

a fine line

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY
Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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WELLINGTON MEETINGS
Poetry @ The Thistle Inn
3 Mulgrave St, Wellington Central
Starts at 7.30pm with open mic.

Monday 18th March:

Guest Poet: Ali Jacs, NZ National Slam Champion 2012, freshly back from the Women of the World Poetry Slam, in Minneapolis.

Monday 15th April:

Guest Poet: TBA

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To Mexico in Search of Poetry

Deborah Norrie-Jones

It's just six weeks since that crazy late night online in Auckland when I looked up San Miguel, a renowned artist and writers' centre in Mexico, wondering if I might head off in January on a one-way ticket. Discovering the San Miguel International Poetry Week and reading the poetry of one of the members of the faculty, Owen Sheers, a Welsh poet, did it for me! At 1:30am I was up cooking noodles, sending poetry. Four days later the amazing email, "... is happy to inform you ... accepted ... an extraordinary opportunity to study with top poets from Mexico and the United States in Mexico's most magical city."

Excitement and terror. Traveling alone in Mexico? As an arts therapist I processed.

A frightened little Spanish/Mexican bull emerged, gaining courage and curiosity as it nosed into a red-gold image of San Miguel. I remained anxious, however, about the safety of that one and half hour shuttle ride through the desert from Leon airport to the Hotel Posada de las Monjas (aka the House of the Nuns), the conference venue.

Now, after a marvelous ride through cactus, and sunrise on circling mountains, here I am making my way up the polished stone steps of the Posada and into the lobby, arriving! Hosea, a kindly gentleman nods and bends his head

in welcome. On the counter are poetry books. Paper bits sticking out with black felt pen writing. Owen Sheers, 130 pesos. *El Hombre Sombre, The Shadow Man*. And more. I am not the only one who has come early. Excited, warmed and safe, I feel at home.

San Miguel de Allende is a colonial town dating back to the 16th century, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008. No traffic lights, fast food outlets, or advertising. Great poets such as Pablo Neruda lived here.

The San Miguel Poetry Week conference is a small, intimate program started by two sisters in 1997. Jennifer Clement is a highly published poet, novelist, and president of PEN International, Mexico City. Barbara Sibley manages the program from NYC. The conference is affiliated to the Stonecoast MFA in Creative Writing.

It begins officially with an evening cocktail party, workshops in the mornings (the faculty moving around small set groups) and afternoons free for siestas, exploring San Miguel, thermal pools or the botanical gardens. Evenings are for readings at the Colonial Teatro Santa Ana at the Biblioteca. On the last night of the program, there is a group poetry reading by all participants.

Unofficially, the conference began as poets and books arrived. The Posada is a wonderful maze of a castle with stairs and terraces in every direction conducive to meeting and relaxing. Most of the participants have been returning for years. This made for a richness and warmth that extended to newcomers.

I woke the first morning, in my simple white room with its wooden cross on the wall, to the sound of San Miguel's bells, then a quiet voice reading from the corner of the balcony. Here the view of town and mountains is extraordinary. A little later, 'RC!' and, 'Peter...!' as another poet leaned over my windows from the other side.

Another distinction of this conference is that all are regarded as equal poet participants. Not students. Eight of the 24 participants as well as faculty had produced poetry books that year. They included:

Robert Williams, 81, a poet, architect, veteran sailor from Vermont. *Holding Time*; "Fragile and momentarily we continue into the fierce bright day".

Peter Ludwin, Washington, USA. *Rumours of Fallible Gods*; "El Greco could have painted in this room..."

Robyn Schofield, Texas. *Sunflower Cantos*. Sharp crystalline poetry: "adamantine, obsidian, hot springs".

At the introductory workshop Jennifer read prayers of Rilke, Queen Elizabeth, John Donne, and gave us prompts to write our own. e.g.

'Here the day words are ...'

'Here the night words are not ...' (the power of the negative)

'Where do you walk?'

Some responses:

"My big shouldered river crosser..." Casey

"Creator of questions..." Wilda

"Necklace of God of many names..." Katie

"To whom do I thank, I do not know..." Peter

She encouraged us to write with a voice of authority:

"I will roll the stones

across the tunnels, the gaps" (my response)

Stressed again the power of the negative:

"It is not like marble ...

It is like the fine arrow

shooting from a glass turret..." (my response)

Working with faculty, we analysed the music in our poems (Annie Finch) and questioned how much allusiveness can be tolerated (Elizabeth Rosner). We critiqued; the big movements, shifts in a poem; balancing accumulation of detail with the personal; the turn, when the poem comes alive; and the endings that shouldn't be.

Joseph Stroud, whose poetry won the Pushcart Prize: "After beautiful lyrical writing there comes out that twisted rigid fist from your side, [he demonstrated this] to sign off, explain the poem..."

I enjoyed getting to know members of our small workshop group, their personalities embodied in their poetry. Adrienne Bard, a CBS political reporter from Mexico City, juggling concern for her mother with dementia in L.A., titled a poem, 'I am the Accordion Woman'. Justen Ahren, poet and director of Martha's Vineyard Writers Residency, USA, influenced by Eastern European poetry wrote, "something lost informs that I believe. A book once read/ the colour of the ancient sea".

I shared a meal with Owen and his fiancée Catherine on New Year's Eve, wandered with them up to the plaza for fireworks in front of La Parroquia, and listened to his immensely moving poetry: the voice of a British soldier returning from Afghanistan.

A final image of the conference: all of us trooping those narrow flagstone pavements of San Miguel late at night, under soft red-gold lights, expectant – off to a marvellous reading or tortilla soup and tequila to celebrate hard work, poetry and friendship.

I am learning to trusting the process of my one-way journey. Justen has offered me a residency for April at Martha's Vineyard! My early adolescent years were spent in this area of USA. As in the best of poetry and journeys, we are taken forward but are also always returning. I give thanks.

www.sanmiguelpoetry.com; Facebook: The San Miguel Poetry Week.

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

The year is well begun, and items have started to appear on the Coming Events page of our website. Keep an eye open for a poetry event near you – we can all support each other.

I spent a lot of time writing in January, having decided to start my day with writing, instead of trying to find the energy to do it at the end of the day. Like all good New Year Resolutions, that didn't really work out. I'd rather write than earn a living, so I immediately fell way behind on Poetry Society work, and have had to go back to devoting just one day a week to writing. (A huge thank you to Gillian Cameron and Margaret Vos for helping me get back on track.)

I'm not complaining – I managed to get my first collection together and published on my one-day-a-week schedule last year (<http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/myfamilyotherstrangers>) and the launch in December was a lot of fun. Many thanks to those of you who came along and supported me. I've got a taste for publishing now!

There are lots of publishing opportunities for every poet, from the established literary giants like *Landfall* and *JAAM* to local and much-loved monthlies like *Valley Micropress*. Sending your work to journals, both print and online, doesn't always get you published, but it does make you aware of just how much poetry there is out there to read and enjoy. And eventually you stumble upon an editor who likes your work, and you're on your way. From the newest poet to the most widely published, we're in this together - let's enjoy the ride.

About our Contributors

Liz Breslin is back from her OE in the UK, and ready to re-enter the poetry life of Hawea.

Kirsten Cliff lives in Matamata and blogs at: <http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.com/>

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

Deborah Norrie-Jones is an artist, arts therapist and poet. Deborah's childhood features the West Coast, Dunedin and PS 43, Harlem, NYC. Australasian (citizen of Aotearoa and Oz), published in *Takahe*, *LiveLines* and *Anotherlostshark*, she presently lives among rooftops in San Miguel, Mexico. www.deborahnorriejones.blogspot.com

Vanessa Proctor has lived in NZ and now lives in Australia. She discovered haiku while living in Japan in the early 1990s. Her work is widely published and has won numerous awards.

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

A Warm Welcome To:

Áine Kelly-Costello Auckland

Bill Sutton Napier

Cassandra Rolston Christchurch

Chris Croft Kurow

Diana Roberts Christchurch

Don Maclennan Nelson

Eliot Attridge Blenheim

Ellen Bush Christchurch

Jac Jenkins Whangarei

Janet Marshall Riwaka

Jared Taylor Christchurch

Theresa O'Connor Napier

Valerie Roberts Paraparaumu

Wanda Kiel-Rapana Franklin



Letter to the Editor

I had the honour of winning The National Robert Burns Poetry Competition for 2013. There were three sections: Published Poet (which I won), Unpublished Poet and Junior Section. My prizes were: The Stan Kirkpatrick Medal, a Certificate, publication in the Otago Daily Times, the latest book of poems (*the in-complete poems*) by one of the judges, David Howard, and an invitation to attend the Burns Supper.

There was a record number of entries and even some from Scotland. We celebrated in the traditional manner on January 25th with the presentation of prizes and the Burns Supper of Haggis and a wee dram o' Whisky at the Toitū Otago Settlers Museum.

This is a huge step up for me after winning the McGonagall section in 2005. He was known as the world's worst poet, but that didn't phase me, and I accepted my prize with dignity and pride.

This year my poem was written in Scots [dialect], which was a big challenge that I enjoyed immensely. Other winners and place getters can be extremely proud of their poems, which were well received by the big audience at both functions. This is a competition well worth entering, so I challenge anyone with Scottish ancestry to give it a go.

Debbie Williams, Dunedin

Congratulations

2013 sees our members off to a flying start.

Ernie Berry came Third in the Fort Worth Haiku Society's Quarterly Contest, and Third (Senryu) in the 2012 San Francisco International Competition for Haiku, Senryu and Tanka.

Kirsten Cliff's haiku have been chosen to appear in *A New Resonance 8: Emerging Voices in English-Language Haiku*, edited by Jim Kacian and Dee Evetts, and due out from Red Moon Press in August 2013. Furthermore, her poem 'The Invitation' was one of two winning poems in the Two Hands Bread poetry contest. The poems will be used in various ways, such as on the Two Hands Bread website and packaging. **Tim Upperton** was the other winner of the Two Hands Bread competition.

Janis Freegard's book of poetry, *The Continuing Adventures of Alice Spider*, has been published by US publisher Anomalous Press: <http://anomalouspress.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=44b715dc48b8cd794e8ecc464&id=024f77b769&e=3d68eddbb5>

Janis's book (along with several others) is available for pre-order through a Kickstarter campaign: <http://anomalouspress.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=44b715dc48b8cd794e8ecc464&id=e8da63f2d9&e=3d68eddbb5> where you can also get a sneak peak and listen to Janis read.

Lots of good New Year news for **Wes Lee**: her poem 'Gilda' has been commended as one of ten finalists in the *Magma* Editors' Prize and will appear in *Magma 55*. <http://magma-poetry.com/competition-2/>

- three of her poems have been commended in The Gregory O'Donoghue Poetry Prize 2013, administered by the Munster Literature Centre. <http://www.corkpoetryfest.net/prize13.html>

- her poem, 'Conch' will appear in the *Riptide* anthology, and will form part of a live performance by Cygnet Theatre. <http://www.riptidejournal.co.uk/>

Earlier (ie in late 2012, but since the last issue of *afl*), her poem 'Confluence' was published in *Journeys through Fire*, featuring the winning and shortlisted poems for The Lancelot Andrewes Awards, judged by Carol Ann Duffy.

Vaughan Rapatahana had an exceptionally productive 2012: three full and completely different collections of poetry since November, 2011 (the latest, *Schisms*, was published in Nevada, USA, in November 2012); two part-collections; two separate poetry and song teaching resources, including the first ever bilingual qua Maori-English such; a compilation of his writings over the years on Colin Wilson - author of *The Outsider* - as well as original philosophy, that being his background; the very important English language critique *English Language as Hydra*; plus copious poems, short stories, reviews, articles and other miscellaneous writings worldwide - from France to Macau, USA to Australia, UK to Aotearoa, Thailand to Hong Kong. Another book also crept under the radar at the tail end of 2012 - a short story entitled 'unmasked' - written about his days working in Xi'an, PR China. That's ten books in one year, with a novel due out from Atuanui Press in 2013.

Aalix Roake's poem 'Different Stars, Different Sky', which originally appeared in *Astropoetica*, is to be performed as part of **Gus Simonevic's** poetry project 'Aotearoa - Found in Translation', at the Basement Theatre (Auckland) in March.

André Surridge won the inaugural Janice M Bostok Award with: evening breeze

a flag releases

its stars

NZPS haiku editor **Sandra Simpson** came second, and **Margaret Beverland** was one of those who received an Honourable Mention. **Cynthia Rowe** was on the judging team.

Charmaine Thomson has been nominated by Muse-Pie Press for the 2012 Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses.

Debbie Williams won the Published Poets section of the The National Robert Burns Poetry Competition for 2013, with 'A scrap o' truth, for a' that'.

Anne Hollier Ruddy and **Maureen Sudlow** have poems in *Shot Glass Journal* #9: <http://www.musepiepress.com/>

The 2012 issue of online literary journal *Turbine* includes work by **Siobhan Harvey**. <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/turbine>

Phew! Good job, everyone.



Competitions and Submissions

The Binnacle: Tenth International Ultra-Short Competition (USA) Closing date: 15 March - Free entry. For prose works of 150 words or fewer and poetry of sixteen lines or fewer and fewer than 150 words. All works should have a narrative element to them. All submissions should be made via email to: ummbinnacle@maine.edu. We prefer that you send your entry both in the body of your e-mail and as an attachment in a .doc, .txt, .odt, or .rtf file (.rtf preferred). A minimum of \$300 in cash prizes will be awarded, with a minimum prize of \$50. Please submit no more than two works total, prose and/or poetry. Please include your postal address as well as a thirty-five to fifty word self-description. Notifications in the latter half of May 2013. Publication date: May 2013, but printing may not be completed until October, 2013 (probably later). Awards made at the time of publication. Website: <http://machias.edu/ultra-short-competition.html>

Girton College Jane Martin Poetry Prize (UK) Closing Date: 15 March - Free entry. Up to four poems submitted as one entry, one entry per poet. First prize: £1000, although the panel may choose to distribute this. See website for full details: www.girton.cam.ac.uk/jane-martin-poetry-prize Online submissions at: https://app.casc.cam.ac.uk/fas_live/jmp.aspx

African Prisons Project Poetry & Short Story Competitions (UK) Closing Date: 20 March - In support of African Prisons Project, a national charity working to bring justice, dignity and hope to men, women and children in prisons across Africa. For original, previously unpublished poems up to 50 lines, on any subject and in any style. Prizes: £100, £50, £30 and 2 x £10 (High Commendation) plus first publication in the Excel for Charity News Blog. Entry fees: £3 per poem, £12 for 5, £16 for 7 or £22 for 10. A third of net entry fees will be donated to African Prisons Project. You can enter online and pay securely by PayPal and submit your entries by e-mail, or download an Entry Form for postal entries at: www.excelforcharity.com

Stealing Time "Pregnancy/Birth" Issue (USA) Deadline: (received by) 25 March - *Stealing Time: A Literary Magazine for Parents* seeks submissions of poetry, fiction, literary nonfiction, memoir, and book reviews for their Spring 2013 themed issue on pregnancy and birth. Poems should be 1-2 pages maximum, prose entries 3,000 words maximum. (Website might still have March 1 deadline, but extension confirmed.) All family configurations welcome: straight, LGBT, single parents, blended families, etc. Online guidelines: <https://stealingtimemag.submittable.com/submit>

Carpe Articulum - call for submissions (USA) Deadline: 30 March - No page limits. Multiple submissions permitted; submit online via the website: <http://www.carpearticulum.com/submissions/> Previously published work is permitted only if the print run did not exceed 2,000 copies.

Fish Publishing International Poetry Contest (Ireland) Deadline: 31 March - 10 poems to be published in the 2013 Fish Anthology. Prizes: €1,000. The ten published authors will each receive five copies of the Anthology. Entry fees: The cost of an online entry is fixed in Euro and the conversion into your local currency will be done automatically by your credit card company according to the current exchange rate. First (online) entry €14; Subsequent Entry €8. Enter online at: <http://www.fishpublishing.com/poetry-contest-competition.php#online>

Flash 500 Humour Verse Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31st March - Entry fee: £3 for the first poem, £2.50 for each poem thereafter. Up to 30 lines. Prizes: £150 plus publication; £100; £50. The results will be announced within six weeks of the closing date and the three winning entries will be published on the website: http://www.flash500.com/index_files/humourverse.html [Note from editor: this competition favours rhyming metred light verse. It's a good idea (as indeed it is for most of these) to read past winners before entering.

Sentinel Literary Quarterly Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 March - For original, previously unpublished poems in English on any subject, in any style, up to 50 lines (excluding title). Poems entered should not be entered into another competition running at the same time. Prizes: £150; £75; £50; £10 x 3 (High Commendation). The winners and

commended poems will receive first publication in *Sentinel Literary Quarterly* magazine. Fees: £4/1 poem, £7/2 poems, £9/3 poems, £11/4 poems, £12/5 poems, £16/7 poems, £22/10 poems. Enter online and pay securely by PayPal or download an Entry Form for postal entry at: <http://sentinelquarterly.com/competitions/poetry/>

a fine line - call for submissions Deadline: 7 April - The editor welcomes your contribution. We currently pay a small fee for Feature Articles and reviews. See publication guidelines for these and other sections of the magazine at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutsubmissionguidelines>

Rattle Seeks Poetry by Single Parents (USA) Postmark Deadline: 15 April - *Rattle: Poetry for the 21st Century* seeks submissions of unpublished poems, essays, and artwork for the Fall 2013 themed issue on single parents. Editors say, "Poems may be any style, length, or subject, but they must be written by single parents (either now or when they wrote the poems). As always, we want to publish a representative sample of what the featured group happens to be writing, to help see the more subtle ways being a single parent might affect the writing, and to recognize single parents who find time to be poets, as well. We'd like to publish essays by single parents about how parenting affects their writing and vice versa. Our preference is always an engaging narrative essay, which focuses on some aspect of the genre." See website for submission guidelines, by mail or online: <http://www.rattle.com/poetry/submissions/calls/>

Silver Boomer Books - Call for Submissions (USA) Deadline: 15 April - *Longest Hours - thoughts while waiting* (working title). See: <http://silverboomerbooks.com/sbb/wp/for-writers/longest-hours/> In this culture of instant gratification, we can hardly stand waiting. We have to have our iPads or iPhones so we can surf the internet or play games while we wait. We wait for babies to be born and for classes to begin or end. We wait for test results - medical tests, English tests, eye exams, employment tests, personality tests, assessment tests of all kinds. We wait to be served in restaurants. We wait for people important to us to make decisions or get jobs or get well or get pregnant or get up and do something. We wait in line - oh, do we ever wait in line. Someone once wrote that by the time people are 70 years old, they have waited in line a total of about five years. Can that be true? All waiting is hard. What kind is hardest? Stories and poems might share emotions and experiences during long, excruciating waits. Sometimes waiting involves deep heartache and pain, anticipation of great joy, worry and anxiety, fear of danger, with dread or hope or happiness hinging on outcomes. Waiting is very often a big part of suffering. Maybe through it we can gain the strength to transcend suffering and pain - not just to survive. Understanding how other people deal with waiting can help and strengthen us. Please visit the website for the submission guidelines and follow them carefully, especially the instruction to paste work into the email, not attach it. Multiple submissions are welcome but only one item per email. Our request for 'publication history' means if and where the work has appeared before, not your own record of publications. We are happy to use work that has been published previously if you still retain the copyright. We credit the previous publication on a 'fine print' page.

Poetic Republic Poetry Prize (UK) Closing Date: 30 April - Prizes: Single Poem Prize £2,000. Portfolio Prize (two poems) £1,000. The two prizes may be awarded to the same person. Qualification for the portfolio prize requires two entries. Peer review online poetry competition judged by the entrants themselves. The event culminates with a collaborative eBook publication featuring the best poems and comments, as chosen by the participants. For poems up to 42 lines. Entry fee: £7 per poem. For complete entry details and to enter online go to: www.poeticrepublic.com

100 Tanka By 100 Poets Of Australia & New Zealand Deadline: 1 May - Submit unpublished or previously published tanka for an exciting new anthology to showcase the very best of Australian and New Zealand tanka, modelled after the famous traditional Japanese anthology 'One Hundred Poems By One Hundred Poets'. The collection will be edited in Australia by Beverley George, editor of *Eucalypt, A Tanka Journal*, and Amelia Fielden, editor of *Food For Thought and The Melody Lingers On* themed anthologies, and in New Zealand by Patricia Prime, editor of *Kokako Journal*. Please submit up to 6 of what you consider your best tanka - what the Japanese call 'representative' tanka - in the customary 5 line form. Single tanka only, no strings or sequences. The tanka submitted may be published or unpublished ones. If you have received awards, please include that/those tanka in your submission. When sending previously published and/or awarded tanka, please include full accreditation details. Theme: open. Submissions to Beverley George: beverleygeorge@idx.com.au or Amelia Fielden: anafielden@hotmail.com for Australian poets; to Patricia Prime: pprime@ihug.co.nz for New Zealand poets.

B.J. Rolfzen Memorial Writing Contest (USA) (Sponsored by Dylan Days of Hibbing, Minnesota) Deadline: 3 May - For poetry and short fiction. All fiction will be judged in one category; poetry will be judged in a student division and an open division for all other poets. All entries must follow strict specifications, which are listed on the website: <http://www.dylandays.org/a/j/dylan-days/contests/creative-writing> Winners of the contest will be published in the *Talkin' Blues* journal and official Dylan Days program and receive copies of the publication. First place winners will have their names recorded on a plaque in Bob Dylan's hometown. It is not necessary for the work to be about Bob Dylan.

Talk Poem

Vaughan Rapatahana

Ichthyosaurus

By James Norcliffe

1

It nudges its long snout
through the dappled curtains of time

In a green light its teeth shine
they are sharpened emeralds:

wanting, waiting and momentarily
there is no longer snatch gob and grab –

there is only the soft rise and fall,
the even breath of a sleeping ocean.

2

There was a perfect arch
from hill to shining hill,
the dark water between.

There was the smell of morning
coffee, a warm cup and toast
to ward off the autumn chill.

There is not one centimetre
of human history in the
kilometres of its eyes.

It would have sensed
your uneven breath as
you waited, warm and naked,

and as your rainbow body
arched with love, it would
have burst through the surface

of the ocean, its jaws stretched
beyond lex talionis, beyond reason,
streaming with saltwater, with lust.

- from *Shadow Play* (Proverse Hong Kong, 2012)

I don't think that there can be much doubt that James (hereafter Jim) Norcliffe is a leading proto-modernist poet, with a justified international reputation, and an impressive odyssey of poetry published – this book in which this poem appears is his seventh collection. He has just won the 2012 Kathleen Grattan Prize for a sequence of poems too – so he is at the height of his acme, as it were. This collection too led to his final shortlisting for the Proverse Prize for Literature in 2012.

More, he is very definitely a poet's poet – with considerable mahi being shoveled out over the years to the betterment of his poetic peers in Aotearoa – from his poetry editorship of *Takahe* through to stewardship of the New Zealand Poetry Society and his current captaincy of the poetry cockpit of the Christchurch Press.

Shadow Play does not see him let down his guard either; rather it reinforces all those attributes that make him an excellent poet who – through his more constant jaunts overseas (think Medellin as just one recent example) has become less of a New Zealand poet reflecting New Zealand themes and scenes and more of a voyageur-peintre of pictures far distant from the shores of Otautahi. There's certainly no Maori on Jim's marae.

Don't get me wrong either – I'll state it right away: *Shadow Play* is a great collection of mainly previously published poetry and if it comes your way, snap it up, eh! Norcliffe writes poetry especially well.

And so to the poem.

Other than the entire poem being a bit of a doppelganger (think DH Lawrence's 'Hummingbird') two salient features of Jim's entire poetic craft exude through the pores: his luxuriant clay-play-modelling of words and – more specifically – repetition of the same words (e.g. hill; ocean; warm; beyond, long/longer) and word-echoes; and his oft-times underlying flecks of sheer menace, as if some bad brew is just about to spill out all over the primus and his job is to top-pot it just enough so that we don't quite get burned, but we certainly feel the heat. There's very often a lurker lurking just below the surface of Jim's opus, and in this particular poem he sets us up for it after first lulling us into pacificity with words such as "soft rise and fall" and "even" and "sleeping".

Jim likes to party with sounds and found sounds, with individual words and their first cousins. With syllables and their resounds just a bit down a given page. Thus, we have here the alliterative nuances of:

"wanting, waiting"
"gob and grab"
"human history"
"waited, warm"
'streaming with saltwater'

but, more, the timbre of the repetitive, whereby the repetition clings to a different agency in this poem the second time around:

"even breath / uneven breath"
"arch / arched"
"waiting / waited"
"was / is"

And the tonal rhyme of "hill" and "chill". Segueing with the near-rhymes of "time" and "shine" and "waited" and "naked".

Then there's the ease of the metaphor, "through the dappled curtains of time". And the absolute killer juxtaposition of "there is not one centimeter" and the hyperbolic "in the kilometres of its eyes". Primeval oxymoron gone wild.

Latin intrudes – as alien as the beast – in the form of "lex talionis", yet of course this creature, this incubus, is waaaaaaay beyond mere 'eye for an eye' – it is of an alien da-sein completely even despite its 17 metre length. This thing runs on another fuel, a sheer "dark" dinosauric lust for flesh, blood. It ain't no regular creature at all. And it can afford to await its lunge for human fare – after all it's been around a looooooong long time.

Maybe here Jim is also alluding to something never specifically stated – maybe there's a hint of man-woman predation (think "naked" and "lust" versus "love"); perhaps there's an element of reminding us just how unpredictable nature is; but part and parcel of Jim's craft is his lack of black and white text-bookism. He wryly paints in more clever hues and we savour every last daub, wondering sometimes just what shade this is.

To summarise then: 'Ichthyosaurus' (initially published in *Landfall*) is just one excellent example of the crafty craft of James Norcliffe in this compilation. It reflects his self-confessedly non-confessional mode of writing poems, and his distinct ability to leave us with more than the appreciation of his manifest poetry-writing skill, as we are reading and as after-taste. The master-puppeteer is plying and playing with his readers.

The only slight issue I have is that – as I have also noted elsewhere recently – Jim never fulfils all the degrees of a designation of what a poet could be as delineated by Salman Rushdie. That is: "A poet's work is to name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world, and stop it going to sleep."

But then again, if Jim Norcliffe were to be more transparent and take up a political and moral cudgel more belligerently, would his poetry be as great as it essentially is?

[*Shadow Play* is reviewed in full by Mary Cresswell in the Reviews section of this issue.]



Featured Poet: Deborah Norrie-Jones

My Poem is Whinging this Morning. Covered in Fluff, She Droops.

When you dress your poem in the morning
be careful to gently hold her arm above
the sweater hole. Do not twist
her fingers or crick her neck.
These are ways of causing damage, pain.

A poem is a beloved thing,
has a life of her own. Needs
your encouragement. Applause.
Brush her hair. Take time
over each tangled word until
they all sit smooth
silky fine

Let your poem run freely, exploring
in fresh air. Do not lock her in
stuffy, old fashioned rooms.

She needs the lime-green
of banana leaves, slice
of yellow sun biting its edge,
the blue button in a seagull's eye,
the red of his leg on the post,
a bright green and white boat.
But tie her laces tight, there are
oyster-shells in the bay.

As she runs, listen to her - mark
her footprints, record
her phrase - swinging on the
old tyre over the ragged sea,
as you push and pull.

It is not like marble

It is a fine arrow
shooting from a glass turret.
It will slice through you
as silver, until
you are breathless
strung high.

You will cry out but
there will be
no mercy. You will flail,
and those around you
shrink back,
but you will return,

tear to shreds
the silken arrow
caught between your ribs,
scatter its fine fragments,
bare your face
to the wind
and the mountains.

It is not like bark

It is a soft emerald cloth
that will blind you.
It is not fallen, it is shredded.
It is scratched red and fine
on the edges of tomorrow.
It will bleed, though
you place soft fabric on it,
to hold, to stay the flow.

Eventually, you will let it run
freely. The ground beneath you
will be red. Though you run,
it will pursue you through
the valleys of the world.
Eventually, you must cup
your hands and drink.

It is not like silver

It is the smile
of a sun god
behind a turquoise
post. You will need to slip
quietly past and search for
your emeralds
elsewhere
They will be hidden
along the road. One tucked
in a child's bodice edged
with embroidery and animals.

Another you will find as
you stand defiant at the door
of a home where a dog
is being whipped.

There will be more.
You may need to scratch
a tar sealed surface
and listen to which
gum tree calls loudest
in the breeze.

If this skin is a road what is a road like?

A road is like a leather belt
raised in anger.
A road can whip
itself around you,
lay you down
on a concrete floor,
call you out into the dark
of a foreign country and slap
you in the face with its sight
of the sea from a train
traveling too fast
backwards
into a forgotten land.

Lamb

Is there a lamb in this skin
which shimmers golden white?
Soft. It folds and his hands hold tight
the wounded toy. He pulls at the
bandage around the arm, sees
the one wound around his own. Holds
the animal close to his chest. His eyes
turn, look away, beyond.
You stand behind. He is one
and a half years old. Already knows
to connect the now with then
and bring compassion to the need.

What sound is in this skin

that one should kick so,
should pause at the door before
the run in the night.
Before the taking of white powder.
Before the laying down upon the cold
metal bed - as cold as it.
What sound is in this skin
that no longer moves?

A sound that rumbles
quietly and spreads
across the land like fire
on Turkish castles, warning
the enemy is just 600k away.

That which Remains

Umberto Saba 'Infinity passes by, in humility'

'The city is alive for the poet' wrote Umberto Saba.
In narrow lanes, absolutes intended, slip and slide.
Ripped walls succumb to wild winds over centuries.
The dark decay of once aristocratic houses in Trieste
leaves a dankness at the gates. Yet, the garden
still shimmers; new leaves on the move, like me.

Great and terrible events - once in this city port.
Before an immense and silent crowd
the bodies of Franz Ferdinand and his wife
were offloaded here for the train for Vienna.
At the finish of the war, the soldiers poured
from a destroyer - to celebrate an end to troubled times.

Now, beneath the Viennese lamppost, an old man sits
plays an accordion for the people strolling in the sun.
The swell of blue gentle beside the great flagstone pier.

Once, from San Guisto's castle, smoke seen
rising over San Sabba's rice fields, was later
revealed to be the burning bodies of Jews.
Now, Vespas line the crooked streets below.
The kind man reeking of alcohol, wildly waves
his arms; shows the way to Via San Michelle.
Black men selling on street corners now go ignored.

Once, there were two of us, my love,
walking the streets of Italian cities and history,
riding buses, boats and trains - celebrating our
interim to troubled times; years of conflict,
the death of a child, your cancer in remission.

Now, beneath high marble columns, on a ledge
I sit and watch sirened ambulances hurtle by.
A blue tiepole bus slips in, absorbs the people.
For a brief moment, the bus slides between great buildings.
Half seen, it shimmers, then is gone - warm
with company - elsewhere, like you.

Cold winds rip through wide city streets, return
to sweep far out to sea. The damp is seeping
along the cracked concrete pavement.
I rise to my feet and walk.

Words need to be crafted, not sprayed. They need to be applied together with infinite care.

Norman Cousins

I no longer feel I'll be dead by thirty; now it's sixty. I suppose these deadlines we set for ourselves are really a way of saying we appreciate time, and want to use all of it. I'm still writing, I'm still writing poetry, I still can't explain why, and I'm still running out of time.

Margaret Atwood

haikai café

Edited by Kirsten Cliff

Cold Sun

cold sun—
the centre
of a chrysanthemum *Kirsten*

squeezing an orange
for today's hot drink *Margaret*

hand-in-hand
a line of preschoolers
at the zoo *Vanessa*

butterflies embroidered
on my veil *Cynthia*

her hair
shaken out to cover
his 'mother' tattoo *Jim*

warding off the magpie
with a vinyl briefcase *Cynthia*

going online at Starbuck's
while we wrangle over
the Arab Spring *Nola*

"Who are you?" the pirate
asks at bath-time *Patricia*

crowded beach
just for a moment
losing my son *Margaret*

coming out of the movie
eyes full of tears *Sandra*

amid corn stubble
an abandoned farmhouse
backlit by the moon *Vanessa*

on every path
coloured leaves *Nola*

Composed between June 17 and July 25, 2012.

The junicho began as a face-to-face workshop exercise at the Haiku Festival Aotearoa 2012 and was completed online at the *Issa's Snail* website (Dy, Moira, Maureen and Jim were unable to continue online).

Participants: Dy Andreasen, Sydney, Australia; Margaret Beverland, Katikati, NZ ; Nola Borrell, Lower Hutt, NZ; Kirsten Cliff, Matamata, NZ ; Moira Cursey, Hamilton, NZ; Maureen Gorman, Winchester, VA, USA; Jim Kacian, Winchester, VA, USA; Patricia Prime, Auckland, NZ; Vanessa Proctor, Sydney, Australia; Cynthia Rowe, Sydney, Australia; Sandra Simpson, Tauranga, NZ.

'Cold Sun' was first published in *A Hundred Gourds 2:1*, December 2012.

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



Reviews

Shadow play James Norcliffe, with preface by Bernadette Hall (Proverse Hong Kong Publishers, 2012) ISBN 978-988-19935-8-8. RRP NZ\$24.99, includes CD. Proverse Prize Finalist 2011. Available from proversepublishing.com, Unity Books (Christchurch) and Amazon.

Mary Cresswell

I was standing by the counter
when the lights went out
and all the rabbits disappeared
and the wallabies and the fine wines

(‘a pork pie from Montpelier Retreat’)

When the lights go out, we don't see the puppet master. In a shadow play, we only get to judge his performance. (Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!) This play is a very fine performance. We are given four acts:

A Pink Dolphin Made of Glass looks at solitary people in their obscurity and their clarity. There is the loneliness of the man who loves the 'ATM': "wrapping his arms around/ the soft yellow light", of the 'Vindaloo' man whose love "blisters the tongue/ when its name is whispered."

And of course, the murkiness is all,
while the taste is sharp and clean
as the clatter of a tankard on stones.

(‘Hamlet nurses his beer’)

Lost in Nineveh moves us into darkness and decay, feeling the weight of time and finding that we can't avoid seeing the many faces of dissolution and disintegration.

it is all too fragile

how quickly it drifts
above the black basalt dykes
how deeply the shadows
stain the clefts and gullies

but the headwaters are red
like lava you imagine
red like magma rising

['caldera']

and

There is something large, someone says,
something large and dead in the woods.

(‘at Fossil Gorge’)

Sleeping the Sleep of the Dead shows us death – cold – destruction – “the sun just hanging on/ bright before the dark rain/ coursing down beyond” (‘Nor’west Arch’). There are ice ages and dry corpses; there are smells and deliberately corrupted maps. There is:

my alien vegetable
which does not suck at the sun
follow the stars nor leave
anything to chance

has three small buttons
each is marked **once**

[SPOILER!! The answer to this riddle (= a suicide bomb) was given in the original publication but was omitted here for some reason.]

The last act is The Colour of Tenderness. There is some hope, but the path to it is steep indeed; many of the poems in this section take place on a vertical, not the horizontal, plane:

we see the path
climbing climbing
into the nearby mountain

a ziggurat so
precipitous it scares
the bejesus out of us

(‘the colour of tenderness’)

This leads to ‘Scaffolding’ – “if you lose your nerve/ the vertigo could return”; to a beer from the depths (‘By the lake’); and to ‘the bookman after love’: “falling from his hand dropping to the floor” and then “words that fall like water”. When we move ‘towards the mountain’,

We are on the swing bridge built to deliver
sheep from one side of the gorge to the other.

It sways back and forth with all the
grotesquery of these birthing stories,

and although the water below is as clear as
reality, you still mistake a stick for a trout.

The book is a complete package, with a CD of the author reading all 44 poems, and with prefaces and advance responses to the text. (The list of credits for previous publication is between the title page and the introduction – not a good look.) And there is a wealth of information about the publisher, which is a new presence on the New Zealand scene.

***Hippopotamus in the room* Martha Morseth (Steele Roberts, 2012). ISBN: 978-1-877577-75-8**

Liz Breslin

First impressions count. And the cover of *Hippopotamus in the room* is so irrepressible it’s in laugh out loud territory. A good start to a collection that takes on some large, unlanguageed things. There’s an explanatory poem straight off as to the hippopotamuses and giraffes lurking around, but beware the crocodile: “Watered well, talk is careless/ doesn’t notice the grass grow higher.”

The other 51 poems are arranged into four literally titled sections. The first of these is Time and the camera, in which most poems are partnered with a black and white image; a visual complement to the histories.

As well as telling individual stories, the chronological insight into the progress of photography from Kodak Box to digital gives good pause for thought. In ‘Two dimensions of recall’, Martha exposes the process of making “jigsaw/ recollections from clues”:

We try to recall
their names, piece together
the future, wonder why they
press so tight against
the tyre, why the boy's eyes
are closed, what the dog sees.

The most striking poem in this section is 'Great aunt takes control'. Her face literally snipped (with her own cuticle scissors) from the picture, she becomes better sketched in her absence:

They say she smelled of lilac talcum
moved like a bear
wiped her children's noses with starched hankies
made from squares of lawn she'd tatted edges on.
Her voice was a harp, trilling her moods;
she made the best banana cream pies in town.

In 'Colour and flash '65', we read that photos are "turning what we/ remembered into flat impressions/second hand images stored in boxes". This section neatly reverses that process and enlivens images and memory. It's a sort of sadness that in digital reality it's possible to fudge that and

heighten waves, deepen furrows
increase spray, bruise clouds with threat of storm
print the reality I remember

Section 2, Sketches of people and places, has, as the title suggests, poems about just that. Oamaru, Ohio, the Badlands. Bombay/Mumbai depending on the age of the atlas and its reader. There is much birdsong and ordinary life in this. In 'Quincy & Quincy', she writes:

I don't want to alarm them
so I talk of safe things I know:
jars of homemade jam
quince fruit I'm preserving

And ordinary is great. Especially written with an unordinary twist. In 'Remembering Janet Frame', Martha writes,

The tui in my garden are not so clever
But they manage to stand on their heads
While they siphon the nectar from the kowhai blossoms.

There's a lunar eclipse tonight, on your birthday.
How you like to unsettle us all so quietly.

And there's a bit of unquiet settling going on here, too. Friendship is stretched and tested. In 'Finding mushrooms':

I wonder
How much do trust and friendship matter?
The mushrooms taste of earth and summer.

And in 'Chance casualties', a light look at severed mannequin hands "in a department store skirmish", she writes,

I think about connections, friendships,
how they might end
when clasped too tight.

But only momentarily;
there is shopping to do.

Reaches of Imagination, the third section, reaches into areas as diverse as frost, fear and 'Where is a wizard when you need one?' If there is a unifying theme here, could it be something like an undercurrent of unlucky or dark? There are fallen nests and "a crescendo of terror" and in 'Then luck will come', we're told, "Each time I pluck the petals/ the daisies come out wrong."

Further, in 'Thinking of HG Wells', we're warned that

Even thoughts are hazardous.
Like the time I said to myself
'Don't hit my car'
as my neighbour backed
down the serpentine drive.
Two seconds later
I heard the crunch
and I knew I was to blame.

Phew. There are stories about stories in this section too, but no happy endings. Especially not in 'Cinema Two'. It's true – "Imagination's no safe place".

The final section gives us Landscapes of Possibilities. As through the rest of the collection, there is a fine tension between the said and the unsaid, the everyday and the extra. Sometimes this is explicit, as in 'Metaphysical confessions in a Dunedin Flat'. The prose poem 'It depends' has two literal takes on a friendship, with meetings a month apart in the same cafe. We also revisit photography in 'Close reading a photograph':

Your six-year-old daughter sits upright, a troubled queen.
The lampshade behind her a crown...

...We fooled around I the fool you around we all adored
the child the only one who watched what others
pretended not to see...

There it is again - the hippopotamus in the room.

***breakfast with epiphanies* Owen Bullock (Oceanbooks 2012) RRP \$19.95 (e-book: \$5.95)**

Vanessa Proctor

Owen Bullock's *breakfast with epiphanies* is a meditative collection of haiku and senryu, each epiphany, rather than being a moment of dramatic enlightenment, a quiet realisation about the nature of the world and the poet's place in it. As the title suggests, there is a wry humour underlying many of the poems and this is where the strength of this collection lies.

me & the kid	meditation –
believing	the dent in the monk's
we're Arsenal	head

These poems are personal reflections on human experience, relationships, aging and loss and it is this focus on the personal that appeals to the reader.

Bullock is also a keen observer of nature and his poems often focus on a specific image, whether it is a match caught in a spider's web or crows against the sunset. The most successful of these nature poems are closely connected to human experience such as the atmospheric,

sleepless night
the mountain wrapped
in mist

Bullock's writing is both concise and precise as befits the genre of haiku. His voice is down to earth, conversational at times, and his style is varied. Incorporated into the collection are a few haiku that are Issa-like in their style and subjectivity.

fly
in the drinking water
you too will dissolve

The subject of this haiku is ambiguous, lending added depth to the poem. Is the poet addressing the fly or is there someone else present? The ambiguity makes for interesting reading.

The haiku are also varied in shape and avoid formulaic patterns. Amid the three-line haiku are both one and four-liners, which are a refreshing departure from convention.

Things are not always as they seem in Bullock's world of epiphanies and he uses some surprising images, not only visual, but many of them sound images.

moving day – the little noise he makes
the last wardrobe before he rings the bell
his son's dresses is the bell

There are poems about knickers, ice cream and a breakfast mug, among other things. and each takes on a significance well beyond the object itself.

breakfast
I'm holding onto a mug
the way father did
in the photo

Underneath the humour lies an awareness and acceptance of things as they are, and ultimately an acknowledgment of man's ephemerality.

This is a thoughtful and accomplished collection of poems that certainly deserves a second reading.

***My Family & Other Strangers* Laurice Gilbert (Academy Aotearoa Press, 2012) ISBN 978-0-473-20235-5. \$12 from <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/myfamilyotherstrangers>**

Vaughan Rapatahana

Ka nui te pai tēnei pukapuka o ngā whiti. Ka nui te pai nōtemea ko ngā whiti tino hōu me pūangiāngi me ki he tinihanga kore kei konei.

An excellent book of poems. Excellent because the poems here are fresh, refreshing and sincere.

And unadorned too. Except for the profuse acknowledgements and dedications and the 'sharing the love' sections. For Laurice Gilbert is a generous personage – reflected not solely in the emotive thrust of her poems, but also in the way she has compiled the entire collection as a form of accolade to all those who have ever meant something to her – warts and all.

My Family & Other Strangers is a love affair with life and every idiosyncrasy and idiosyncratic individual this brief planetary interlude we all share, entails.

What a lovely change to read and savour simple poems about real everyday experiences that are not stuck in the lexicological mire of impenetrable vocabulary and literary gamesmanship, pedantic footnoted cross-fires and miasmatically abstruse references and allusions.

Laurice Gilbert is then a literary breath of fresh air. Throw open the windows and read the entire slim volume in one especially fulfilling session.

None of which means that she cannot write some damnably effective imagery. Gobble up these tasty morsels as just some of her poetico-culinary skill:

Feelings were kept on the top shelf
where children couldn't reach them
(‘Life is a Grocery Store’)

Portrait of the Artist

After EE Cummings

Vincent Van Gogh poor and mad
who used to drink absinthe into the night
alone
painted peasants prostitutes sunflowers
starry starry night by all that's holy
he was a colourful man
and what I want to know is
how can I find such passion as that
and live

Maybe in your own collection ... ?



Mini Competition

I'll probably regret this, but here goes: write me a limerick. This is a popular form, so it'll have to be good to stand out from the pack, and I'll pay special attention to the rhythm and rhyme. But don't let that put you off entering. Having said that, I very much favour innovation and originality, so your non-traditional limerick might still stand a chance if it sufficiently surprises me. I'll choose up to five winners, and the prizes will be random poetry books from among the collection kindly gifted by Roger Steele, of Steele Roberts. Send your entry to: laurice@poetrysociety.org.nz (preferred) or: PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145, by the **NEXT MAGAZINE DEADLINE, 7 APRIL.**



Random thoughts from the www

"Insanity and poetry are old kin. The number of canonical poets who suffered from mental illness is immense: Blake, Holderlin, Pound, Plath, Lowell, Berryman, Hill, to name just a few. The distinction between insanity and genius is typically judged by the extent of an artist's transgressions as well as their social class. The blue-blood can afford his or her illness. A struggling mother or teacher is suffocated by it."

"... it could be that society has generated a space around poetry where such extreme non-conformity is allowed, and many such persons are drawn (or forced) into it. If so, then the poetry community is just another form of institutionalization, a free-range Bedlam. However, if mental illness is material – if it is a matter of hormones and receptors – it could be that some forms of madness provide the imaginative qualities needed to produce poetry. In this formulation, poetry is the mechanical output of an irregular mind, the excretions of a human poetry machine: language, images, concepts, and social forces enter and then out comes the poem."

http://criticalflame.org/verse/0113_pritchard.htm

"... teaching poetry teaches kids to be decent human beings. And perhaps we could use a few more decent people.

"Stories unite us, and show us the ways in which we are connected," said [Sheila] O'Connor, who estimates she worked with more than 10,000 schoolchildren as a poet in the schools with COMPAS and other regional arts organizations.

"When children are telling their stories and listening to their classmates' stories, they learn so much about each other, and all this natural empathy starts to develop in the classroom," she said in an interview. "You can't not care about someone who's writing about putting their dog down, even if you hated them at recess for a year."

<http://www.minnpost.com/books/2013/02/sheila-o-connor-why-teaching-poetry-matters>

That hesitation right before a kiss
I don't remember ever learning this
I've never had a valentine before
I'm not a little baby anymore

It's poetry – rhyming couplets written in perfect iambic pentameter, those ten-syllable lines of alternating emphasis made famous by authors of sonnets and blank verse. But unlike your average metered rhyme, these lines were written by Twitter ...

with some help from a program called Pentameton.

<http://www.npr.org/2013/02/16/172031066/pentameton-reveals-unintended-poetry-of-twitter-users>

David Biespiel's Poetry Wire: My Kingdom for a Bag of Bones David Biespiel, February 6th, 2013. (Abridged)

What follows, fair warning, has little symmetry or reason and more, it seems now looking it over, a disproportion of the delirium:

It is best to write poetry without ruthlessness or desperation.

A poet's manner and the rawness of his or her material are hard to separate.

A poet cannot save material for poetry. Only spend it.

A poet's raw material is neutral. Interfere with the material, and the poem will come from that.

Don't leave research to the novelists.

Utilize everything, become flooded. Then, select. As if to turn bitterness into sweetness.

Can we all please throw the poetry workshop an elbow and stop telling poets what not to write. If someone tells you X is a rule, immediately do X. Stick it right in the poem's rib cage.

Whitman ...: "The attitude of great poets is to cheer up slaves and horrify despots." Still a goal.

In poetry, difficulty is just fine. Same, simplicity.

Is a poem a self-portrait or a self-exposure? Answer that, and you'll have gone a long way to sorting out what kind of poet you are.

I wish to write poetry between the following workbenches: Model and remodel. Compose and decompose. Orient and disorient.

The anecdotal poem loses me when it becomes a demonstration of the aseptic, when it treats life as mechanical. Otherwise, I have no hostility toward the anecdotal poem.

Ambiguity would like a few nights out on her own without irony.

To write without ambiguity is to write as if social reality is always pleasant. Or worse, to insist on it: "How can anyone be sad on a beautiful day like this!"

Bluntness in poetry is a servant to timing. Delicacy is required. Ba-dum!

The omniscient point of view in poetry has all the honesty of experience of propaganda.

Often when I write a poem I think: My kingdom for a bag of bones. I don't know what that means but it ratchets up my imagination.

I wish to say something to compare the poet to the stripper, but I can't stop laughing long enough to do it so you're on your own!

Question for a poem in progress: What are the principles? What are the means? What is the function? Who is the user? What is the user's experience?

The Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want" Rule for Poetry: Exuberance and profusion can benefit from tradition.

Worth noting: Before Paul Harvey could write, 'God Made a Farmer', there was already poetry in the land.

<http://therumpus.net/2013/02/david-biespiels-poetry-wire-my-kingdom-for-a-bag-of-bones/>



Members' Poems

In my mind, I'm ready

Are you balanced
on the end of a fork
as the door peels away

are you bowing
in obeisance
to a lonely marble

are you falling
like a dusted jellyfish
with flickering hands

did you hear the drop
of silence
above the surface

Charmaine Thomson

In October 2012, Felix Baumgartner (Austria) broke the world freefall jump record by jumping from 120,000 feet above the earth.

Christchurch poets in October, and you

Words like birds
make no barriers of heads.

A skateboarder on the footpath
ollies; his arm bones and elbows

are wings, he tucks in his legs
and lifts and arcs over the estuary

where the evening light makes hexagons
on water, and gurgles escape

from the mouths of minims
running with glee

because someone pressed rewind
and that someone was me

on the beaks of birds snapping
insect backs. They clap their hands

as they fly free elegant
backwards, dandelion seeds

on

the blue

Gail Ingram

Low Battery Lights

At the secret
time of three a.m., who is
it that goes fishing?
A shadowy
figure
with a headlamp on. He
is not alone. Others too,
look for food at
three a.m.,
in quiet allegiance
on the banks of the glinting
clear
narrow
stream of water.
Fishing for God. Human
shapes, barely
lit by flickers from their
low battery lights.

During the day, predators predate.
Those who are masterful are God.
They prey by day and have;
they sleep well at night, secure.

Three a.m. low battery
lights. Ashen
shadow-men
at the narrow stream
of life,
relieved
rerieved.

Susan Haniel

Conclusions

Now I know why
the elderly walk crouched.
They're trying not
to drop crumbs on the floor.

Now I know why
trees drop their leaves
when autumn comes.
Their fingers are tired.

Now I know why
pages break down
in the rain.
Too many stressed words.

Maureen Sudlow

centenarian

the day
the town flooded
I saw my mother's eyes
had changed
from brown to blue

the milky blue
of a new born infant's

she always said
that my face
was an open book

when she read it
her eyes were brown

Catherine Mair

