



Newsletter March 2005

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

New Zealand Poetry Society
PO Box 5283
Lambton Quay
WELLINGTON

Patrons
Dame Fiona Kidman
Vincent O'Sullivan

President
Gillian Cameron

E-mail
info@poetrysociety.org.nz

Website
www.poetrysociety.org.nz

☞ This Month's Meeting ☞

Thursday March 17th 8 p.m.
Turnbull House 11 Bowen Street
Wellington

Jenny Powell-Chamber
And Anna Jackson

☞ Front Page Essay ☞

What Should a Budding Poet Aim At?

By Bernard Gadd

The first goal is to find a poetic voice or voices of your own, the ways of writing that you find congenial and effective. Your voice doesn't have to be an entirely original one, one that readers instantly recognize. Of course some writers do have such voices. I think C K Stead is one:

Sonorous
he reads into a mike
a text he means should be
devoid of meaning

(*John Cage at Harvard, 1988*)

Nor do you have to find one voice which you always use. You're not writing a mass-produced product which must have predictability. What a poet has to do is find the voice that's right for each poem. Here's Mike O'Leary having fun:

Alles verfallen
Axis old as love, pasta
melon, cauli, fish

(*Songs of a Tokio Greengrocer*)

and in a similar but not identical voice, being serious:

Our guards were rounding up old women

Children, and lame and crippled men
herding them into freight wagons.

(*Self Deception*)

A poet's 'voice' can be summed up as meaning how the lines sound whether read silently or aloud. We can see these at work in a poem by Denis Glover, from one of his Arawata Bill series of 1953:

And Bill set up his camp and watched
His young self, river-cold and scratched,
Struggling across, and up the wrong ridge,
And turning back, temper on edge.

(*The river crossing*)

This is a voice that uses rhyme confidently, naturally and well along with the light '-ing' rhymes of the first stanza, and the rhymes based on the final consonants of the second stanza. The words are simple – only 'ominous' is perhaps more literary – and refer to tangible things that feed our imagination. It's a rhythmic but not metrical line. The difference in line length unfussily shows the gap between the young and the older Bill, and the extra stress in the third line of that stanza helps make the point about the unnecessary hardships the younger man imposed on himself, part of the self-deprecating humour of the poem. The language fits the character depicted. It's a voice that could be – and was – used for many kinds of poem. The strong vowels chime – ou, o, o (as in knocking), and a (scratched), u (up) e (edge). They repeat in assonance rhyme and consonants alliterate. The entire approach suggests an older poem, yet of a sort that retains its appeal.

Voice also will be influenced by what moves you, inspires you, angers or delights you. These are what can give depth to your poetry, as in these Blakean lines:

The house of the governors, guarded by eunuchs,
and over the arch of the gate
these words engraved:
HE WHO IMPUGNS THE USURERS IMPERILS
THE STATE

(*'Utopia'*, from *Dominion*, A R D Fairburn)

Will the voice be genuinely yours, or that of an observer?
Or will it alter with the purpose and character of the poem?
British poet Sean Boustead was 25 when he wrote this, an
interesting and sophisticated instance of a voice that expresses
detachment yet also suggests underlying anger and grief:

There is peace in a landscape after war.
Flowers, tourists, lean around the walls
to which the poet, who was paid to shout
but shouted incorrectly, was led to, shot;
seven of the trees in the old pictures
lean indifferently; beautiful vultures
move through the air in beautiful circles.
(A Landscape After War)

Do you see yourself mainly as a performance poet or a
poet of the written (or electronic) word? The performer aims
at immediate response from an audience, using intonation,
gestures, body and so on to encourage reaction ... but these
may make for thin poetry on the page. What are you going to
ask of your readers ... to read attentively, to use their
imaginings, to understand it all at one reading, to look to
your poetry for recreation rather than, say, challenge or
surprise?

It's good advice to find and become familiar with the
work of poets whose writing is congenial to you and relate to
what you want to do and can do well. But also read widely
among other poets ... there is always something to learn
from well crafted writing.

Probably the best advice of all is never be satisfied with
less than your best work. If you find it hard to choose your
best, there are always more experienced poets willing to offer
suggestions. Here in conclusion is an interestingly controlled
voice by another 25-year-old British writer:

This is simply to inform you:

that beneath the spray of my expensive scent
my armpits sound a bass note strong
as the boom of a palm on a kettle drum;
(Poem for a Man with No Sense of Smell,
Kate Clanchy)

☞ From the Committee ☞

Introducing James Norcliffe:

I am very pleased to have been elected to the New
Zealand Poetry Society Committee and look forward to
taking part in its deliberations. I have been a longstanding
member of the Christchurch Poets' Collective and have been
very involved with the poetry world in Christchurch and
other parts of the South Island for many years as a
practitioner, performer, editor and facilitator of poetry
courses. I trust my presence will bring a southern perspective
to the committee's work and that I'll be able to serve as a
liaison between north and south. I have published my work
widely here and overseas and I've published a number of
collections. My latest *Along Blueskin Road* will be launched

by Canterbury University Press this April. My most recent
books have been *Rat Tickling* in 2003, the anthology of
Canterbury poems *Big Sky* which Bernadette Hall and I
edited in 2002, and the Redraft series of anthologies of young
people's writing which I've edited with Alan Bunn. I am
currently the poetry editor of both *Takahe* magazine and the
Christchurch Press.

☞ From the Editor ☞

You should find a subs renewal form inserted in this
month's newsletter. Everyone who returns their renewal form
before 24 March goes in the draw to win two great new
books: *The Red Tram* by C K Stead and *Palaver Lava Queen*
by Sue Fitchett, so get those forms back in quickly! The
results of the draw will be published in the April newsletter.

We are delighted to announce that the New Zealand
Poetry Society has been awarded a Lion Foundation grant
towards the costs of the newsletter production and that the
Whitireia Polytechnic Publishing students will be providing
us with editorial assistance. Thank you!

This issue we welcome new contributors Anna Jackson,
Anna Livesey and Adrienne Jansen.

If you are interested in reporting on poetry events in your
area we would love to hear from you, contact the editor for
further information. If you have reported on events in the past
but have not heard from the editor it may be we no longer
have your contact details, please feel free to get in touch.

Many of you may have already noticed the work Jane
Harris has been doing on our website with residencies,
submissions and competition deadlines along with breaking
poetry news. Thank you Jane! We are planning to construct
comprehensive poets' resources on the site over 2005 so keep
visiting. Don't forget you can still view back issues of the
newsletter in the members' section and download
competition forms.

Website: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/>

☞ Obituary ☞

The Road Less Travelled

The Nelson poet Alexander Ferguson died recently. His
funeral notice began in typical style. 'I, Alexander Ferguson,
originally of 1912 Scottish vintage, wish to advise my
departure on 7th January for, St Andrew willing, a better
place.' He also thanked the dedicated, compassionate staff of
the Nelson hospice for 'assisting at my transition'. Alex's
notice ended with some well-known lines from Robert Frost,
who was a second cousin twice removed:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(Report from IIML)

☞ Upcoming Events ☜

Honouring Words Aotearoa Whakatairanga i te Kupu

Honouring Words: International Indigenous Authors Celebration Tour was initiated by Canadian writer and publisher Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm (Anishnaabe) in 2002 to promote and expose the work of indigenous writers to a growing international audience.

A group of nine exciting and innovative indigenous writers and storytellers from Canada, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand will be on tour. They will bring readings and performances to venues throughout the North Island from the Tuna Café in Moerewa to Te Papa in Wellington.

The touring group includes a lineup of celebrated writers, such as Robert Sullivan, a Māori poet whose first book *Jazz Waiata* won the PEN (NZ) Best First Book of Poetry award.

The tour will be visiting Northland, Auckland, Whakatane, Otaki, Porirua and Wellington from 3–13 March 2005.

WELLINGTON

NZPS Wellington Meeting

Jenny Powell-Chalmers and Anna Jackson read from their new book *Locating the Madonna*, (see review page 9) which began as a conversation ‘on the uncertain line that divides influence from plagiarism.’ Sending poems by post to each other between Auckland and Dunedin, they hoped that, ‘a poem thrown “into the dam/ at Aviemore” would “gather power before it reaches/ you/ in Auckland”.’ Come along to hear how they succeeded. No open reading this month. Thursday March 17th 8pm

POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP

Vivienne Plumb will tutor in the Rimu Room (upstairs in the Coastlands Complex) on **Saturday 5th March 9am to 5.30pm and on Sunday 10am to 4.30pm**. Viv will touch on writing for kids as part of the workshop, but participants can opt out of this session if they wish. Only **\$100** for full weekend. Also on 4th March, in the meeting room at the Paraparaumu Library, we are holding a ‘**Poetry Fest**’ Pick up brochures at libraries and community centres, or contact Judith Holloway (Chairperson Greater Otaki Literary Trust), tel. 06-368-2221 or pukehou@paradise.net.nz.

WAIRARAPA

Poems on the Vine – Wairarapa

‘Poems on the Vine’ is on Saturday, 5 March 2005.

In total ten poets, headlined by New Zealand’s Poet Laureate Brian Turner, will perform and entertain between

11.00am and 4.00pm. Tickets are \$25 and gate sales are available. To contact coordinator Philippa Broad, phone (06) 378 2875, or e-mail sales@hedleysbooks.co.nz

☞ A Warm Welcome to ... ☜

Cliff Fell – Motueka

Evan Keats – Wellington

Celia Power-Loefler – Geraldine

Mandy Thomas – Taupo

Roger Barker – Dunedin

Anne Perera – Palmerston North

Gaye Sutton – Carterton

David Ingram – North Shore

Quotation of the Month

‘Here art is not something laid on from outside, but the means that men and women developed in finding their humanity and understanding.’

Denys Thompson in The Uses of Poetry

☞ Other News ☜

No Town too Small to be WOWed

Words on Wheels visits a different area of rural New Zealand each year on a six year cycle. This year WOW set out for the top of the South Island on Tuesday, 22 February 2005. Six dynamic New Zealand writers piled into a van and ripped around the West Coast, Takaka, Motueka, Richmond, Nelson, Picton, Blenheim and Kaikoura.

New Technology for Writers in Schools Programme

The New Zealand Book Council has announced a new addition to the *Writers in Schools* programme.

From 2005 all Book Council member schools will be able to participate in a series of video conference writer visits. The series is designed primarily for secondary schools. Schools will have access to as many as 10 virtual writer visits a year, in addition to their subsidised half-day writer visit. Video conference visits will encourage discussions on poetry, short-stories, novels and journalism. For more information about *Writers in Schools* visit:

<http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/education/aboutwritersinschools.html>

Norfolk Island Festival Update

Norfolk Island Writers' & Readers' Festival 17–24 July 2005 features: Robert Drewe, award winning author of *The Shark Net*; Owen Marshall, top New Zealand poet and short

story writer; Shane Maloney, crime writer, author of the Murray Wheelan series; Stephanie Johnson, winner of the Montana Book Award; Ann Howard, publisher and Haiku poet; Jenny Pattrick, author of the *Denniston Rose*; Stephen Downes, food and wine writer; Judy Nunn, author of *Pacific and Territory*; Tim Low, nature writer and environmentalist; Merlinda Bobis, poet, novelist and performer; Jeffrey Masson PhD, author of *My Father's Guru*; Margaret Gee, publisher and literary agent; Tobsha Learne, author and playwright; Peter FitzSimons, author, TV personality, journalist and corporate speaker; Bessie Bardot, bestselling author, model, presenter; John Martin, pianist; Robert Bickerstaff, renowned Covent Garden baritone.

Call for Applications to Hawai'i Writers' Residency

Creative New Zealand and Fulbright New Zealand are calling for applications to their residency for New Zealand writers of Pacific Island heritage, based at the Centre for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i for three months from late August 2005.

Applications close at 5pm Friday, 1 April 2005. For more details and application forms please contact Anton Carter, Arts Adviser, Pacific Islands Arts, Creative New Zealand (Phone (04) 498 0729 or e-mail: antonc@creativenz.govt.nz) or Peggy Tramosch, Programme Manager, Senior Scholar Programme, Fulbright New Zealand (Phone (04) 494 1507 or e-mail peggy@fulbright.org.nz). You can also visit the Fulbright New Zealand website for more information and application forms.

Website: www.fulbright.org.nz

Montana New Zealand Book Awards Judges Announced

The judging panel for the Montana New Zealand Book Awards 2005 has been named. Graham Beattie, former managing director of Penguin Books and Scholastic New Zealand and most recently, chair of the regional judging panel for the Commonwealth Writers Prize, is the convenor of this year's panel. Wellington writers and reviewers, John McCrystal and Laura Kroetsch make up the panel of three.

This year, for the first time, the winner of the Poetry category will be judged alongside the winner of the Fiction category for the Deutz Medal. In previous years it has been judged alongside non-fiction category winners for the Montana Medal. The winner of the Poetry category will be announced on Montana Poetry Day, Friday 22 July, three days prior to the Awards Ceremony, which will be held in Wellington on the evening of Monday, 25 July 2005.

Poetry On Auckland's Pavements

Aucklanders have their eyes firmly focused on the footpaths. Popping up underfoot in various CBD locations

from 7 February will be a selection of poems that will take people on a unique journey of Auckland as part of Poetry on the Pavement.

Poetry on the Pavement is a collection of New Zealand poems chosen for their special significance to various Auckland locations. The poems, which will be temporarily stencilled onto the footpath, will stretch from Karangahape Road down to the waterfront.

Poetry on the Pavement has been curated by Paula Green, who has selected a range of poems and poetic fragments that best represented the diversity of past and present Auckland. New Zealand poets featured in Poetry on the Pavement are: David Eggleton, Kevin Ireland, Robert Sullivan, Jill Chan, Trixie Te Arama Menzies, Janet Charman, Riemke Ensing, John Pule, Apirana Taylor, Paula Green, Hone Tuwhare, Michael Morrissey, Jenny Bornholdt, Arthur Baysting, Konai Helu Thaman, Dinah Hawken, C K Stead, Murray Edmond, Anne Kennedy, Anna Jackson, Sue Fitchett, Michele Leggott, Bob Orr and Denys Trussell.

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Creative Writing Day

On the 19 March 2005 the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary is holding its second annual Creative Writing Day. They are looking for enthusiastic published writers to take workshops, or keen people to read from either their own or others writing. The event was a very well supported last year with over 400 people. There is also a writing competition associated with Creative Writing Day. If you are interested or can suggest people that might be interested contact Maree for more information on (04) 920 9202 or e-mail: Maree@sanctuary.org.nz

Website: www.sanctuary.org.nz

An Honourable Bypass

The Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh is to be honoured by having a new 28.2 million Euro bypass named after him in Co. Monaghan, the county in which he was born. The bypass, on the route between Dublin and Londonderry, will be named 'The Kavanagh Way'. (Report from IIML)

Local Poet Honoured in Dunedin

Poet Brian Turner was honoured in Dunedin recently. A plaque in Brian's name was unveiled on the Writers' Walk in the Octagon, under the nose of Robbie Burns. Lynley Hood (co-instigator, with Roger Hall, of the Writers' Walk) introduced and congratulated Brian, who read a poem from his forthcoming book *Footfall* to the crowd. The unveiling was followed by an "open mike" session. As a tribute to Brian, who is an avowed Otago-ite, poets read work with a local flavour.

Brian has been awarded the Commonwealth Poetry Prize, the New Zealand Book Award for Poetry, the John Cowie Memorial Award for Playwriting and the Dulux Prize for

Sports Journalism. He has held the Robert Burns Fellowship and is the current Te Mata Estate New Zealand Poet Laureate.

He is the editor of a popular column in the *Otago Daily Times*, every week publishing a poem from an Otago poet. This has been instrumental in raising the public profile of poetry here in the south.

His plaque in the Octagon is inscribed with a passage from the poem *Portobello Bay*:

and soon, across the bay, a white sail
leaned on the burnished sea
and the morning billowed
becoming bluer.

Report by Sue Wotton

Poets to appear at the Auckland Writers & Readers Festival 2005

William Direen (now resident in Paris) will talk about writing as an "exile" along with Sarah Quigley, Nigel Cox (both from Berlin) and Anne Kennedy (from Hawai'i). Performance poet Karlo Mila will appear in the Open Mike event at Float Bar.

New Arts Magazine Series on TVONE

Graham Sydney has a new role as a television director, directing two segments on poets Stephanie Johnson and Glenn Colquhoun for the new arts magazine series on TVONE. The series also features poets Janet Charman, Murray Edmond, Fiona Farrell, Anna Jackson, Anne French and James Brown.

☞ Publications ☞

Poetry Launch

Michael O'Leary and Mark Pirie are holding a double launch for their new books at the Church Community Room, St John's Church, corner of Dixon/Willis Streets on Wednesday, 9 March 2005 at 6pm. Michael O'Leary's book *Make Love and War* (HeadworX, \$19.95) is an all new collection of poems written since the publication of his selected poems in 2003. Mark Pirie's new book is *Giving Poetry a Bad Name* (Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop, \$29.95, 256 pages) and is a selection of the best of his early work, spanning 12 years.

☞ Submissions ☞

Here's a Challenge

Have a Brainwave and write poems on the theme of Challenges. Any kind of challenge: Mental, Physical, Real or Unreal. And support a worthy charity. In late 2003, Peter

Lister, one of Biscuit Publishing's directors, suffered an accident which caused a severe brain haemorrhage. After a long and difficult struggle, Peter made a full recovery. This February (2005) he and his wife Jacqui will climb Mt Kilimanjaro to raise money for the Brainwave fund. This poetry competition is also for the Brainwave Appeal. All proceeds, every penny of the entry fees, will be given to the Hospital's Brainwave fund. All those involved in this competition are donating their services free. You can learn more about the Brainwave fund by visiting the charity's own website: www.nba-uk.org

The outright winner will have a collection of poems published (any subject) and receive 50 copies. An anthology showcasing the Top Fifty Poets will be published and all poets included in it will each receive a free copy.

For rules, entry fees and more information, e-mail info@biscuitpublishing.com or check out the website at www.biscuitpublishing.com

Deadline for entries: 31 March 2005

Flipped Eye

Flipped Eye Publishing is publishing an anthology of poems to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution on 10 November 1995. The anthology will be published on 10 November 2005.

Ken Saro-Wiwa's career spanned teaching, business, government administration, writing and political leadership. It was these last two for which he became renowned, and was eventually murdered. His writings included satirical novels, newspaper columns, children's tales, folk tales and the popular television play *Basi & Co.* – a long-running series of over 150 episodes. For many Africans, he epitomised a freedom fighter. Further information can be found at Flipped Eye Publishing's website: <http://www.flippedeye.net/>

Send poetry submissions to kensarowiwa@flippedeye.net by 30 June 2005.

Indigenous Women

The organisers are looking for your creative works for an exciting new anthology entitled *Father Tongue* (working title). Fathers and grandfathers are often overlooked in much of the writing that exists in indigenous communities. The reasons for that are too many to list here, which is why the organisers need you to share with them your stories of fathers.

They are accepting your poetry, fiction, non-fiction, essays, narratives, songs, cartoons and other creative endeavours. They are looking for work from indigenous women and girls from North and South America, Hawai'i, Australia, New Zealand and anywhere indigenous women are found.

Submission Guidelines:

Please send your submissions and queries to indigenouswomen@hotmail.com. Send your submissions in

a Microsoft Word file attachment with your full contact information including your name, nation affiliation, address and e-mail address by 28 July 2005

Tsunami Poems

The Poetry Live website is interested in receiving tsunami poems for its poetry page. Send your poem in the body of the e-mail to Judith McNeil (Coordinator, Poetry Live & four-by-two publishing), at four-by-two@xtra.co.nz

Website:
<http://groups.msn.com/PoetryLivefourbytwopublishing>

☞ Congratulations ☜

Takahe Competition Winners

2004 Takahe Poetry Competition

Congratulations to winner **Sue Heggie** of Christchurch, and second placed **Tim Upperton** of Palmerston North. The two runners-up are **Alice Hooton** of Mairangi Bay and **David Fraundorfer** of Tauranga. Highly commended were **Jan Hutchison**, **Helen Bascand**, **Michael Harlow** and **Simon Perris**.

2004 Takahe Cultural Studies Competition

Winner is **Bernard Gadd** of Auckland. The four runners-up are **Jenny Clay**, **Jacqui Goodall**, **Raewyn Alexander** and **Maggie Rainey-Smith**.

Poetry Crimes Winners

The Red Room Company congratulates the following poets on being selected for 'Poetry Crimes': **Jaya Savage**, **Claire Gaskin**, **Ian C Smith**, **Ian McBryde**, **Kate Middleton**, **Jennifer Compton**, **Brenda Saunders**, **Justin Lowe**, **Amanda Johnson**, **Chris Edwards**, **Alan Wearne** and **Jennifer Maiden**.

Thanks to those poets who submitted work to Poetry Crimes. The project drew a wide and enthusiastic response, with well over a 100 poets contributing their work.

The Poetry Crimes project will be online, using audio to hear the winning poems, and their authors speak! Check it out at www.redroomorganisation.org

Zen Garden Competition

2004 Haiku Winners

3rd Place – Ernest J. Berry

sunshower
the flowering
of umbrellas

HEA Twenty-Seventh Annual International Haiku Contest

Hawai'i Word Category

1st Place – Ernest J. Berry

Hawai'ian sunset
how easily the frigate bird
catches fire

The Humour Category

2nd Honourable Mention – Ernest J. Berry

fifth husband
she picks a fresh bunch
of bridesmaids

The 2004 San Francisco International Haiku Senryu and Tanka Contest

3rd Place – Ernest J. Berry

spring rain
the chameleon busy
being green

Tasmanian Island of Residencies Award

James Norcliffe has won a Tasmanian Island of Residencies award, one of two awarded to overseas writers this year the other being the other being the South African writer **Shaun Levin**.

Website:

http://www.tasmanianwriters.org/island_of_residencies.htm

☞ Reviews ☜

This Piece of Earth: A Life in My New Zealand Garden

by Harvey McQueen

In a lively departure from *The Ninth Floor*, a revelatory work on the Lange years, Harvey McQueen, poet, writer and editor, offers us *This Piece of Earth*. In this compact paperback from Awa Press, he extols the simple and profound pleasures of gardening and cooking – with throwaway good advice tucked in among the reminiscences. In a book that's both memoir and a paean to the seasons and the ordinary business of living, McQueen's lucid text illuminates. Lightly seasoned with poetry, politics, intimate commentary and easy peasy recipes based on fresh produce, he demonstrates why gardens and poetry seem to go together. Verlaine told us, 'Il faut cultiver votre jardin.' With this book that becomes a pleasure, not a duty. *This Piece of Earth* will line up nicely beside McQueen's six books of poetry on any booklover's shelf.

(2004) **McQueen, Harvey.** *This Piece of Earth: A Life in My New Zealand Garden.*
Wellington, Awa Press.
RRP \$34.95 ISBN 0 9582 5383 8

Review by Jenny Argante

Crosswind
by Paula Green

Paula Green's third collection of poetry, *Crosswind*, is perhaps her most lyrical and accessible collection yet. It is a beautifully presented book, larger in format than most poetry books, with the cover image a reproduction, in glorious amber tones, of Michael Hight's mixed-media, abstract work *Whakaari, V*. It also contains 15 reproductions of art works by leading New Zealand artists, including Seraphine Pick, Gavin Hipkins, Gretchen Albrecht and Carole Shephard, among others. Each of these is paired with a poem by Paula Green, originally written in response to a different piece of art by each of the artists. The artwork reproduced in the book is not the work that prompted the poetry, but a newly commissioned work responding to the poetry itself. Each artwork is intriguing and adds to the overall sumptuousness of the book, but for me, the strongest visual imagery is in the poetry itself, the 'twig forest with diamonds for eyes' in 'The Wild Side in Me', or the 'adolescent men/ standing there as though the road will deliver/ wild horses' in 'Intersection'. And, as always, Paula Green conveys abstract emotions with as much force as more literal scenery, describing in 'Lemon Stack' her 'block of sour memory,' and in 'Glenburn', beautifully evoking 'the scale of love' through her description of the 'sound of his laugh' as 'a vein of sun that is in him.'

Throughout the book, in fact, Green connects abstract emotion with literal scenery. The first section, "Famished for the Land", is made up of poems that each addresses a different landscape. The geraniums, garbage, grilled doors, narrow passage-ways and plastic flowers ground her long, meditative sequence 'Desiring Italy' in detail, but the details are viewed through 'a floodgate of feeling,' that is equally carefully delineated. There are 'turbulent views' to be found back home in New Zealand, too, where she is just as much a tourist at Milford Sound, alternately resisting and seeking a 'perfect postcard' experience of the landscape.

The final section of the book, "Westbound and Floating", makes connections between specific places that have been important in Green's life (from 'Brown's Bach, McGregor's Bay' to 'Percival Street, Wellington') and the music of the seventies that provided the soundtrack to her youth. Phrases and rhythms from these songs haunt these poems very much in the way memory haunts the present construction of self and life, not uncannily at all, but with lyricism and the most resonant nostalgia.

In the opening poem of this collection, 'Waitakere Rain', Green writes that she tastes in the rain of her city 'constancy,

memory and.../ the watery departure of words/ from the thunder-black sand of Te Henga Beach.' I taste constancy, memory and the watery departure of words from place in the poetry of *Crosswind*.

Green, Paula. *Crosswind* September 2004, 80p,
paperback, illus, 1 86940 324 X, \$27.99

Review by Anna Jackson, a Wellington poet and lecturer.

Pokeno Opposes the Kaiser

by Bernard Gadd

This chapbook is a small gem. The postcards, letters home and field diaries of WW1 soldier Herbert Gadd, preserved by the family, have been shaped and crafted into 17 poems from Flanders during 1917–18.

The voice of a kiwi farm boy from Pokeno is enhanced by the experience and knowledge of his relative – poet, editor, publisher and former English teacher Bernard Gadd. Reading the poems in the knowledge that this soldier was killed in his twenty-first year makes for a poignant experience.

My two uncles were more fortunate. They survived the sheer funk and horror of trench warfare and returned home to collect their MCs.

This soldier speaks to us across the years of the immemorial tragedy of young men at war.

everywhere's din, and light burst, and filth,
and you can't go on,
but you must

...nothing – not in dreams either –
ever fixes your
fright

Herbert Gadd faces war with his eyes open. His is very aware of the enemy ("the Bosche", "Fritzes", "Hans", "the Hun") near at hand – near enough to see the glow from their cigarette tips. 'The Tommies in Flanders look half starved,' he notes and, 'among our prisoners was a howling fifteen-year-old.'

Though young, the soldier is very much his own man. 'The army's not a notion how to manage a war,' he observes as he 'makes the daily tally of who's still whole here' and reads the kiwi papers which want people 'to want this war.'

'You carry your war on your back,' he tells us and have 'a feed in a caf of stony scones.' It's all here – the delousing and the bathing vats, all the things I wanted to ask my uncles but this soldier even imagined his own death.

if the final bullet
comes in singing

my hope's that the quick brain'll
unstring
every nerve

**Gadd, Bernard. *Pokeno Opposes the Kaiser*.
Hallard Press, 43 Landscape Road, Papatoetoe.
\$7, only available direct from the publisher.**



Manukau in Poetry

Senior Editor: Bernard Gadd

Another initiative of Bernard Gadd's is this revelation of place through poetry. The anthology has as its reference the third largest city in New Zealand – Manukau. It started life as an online collection hosted by the Manukau libraries.

A colourful harbour scene painted by Alan Taylor makes the cover stand out and invites one to explore the contents. The 34 poets are listed in alphabetical order – some are well known, some new discoveries, some are represented by a sequence of poems, others by a single work.

There are poems by Polynesian and Chinese residents, poems in Māori and one in the Dutch language. Airport poems are included, beach and historical poems, poems conflating Manukau with the classical world.

As one might expect with writing around a specific theme the quality of the work in this anthology is somewhat variable. While many of the poems are laced into the landscape of South Auckland, some approach their subject more tangentially.

The collection opens strongly with Vainepa Aiono's Pacific Island Manukau and Tony Beyer's nostalgic sequence about a Manukau that existed perhaps before 'the constantly unfolding/episode of the motorway'. He writes of 'parts of the world/that if I don't remember/won't have been'.

Editors Bernard Gadd, Bruce Ringer and Melissa Steiner have done a fine job in celebrating Manukau with this anthology.

Ed. Gadd, Bernard, Bruce Ringer & Melissa Steiner.

***Manukau in Poetry*.**

Hallard Press, 43 Landscape Road, Papatoetoe.

\$20 direct from publisher. RRP \$21.95

Reviews by Robin Fry

moment to moment

by Sandie Legge

St. Bathans

with verse by Sandie Legge.

by Pauline Bellamy

Remember that kiwihaiku, 'two hawks/ gliding on thermals/ big sky breathless' (November 2004)? If you liked that, *moment to moment* is for you.

This haiku-size book is delightful. Sandie's 'fragments of verse' (2–5 lines) pinpoint specific images, many of them seasonal and most of them from nature. She wrote the verse to complement black and white illustrations by Rick Morris and the result works very well. The format is clear and simple and the title fits the content.

Sandie's words encapsulate the central image and frequently add a touch of humour; for instance 'after snow-melt/ see, white patches linger/ snowdrops', or 'new roof/ returning swallows/ check it out'. Sandie accepts that nature does its own thing: 'knows how to be/ a tree/ doesn't try to be'; e.g. 'falcon/ blood on feathers/ silent sky'.

However, she does bring in the human point of view, again with that sense of fun, as in 'the days grow short/ seabirds wing north/ shoreline shellfish party'. (Those birds are actually doing their own thing: eating huge amounts over the summer, building up that layer of thick fat, fuel for the long flight. I went to Miranda in January!) Or even more explicitly from the human point of view, 'querulous frogs/ debate the coming weather/ evening talk-back show'.

In the careful observations and sense of time passing, the writing is haiku-like – though some verses would be accepted readily as haiku. (Note that kiwihaiku.) Anthropomorphising nature is currently discouraged in New Zealand haiku, and Sandie does a lot of that: the wind bullies, the 'sleepy cove' dreams and the fantail shows 'cupboard love'. But what is fashion? In 1989 NZPS awarded joint first prize for a best haiku sheet which included 'I clasp the binoculars,/ Even the stars/ dance to my heartbeat.' (Alan Wells). Besides, the poet does identify her writing as 'fragments of verse', rather than haiku.

Sandie is less accepting of homo sapiens. She thinks we ought to behave better: 'the mind flips and skips/ the tongue twists/ words pierce'; and 'clinging to the familiar/ concealing new life/ change'. This section of her work loses the strength gained by a specific concrete image, a skill which she uses so well in her earlier verse.

The poet's choice of style of writing works better in *moment to moment* than in *St. Bathans*. The sixteen poems, some untitled, accompany Pauline Bellamy's fine etchings on good quality paper of historic buildings of St. Bathans, a former goldmining township between Ranfurly and Alexandra.

If Sandie's aim was to gain a nostalgic tone, then she achieves this: '... Gone long ago now/ those pioneer settlers/ but the feel of the place lingers on' ('The Billiard Rooms'). Other strengths include some fine images, sense of rhythm (though this varies) and light humour. Some good lines encourage the reader to read on; e.g. 'I can tell you of ...' ('Melting Pot in Gold Pan Town'). And I like the attention-catching words; e.g. the rhythmic use of place names in 'Pictures in the Mind':

Hawkdun, Dunstan, St. Bathans and Cambrian;
Idaburn, Wedderburn, Waipiata and Ophir-

The lines that follow, however, are too general: 'evocative, nostalgic and romantic./ the reality of life there and then/ not matching the image here and now'. Again, in another poem, 'Shiels, bothys and crofts-' is an intriguing line, but is followed by the documentary-like 'sturdy homes for the fortunate few/ most of them sadly now crumbled' ('Home').

Nice insights lose impact through lack of a particular concrete image; e.g. 'Nostalgia turns relics of toil/ and symbols of drudgery/ into antique and collector's items!' (Untitled, page 18). There has to be a good haiku in this!

The 'looking back' stance adopted by Sandie (and no doubt encouraged by the subject) tends to passiveness. When the poet is actively present, things move, as in this stanza from 'The Billiard Rooms':

Hear the click of the balls
the cries of the diggers
the saucy laughter of whores
the music the shouting
the curses the whistles
the barking of dogs at the door
smell the sweat and the smoke
seeping out of the walls
the booze the horse the hay
see the dancing the fighting
the sozzled old-timer
slumped in a heap on the floor

Nineteenth century St. Bathans is alive again!

An exhibition of the drawings and verse was held at Bellamy's Gallery, Macandrew Bay, Otago Peninsula in November, 2004.

Legge, Sandie. *moment to moment*.

Shepherd's Croft Scribblers. (24 pages)

\$8, from Sandie Legge, R D Oturehua, Central Otago.

Bellamy, Pauline. *St. Bathans*,

Pauline Bellamy Prints. (46 pages).

**\$25, from Bellamy's Gallery, 495 Portobello Road,
Macandrew Bay, Dunedin.**

Reviews by Nola Borrell

Locating the Madonna

by Jenny Powell-Chalmers & Anna Jackson

Locating the Madonna began as a conversation between Jenny Powell-Chalmers and Anna Jackson on the uncertain line that divides influence from plagiarism. The two poets decided to explore the grey area through a collaborative project that licensed them to steal theme, style and even whole lines from each other. With Jackson in Auckland and

Powell-Chalmers in Dunedin, they sent poems by post to each other, hoping as Powell-Chalmers puts it, that a poem thrown 'into the dam/ at Aviemore' would 'gather power before it reaches/ you/ in Auckland'.

The project produced a consistent symbol for the book – the Madonna, who appears in different guises in almost every poem – but each poem is ascribed to an individual poet. Although the book is a joint effort, the poems, for me anyway, separate themselves into two bodies of work.

My favorite poem in the book is Jackson's 'The Madonna of the mice'. 'My attribute is simply mice,' she says, then later:

Nobody ever says The Mice.
In any case, they are just us
to us.

I almost forget I am not a mouse, too,
the mother of all mice.

I love the facets of this poem, which plays off the bizarre profusion of Catholic Madonna imagery while also suggesting that emotional identity and intellectual knowledge do not always match up. This incorporation of different ideas is typical of Jackson's poems, which often spill down the page in one long stanza, ending up in places that are intriguingly different from where they started. Jackson's language is controlled but not pared to the bone, and often memorably evocative.

By contrast I found many of Jenny Powell-Chalmers' poems a little too clipped. The endings often skate away from the content of the poem, leaving the reader not quite satisfied. The language does not commit any sins, but on the other hand there were not many lines that stuck in my head or made me pause and read them again to relish their surprise or music.

For both poets, the Madonna is a palimpsest to be overwritten with their own concerns and ideas. It is a potentially fruitful concept, but also risky; turning such a strong symbol to one's own ends is a challenge. Generally, I feel Jackson tackles this problem with more success. Her poems get inside the Madonna, offering a fresh sense of her nature, whereas Powell-Chalmers' poems are more focussed on external representations, icons, statues and firmly embodied Madonnas who move through the New Zealand landscape without necessarily transforming it or themselves. On a side note, the cover design is unfortunately reminiscent of an academic text and, I think, lacks the crucial "pick me up" factor. Inside however, is some brave and intriguing work.

Powell-Chalmers, Jenny & Anna Jackson.

***Locating the Madonna*.**

Seraph Press, \$24.95 paperback

Review by Anna Livesey, a Wellington student, writer and teacher.

☞ Websites ☞

Tauranga Writers

Take a look at the first of the new look Tauranga Writers newsletters from their new look homepage at:
<http://www.taurangawriters.org.nz/newhome.html>

☞ Out & About ☞

NELSON

Nelson poets have had an incredibly busy time recently with readings at The Suter Art Gallery in the subject of the long running exhibition *Art At The Heart*. This is very successful exhibition called upon many community groups to select paintings and comment as to the reasons for their choice.

Floor talks will continue as follows:

9 March – 12:10pm

13 March – 2:00pm

It was asked that poetry should pertain to or respond to the role of art in defining cultural identity and community development. Art at Heart *Our Community Presents Selected Works from the Suter Collection* Exhibition: 11 December–20 March continues.

There was a huge attendance at our Top Of The South Writers Forum, including many poetry enthusiasts. This was a most successful day for the region's writers with 100+ attendees at a forum held at Nelson Marlborough Institute Of Technology on 19 February. One group I was in, facilitated by Colin Gunn, managed in the short space of time allotted to organise a time, date, venue and facilitator to mount a first meeting to try to create a script/screen writers group. Several interested people lists for area writing groups were created. Many subjects were tackled with enthusiasm throughout an intensive day. In time I feel sure this day will result in an upswing in productivity and the quality of local writing.

A great deal of work was done toward publishing promotion and marketing of writing. Poetry now has a good contact in Michael Lipscombe, a local musician and writer, with expertise for developing CD recordings for poetry. Mike is also going to do another Nelson anthology of short stories poems, with the theme of *The Real Nelson...* This book will be another in the series put out by Ashbourne Writers.

The usual readings at Kafiene continue on the second Wednesday in the month. All welcome.

Finally a poem from Lesley Haddon who usually drags a wry laugh from the crowd.

Street Men

Streetmen

hang about in doorways
They rest their shoulders
on windows and thrust out their bellies
They drape over parking meters.
If they are lucky they find a seat.

And sit their minds a blank,
In the summer heat.
They have a far-away look
Like a dog tied up on a leash
Waiting in the summer heat.
Then they are claimed
And brought to heel.
By wives cruising
the summer sales.

Report by Rosemary Purse

WELLINGTON

New Zealand Poetry Society

There was a disappointingly small audience at Turnbull House for the first NZPS meeting of the year on 17 February despite the excellent programme arranged by Vivienne Plumb.

MA Creative Writing Course graduate Emily Dobson – recipient of the Adams prize and the student selected to go to the Iowa Writing School this year – was followed by poet, musician and broadcaster Hinemoana Baker whose first book *matuhi/needle* came out last October.

Emily Dobson read from *a box of bees*, part one of her MA folio. In it her youth and childhood growing up with Arataki honey, her family's business in Havelock North, is forever preserved like a bee in amber.

Sometimes barefoot, I crossed
the warm road to the honey factory,

my young body a smudge of heat
in the quiet evening...

In a long poem sequence written in two line stanzas, a richly sensuous picture emerges of grafting; preparing the frames with wax; cleaning pollen; harvesting royal jelly; stirring up her father's protein mix for the bees, working hard amongst the sight, feel, taste and smell of honey and the sound of bees. Mistaking it for a sultana, she even bites into a bee! In the kitchen 'steam rises, melting the air...'

The poet learns from Dimitria, her mother's nanny (I assume) of her parents' romance in the honey factory. There's her own first love; her grandparents' grape-vines; her mother's poetry; her grandfather's orchard tree with 101 different apple species grafted onto it. At 10, she's a child in the garden: 'There are swan plants for the monarchs/ blue borage for the bees and for salads'.

Emily Dobson uses quotes from her poet mother, from Sappho, the Upanishads and other sources but the experience is all her own – a whole that adds up to more than the sum of its parts. By sharing her unusual background Emily Dobson gave her listeners an altogether delightful experience. Her book will be published in July by Victoria University Press.

The versatile poet Hinemoana Baker, also a graduate of the MA Creative Writing Course at VUW, read some new

poems as well as some from her elegant book published by VUP in conjunction with Perceval Press of California.

The square hardback, lavishly illustrated with paintings by Jenny Rendall and including a CD of Hinemoana's music, is a pleasure to handle. Much of its contents is informed by the poet's Māori ancestry and love of te reo, recovered as an adult. Its title is taken from the eponymous poem *Tangihanga* where 'I am a needle of bone/ on my aunty's knee.'

Hinemoana began with some domestic poems then amused her audience with a couple about being a musician. We heard her beautiful singing voice briefly in *Sound Check* and had to agree with the idle onlooker of the poem who said 'you got a voice on you alright..../ i'd up the tops if I was you.' Her prayer to be a hip hop artist had Hinemoana Baker become 'a jewelled treasure of hiphocracy'. In a more sombre vein she read *Still*, another woman's experience of stillbirth. After making a documentary in Waitara, Hinemoana wrote *Ko Wiremu*, a poem about the effects of war and land loss. This was prefaced by a poem of Bertolt Brecht: *War has been given a bad name*. Aspiring to write of such matters without resorting to rhetoric, Hinemoana read a poem she greatly admires by Bill Manhire. His recently published *Hotel Emergency*, conveys in sounds the multitudinous forms of suffering caused by modern warfare. She ended her reading with *Whenua*, a poem written for a godson. This neatly brought the subject back to bees once more. *Whenua*, meaning both land and placenta '...hangs/ heavy as a beehive from our fingers'.

Questions from the audience concluded the evening and both poets had questions for each other.

Report by Robin Fry

PICTON

Picton Poets

They say that people don't come to meetings in February, and last week's muster wasn't exceptional in that respect. But our absent members missed out on a treat. With a minimum of formal business – indeed, was five a quorum? – and a quick run through arrangements for representation at Creative Marlborough's *Artrageous* show on the 13th (I wish I could claim to have thought up that name!), there was plenty of time for poetry and plenty of poetry for the time.

Our Mr Haiku, Ernie Berry ('tho' haiku 4 some's a bit terse / i confess that it lines my perse / with dollars and cents / that pay all the rents / & keeps my fair lady in ferse'), explained, with examples, about the multi-layered appreciation of haiku, and also the way in which lines 1 + 2 and lines 2 + 3 can be taken quite separately. We all contributed odds and ends we'd written or had come our way recently, and volunteered Julie for the first installment of her *Down Memory Way* for next time.

Report by Sandy Arcus

The NZPS 2005 Haiku Competition

Often contestants for a literary award discover only after the judging what the judge was looking for. It might help to suggest a few things that I'll be keeping an eye out for. But nothing here should be taken as trying to limit innovative thinking about haiku nor idiosyncratic craft. I like to be taken by surprise by a poem, by the feeling that it's fresh no matter what the topic is, and that it might have impact enough to lodge in the memory. A haiku is usually defined as a catching a moment in words; in fact it's catching memories of sensory impressions of a brief experience and selecting from them those that can be conveyed in words vividly and effectively, and which suggest resonances beyond the immediate experience.

There are a few technical things I think are important. I don't mind whether the poem has one line or three or four. I don't care if it hasn't 17 syllables. But a haiku must not be wordy, must have that unique succinctness and terseness ... though of course if the haiku is reduced to two or three words, it becomes more of a headline than a haiku. A haiku is not chopped up prose, the lines should not flow on from start to finish, but somewhere in the haiku there needs to be a sense of pause that still allows the haiku as a whole to make sense and have that feel of crafted unity. Small as they are, haiku should have cadence.

I loathe clichés; they are the enemies of clear thought and precise expression. Metaphors can be used (though it is very hard to use personification convincingly in the 21st century) but metaphor is never the main point of a haiku.

Haiku to be good don't have to be serious, but neither should they be merely flippant.

Good writing.

Bernard Gadd – NZPS Haiku Competition Judge, 2005

☞ Talk Poem 12 ☞

Tangihanga Hinemoana Baker

American poet Billy Collins talks about meaning in poetry as 'cards face up' and 'cards face down'. The writer has a choice, to lay all the cards face up – laying out the meaning clearly – or keep some cards face down retaining some mystery in the poem. Of course it's not as straightforward as that, but the idea of cards face up or down is a great way of talking about issues of accessibility in poetry.

I began to read Hinemoana Baker's poem 'Tangihanga', the first poem in her new collection, *mātuhi/needle*. Straight away I wanted to talk to her about cards. There were three questions I wanted to ask her. But first of all, here's the poem:

Tangihanga

at the pā
nō rātou te mana
nō ngā wāhine
e mau panekoti ana

my father
stands to speak

I am a needle of bone
on my aunty's knee
I have cut my hair

handled gently
I am a thatched weapon
a flake of obsidian

something skirting
the boards of the house
as if it were a property

what he says is like
bread or a bruise

there is a rushing to the edges
the scent of kawakawa releases
into the dark-fleshed home

Here's the first card question. In the first stanza there are three lines in Māori. That's a card face up if you understand Māori or a card face down if you don't. I asked Hinemoana, was it that simple?

'If you understand them, there are riches in the lines. But I don't think they are necessarily "face down" to someone who doesn't speak Māori, because the first line is in English, and the title 'Tangihanga' is now in most people's vocabulary. The lines in Māori might function as a kind of sound effect that places the reader at the pā, where they might be also hearing without understanding. The rest of the poem points you to the meaning of the lines in Māori too. And there's always dictionaries.'

Does she use Māori in poetry in a deliberate and conscious way?

'I use it as I use it in daily life, and in music, and in my work. This is how I and people around me talk, moving in and out of the language. That's what I long for, when all of us do that, and we don't ghettoise language at all.'

So we've talked about one card face down. Now for the next; the fifth stanza. I like the sound of it very much, it seems to suggest things, but I just don't know what it's saying. To me it's a card face down. Or perhaps I'm just dumb that I don't get it. I ask Hinemoana.

'Those lines are about something sneaking around, something slightly dark, foreboding, something about ownership.' I tell her she's paraphrased the lines, not explained them. She says, 'Well it doesn't matter if you don't understand it. Skip to the next stanza, or the next poem. Or read it aloud, listening to the sound of it. It might be

something that just flows over you, so that you end up with some sense, some result. But don't let it affect your self-esteem!'

Okay, I won't.

Finally, I go to the second last line – kawakawa. Why has she chosen that word? Does it have some additional meanings that I don't know? I ask her.

'First, I think the sound "kawakawa" is absolutely beautiful. Also, the leaves of the kawakawa are used to make parekawakawa, the headgear worn by women at a tangi, so it's an image of grieving. It's also a powerful healing plant.'

I think, there's a range of New Zealand allusions in poetry that we need to gather in and become familiar with, in the same way as others study classical allusions. But what if I don't know all those associations with kawakawa? Hinemoana says, 'All you have to do is go and pick a leaf – it grows in lots of gardens – and smell it. Then your body might tell you how to interpret that line.'

So now we've turned one card face up and left the other two face down. Hinemoana says, 'When I'm writing, I need all the cards to be face up for myself, so there's no ambiguity inside me why I used a word or a phrase. When I'm satisfied about that, then I think a poem is finished.'

Adrienne Jansen is a Porirua poet interested in cultural identity.

🌀 Events Manager Required 🌀

The Wellington branch of the NZPS is seeking an Events Manager to run their monthly meetings. An honorarium is available for the successful applicant. For further information, contact:

The Administrator
NZPS
PO Box 5283
Lambton Quay, Wellington.
info@poetrysociety.org.nz



🌀 KiwiHaiku 🌀

a moon full and bright
the cry of wild geese and wings
draws you to my fire
Mike Subritzky
(Te Awamutu)

Please submit KiwiHaiku, preferably, but not essentially, with a New Zealand theme, to Owen Bullock at PO Box 13–533, Grey Street, Tauranga.

April DEADLINE IS March 24th