations to assist with their collection of prose and poetry evoking the spirit of particular places. Photos and art will also be used.

While materials for Auckland, Wellington and other main centres are readily available, it is not always easy to find quality material covering remote or rarely discussed places. The prime consideration is that the passages chosen should create a vivid impression of a particular urban or rural location, often by presenting an action or story that occurs in the place. The texts may be written in or about any historical time.

Is there a passage of your own work that might be overlooked? Do you have a favourite poem or excerpt (by yourself or another writer) that gives you the 'feel' of a place? Are there writers from your locality who deserve to be known nationally?

Please contact Dr. Nelson Wattie c/- Steele Roberts Ltd. PO Box 9321 Wellington; ph 04 499 0044; fax 04 499 0056.

Taboo-Haiku

Haiku masters have written poems on every aspect of life, but often publishers have shown reluctance to print haiku that deal with controversial themes such as sexuality, violence, bodily functions, etc.

Taboo-Haiku is a mass-market haiku anthology that will feature the finest examples of international Haiku dealing with the forbidden themes that often go unexplored in mainstream contemporary haiku publications.

Avisson Press invites all Haiku poets to submit poems directly to editor Richard Krawiec, 319 Wilnot Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina 27606 USA. Published poems are acceptable if you include proof of your right to reprint. Include \$1 per haiku reading fee and a stamped postcard for notification -note: poems will not be returned.

Equinus

I met a man
who laughed much but carried
griefs in a basket of gold.

Moths are prettier than you
think. Drab brown isn't when
you look more closely, hold

the pale dust of the moon
in your hand and blow a wish
a kiss, high into the stars.

The night nudged me awake
shushed me
with a horse dancing across

the black, neck arched, mane
flying, a glittering constellation
galloping home.

Sue Emms

Mike Subritzky writes ...

Thanks for all the congratulations on my poem being read in Westminster Cathedral on ANZAC Day. I was told that I am the first Kiwi to be read at the ANZAC Memorial in Hyde Park, and they are pretty sure that I am the first Kiwi to be read in the Abbey. Recently I opened a package from London. Inside was a letter from the New Zealand High Commissioner thanking me for the use of my 'poems.' Yes, they actually read *two* on ANZAC Day.

There were three poems used at the dawn service held at the Australian War Memorial in Hyde Park, the first read by Australian Brigadier Vince Williams, CSC who read *The ANZAC Graves at Gallipoli*, written by Michael Thwaites (a Rhodes scholar) in 1938. The second was *The Last to Leave*, read by His Excellency Mr Michael L' Estrange, High Commissioner for Australia, and written by Sergeant Leon Gellert of 10th Battalion AIF, who landed at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915 and was evacuated wounded. My poem *Spirit of ANZAC* was read third by His Excellency The Honourable Russell Marshall, High Commissioner for New Zealand.

At the noon service at Westminster Abbey, there were two (downhome) poems, and also three (downhome) hymns. The first hymn was *Lord of Earth and all Creation*, adapted from another poem by Michael Thwaites. Then *ANZAC Cove*, penned by Leon Gellert and read by the Honourable Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia. Then my poem *Pastures Green* was read by Lord Freyberg, grandson of General Sir Bernard 'Tiny' Freyberg. This was then followed by a Kiwi hymn called *Where Mountains Rise to Open Skies*, written by New Zealander Shirley Erena Murray.

Inside my package was a copy of both Orders of Service, and the dawn service copy was that actually used by Russell Marshall. Interestingly, all of the poems, and both hymns were written in rhyme... (I just wish Peter Earsman were alive to know that) I'm pretty sure the poems were lifted from the IWVPA website, so that should create an interest for those folks from down under to consider doing the odd verse with an ANZAC focus for next year.

Sorry to blow my own horn, but hey, Westminster Abbey! I've walked around Poets Corner inside the Abbey and all the great ones are buried there ...For a change, they had to listen to a bit of Subritzky. (harking back to my 3rd Form year at Waihi College).

God bless.



Spirit of ANZAC

They clad us in the colours of the forest,
and armed us with the weapons made for war.
Then taught to us the ancient trade of killing,
and led us to the sound of battle's roar.
So give us comfort as we lay down bleeding,
and pray upon our cold and stiffened dead.
But mark our place that we might be accounted,
this foreign soil becomes our graven bed.
Now children place upon this stone a garland,
and learn of us each Anzac Day at dawn.
We are New Zealand' s dead from distant conflict,
our sacrifice remembered ever more.

Mike Subritzky

Out & About

CHRISTCHURCH

Small White Teapot

At their monthly meeting on May 18th, The Small White Peacock Group were delighted to welcome Ernest Berry who was visiting Christchurch.

Ernest had suggested that we follow Wellington Windrift' s idea of having a Haiku Tree, but owing to a crowded Main Street Cafe we were unable to gain access to their plastic version but a bag sufficed to hold the anonymous haikuthree from each member. All enjoyed the format which provided good analysis and discussion and it is likely that we will continue this method of non-threatening criticism.

A big thank-you to Ernest, who was generous in sharing his expertise and in giving encouragement. A discussion on the idea of a National Haiku Workshop Weekend and possible venues in 2005 met with enthusiasm. A happy and profitable meeting.

DUNEDIN

Upfront

On 27th April the second Upfront poetry meeting was held in Dunedin. At the open mike, eight readers demonstrated the range and diversity of women writers in this city with poetry of a high quality - some from people reading for the first time. About thirty people were present, including a few males who seemed to appreciate what they were hearing. Advertising had obviously worked with a range of ages, and at least one visitor from overseas.

Among readers in the first half evening were Ann Jacobson, Sonya Sabal-Ormsby, Leonora Smith, Elizabeth Brook-Carr, Jenny Powell-Chalmers, Shirley Deuchrass, Brigid Lowry (Writer in Residence, Dunedin Teacher' s College) and Lois Mead-McEwan.

Our first featured reader was **Martha Morseth** who is a well-known Dunedin writer. She read poems from her book *Between the Lines* and some new writing - one poem was from April' s *North and South* magazine. Like many of Martha' s poems, on the surface it's an unassuming account but as the poem progresses, definite undertones of menace and doubt begin to become apparent.

Finding Mushrooms

They looked like brown cushions,
flat and velvet.
' The cocky won' t mind' , my friend assured me.
' He said anytime and this spot was the best.'

The mist drifted across the valley.
Our silhouettes bent against a watery sunset,
yellow like faded newsprint on musterers' huts.

I told myself the farmer should know
and so should she,
another farmer' s daughter.

Our baskets full, we climbed back
through the wire fence, back to the shelter.
She took the butter from her pack,
got the kettle out, lit the primus.

Into the scalding froth she threw the plump slices
and I wondered,
has she misread the fungus colour;
how much does trust and friendship matter?

The mushrooms tasted of sun and earth.

Martha' s style of writing makes for very entertaining and satisfying poetry to listen to and to read.

Second to read was Phoebe Smith, a young local poet recently featured in *The Listener* as an upcoming performer - notably for her brilliant one-person performance in *Spoonface Steinberg*. At this reading, Phoebe proved she is also an adept writer and performer of her own poetry as well, and had us all eating out of her hands.

Emma Neale, a well-established NZ writer recently selected by *The Listener* as one of New Zealand' s ten most-promising young writers, was the third featured reader of the evening. Emma has had two books of poetry published and she read us some of her poetry from these books as well as new poems - one she hasn' t ever read to an audience before. Emma' s thoughtful, elegant poems are always a pleasure to hear and this particular occasion was no exception.

(*Report from Kay Cooke*)

PICTON

Picton Poets

The May meeting was based around an erudite presentation by John Canham on Robert Browning, his life and poetry. We' re also tossing around ideas for doing something locally and in Blenheim for Montana Poetry Day.

Here's a poem with a local flavour from author Ebbn Floe:

ird of passage
ouncing down from the
us,
rogue,
ra,
onny
ackpacker
luebridge
ound

TAURANGA

Tauranga and the Waikato region celebrated Poetry Out There! with Northern Lights Tour poets James Norcliffe, Emma Neale and Nick Ascroft, who read in Gisborne, Rotorua and Whakatane before coming on to Tauranga.

On Friday May 7th they were honoured guests at the Reception held prior to the Bravado Poetry Competition Awards, listening to the prizewinning poems read by those poets who were able to attend. Luckily, this included Bernard Gadd and Tracey Slaughter who took 1st & 2nd Prize. Mayor Jan Beange of Tauranga had kindly agreed to present the prizewinning cheques and received an original artwork from local artist and poet Jan Fitzgerald instead of the usual bouquet of flowers.

On Saturday nearly 400 people turned out for Poetry in the Park, where the Northern Lights Tour poets were featured as star performers. Musical interludes were ably provided by members of Tauranga Music Club, and there was an original interpretation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, choreographed by Tanya Bamford-King (who also offered us her own new dance, *Ocean-Spirit-Earth*.) This was performed by local belly dancers Belly Hoo, the performance troupe of Art of Movement of which Tanya is director. The Word Wizard was on hand to help children write animal and nature poems for the Poet-Tree, and face painters Kerri and Sharon helped them get into the spirit by sending them off as tigers, bears or flower fairies.

In the evening there was a Celebrity Poetry Reading from James, Emma and Nick – three poets of superb quality and splendidly contrasting styles - who deserved a better turn out. Though, as James pointed out, they *were* in competition with Super 12.



WELLINGTON

Christy & McQueen at Turnbull House

There have been so many requests to read at NZPS monthly meetings at Turnbull House that the May meeting again featured two poets. Visiting Canadian poet Jim Christy shared the stage with Wellingtonian Harvey McQueen whose latest book *Recessional* was launched last month.

The much-travelled Jim Christy is a polymath in the arts and has a breadth of reference to draw on in his poetry, which is often accompanied by a jazz/blues ensemble. He said he felt somewhat naked with just the spoken word at Turnbull House. Relaxed and laconic, he offered his poems along with stories and observations on the multifarious world that he and they inhabit. Krakow and Archangel (Arkhangelsk) are visited in *Tonight In The World* – and “Are babies snug in Transylvanian cribs?” he asks.

A poem in a jazz rhythm invites:

‘Let’s be God for a block
a junkie for a block
and step on all the cracks’

Still on this theme was his *Way North Jazz* prompted by nostalgia for his old hometown in Yukon:

‘You can have your springtime in Vermont
Dawson city round about December’s for me .

The miraculous buds of May
August evenings on porch swings
kicking leaves in russet October –
all like smudged pages from a fake book
of Dixieland standards owned
by a wedding reception quartet
who all have day jobs down at the mall.’

The poem’s jazz group is eventually found in this chilly environment in mid chorus ‘in a glacier, their notes /frozen in time’.

We heard a film noir poem *The Big Nowhere* (Jim Christy has acted in films, too); a Darwinian poem called *Life* in which grey things darting back and forth in a bucket of rainwater undergo a metamorphosis while he is inside the house taking a phone call, and *The dead woman blues*.

Old time academic poets, he observed, write about relationships. Careerists of the middle-range creative writing schools write about women, while poets like him write about girls and jazz.

‘I love my country but not the literary scene there.’ He illustrated this remark with *The Poetry Reading* where ‘The poems of the award winner are even duller than the audience’ - in contrast with the vivid life taking place outside.

His *Remembrance Day* is a powerful anti-war piece.

‘Did Etruscans have insomnia same as me?’ he asks. ‘What constituted Palaeolithic pillow talk?’

Jim Christy is a poet who has read much, seen much and lived much. Unlike the award winner of *The Poetry Reading* he is never boring.

Harvey McQueen (whose new book *Recessional* is reviewed on p. 7) picked up on the Canadian poet’s anti-war stance:

‘... killing becomes
a hard to break habit, blood demands
more blood ...
... the land
the poor land.

It could happen here.”

(from *Thoughts Upon a Letter of Michael Collins*)

This is Harvey McQueen’s sixth book and he says the poems keep coming. His is likeable poetry and he speaks for many of us as he looks back over the stages of a long life, remembering its joys while harbouring fears for the future of the planet:

‘May we have peace, O Lord
but may it not come in our lifetime.
Humanity may have walked on that scarred
moonface but we fail to control our own hearts.’

(from *Easter Sunday 2002*)

On their way to Harvey’s book launch last month, he told us, a friend’s son asked, ‘Is he still writing poetry? Only young people write poetry.’

‘Not so,’ joked Harvey. ‘As one approaches 70 writing poetry is one of the few things one can still do!’

A fascination with juxtapositions gave him *Reading Kassabova On My Brother’s Farm*:

‘That Balkan sadness
at the eternal slaughter

a doe is killing other does’ fawns
my brother has his rifle in his hands’

Among the new poems Harvey McQueen read were two about European painters and another meditation on war, *32 Men Got Away From Colditz* – ‘demonise the enemy and they will demonise you back’ ... ‘the torturer has a different face /the rules are broken’.

Listening to Harvey McQueen’s reading I became aware that, what we were hearing, behind the humour and the cherished domestic life, was ‘the still sad music of humanity.’

(Report by Robin Fry)

Writer's block

The New Zealand Society of Authors Wellington Branch is about to add four more text sculptures to the Wellington Writer Walk, designed by Catherine Griffiths, featuring the writings of authors who have made their mark in the city. Barbara Anderson, Eileen Duggan, Alistair Te Ariki Campbell and Dame Fiona Kidman join the Walk.

One feature of the extension of the Walk has been sponsorship, with Moore Wilson supporting Alistair Te Ariki Campbell's sculpture, and the IIML involved in Barbara Anderson's. "We are delighted to announce that Glenn Schaeffer, of the International Institute of Modern Letters, has donated the full amount to create Barbara Anderson's text sculpture," said Chair of the NZSA Wellington Writers Walk Committee, Dawn Sanders.

Barbara Anderson was a member of Bill Manhire's Original Composition class more than twenty years ago and has continued her links with the IIML through readings and guest writer appearances in the fiction workshops. We're thrilled she's now been set in stone.

The Royal New Zealand Navy has also offered to be involved in the Walk. Barbara's husband, the Rear Admiral Sir Neil Anderson, expressed how touched he was by this gesture.

There was a public unveiling on Saturday 8th May outside Circa. Fund-raising continues to complete the final stages of these and the next plaques. Contributions towards this project can be sent to: NZSA Wellington Branch c/- Dawn Sanders P O Box 17 215, Wellington; ph 03 476 8369, e-mail Action-Sanders@xtra.co.nz

Wellington Windrift

The challenge for our May meeting was to write a sequence of haiku. (See *Yellow Moon's* Seed Pearls competition.) Imaginative and crafted poems resulted. Newcomer Lynne Frances read a moving sequence on her father's illness and death; Karen Peterson Butterworth presented a series on drought followed by rain in the shape of a raindrop; and Irene Ruth wrote haiku 'postcards' from a travelling daughter. Ernest Berry sent *day off* with off-beat observations on the town - skilful as always.

Our haiku 'tree' again elicited much discussion and fun. We responded immediately to this haiku by **Veronica Haughey**:

rosy morning light
- early joggers
in the pink

Karen Peterson Butterworth wrote:

midwinter –
sunlight crawls across
the whole floor

We recognised this! 'A long moment,' quipped one. 'It's the moment of noticing,' said another.

We practised auditory haiku too. (See *Kokako*, 2003.) Another newcomer, **Laurice Gilbert** (an audiologist and writer of humorous poems) produced this impromptu haiku:

hearing test –
the baby passes
wind

Nola Borrell reported an encouraging amount of interest in attending a national workshop in 2005. Now we are into considering the practical implications of our 'kite-flying' .



Elena Lindsay was agreeably surprised to find one of her haiku in the elegantly presented *Haiku: Poetry Ancient and Modern* (2002) compiled by Jackie Hardy. (2002, MQ Publications, 12 The Ivories, Northampton Street London). It also includes haiku by Ernest Berry, Cyril Childs, Ruth Dallas, Bernard Gadd, John O' Connor and the late Bertus de Jonge. The book is published in French as well.

Overseas

NORFOLK ISLAND

Writers' & Readers' Festival 11th – 17th July

- ❖ 17 confirmed presenters covering a wide range of topics including children's books, crime fiction, poetry, comedy, animals, gardening, travel and adventure, publishing and television.
- ❖ 'Super Sessions' available to kit holders – 2-hour small-group sessions with an established author, publisher or literary agent.
- ❖ Gala Concert by renowned Covent Garden baritone Robert Bickerstaff.
- ❖ Mix and mingle with the authors/presenters at the Festival: Jean Bedford, Nick Bleszynski, Peter Corris, Catherine DeVrye, Irina Dunn, Mary-Anne Fahey, Morris Gleitzman, Kate Grenville, Derek Hansen, Ann Howard, Jeffrey Masson Ph.D, Roger Maynard, Mary Moody, Chester Porter QC, Dr. Robyn Rowland AO, Professor Pierre Ryckmans, Alexa Thomson

Festival Kits AUD\$195.00 available from the Organisers, Ian & Monica Anderson, on behalf of the Norfolk Island Writers & Readers Group, P.O. Box 158, Norfolk Island 2899. Please contact us or visit our website: www.writersfestival.nlk.nf, e-mail: writersfest@norfolk.nf, fax Intl +(6723) 23106. Travel & accommodation packages available from The Travel Centre, Norfolk Island. Contact rebecca@travelcentre.nf

A world that starts with art

Read Philip Kennicott's article in *The Washington Post* reporting on the idea proposed by Helen Vendler at the 33rd Annual Jefferson Lecture, the National Endowment for the Humanities' blow-out.

Vendler, a Harvard professor and noted literary critic, was the honorary 'big thinker' speech was deceptively radical. She asked the assembled luminaries and functionaries of American academia, gathered in a ballroom at the Washington Convention Center, to consider putting art ahead of the usual matter of life.

He adds, 'In Vendler's reordered world, politicians would turn to poetry, rather than history, to make sense of the competing claims of the world. Statesmen would consult Dante before Machiavelli, students would be rewarded for anatomising Aristophanes *The Frogs* and not frogs from formaldehyde vats.'

Vendler claims that the arts – especially poetry – are more fundamental to life than history is, "since, whether or not we remember it, we seem doomed to repeat it. The arts exist to relocate us in the body. They situate us on the earth."

Kennicott defines her position on poetry thus: 'Far from being unreal, a poem is part of our physical world, sitting on a page, agitating the air with sound waves and ultimately animating us right down to our heartbeat and glands. If it's real, then it can effect change in what we so casually call the real world'. Go to: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/articles/A7143-2004May6.html?referrer=emailarticle>.

☪ Competitions ☪

Bell Gully National Schools Poetry Award

Entries have now opened for the Award, which is organised by Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) and supported by leading law firm Bell Gully. Any student in Year 12 and 13 enrolled at a New Zealand secondary school is encouraged to submit a poem, and they have until 18th June 2004 to enter the competition.

The winner will receive a \$500 cash prize; a \$500 book grant for their school's library; a year's membership to the New Zealand Book Council; and subscriptions to leading literary journals *Landfall* and *Sport*. The winning poet will be announced at a reception in Wellington in August during the Bell Gully Schools Writing Festival 2004 – a chance for young writers to work with the country's leading writers, poets and screenwriters.

Entry forms have been sent to all secondary schools and are also available upon request from fiona.wright@vuw.ac.nz.

Takahe Poetry Competition

Judged by Jack Ross, editor, novelist and short story writer. First Prize \$250 & Second Prize \$100. Two Runners up will receive one year's subscription to *Takahe*. The New Zealand Book Council will also grant the winner and both runners-up a year's membership in the New Zealand Book Council, which will entitle them to four issues of *Booknotes*. Closing Date: 30th September 2004. Results will be posted out in December 2004. Full details and entry forms on the NZSA website – www.authors.org.nz

Takahe Cultural Studies Competition

Judged by Rudolf Boelee & Cassandra Fusco. First Prize \$100, plus four runners-up will receive one year's subscription to *Takahe*. Closing Date: 30th September 2004. Results will be posted out in December 2004. Full details and entry forms on the NZSA website – www.authors.org.nz

Upper Hutt 2004 Poetry Competition

For the fourth year running Upper Hutt resident Tony Chad is involved in the organisation of an annual Poetry Competition based around Upper Hutt themes. This year's Upper Hutt City Poetry Competition will again peak on Montana National Poetry Day, Friday 16 July with a full day of poetry performances and winners of the competition announced.

Tony informs us that the theme of this year's poetry competition is for Upper Hutt businesses to register to have a poem written about their business. He assures us no suspect poems will surface. It is about celebrating business in Upper Hutt and having some fun along the way. For \$50.00 businesses will get a poem written, published widely including a booklet of entries. On Montana National Poetry Day the poems will be profiled throughout the day.

The competition is free to enter and members of the Society have featured in previous results. Registration of businesses closes on 31st May, and poems will be accepted until 25th June. Intending entrants are asked in the first case to contact the Upper Hutt Information Centre (04) 527-2141 or e-mail uhvic@uhcc.govt.nz. They will then be allocated a business partner and sent an entry form.

Detailed information may be viewed at the Upper Hutt City website:

www.upperhuttcity.com

2004 San Francisco International Competition Haiku, Senryu, Tanka and Rengay

Sponsor:

Haiku Poets of Northern California.

Deadline:

Haiku, Senryu, and Tanka In hand, October 31st
Rengay In hand, November 30th

All entries must be original, unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere. There is no limit to the number of submissions. A first prize of \$US100 will be awarded in each of the four categories. Second and third prizes of \$US50 and \$US25 will be awarded for Haiku only. Contest results will be announced at the first HPNC meeting in January.

All rights revert to authors after the contest results are announced. Winning poems will be published in the Spring/Summer issue of *Mariposa*, the membership journal of the Haiku Poets of Northern California. This contest is open to all except the HPNC President and, for their respective categories, the contest co-ordinators and the judges (who will remain anonymous until after the competition.)

Haiku, Senryu & Tanka Submission Guidelines.

Type or print each entry on two 3 x 5 cards. In the upper left corner of each card identify its category as Haiku, Senryu, or Tanka. On the back of one card only, print your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (optional).

The entry fee is \$US1 per poem. Send haiku, senryu and tanka submissions, along with entry fee, to HPNC, c/o David Grayson, 9874 Golf Links Road, Oakland, CA 94605.

Rengay Submission Guidelines.

All rengay must be titled. For two people (Poet A and Poet B) follow this linked format: 3 lines/Poet A, 2 lines/Poet B, 3/A, 3/B, 2/A, 3/B. For three poets (A, B, and C) the format is: 3 lines/A, 2 lines/B, 3 lines/C, 2/A, 3/B, 2/C. Type or print each rengay on three letter-size sheets.

Include full authorship information, stanza by stanza, as well as all poets' names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses (optional) on one copy only.

On the other two copies, mark stanzas with letters only (poet A, poet B, poet C) to indicate the sequence of authorship. The entry fee is \$5 per rengay.

Send rengay submissions, along with entry fee, to HPNC, c/o Fay Aoyagi, 930 Pine Street, #105, San Francisco CA 94108.

All Submissions.

Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. dollars to Haiku Poets of Northern California (HPNC). Cash (in U.S. currency) is OK. Enclose a business-size SASE (U.S. first class postage or an IRC) for notification of contest winners. No entries will be returned, with the exception that late submissions, or those received without payment, will be returned using your SASE; without an SASE these entries will be discarded.

Kokako - NZ Haiku & Senryu Contest

Again this competition is open to New Zealanders and ex-pat Kiwis. Please mail \$5 entry fee with 2 copies of your entries: one with your name & address. You may submit unlimited numbers of unpublished haiku or senryu. Post or e-mail entries to *Kokako* NZ Haiku Contest 43 Landscape Road, Papatoetoe, Auckland (bernard.gadd@xtra.co.nz)

There are no age limits nor any restrictions on the type of haiku or senryu submitted. The judges are Patricia Prime and Bernard Gadd together with the Patrons of the contest, Catherine Mair and new Patron, Ernest Berry.

The top three entries earn a free annual sub to *Kokako-SPIN* (worth \$20) plus a book token, and a further 20 of the best will be published in *Kokako 2005*, for our international readership.

Deadline for entries is January 1st 2005. The top three for our first contest, whose results will appear in the 2004 issue, set a high standard.

Haiku Presence Award

With a first prize of £100 (approx. \$300) and £25 each for up to 4 runners-up. Winning and commended poems will be published in *Presence* #25 or #26. The principal judge is Matt Morden. Entry formats are as follows:

Option 1: Up to three haiku on a single A4 sheet, including name and address. *This entry option is free of charge at the first stage.* You *must* include an s.a.e. If from outside the UK, you *must* include 2 IRCs or \$1 to cover return postage.

Option 2: A single A4 sheet including your name and address and as many haiku as you like, at the rate of £1 per haiku, or \$5 per three haiku. Payment should be by UK £ cheque to *Haiku Presence* or in \$ bills.

If neither payment method is suitable, please contact Martin Lucas to arrange an alternative, or use Option 1.

Entries by Option 2 will be guaranteed inclusion in the judge's shortlist. Entries by Option 1 will be sifted for quality by Martin Lucas and/or the *Presence* team. Those failing to reach the shortlist will be returned to the author. *Entrants whose haiku are accepted for the shortlist will be charged a total of £3 or \$5 for entry to the next stage (irrespective of the number of haiku accepted).* Payment for this stage must be made by 31 October 2004.

All poems will have author details deleted before final judging. Entries must be original, unpublished and not under consideration elsewhere.

Closing dates: 31st August 2004, Option 1 & 31st October 2004, Option 2. Please send entries to Martin Lucas, 90D Fishergate Hill Preston PR1 8JD UK.

Tom Howard Poetry Competition 2004

A premier literary competition for original creative writing in poetry or verse in any style and on any theme. \$AUD2,670 in cash prizes, plus publication in an anthology of winning and commended entries. Closing date: September 30th 2004. Full details from the NZSA office: e-mail nzsa@clear.net.nz

British Haiku Society Nobuyuki Yuasa Award 2004

The original deadline for the Nobuyuki Yuasa International English Haibun Contest 2004 has now been extended to 30th September. The judges are looking for work of literary merit in which the fusion of haiku verse and haiku prose is distinctive and convincing.

The entry fee is £10 (cheques to British Haiku Society) or US \$15 (in bills at entrant's own risk) for each haibun entered. A maximum of three submissions per entrant.

The judge is Professor Nobuyuki Yuasa, editor and translator of Basho's haibun, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North & Other Travel Sketches* (Penguin, 1966).

Prize: One overall winner will receive an original framed Japanese painting donated by Professor Yuasa, a signed original print created by artist David Walker to illustrate the winning haibun, and ten copies of an anthology containing the winning entry and a selection of commended haibun by other entrants. All other entrants will receive one complimentary copy of the anthology.

Conditions: Open to the public worldwide, for haibun in the English language only, of a length between 200 and 1500 words, including one or more haiku. Work may be published or unpublished at the time of submission, but entry implies readiness for it to be published, if selected, in the contest anthology. Each haibun should be given a title.

The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entries cannot be returned. Copyright reverts to the author after publication in the anthology. If insufficient entries are received, we reserve the right not to proceed with the contest, in which case entry fees will be returned.

Send to: BHS Yuasa Award, Lenacre Ford, Woolhope, Hereford HR1 4RF, UK.

BNZ Katherine Mansfield Awards

The Katherine Mansfield Award is the Bank of New Zealand's longest-running sponsorship, with involvement from 1958. In 2003 the Awards became an annual competition, and prize money in the main award category was increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The short story awards commemorate Katherine Mansfield's contribution to New Zealand literature, and assist New Zealand writers to achieve recognition in their own country.

All entries must be unpublished stories and 'double blind judging' is a unique feature of selection. Respected writers and academics, who remain anonymous until judging is completed, judge each section individually. All entries are also anonymous, written under a pen name, and there is no pre-selection of entries.

Notable past winners of the Bank of New Zealand Katherine Mansfield Award include Maurice Shadbolt (1963, 1967 and 1995), Frank Sargeson (1965), Keri Hulme (1975), Vincent O' Sullivan (1979) and Daphne de Jong (1981).

Full details about the Awards will be available from 1st May 2004 when the 2004 Awards open. The closing date is 30th June 2004. You can enter online at www.bnz.co.nz/kmawards.

Yellow Moon Seed Pearls Competition

Closing date: August 31st 2004

- A- Haibun: a haiku journey \$100, \$50
- B- Haiku (sheet of 3) \$100, \$50
- C- Tanka (sheet of 2) \$100, \$40
- D- Haiku Sequence – 8 to 11 themed haiku by one or more poets \$100, \$40
- E- Nature Poem (to 28 lines)
- Free verse or rhymed \$100, \$40

\$3 per entry Winning and Commended poems published in Yellow Moon magazine. Entry form essential. Send long (22 x 11cm) SSAE to Beverley George PO Box 37 Pearl Beach NSW 2256 or print from <http://www.yellowmoon.info>.



Woof! Woof! Woof!

Full details and registration for International Dog Short Story & Poetry Competition at <http://www.erinrac.com/>.
Deadline 15th September 2004.

Your story must not exceed 1500 words, or your poems 50 lines.

Regular Gatherings

If you belong to a group not listed here, or you need to change the information on show please send an e-mail to the Editor.



AUCKLAND

Poetry Live meets at Pog Mahones Tavern, 108 Ponsonby Road on Tuesday nights. Contact: Judith McNeil, (09) 360 2510.

The Glad Poets of Henderson meet at the Waitakere Community Resource Centre Ratanui Street Henderson on the last Sunday of each month, 2.30-4.30 p.m. Contact Maxine Green (ph 09 836 7280).

The Pub Poets meet in the Royal Room at The Cock and Bull Botany Town Centre at 7.30 p.m. on the first and third Monday of the month. For more information contact Alan (ph 09 272 4104).

Passionate Tongues is a monthly reading at Temple, 486 Queen Street from 8 p.m. There's also an open Poetry Slam (prizes). \$5 or \$3 entry. Contact Michael Rudd: (ph 09 441 7034 or 021 299 86 43, or e-mail oralink@hotmail.com). Michael is also running the occasional **Vocal Point** at The Depot 28 Clarence Street Devonport.

Auckland Poetry Nights. 6 p.m. First Monday of every month at Baxter & Mansfield's Bookshop, 54 Wellesley Street West, Auckland. BYO work or someone else's – Bloomsburys, beatniks, punks and post-modernists all welcome. e-mail books5@hardtofind.co.nz or phone 09 307 7889

BALCLUTHA

Meets every first Wednesday of the month from 7 p.m. at The LumberJack Café Owaka (15 minutes down Southern Scenic Route). Information: Gwyneth Williamson (ph 03 418 983).

CHRISTCHURCH

The Airing Cupboard Women Poets meet at 10 a.m. every 2 weeks (starting from February 1st) at The Quiet Room in the YMCA on Hereford Street. Ring Judith Walsh (ph 03 359 74330 or Barbara Strang (ph 03 376 4486).

Another group is **The Live Poets' Society**, which meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Linwood Community Arts Centre (corner of Worcester Street/Stammore Road). Contact Alan McLean (ph 03 389 0908).

A haiku group, **The Small White Teapot**, meets upstairs at the Mainstreet Café Colombo Street at 7.30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. Contact Barbara Strang (ph 03 376 4486) for more information.

CROMWELL

Cromwell Writers meet on the last Tuesday of the month in the homes of members on a shared basis. Contact Tom Llandreth (ph 03 4451352) or e-mail tomal@xtraco.nz.

DUNEDIN

Fortnightly readings are held at 8.30 p.m. at the Arc Café, 135 High Street. Check with the Café itself for dates and times.

DUNEDIN

Upfront-spotlighting women poets meets on the last Tuesday of each month at Cobb & Co. (first floor lounge) from 7 p.m. Open mike reading promptly at 7.30 p.m. followed by featured poets. Contact Martha Morseth (03 4739577) or e-mail mjmorseth@clear.net.nz.

GOLDEN BAY

Joe Bell from Milnthorpe is the Convenor of **The Golden Bay Live Poets Society**. This Society has a monthly Performance Night at the famous Mussel Inn Bush Café at Onekaka. (For dates go to www.musselinn.co.nz.) Visiting poets are most welcome. For news of meetings contact Joe (ph 03 524 8146, fax 03 524 8047; or e-mail gbaybell@xtra.co.nz).

HAMILTON

The Hamilton Poets Group meets on the last Thursday of each month at the Satellite Campus on Ruakura Road Hamilton at 7.30 p.m. Contact Penny at: pen101nz@yahoo.co.nz (ph 07 854 0378).

HAWKE'S BAY

The Hawke's Bay Live Poets' Society meets at 8 p.m. on the second Monday of each month (except January) at the Cat and Fiddle Ale House in Hastings. Contact Keith Thorsen (ph 06 870 9447) or e-mail: kthorsen@xtra.co.nz

LOWER HUTT

Poets Pub A free entry community sponsored poetry reading happening. First Monday of the month from 7 p.m. at Angus Inn, Murphy's Bar, Waterloo Road. Bar is open & food to order. Free coffee and tea. Guest reader plus open floor mike session. For more information contact convenor Stephen Douglas (ph 04 569 9904, e-mail DouglasSR@xtra.co.nz).

NELSON

The Nelson Poets meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in Kaffeine New Street Nelson. New poets welcome. Contact: Martina (ph 03 548 2989) or Gaelynne (ph 03 546 8434).

OPOTIKI

Opotiki Writers Inc meet at 10am on the last Wednesday of the month at the Opotiki Hotel, for a morning of chat, support and motivation, all loosely based on our writing experiences. Contact Ann Funnell 07 315 6664 or timann@paradise.net.nz

PICTON

The Picton Poets (founded by Ernest Berry in 1996) meet at The Cottage 75a Waikawa Road Picton at 10.30 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. Contact: Anne Barrett (ph 03 574 2757, e-mail wheezyanna@msn.com) or Jenny Carroll (ph 03 579 3031, e-mail jayemcee@paradise.net.nz).

PORIRUA

Poetry Café meets in the function room upstairs at Selby's Sports Café 1 Selby Place Porirua on the second Monday in each month. Free entry.

ROTORUA

The Rotorua Mad Poets meet every Monday night at the Lakes Hotel Lake Road, 7.30-9.30 p.m. Contact: Colleen (ph 07 347 9847) or Kay (ph 07 349 0219).

TAURANGA

Poets' Parlour meets monthly 2nd Sunday 12.30 p.m. in the Robert Harris Café, State Insurance Arcade, off Grey Street. Contact Jenny Argante (ph 07 576 3040, e-mail: jenny.argante@xtra.co.nz).

TIMARU

If you are interested in the Timaru **Poetry in Motion** performance poetry group contact Karalyn Joyce (ph 03 614 7050) or e-mail karalynjoyce@xtra.co.nz.

WANAKA

Poetry Live at the Wanaka Arts Centre, first Thursday of the month 7.30 p.m. Contact Pip Sheehan (ph 03 443 4602).

WELLINGTON

The New Zealand Poetry Society meets on the third Thursday of each month (except for December and January) at 8 p.m. at Turnbull House Bowen Street.

Bluenote 191-195 cnr Cuba Street & Vivian Street, **Poetry Studio** every Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 p.m. Free admission. ph 04 801 5007.

also at **Bluenote** performance poetry most Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. Contact Blaise Orsman (mob 025 616 04 53) or Blue Note (ph 04 801 5007) after 4 p.m. to confirm.

Café Poetry to Go. A low-key friendly small group who come together to talk poetry, write, drink coffee with muffins. Led by Stephen & Rosa Douglas at The Rock, Glover Court, 4 Glover Street, Ngauranga Gorge (up from LV Martin). Planned dates May 11th, July 13th, September 14th & November 9th from 7.15 p.m. Contact: ph 04 569 9904, e-mail DouglasSR@xtra.co.nz.

Cafe Poetry to Go at The Rock Café 4 Glover Street, off Ngauranga Gorge (up from LV Martin). If poetry is new to you this is the place find friends, learn to read aloud and exchange tips and books. Last Thursday of the month, supper provided, gold coin donation appreciated. Contact Stephen and Rosa Douglas (ph 04 569 9904, or e-mail DouglasSR@xtra.co.nz or phone 04 5699904.

Poesis: Poetry and Religion Forum

A forum to discuss religious poetry (international and New Zealand) will be held every five weeks in the WIT Library, Anglican Centre, 18 Eccleston Hill, Thorndon. All enquiries to antonin@wn.ang.org.nz.

WEST COAST: HOKITIKA

Contact Don Neale (ph 03 755 7092) or e-mail: startledworm@paradise.net.nz for news of the winter meetings of the **Hokitika Wild Poets' Society**.

WHAKATANE

East Bay Live Poets meet at 7.30 p.m. on the third Monday of each month in the Craic. Contact: Mary Pullar (ph 07 307 1126, e-mail jwpullar@wave.co.nz

WHANGAREI

Poetry, Prose, Tea & Talk. Last Sunday of the month, 2.00 p.m. at 18a Vale Road Whangarei. Contact: Rosalie (ph 04 388 913) or e-mail chtoomer@xtra.co.nz.



Iceland Poppies

Ruth Dallas

You ask me
What am I saying
In my poem.
What am I saying?
That everything
Is falling from us,
We, too, are falling;

And so this day, this
Hour, with the sun shining
In its customary fashion
And the wind blowing the trees,
You and I,
Sitting behind windows,
Discussing poems,
This moment, every moment, falls,
Is falling.

More precious
Than any fiery diamond
Is the flowering human heart,
Opening like a poppyhead
And like a poppy falling.

(from *Steps of the Sun*, Caxton Press, 1979)

When I first came to New Zealand, I began reading New Zealand writers as a means of uncovering the culture of my adopted country, of understanding history through fiction, and the past through poetry.

There are three women poets I came across to whom my heart was soon lost. First, Cilla McQueen, who, with *Living Here*, has written the quintessentially New Zealand poem; i.e. a poem that could not be written by any other than a New Zealand poet. I adore Elizabeth Smither for her cunning combinations of wit and wisdom, and admire and respect Ruth Dallas, whose *Making Poems* sits above my writing desk as inspiration and focus.

Iceland Poppies is a poem that uses language which is laid-back and unpretentious, yet also delicately exact. To me, it seems to say what has been said by another revered woman poet, the Afro-American writer Alice Walker. Walker sets down her defence of the poem as 'experiencing now' more robustly and explicitly than Dallas in an equally good poem about writing: *How Poems are Made: a Discredited View*. Walker is of the opinion that poems are born out of pain, and, in this work, she concentrates on the writing of poetry.

Dallas sees poems as an everyday part of life, and to be shared. She is as much interested in the reader's response as in what the poet has presented. Where they differ, perhaps, is that whereas both writers see poetry as defining the moment, Walker sees poetry as born out of pain and struggle. For Dallas, any experience can begin the process of creating a poem.

Where they seem to agree is that a poem works best when it offers insight rather than explanation, that poetry, though essentially felt or experienced emotionally – from the brain to the heart - can also provide the comfort of rationality, the consolations of philosophy.



Dallas has found a method of doing this without delivering a sermon, or a lecture. Like most poets, she operates from a basis of associative intelligence – seeing connections that are not always obvious and making use of them.

Here the Iceland poppies become a metaphor for evanescence – life, death, a falling away. Simply put, a letting go, a natural wastage - loss for what is no longer there, whether our own powers and pleasures, or the physical separation imposed by death.

The *Iceland Poppies* of the title are nowhere else specified within the poem. This works for me. Only yesterday, I was discussing with some fellow writers the difficulties of giving a poem a useful name.

Many poets like to leave their work untitled. They see this as another means by which they can confer autonomy on the reader, i.e. s/he decides how to remember it. Yet many editors seem to prefer a title. They don't insist on it, exactly – but their preference is so marked that you feel obliged to add a title before sending off your poem.

Together we came to the conclusion that, if a title was used, it had to add something to the meaning, and to complement rather than duplicate what was in the poem.

This Dallas has done. Iceland poppies look frail, and yet they stand up for themselves and can flourish and recover after adversity. Most importantly, they offer a diversity of colours that illuminate the garden, but do not overwhelm it. They are not long lasting, and don't cope all that well with being picked (they wilt) or arranged (they flop).

That quality of transience is the clue to the poet's meaning – answering the question put by the poet, "What am I saying?" Answering it differently, and by implication rather than as directly as it is answered within the poem ("That everything/is falling from us. /We, too, are falling.")

Change, decay ...loss: these are facts of life. As Yeats put it, "Things fall apart, /The centre cannot hold." Yet loss can be accepted as a part of life - without perpetual regret. The moment moves on, the poppies bloom again. This teaches us, if we are wise, that we only have the hours and the days.

And each other. This is important to Dallas, and it is no accident that 'You and I' are inside discussing poetry, while outside the wind blows, and the poppy petals fall. If we have each other, if we have poetry to share, we are guarded and protected, and, like the trees, bend to the winds.

Dallas wants us to understand that although "This moment/every moment, falls/is falling" *we do have it*. When we are in the moment, we own it. We have 'Now' (and what else *can* we have but now?) We also have each other; we have relationships (however defined). We have the breadth and depth of human loving; we have 'Us' and that is what gives each moment importance – and also what makes it a beautiful and transitory thing. Like the poppies, however transitory, to be appreciated for what they are and what they can offer.

Dallas emphasises the value she puts on love when she says "More precious/than any fiery diamond/ is the flowering human heart..." and contrasts it with the diamond, which has a high commercial value.

A diamond is bright and sparkling, and has fire at the centre. A diamond is also hard, adamantine: it has no natural but only constructed beauty - mined, cut, polished and set. That 'diamond' can be anything: fame or fortune, who we are and what we do alone. The diamond is anything we pursue outside of 'Now' where peace and companionship sit side by side and talk about poems.

For Dallas, 'the flowering human heart', is always going to be more precious because, lifelong, our hearts and souls sprout buds, display blossoms before they fall. The heart is where we store the emotions that drive us towards expression and commitment, to opening up "like a poppyhead", which is where the seeds are stored.



The poppyhead represents a perpetuity of starting over: the next generation, the future. So though things fall, they leave traces, imprints – memory, recollection, creativity – and space for another flowering.

Dallas offers us all this in a poem that isn't long and has words no more difficult than 'customary' or 'poppyhead'. She offers us meaning between the lines, and behind the deceptively simple words read from the page. Meaning that is hidden, and omnipresent.

"What am I saying in my poems?" asks Dallas .
We answer, "Carpe diem. Seize the day."

Jenny Argante



Do you have a favourite poem you'd like to comment on? Would you like someone else to write about it for you? Please remember that contributions to TalkPoem and suggestions for commentary are always welcome from any reader to the Newsletter Editor.

☯ KiwiHaiku ☯

librarian –
now retired
she has time to read

Nola Borrell
(Lower Hutt)

KIWIHAIKU features one haiku, senryu or tanka each month. Poems with a New Zealand slant are preferred. Fresh submissions (including details of any previous publication) with SSAE to Owen Bullock PO Box 13-533 Grey Street Tauranga.



**TheJulydeadline
is
June26th 2004**

