



a fine line

March 2011

The Magazine of The New Zealand Poetry Society

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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Poetry @ The Thistle Inn

APRIL MEETING

Monday 18th April, 7.30pm

Guest Poet: Owen Bullock (Bay of Plenty)

MAY MEETING

Monday 16th May, 7.30pm

Guest Poet: Vana Manasiadis (Crete)

The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Wellington. Open mic. \$3 entry for members.

Meetings Sponsored by Creative Communities Wellington Local Funding Scheme.

The New Zealand Poetry Society expresses its deepest sorrow at the loss of lives in the recent Christchurch earthquake, and wishes all its members to know we are thinking of you with compassion in the aftermath.

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Feature Article

Does size matter?

Liz Breslin

Does size matter? And if so, how and why? It's a question that can apply far more broadly, but let's consider it today in the light of poetry readings.

Every month, as we wait for the crowds (or lack of them) to head in for a dose of Poetic Justice, the nerves kick in. What if our regulars are all out of town? What if nobody shows? What if? What if? What if?

For the record, we've had anywhere from ten to sixty people present. And on the more populous end of the scale, the attraction was clearly the words *Guest Poet: Brian Turner* on the poster. There were far more open mic readers that evening, as well. Is it somehow more validating to read your work in front of a Real Poet? How many other people equal enough for your work to be truly heard?

The thousands of people who heard Sam Hunt open for Leonard Cohen in 2009 shared an incredible poetic electricity. His poems took on different guises in an arena, away from their more familiar settings of tent and bar. Thousands of singular emotions packed into one place. Imagine, then, the vibe at the recent 20th International Poetry festival of Medellin, Colombia, where 200,000 people took part over nine days. There, poetry is shared, celebrated. Nailed, even, up onto trees. Their mission? *"We appeal to you to poetize public spaces in the big and small cities of the world. This will be our massive and loving manner of communication with 'the others', who are also us."*

Beautifully put. And lest we rest on poetic largesse, there's also the too-common other extreme. Case in point: the South Island reading that saw four poets (all worth travelling miles to hear) and one crowd member. Ouch.

Yet it's sometimes the quiet meetings that are the most rewarding. The tentative readers emboldened to try something new. The resonance of a voice in the circle. The chance to listen to the spaces as you breathe. They may not exhilarate, but these smaller gatherings really satisfy. And they're brave.

Glenn Colquhoun spoke, in a recent workshop in Dunedin, about good poems being an interaction of sound, form and sense. And how great poems can kind of hover above the page. Not to strain the metaphor till it breaks, but... here goes anyway...to take off and wing its way, a poem has to be enunciated. Declaimed. De-paged. And, on the other side, it has to be heard. But whether by a multitude, or the other in the mirror, is perhaps not the point.

The point, then, is this. The size of the poem outweighs the size of the crowd. When there's work inside you, waiting to hover, then you'll take it to the outlets you find. For sure, more people at readings mean pluralities of reaction and exposure, but, from the crowds of thousands to the intimate circles, every poetic dynamic is different. There's no magic audience number that validates your work; you do not suddenly become a Real Poet yourself by performing in front of one. A great poem fills whatever space it is given. Give it heaps.

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

Our annual competition is a big focus for the next couple of months, and running it is a job I really enjoy. For most of it (until near the end, when I'm far too busy) I get to read a lot of good poetry (and more of

the other sort, it has to be said). I enjoy guessing which poems the judges will consider prize-worthy and confess that I hardly ever get it right, except for the Junior Open section. I'm always impressed with the quality of poetry that our young entrants produce, and follow with interest the writing careers of past winners.

The difference in taste is the reason we change our judges every year. While really good poetry always shows, there is still plenty of leeway for different kinds of poets to have a chance to shine. The 'second bite' of selection by the anthology editor is a chance for the poems that didn't fit into the judges' criteria to have a new eye cast over them.

Every year at least a dozen poets lessen their chances of selection by failing to follow the competition rules. Most often it's including only one copy of their poem (thus missing out on editorial selection), though there are also those who present (usually) their haiku inappropriately – all their submissions on one page, or with their name on one copy (as some overseas contests require). If they're entered early enough I'll return them so they can be presented properly, but that doesn't happen once we get into late May and I'm flat out processing entries while still doing my regular work.

So here's my advice: enter competitions well before the closing date, read the instructions extra carefully, and keep sending away those poems you know are great but no-one has chosen yet. I've had poems selected after 6-7 attempts, when I've finally struck (metaphorically) the right reader.

In this issue you'll find the competition entry forms and your annual membership renewal form. Some of you will notice there's nowhere on the competition form to renew your membership. That's because I **really** need you to use the renewal form, or you risk my missing your renewal when I'm working hard on the competition. You can still send a single cheque.

Good luck. I look forward to hearing from you.

About our Contributors

Liz Breslin lives and writes in Hawea Flat and is co-founder of Poetic Justice Wanaka.

Gillian Cameron is a committee member and member of The Academy poetry group.

Vaughan Rapatahana lives and works in Hong Kong, although he keeps his house in Te Araroa, East Coast. He is poetry editor of *The Maori and Indigenous (MAI) Review Journal*.

Nalini Singh is a 17 year old majoring in physics, biology and economics at Auckland Uni because she 'sees poetry in everything, miracles everywhere.' She has appeared in a few publications and looks forward to a long future of blending her love of science and maths officially with her passions of music, literature, languages, philosophy and psychology unofficially.

Gill Ward lives on the Kapiti Coast. She organises the Kapiti poetry café monthly event 'Poets to the People.'

A Warm Welcome to ...

Feofaaki Ahokovi Dunedin

Martin Bassett Whangarei

Valerie Kirk New Plymouth

Naomi Madelin Helensville

Amanda Ryan Wakefield

Keith Thorsen Wellington

Congratulations

Stephen Giles had a poem published in the International Reading Association's magazine, *Reading Today*. The Association, based in Delaware, USA, has around 70,000 members. Way to get an audience!

Maris O'Rourke came second in the 2011 Robert Burns Poetry Competition, judged by **Michael Harlow**.

Keith Westwater was awarded the Best First Book publishing prize by Australian publisher Interactive Publications (IP) in its 2011 "IP Picks" competition. The competition is open annually to writers from Australia and New Zealand. Keith's collection of poems, entitled *Tongues of Ash*, will be published later this year or in early 2012.

Check out *Interlitq* at <http://www.interlitq.org/> The journal is publishing a New Zealand Literary Showcase from February to April, featuring over 100 NZ poets. The first issue has poems by NZPS members **Helen Lowe**, **Niel Wright** and **Laurice Gilbert**, with more to follow in subsequent issues.

And long-time member **Frances Meech** sent me a copy of *Valley Micropress*, in which she was the Featured Poet in 2003. (Frances has published 2 collections since then.) *Valley Micropress* editor **Tony Chad** is thoroughly approachable, and I recommend supporting his monthly journal.

Remember to look beyond obvious literary journals for submitting your work. I once had a hunting poem published in *NZ Hunting & Wildlife*, and the decent rate of pay was a bonus.

Publications

New arrivals on the NZPS bookshelf since the last issue:

aup new poets 4: harry jones, erin scudder, chris tse (AUP, 2011).

Competitions & Submissions

Note: for those not on the internet, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to the National Coordinator for full details of any of the listings you are interested in.

a fine line - call for submissions. Deadline: 7 April. Thanks to Creative New Zealand we are now able to pay a reasonable fee for Feature Articles, and a small amount for reviews. See guidelines for these and other sections of the magazine at: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutsubmissionguidelines>

Straylight Poetry Contest (USA) Deadline: 18 March. Three poems per person. No page limit, but "epic" poems will not be considered for the contest (though they may be considered for the website). No subject or style limitations. Please submit a cover letter with bio and contact information, but DO NOT include name or contact information on the poems. There is a \$10 reading fee, which can be paid through online Paypal submission form. Prizes: 1st: \$125, 2nd: \$50, 3rd: \$25. All 3 receive print publication, 1-year subscription, 3 copies. Other contest submissions may further be considered for print edition or online. Email your submissions to straylight@litspot.net (Attn: Poetry Contest), or send to: Straylight Magazine c/o Poetry Editor, English Department, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, 900 Wood Rd, Kenosha, WI 53141, USA. Snail mail submissions must include a check, as well as an email address and/or phone number. In addition, they accept regular poetry submissions. You do not have to send money to be considered for publishing; the fee is solely for those who wish to enter the contest. See: http://straylightmag.com/?page_id=11

Academi Cardiff International Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 25 March. First prize £5000. Judges: Don Paterson, Philip Gross. For poems of up to 50 lines. Entry Fee: £6 per poem. Contact: Academi, PO Box 438, Cardiff CF10 5YA, UK. <http://www.academi.org/cipc/> The National Coordinator has a pile of entry forms for this Competition. Send a SSAE to PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145.

Carpe Articulum - call for submissions (USA) Deadline (poetry) 30 March. Short Fiction, Screenwriting (Best opening scene only) and Non-Fiction & Poetry. No page limits. Multiple submissions permitted; submit online via the website. Previously published work is permitted only if the print run did not exceed 2,000 copies.

<http://www.carpearticulum.com/submissions/>

Fish Prizes 2011 (Ireland) Deadline: must be received by 30 March. Poetry Prize - 1,000 Euros; 200-word limit; Entry fee: 14 Euros; the ten winners from each Fish competition will be published in the 2011 Fish Anthology. Full details, rules & online entry for all contests at www.fishpublishing.com Major credit cards accepted with online entry. Mail postal entries to: Fish Publishing, Durrus, Bantry, Co. Cork, Ireland. Questions? Please email info@fishpublishing.com General Guidelines: Do not put your name and address on the story, but on a separate sheet. Stories and poems must not have been published previously. Entry will be taken as acceptance of the rules and conditions. Copyright reverts to the winning authors one year after publication of the Anthology. The 2011 Fish Anthology of winning stories and poems will be published in July 2011.

Queen Mother Memorial Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 March. The poem(s) should follow the length and format: 3 verses, 3 lines per verse, 10 words per line. Entry Fee: £3.00 per poem or £10.00 for 4 poems. Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/royalpoetrycompetition/competitiondetails>

The International Rubery Book Award (UK) Deadline: 31 March. For self-published books, (including those published by an independent publisher). * We accept fiction (all genres), young adult, children's, biographies, non-fiction, self-help, cookery, poetry, etc * We have a panel of carefully selected expert readers. When we receive your book we pair up the category of your book with our reader's specialist interest. * Our readers observe strict criteria when reading each book. In general terms, the most important aspects for you to keep in mind are: whether a book is well written (including structure and style), and whether a book is well presented (cover, pictures (if relevant) and layout). * The results and overall winner will be announced in July. 1st Prize £800. The winning book will also be read by a top literary agent from MBA. 2nd prize £150; 3rd prize £50. Enter the awards at:

<http://www.ruberybookaward.com/enter-the-awards.html>

JAAM 29 - Call for submissions Deadline: 31 March. JAAM literary magazine issue 29 will be guest edited by Anne Kennedy, co-editor of online literary journal Trout. JAAM considers poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, essays, photography and other artwork. Submissions can be emailed to jaammagazine@yahoo.co.nz or posted to: PO Box 25239, Panama Street, Wellington 6146, NZ. Make sure you include a stamped self-addressed envelope for reply. JAAM 29 will be published around September.

Quarterly Literary Review (Singapore) Deadline: 31 March. The Internet literary journal of Singapore. Mission is to promote the literary arts in Singapore, to stimulate the feedback mechanisms in the literary scene, and to develop Singaporean writers to international standards. Accepts submissions from Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans alike, but prefers writing with Singapore relevance. Non-paying market. Guidelines: <http://www.qlrs.com/submissions.asp>

Buxton Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 1 April. Theme: Fire. Categories: Open (ages 19 and over), Youth (ages 12 - 18), Children's (11 and unders). Prizes: £300, £200, £100 in Open Category, book tokens for Youth and Children's Category. Entry Fee: £5 per poem; Youth and Children's Category free. Website: <http://www.derby.ac.uk/buxtonpoetrycompetition>

Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry Contest (USA) Online Submission Deadline: 1 April Top prize: \$1,500. Submit one humor poem online. No length limit. Both published and unpublished poems are welcome. No fee to enter. See the complete guidelines and past winners at:

http://www.winningwriters.com/contests/margaret/ma_guidelines.php

West Branch (USA) Deadline: 15 April A semiannual journal of literature published at Bucknell University's Stadler Center for Poetry. Accepts poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and translation. Payment: \$20/poem + \$10/additional page, or \$10/page of prose, with a min. payment per writer of \$30 and a max. payment of \$100. Provides each contributor with two copies of the issue in which his/her work appears and a one-year subscription to *West Branch*. Submit online at: <http://westbranchsubmissions.bucknell.edu/>

Lucidity Poetry Journal Clarity Awards (USA) Deadline: 30 April. Free contest offers small prizes and possible publication for poems in any form dealing with people and interpersonal relationships. Authors must be 18+. No email submissions. Unpublished submissions preferred but not required. Top Award: \$100, 2nd Prize \$50, 3rd Prize \$25; winners announced in Winter issue. Poems published with poet's permission. Editor Ted O. Badger says: "Seeking poetry that deals with people, relationships, life issues and events, written in clear and concise English. Form of the poem is open but it must have something to say without resorting to vulgarity. Clarity is crucial. We publish poetry that everyday people can relate to, understand and enjoy." Address to send submissions to: Lucidity Poetry Journal Clarity Awards, 23 Bendwood, Sugar Land, TX 77478, United States. Send 1-5 poems, maximum 36 lines per poem including stanza breaks; prefer poems no shorter than 18-20 lines; typed, single-spaced, in standard font. One poem per page. Include author's name, address, phone and email (if available) on each page. No email submissions, please. Guidelines URL: <http://lucidityjournal.00books.com/>

MAG Poetry Prize 2011 (UK) Closing date: 30 April Prize fund accumulates @£2.00 per entry (up to £10,000 maximum) 1st Prize - £2,000 minimum. The entrants judge this online poetry competition themselves - a knockout system in three rounds. Any subject or style: Poetry or Prose Poetry, Maximum 42 lines, Entry fee £6. All profits from the competition will be donated to MAG (Mines Advisory Group). MAG is a neutral and impartial humanitarian organisation that clears the remnants of conflict for the benefit of communities worldwide. To find out more and to enter visit <http://www.poeticrepublic.com/>

Odes to the Olympians Poetry Contest (USA) Deadline (must be received by): 30 April Authors of a historical novel series offer free contest with small prizes for poems about Greek and Roman mythology. Top Award: \$50 apiece in adult and youth categories and publication on website. Categories are youth (under 18) and adult. Theme: Apollo, the God of Music, Light, Prophecy and Healing. Guidelines URL: <http://www.tapestryofbronze.com/OdeForm.html> Enter by email only; one poem, maximum 30 lines; typed using a standard font, single-spaced, pasted into the body of an email to: tapestryofbronze@yahoo.com. Include your name, pen name (if applicable), address, phone, and email address. If under 18 include your birthdate; otherwise, simply indicate that you're an adult.

Thynks Publications Limited First Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 April Prizes: 1st £100, 2nd £50, 3rd £25. Entry Fee: £3 per poem. For rules and entry form visit website: <http://www.christinemichael.org/thynkspoetrycompetition>

Ware Poets Open Poetry Competition 2011 (UK) Closing Date: 30 April For poems up to 50 lines, previously unpublished. 1st Prize £500, 2nd £200, 3rd £100. RedPage marketing Sonnet Prize £100. Entry Fee: £3 per poem, £10 for 4 poems, £2.50 for each subsequent poem in same submission. For further details send SAE to The Competition Secretary, Clothall End House, California, Baldock SG7 6NU

The Massachusetts Review (USA) Deadline: 1 May Independent quarterly of literature, the arts, and public affairs. Seeks a balance between established writers and promising new ones. Pays \$0.50 per line for poetry (\$25 minimum per poem); \$50 for an essay or a work of fiction. Guidelines: <http://www.massreview.org/07submit.htm>

Featured Poet: Nalini Singh

– *twinkle, twinkle little star*
circumference is two pi r –

and i shiver as i read pi written out
for a thousand digits, gold numerals
square-shouldered on a screen of black that
flashes like a cosmic desert, gaping –
there are squares in the constellations
that i trace with my thoughts the way
my fingers brush across the length
of pi that i can see, and i look for these
squares even here, even as i am
watching the brilliant illogic of the circle
scraped out like stars, dust-eyed and
spinning. it's hardly recursive, hardly
a sequence that breathes from
dry-footed arithmetic or even the
sweeping galaxy of geometry, vagrant and
shameless in its fourth dimension – it's
hardly imaginary.

it's here, in the pulsing sphere of my eye
as i turn and feel my spine push
into a hot arc as i stretch backwards
and i reduce the irrationality to a still
symbol that i can toss about, the way
i can name the obsidian hallways of
the multiverse, hollow and frozen.
and i know the consecution is
as alien as the topography of planets,
distant and lifeless, i know there is
a kind of glory to the impulsiveness
with which one digit follows another,
that there is a foreign magnificence
to the haphazard array bursting
free out from the sky and circle; i
know that there is some bleak solace
to reduce chaos to five letters and
perhaps an ancient symbol. but

it escapes me. and i look at π ,
square-shouldered and incomplete
and we are strangers.

spinal intervention
(a musculoskeletal procedure)

in a downward sweep
your hand, conducting an
orchestra of nerves and organs
flows down my open spine;

you are explaining, three
fingers pausing at my lower
back, why the disc-sponge
is waterless, but I do not care.

each place, a humming frenzy
of strings, bass drum-beats,
is a falling galaxy of
treble stars and there

are so many ways, so many
hidden pockets where it might
crumble. it has already. this is a
cerise light, a violin's cry

just here, just here, where you
rest a cool fingernail, sliding the
needle through this belt of flesh
and plunge into the map of

burning celestas, orbits a
jet of blue-white downpour
the soprano harp sweet and
high. and for the barest

moment, I can pretend,
amid torn ligaments and the
creaking backbone curve,
a sort of heaven could exist.

In Vain

in Spain, they call their children *Jesus* –
Christian and *Christina* in England;
in India, anything from *Dream* and
Imagination – all kids are gods –

irises blooming, apple-eyed,
sucking their toes and thumbs
every newborn an angel
incarnated till it opens its mouth

and bawls the buildings
down. at four, tasting their first
bitter lie, they still are holy
even when they unfurl

a plump-red fist with stolen
titbits from the girl next door;
even when possibility could
mean this train could veer

right off the track into the
gorge below – it is
only when cause and
consequence in stubborn day

play out the course and
the first unhappy ending
means their bottom lip
no longer trembles, and

Saint Nicholas becomes
dyslexic, Satan, *Lucy* and
Lucius now we call them
when Superman never comes

and they are not afraid
of the darkness any longer.

qantas quantum and quagmire

we can walk on water we can walk on water we can walk on water you
tell me it is not raining but there are clouds and if we can walk here we can
walk on water the seats grow warmer with touch the seats grow
warmer with the beats of silence with the glances passed the seats
are tight so tight and breathing out our lightness tell me why then we are
so light here i say and you say the dawn is brighter you say this is the
shoulder of light this is not the legs that reach us on the ground not the
dry toes of light this is the shoulder and we are in it we are in it we are in it
and the clouds beneath us and i need to walk i need to walk i need to walk
out water if you would please get up and let me pass

pass me your mind then pass me your whole body pass me
your soul and i will keep it touch it gently hang it up around my neck
in wonder we are so far from the stars i say but you say this
is the shoulder of light and we can walk on shoulder we can walk on
shoulder we can walk on shoulder but if we can walk on
water too surely the light is liquid surely the light can freeze like liquid
surely i can wear the light about my neck like your soul surely
the heat is matter surely we can photograph the exact shape
the precise spine of love above the clouds

shh its all relative anyway its all relativistic that we can
walk on water we can walk on the aisle of flight and say that we have walked
on water that we have touched the shoulders of light together
that light is going to fall like rain that light is the rain expelled inhaled undone
knitted into water knitted like a soul breathless in breath breathless in body
breathless in air tied around my neck why cant we walk on water
why cant we touch down on the shoulder of light and you say that
this is landing this is moving through you say that we are in it now

Noticeboard

APOLOGY FROM EDITOR

After having finally caught up with the backlog of Members' Poems to publish on the back page, I have been promising willy-nilly that I would publish submissions in "the next issue". Now I have been caught out with many poems and little space, due to this issue having the competition forms in it. All I can say is, I'm very sorry. I'm not aware of having lost anyone's poems, but if you want to send your poem elsewhere I'll understand if you email me to check if I'm still planning to use it. Otherwise, please be patient.

BUY A NZ BOOK DAY, 5th March

In the wake of the Whitcoulls/ Borders fiasco, this is a timely event, coming as it does in NZ Book Month. Support those independent bookshops, folks.

EMAIL TROUBLES

Our domain name (the poetrysociety.org.nz bit) has been hijacked by spammers. My outgoing emails to hotmail and gmail addresses are therefore bouncing as we are blocked by those two services. I am working on it, but in the meantime, if you don't get a timely response from me and you have one of those addresses, it's not that I'm ignoring you.

Reviews

Ithaca Island Bay Leaves Vana Manasiadis (Seraph Press, 2009) ISBN 978-0-473-15235-2 RRP \$25

Vaughan Rapatahana

An interesting work this.

Not exactly a collection of poetry, not exactly a collection of prose.

Greece and Aotearoa all mixed up in a quite tasty Hellenic salad – certainly well-tossed. Greeks and Kiwis - some heroes, more heroines - in a salmagundi of clever crafting – certainly a talented writer. Theseus in Tararuas indeed.

This is a mythistorima, after all – a marvellous melange of intertwined matriarchal generations and nations.

Vana Manasiadis is not a settled soul – she is herself rift between countries and is spread between societies, yet I do not sense the existential angst of a Kazantzakis here, rather the wryly percipient and felt private weaving of being cloven between climes and all the concomitants so involved.

Worth a dip into, rather than a full-bodied plunge, this thin well-presented Seraph is rewarding for all discerning readers who want their intellects to be teased, titillated, tantalized. Witness the following luscious imbroglio:

The Argonaut

Theseus was DOC ranger in the Tararuas responsible for tracking lost campers. He'd retrace their steps with a roll of no. 8, sniff the Rangiora, feel footprints with rough fingerprints. He shot wild boar, carved totara. Once, he fleeced a stray sheep.

Comes complete with *Notes* and a reverse-thrust *Contents*.

It will indeed be very interesting where Vana flies to next. Ever on the move - to or from? Breaker Bay or break away?

Time Traveller Robin Fry (Earl Of Seacliff Art Workshop, 2010) ISBN 978-186942-118-2 RRP \$28

Liz Breslin

This collection is Robin Fry's fourth, after *Weather Report* (Inkweed, 2002), *Daymoon* (HeadworX, 2005) and *Inside it* (ESAW mini book series No. 2, 2006). It's a very conscious collection, which commences with a poetic explanation of the 'Sand boat' that graces the front cover – an overgrown sand pit boat "Smothered in the leaves of fall" and "Too precious by far to throw away/ it lives again on my book's cover/ – Sydney's sand boat – the time traveller/ with its cargo of dreams."

The collection is split into five collections, with more than forty poems, spanning 'Amor Vincit Omnia', 'Time Traveller', 'Ako Tahi Tatou', 'Abroad' and 'Homebodies'. Across this breadth, there is much noticing. Of detail, history, fact, anecdote, connection, shape and form. There's even noticing of noticing!

Noticing

The man stood in the carpark
smiling at his thoughts -
so rarely glimpsed,
the inner life of a stranger -
like a flash of gold
in the lining of a waistcoat,
the blue of a kingfisher's wing.

As to the organisation of the work, the first section holds kisses, roses, dreams and rain. The repetition of "kiss him" in 'Hurry' has a playful urgency and there is poignancy in the rusty emotion in 'The servant'. 'Time Travellers' contains histories, as well as an uncomfortable present day in 'Rave'. The title of the third section is the motto of Wilford School in Petone – 'We all learn as one.' Learning leaks in everywhere and there are some funny moments in 'Finding Poems' –

Lunchtime diners find strings of senryu
among their sushi rolls.

At a birthday, children drink lemonade
while an orchard grows up around them
complete with party hats of oranges and lemons
and spondees thudding to the ground.

A trout swimming downstream
is observed from the Ewen Bridge
with a sprightly ballad caught in its teeth.

'Abroad' and 'Homebodies' need no translation as section titles and show respectively a breadth of travel observations and a playful love of home. It's in these sections, however, that a couple of the formal poems are also distracting. In 'Ballad of the witch' Fry gives us her memories of the movies – ice cream and a scary witch. The chance to hear this read aloud may mitigate some perceived rhythmic anomalies,

but the forced rhyme endings grated against some of the more sophisticated poems in the collection. Likewise, in the villanelle 'Whence Gaza mourns', an emotional modern rendering of Milton's words from *Sampson Agonistes* is marred by the obvious bow to form. Elsewhere, syntax and vertical/horizontal patterning can be distracting, for example in 'Out to it', chartering a history of anaesthesia.

There is much to love, though. In the notes on the back cover, Fry writes "this collection encapsulates my thoughts and feelings about our beautiful planet; my beloved family and my many activities and interests." There's a playful love of life and language apparent in 'California haiku' and 'Stencils'. Here's the first of the 'Stencils' –

(For Thomas)

children's concert
parents' worried eyes
in little tummies
b u t t e r f l i e s

'The high mysteries' is endearing in its dedication – *For Hazel whose pre-school painting has a green wave* – and builds from this simple wave to,

the dance of life
that weaves the scarves of silver
through the seas

the sounds and rhythms of an order
fashioned in the mind of some god,
older than creation,

solitary, terrifying,
whose voice is in the thunder
whose dance is in the storm.

Shakespeare plays an inspirational role in a couple of works here. 'The isle is full of noises' takes its title from *The Tempest* and harks to the legendary place where there's,

no right & wrong way
public - private
permission - password
alarms & keys

'The literary wall' traces the history of Pyramus and Thisbe's kissing wall –

They have been kissing through the ages
since Shakespeare filched them from Ovid
who nabbed them from the Greeks
who stole them from the gods
who lost the plot...

no one remembers when.

Fry's love of words is obvious throughout this collection, along with her enthusiasm for her family and surrounds. Her penultimate poem, 'Climate change', is almost a hymn to this.

May living on the rim
of Wellington's deep-eater harbour,
populous in the summer with floating creatures
borne south on Asian currents,
be a never-ending ocean voyage...

Good Business Ian Wedde (Auckland University Press, 2009) ISBN 978-86940-442-0 RRP \$24.99

Gill Ward

I loved this book! Perhaps I am the wrong person to review it because it may be a one-dimensional review, heavy on the side of approval.

Ian Wedde is a prolific poet, his literary past is teeming with poetry collections (15 of them) to say nothing of his novels and editing and awards. Wedde's intellect shines through in all his writing but somehow he manages to make his poetry accessible to even the meanest mind. As the oft quoted and famous T S Eliot said, "Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood".

Yes, there are allusions to other poetry and art and history and literature peppered through his poems and they give depth and feeling, as in the opening poem 'Epithalamion', set so firmly in the Wellington we know but with the ancient undertones of Spenser (or even e e cummings, who had his own version) and the sly, filmatic humour of Leakey and Julia, but the tone would get you even if you missed the references.

As for the poetry of Wellington in the 'Good Business' section – it is so full of nostalgia and wry sweetness the reader cannot help but be seduced. Wedde paints with his words; all the poems in this book are so visual. You walk that walk with him, see the colours, inhale the smells, feel the dry asphalt under your feet, the grit in your eyes as you rub shoulders with the passing parade of colourful inhabitants. The poetry places you firmly there.

All the street poems echo each other – I love that. The massage oils mixed with the engine oil and the furniture polish, the red flags of Toyota with the red tomatoes in the scrap metal recycler, the tyres on the carpets stretching to the rug rival across the street, the cruelly done-for chickens in KFC over from the winers and diners at the SPCA. The last poem about C&O polishing oil made the old radio jingle from the 1950's ring in my head for an hour or so – it went something like this, "Good morning Mr C. Salutations Mr O". Who remembers that? These poems are a moving tribute to Wedde's father to whom this part of the book is dedicated. I must stop now – but you get the idea?

Wedde gives us a wondrous and ironic selection of dream poems. He takes us on a wide-ranging world journey. He introduces his pets and his friends. He shares his tenderness. Gives us poetry as it should be.

I am struggling not to quote lines from poems – it seems so unfair to pluck out a line without its head and shoulders and feet and legs, but let me assure you there are beautiful lines in these poems and beautiful words – words you don't hear so often, like jejune and tenebrous. Wedde's words are carefully chosen and meticulously placed. Nothing is random but it is never laboured.

A suggestion - for the price of a couple of night's takeaways being replaced by eggs and toast and (budget) baked beans at home you could own this book. It would give you pleasure and feed your mind. Go on.

Regional Review

WINDRIFT, WELLINGTON, FEBRUARY

Bevan Greenslade

Contributions were received from 6 attending and 3 corresponding members; apologies showed several members were recovering from injury/ selling their house/ painting their house/ tramping 'down south', etc : a busy time ...

The 3 themes this meeting were: "summer excess (fecundity)"; "Valentine's Day" or "Waitangi Day"; "bell" or "bells". Contributions included ...

1) summer excess:

cabbage trees everywhere
a long way past
their perfume

Penny Pruden

our shadows
being posted on the road
by the Christmas moon

Harumi Hasegawa

2) Valentine's or Waitangi Day:

long humid
summer's day
where is my Valentine?

l o n g summer day!
Annette de Jonge

3) bell /s:

summer breeze
windbells crisscross
the street

Karen Peterson Butterworth

A start was made for a collection of *kigo* seasonalities for NZ *sanjiki*.
Next meeting will be 1pm on 21 April 2011.
New members welcome; please contact Nola 04.586.7287.

Tanka Reflections

– short songs of the human spirit –

close together
you draw out the shape
of a game
on my arm
with your finger

Owen Bullock

he says
we don't move away much
I'm beginning to feel
planted in the garden
among the capsicums

Catherine Mair

These are the final Tanka Reflections. I offer many thanks to Patricia Prime for her generous contribution of time in receiving and selecting both KiwiHaiku and Tanka Reflections for the last few years.

Mini Competition

Thanks for all the baby poems (though none about Wellington ... strange). The winner this issue is Jenny Dobson. *Opening Notes* is on its way.

Cam

I remember when your little heart
was the size of a poppy-seed
the tiniest being there imaginable
and the knowing was distilled delight

And I feel it now as we lean over
the old stone bridge, throwing our bread
to the ducks, your little heart
moving nut strong

Next issue's mini competition is for a copy of Dinah Hawken's *Garden Poems*, a record of her Residency at Wellington Botanic Garden and Otari-Wilton's Bush in 2004. Those of you familiar with Dinah's work know how exquisitely she writes about landscape, and these poems are beautiful examples. With photos by Tim O'Leary, this collection is a rare pleasure.

I have several spare copies, so I can award more than one prize to poems about landscapes you love. Deadline is 14th April.

One hasn't become a writer until one has distilled writing into a habit, and that habit has been forced into an obsession. Writing has to be an obsession. It has to be something as organic, physiological and psychological as speaking or sleeping or eating.

Niyi Osundare

MEMBERS' POEMS

toreador lexis

these bully
words

m
lacerate
e

I
parry,

without panache

pointed
thrusts,

as
they
lunge

huge
heads

 d
 o
 w
 n;

my
side step
 inept

my
words cape
one
glissade
tardy.

 - these snotty
 noun bastards

just
lust to kill me –

barbs
too sharp,
charged jibes
more *toreador*
than
me,

gored,
 u
 t g,
s mb
 l n
 i

a
bloodpool
quashed
 raging verbosity.
 beneath

Vaughan Rapatahana

Water

For Robert Logan

It is raining and he has been missing
for days. It keeps raining, and his body

not found. Maybe he has become the water
he has always wanted to be. This man who

loved the sea, sun, wind, land, plant, penguin.
Just yesterday, I was by his sea.

Just the other day, by graves, and still
I do not want to think about death. I honor

you, Robert, I honor you who loved
us, who gave us music, justice, light.

I honor this, wherever it lives.

Madeleine Marie Slavick

Robert Logan, a solicitor, musician and environmentalist, went missing near Owhiro Bay, Wellington, in August 2010.

Aue, Basho!
the silence of the pond
the one frog, belly up

Margaret Beverland

MAY DEADLINE is 7th APRIL

It takes an earthquake to remind us that we walk on the crust of an unfinished planet.

Charles Kuralt, 1934 – 1997