



The New Zealand Poetry Society

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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

New Zealand Poetry Society
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☞ This Month's Meeting ☜

**Jim Christy
&
Harvey McQueen**

**Thursday May 20th
Turnbull House 8⁰⁰ p.m.**

Is haiku poetry?

Haiku at their best represent everything you'd want to find in contemporary poetry.

A haiku begins with remembered sensory impressions. The selection of what to include and what to ignore is the very basis of poetry because poetry must go beyond being a diary entry of experience to being lines on the page (or in the ear) that create an experience which is worthwhile in itself. What will work as words and phrases within a poem may require significant re-shaping of the original experience or of the first conception of the poem.

In this example the mass of impressions of a car wrecker's yard is stripped down to single dominating detail which gives the immediate scene a wider resonance:

wreckers yard
last year's colours
on the leaves

Ernest Berry

Haiku don't rhyme, partly because the brevity of haiku makes rhyme too intrusive and can not only seem a little ridiculous - especially when it's hard to find a rhyme - but also distracts attention from the significant elements presented:

Rain Hat Isle I'd fain
See, but for the road, alas,
Muddy with June rain!

(Dorothy Britton has a go at Basho's *A Haiku Journey*.)
Instead good haiku poets aim at fluency of line employing cadences based on speech rhythms:

Forsythia blooms
cluster on a fence –
neighbours talk

Jack Galmitz (USA)

The rhythm of this small haiku is subtle. Each line has two stressed syllables. In lines two and three these come at either end of the line. And each line has its own rhythm created not only by the stressed and unstressed syllables but also by the sounds at the beginning and end of words.

The first line is read as a unit but leads on after a very small pause to the next line. The second line has a caesura or pause after 'cluster', while the 's' sound, the dash and the subsequent 'n' sound create a longer pause before the final line. This line is a single unit, too; but the stress-unstress-stress pattern clearly defines it as the conclusion of the haiku. And the sound shapes of the lines encourage a closer reading of the lines.

This haiku's language lets the lines flow, sounding euphonious even musical, a pleasure to hear aloud. The pauses are well judged for their effect. The writer's control over the language extends from choice of vowels and consonants to syllables to words to phrases to lines and the entire mini poem.

In haiku as in any kind of poem the language creates the poem with phrases or lines fluent, gritty, rhythmic, jittery, pleasant, harsh – whatever the poet's purposes are.

Imagery is at heart of the haiku method of writing. It doesn't have to be a unique or unusual image, but simply something well observed and well expressed. And since a haiku is short, the image must be concise and effective.

The haiku below is built around images: a more or less level surface and an arc with a lone consonant sound 'k' linking the first two lines:

across the harbour
one raincloud
with its own rainbow

Jeanette Stace

Like any poetry haiku can rely on the shorthand of allusions to shared knowledge:

Basho's statue –
I stand in his shadow
for the photograph

Cyril Childs



Good haiku often evoke emotion and remind the readers of similar experiences:

night of her death
through our telescope
Jupiter's moons blur

Vanessa Proctor

The situation is implicit and the long vowels 'i', 'oo', 'ur' in particular help to convey the dominant feeling. But haiku-like, too, the poem shows life going on.

Being memorable is often the hallmark of well written poetry. This lively senryu has lurked in my mind for several years, maybe because of the mind-picture of the Kiwi in a Buddhist monk's robes likening himself to a sparrow and the fact that this seems to liberate a sense of fun and anticipation in him:

hey you sparrows!
I'm in my brown robe
where shall we go?

Richard von Sturmer

As with other good poetry, a haiku may point not only to what is the immediate subject, but by means of it to wider and deeper concerns. No truly good haiku poet, no more than any other poet, is satisfied with surfaces, nor with seeing only simplicity in what is apparently simple:

new grass
horse stories
in old men's voices

Tony Beyer

This is indeed a moving portrayal of aging and of looking back at memories in a world renewing itself.

Naturally haiku too can offer enjoyment, fun, satire, word play:

hobo
beside the river
dozes on penny royal

Owen Bullock

Like all contemporary poetry, the success of a haiku depends not so much on what's said but how it is said and how the poem creates response in the reader/listener.

The best haiku poets draw in some way on the bold and fascinating experiments in poetry of the past century. In those haiku – or poems derived from haiku – the centre of interest is the little poem itself:

snore,
clove

John. M. Bennett (USA)

c i c k e t s . f o g
b a r n y a r d g r a s s

LeRoy Gorman (Canada)



Perhaps this is the place to note that haiku and senryu (haiku about people) have had more myths passed on about them than any other form of poetry, many transmitted through the Internet.

English language haiku do not and indeed must not slavishly imitate ancient Japanese models which are embedded in quite a different language and culture.

English language haiku do not have to have three lines or 17 syllables, caesuras, season words, or any of the features of Japanese haiku of the past. (Modern Japanese haiku are as variable as are English language haiku.)

The best modern English haiku are terse, vivid records of a brief period of time, the poets using the number of words and lines that suit the purpose, avoiding verbosity.

The appeal of haiku for readers is the directness – and, in the best works - simplicity without triviality.

For the writer the appeal and challenge are of learning a poetic craft that looks to be simple, but requires skill, practice, and wide reading in order to get it right.

Bernard Gadd



Bernard Gadd is co-editor with Patricia Prime of New Zealand's leading haiku magazine, Kokako, which presents haiku along with other poetry.

Quotation of the Month

One demands two things of a poem. Firstly, it must be a well-made verbal object that does honour to the language in which it is written. Secondly, it must say something significant about a reality common to us all, but perceived from a unique perspective. What the poet says has never been said before, but, once he has said it, his readers recognise its validity for themselves.

W. H. Auden

From the Committee

As the NZPS moves further forward to reflect its national membership and identity, the Committee wants to remind you to use the proxy voting form on the back page of this month's Newsletter to make your voice heard.

The Committee and the NZPS will remain centred in Wellington, but Committee Members do not have to live in Wellington and can be co-opted onto the Committee during the year. Get involved with the NZPS and help to take us into a brighter future.

We encourage all our members to give us feedback at any time during the year, not just at the AGM in June. If you live in the Wellington area and can attend the AGM, please do so. If you live further afield, you can e-mail or write to us at any time with your thoughts and opinions about the NZPS. Remember, this is *your* society and your voice counts.

Wanted

Is there any chance that someone out there has a spare copy of *Savage Garden* (last year's anthology of NZPS Poetry Competition prizewinners) for sale? If so, please contact Patricia Prime: 42 Flanshaw Road, Te Atatu South, Auckland, or e-mail pprime@ihug.co.nz.

☯ Obituary ☯



Michael King 1945 - 2004

The recent death of biographer and historian Michael King and his wife Maria Jungowska is a tragic loss for family and friends, and for New Zealand literature.

Michael King's books and writings added enormously to New Zealanders' understanding of themselves and their history. This was recognised when in 2003 King was recipient of the inaugural Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement for non-fiction. (These Awards are for writers who have made "an outstanding contribution to New Zealand literature" and the other winners were Janet Frame for fiction and Hone Tuwhare for poetry.)

William Taylor, President of the New Zealand Society of Authors, said: "What Michael King gave to our society and culture has been incomparable. In his recording of the history of our country and its people he leaves us all a legacy of lasting worth. The country mourns the loss of Michael and his wife, and our nation's writing community of our nation stands forever in his debt."

Michael King was an active member – and past President – of the NZSA for 29 years, and worked tirelessly for other writers and the Authors' Fund. For the past four years he was an NZSA mentor, assisting new writers to improve their craft.

The New Zealand Poetry Society extends its deepest sympathy to the families Mr. & Mrs. King.

On the death of Michael King

Haere ra,
giver of our image in a mirror
and holder of a gentle light
to reflect the past
in clear tones
glowing in their richness
of what may yet be

That with clearer vision
we may see a glimpse of where we
and our country
are going
- with your lamp still
glowing in our hands.

Moyae Kennedy



☯ From the Editor ☯

I'm handing this space over to Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, who sent this report of World Poetry Day 2004 to the New Zealand Society of Authors. (*Why not to us, I wonder? – We might have got it sooner.*) Here's his message:

"In a world overwhelmed by noise and slogans, poetry brings us a different way of telling its history, with its dreams and its divisions, thanks to the diversity of the world's languages.

With this celebration, UNESCO does not see itself as the mastermind of some commemorative ceremony. We simply wish to contribute to the free emergence of words, to be a catalyst for transmission, sharing and creativity.

In its written or oral form, poetry may be an instrument of conservation, a living memory of peoples, a story of origins. Whether sacred or profane, poetry enlightens us with memorable words, to be cherished and handed down, both a challenge and an antidote to oblivion.

But the act of poetry also represents dissonance and disproportion, trial and exorcism. Its modern and shifting vision allows for new associations and dissociations. As it plays with language structure, poetry displaces and condenses images and in so doing stimulates the imagination and creative freedom within us.

Poetry thus involves a whole conception of history and culture that ties in with our desire to find a response to the contradictions of our time.

I hope, therefore, that this Day provided one and all with an opportunity to look again, without fetishism or amnesia, at the use we make of languages, heritage and memory. A day that helped us build a vital relationship between the memory of the past and the invention of new possibilities."

Writers International

Writers International now has its own e-mail address: writers_international@yahoo.co.nz. Please send in your questions about meetings and membership, information for the newsletter, or other communication directly to this address.

☯ Upcoming Events ☯

AUCKLAND

A one-day 'Stretch & Grow' workshop is being held on Saturday June 12th by the National Speakers Association of New Zealand. Writers are welcome too, and it includes information on writing, producing and promoting books -- ideal for any self-publisher.

The main presenter is Dan Poynter, an American self-publishing pioneer, who has produced 100 of his own books and frequently lectures in this field. He's flying in from Santa Barbara to supply info on e-publishing as well as print-on-demand, and on effective ways to take your books to market. Other presenters are Amanda Fleming, who trains budding speakers on how to enjoy and maximise their own unique style (helpful for writers keen to buff up author-tour appearances), and futurist Ian Ivey.

Earlybird fee - paid before May 12th - is \$195 including lunch and refreshments. Venue: Allenby Park Motor Inn, Manukau City, Auckland. For further information, go to www.nationalspeakers.org.nz and click on Coming Events.

DUNEDIN

Dunedin Fringe Festival ~ call for fringe artistes nationwide

The Dunedin Fringe Festival is a biennial festival showcasing contemporary art from all art disciplines. The 2002 Dunedin Fringe Festival featured 100 events and up to 500 artistes from all over New Zealand. The Dunedin Fringe is an opportunity for artistes and performers to take their work to new audiences and to be part of an exciting festival programme.

Download a festival registration pack online at www.dunedinfringe.org.nz now – and check out reviews and images of the 2002 Dunedin Fringe. You can register up to 28th May 2004. Contact: Paul Smith (ph 03 477 3350 or 021 150 9207)



TAURANGA

BravadoPoetryCompetition Prizewinners' Awards Ceremony with Mayor Jan Beange

6.30 p.m. Friday 7th May
in the Washington Room
Hotel Armitage Willow Street
Tauranga

Allenquiries:
info.bravado@xtra.co.nz
ph 075763040

This event is kindly supported by
Creative Communities & Tourism BOP

WELLINGTON

'Our quest for love from the world is a secret and shameful tale'

New Zealand Book Council and Penguin Books (NZ) are pleased to announce an evening with world-renowned philosopher, author, and TV presenter Alain De Botton.

Best-selling author of *The Consolations of Philosophy* and *The Art of Travel*, Alain De Botton approaches the entirely different but no less anxious idea of status. In his new book *Status Anxiety* he asks us to contemplate how the world sees us. Do people think we are winners or losers? What tools have been used to make this perception? Can we change these perceptions?

With typical lucidity and charm De Botton peels away the pretensions of our society and investigates the roots of these emotions from the French Revolution and Jane Austen to the 'snobs' and 'dorks' of the local high school.

Join Alain De Botton for an entertaining and lively conversation with Laura Kroetsch at St Andrews on the Terrace Wellington, 6 p.m. Monday 17th May. Tickets are on sale now from Jasmine De Boni (ph 04 499 1569, e-mail events@bookcouncil.org.nz).

A journey beyond biography

The New Zealand Book Council and Random House NZ are pleased to announce an evening with writer, literary critic and essayist C.K. Stead who will discuss and read from his new novel *Mansfield*.

In this fictionalised account, drawn from many years of study, C.K. Stead has created an extraordinary picture of three important years in the life of Katherine Mansfield (1915-1919). Katherine is on the verge of literary success, she has fallen in love with a young soldier and has met some of the larger than life characters from England's intelligentsia. Stead reveals Katherine's bright and inquisitive nature, grappling with a time of upheaval, fledgling love and tragic loss. The result is a vivid portrait of one of our most loved literary icons.

C.K. Stead has won many literary awards, published a wide body of work and has edited *Journals of Katherine Mansfield* and Penguin Modern Classics *Letters*. This is his tenth novel.

Join C.K. Stead in conversation with Greg O'Brien at National Library Auditorium Wellington 6 p.m. Tuesday 11th May. Tickets available from Jasmine De Boni (ph 04 499 1569, or e-mail events@bookcouncil.org.nz).

Windrift

Windrift meets again on Thursday May 20th at 2 p.m. at the home of Jeanette Stace, 58 Cecil Road Wadestown. If you would like to receive the 'formal' invitation including ideas for haiku, please contact Nola Borrell. All welcome.

If you are interested in attending a national weekend haiku workshop in 2005, please let us know. (See April Newsletter for details.) Contacts: Jeanette Stace (ph 04 473 6227, e-mail njstace@actrix.gen.nz) or Nola Borrell (ph 04 586 7287, nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz)

☞ Jim Christy & Harvey McQueen ☜ at Turnbull House Bowen Street Thursday May 20th at 8 p.m.

Jim Christy, poet, musician, painter, sculptor and novelist, is now a Canadian citizen living in Vancouver. He has three published books of poetry, with a fourth book due in September.

Born in 1945 in Virginia, he later lived as a boy in a tough area of South Philadelphia. As an adult he worked as a ferryboat deckhand in Chesapeake Bay, landscape worker in Yukon Territory, antiquities restorer in Mexico, and a freelance photographer in Vietnam.

He has travelled and written about many troubled areas, including Soweto, Nicaragua and El Salvador. All rich experience for his poetry.

Christy has a CD of poetry, songs and music due to be released later this year. Another CD, *Night in Grombalia*, was released by the Transiberian Music Company of Vancouver about a year ago. A reviewer, Dennis Breen, wrote, 'This disc is easily the most arresting and interesting thing I've heard in a while... it has slowly pulled me in, and now I'm gone – hook, line, and sinker'.

Christy has written about 20 books altogether, including essays, travel, novels, and biography. Topics range from boxing to unusual homes and gardens. He has performed spoken word with a jazz/blues ensemble. Christy has also acted in film and television productions.

He's been quoted as saying, 'I never dismiss another's story out of hand - no matter what it's about or how outrageous it may seem.'



Harvey McQueen will be known to many of you, both as poet and anthologist, and also as an educational consultant. He has another poetry collection out this year, *Recessional*, published by HeadworX. His *Pingandy: New and Selected Poems* was published in 1999.

McQueen was born a Cantabrian and worked within the educational system before striking out in 1986 as educational consultant and writer. You may have read his memoir, *The Ninth Floor* (1991), at the time of 'Tomorrow's Schools' when he was personal educational adviser to David Lange, then Minister of Education and also Prime Minister. A more recent educational book is *A Question of Shoe Size: The Campaign for Pay Parity for Primary Teachers 1994-1998* (2001) with Anne Else.

McQueen's poetry has been described as 'mostly meditative or conversational, giving engaging expression to the mental life of a contemporary educated New Zealand male. Poems range over relationships, family, love, work, politics, office life, domestic concerns like gardening or cats, music and reading, with a sensitivity that is never merely fashionable and a commitment to the significance of private thought that is never pretentious. The wry humour, observation of small-scale detail and natural recurrence of reference to New Zealand's fauna and flora are all pleasures' *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*. His books include *Against the Maelstrom* (1981), *Stoat Spring* (1983), *Oasis Motel* (1986) and *Room* (Black Robin, 1988)

McQueen is an experienced anthologist. *Ten Modern New Zealand Poets* (ed. with Lois Cox, 1974), aimed at schools; *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (ed. with Ian Wedde, 1985), which included both Maori and Pakeha traditions; and later *The Penguin Book of Contemporary New Zealand Poetry* (ed. with Ian Wedde and Miriama Evans, 1989) and *The New Place: The Poetry of Settlement in New Zealand 1852-1914* (1993).

Come along, and meet a new voice and be prepared to be entertained, surprised - maybe challenged - and renew your pleasure in hearing a known accomplished voice with new poems.

Other News

Writers and free expression at Barcelona Forum

The Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN (WiPC) will spotlight the struggles of writers worldwide against censorship next month at a major international event in Barcelona, touted as a 'new and creative space for reflection' on cross cultural understanding, peace and sustainable development.

WiPC is hosting a 5-day conference called *The Value of the Word*, one of 47 different 'dialogues' being held at Barcelona Forum 2004. Sponsored in part by UNESCO and hosted by the city of Barcelona, the forum will run from 9th May to 26th September and is expected to attract internationally acclaimed figures, including Noam Chomsky, Bono, former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev and former U.S. President Bill Clinton. The dialogues provide a platform for debates on cultural diversity, sustainable development and the promotion of peace.

Taking place from 17th - 21st May 2004, the *Value of the Word* will be a meeting point for writers from various countries and cultures, who will share experiences about their struggles against censorship. They will include writers freed from prison, exiled writers and those facing persecution. Delegates from PEN's 130 centres will also evaluate past campaigns in support of imprisoned writers and discuss new initiatives.

In addition, PEN's conference will feature three roundtables where writers and the general public can share views on the role of writers in society. One of the roundtables, entitled 'Writers' Responsibilities in the Face of War' will deal with writers in conflict situations. For more information on the conference, visit <http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/eventos/dialogos/ficha.cfm?IdEvento=150>. For more information about PEN's work, visit <http://www.internationalpen.org.uk/> (*Report from NZSA, with thanks*)

Two new writer's awards

The Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust in association with the NZ Society of Authors is pleased to announce two \$10,000 awards for writers.

Ashton Wylie was an Auckland businessman who had a wide range of interests, particularly in the area of personal development and positive relationships. Following his death in 1999 the Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust was set up with the mandate of having human relationships as its focus and its main intent being to assist all people to become more perfectly loving.

The NZSA has been negotiating with the Trust to set up the two awards. The NZSA will be administering them and the Trust will present the awards at a ceremony to be held at the Hopetoun Alpha in Auckland on August 20th 2004.

The Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust Book Award is for a book published between April 1st 2003 and March 31st 2004 and the **Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust Writers Award** is for an unpublished manuscript. Both are for the mind-body-spirit ('New Age') genre. The deadline for entries is 31st May 2004 for unpublished manuscripts and 30th June 2004 for published books.

Please contact the NZSA Office for submission forms and full details of eligibility criteria. E-mail nzsa@clear.net.nz or write (with SSAE) to PO Box 67-013 Mount Eden Auckland 1003.

Welcome

... to **Sandy Bain**, Christchurch
 ... to **K.E. Barratt**, Auckland
 ... to **Michelle Brewer**, Manukau City
 ... to **Maureen Cassidy**, Rotorua
 ... to **Sue Emms**, Tauranga
 ... to **Chris Eyes**, Hamilton
 ... to **Joseph L. Fone**, Christchurch
 ... to **Janice Fry**, Rotorua
 ... to **Michael Harlow**, Alexandra
 ... to **Phyllis Gibson**, Auckland
 ... to **Valerie Goodyer**, Bay of Islands
 ... to **Lawson Hale**, Whangarei
 ... to **Christopher Horan**, Invercargill
 ... to **Kalyan Ky**, Wellington
 ... to **Sherry McCauley**, Spokane USA
 ... to **Carol Rowe**, Thames
 ... to **Nicola Saker**, Wellington
 ... to **John Schrader**, Wellington
 ... to **Barry Southon**, Pakuranga
 ... to **Maria Turner**, Auckland
 ... to **Juliana Venning**, Christchurch
 ... to **Art Verschoor**, Napier
 ... to **Elizabeth Rose Welsh**, Rothersey Bay
 ... to **Melanie Wittiver**, Auckland

œ Publications œ

Former NZSA director's new book

In March this year Jenny Jones, former Executive Director of the New Zealand Society of Authors, saw the launch of her new book by Wellington writer and editor Jane Westaway.

Writers in Residence: Journeys with Pioneer New Zealand Writers, published by AUP, is an engaging and unusual book about 19th-century New Zealand writers. It presents in human terms what it meant to be a writer in a strange new land. Unexpected people took to the pen; travellers recorded their adventures; soldiers, judges and civil servants burst into print.

The 20 writers featured include Joel Polack, William Colenso, Edward Jerningham Wakefield, Frederick Maning, John Logan Campbell, Samuel Butler, Lady Barker, and end with Blanche Baughan and Jessie Mackay.

The book required considerable research but, with its strong biographical emphasis, is both lively and accessible. *Writers in Residence* aims to take these talented, entertaining and courageous characters out of the exclusive possession of the scholars into the New Zealand literary mainstream as part of a general sense of the past experienced within this land.

As Jenny herself remarked, 'I hope to have captured something of the reality of the lives lived and to create a sense of this country as one inhabited by writers.'

Hen Enterprises



Focus on Fiction by Sue Emms @\$7.50 is a useful introduction to the main principles of fiction to help you get published, whether short stories or novels. Sue Emms has been widely published in New Zealand and abroad, and was this year's *Takahe* winner. She judged last year's Auswrite and Western Districts competitions and was three times a finalist in the Richard Webster Popular Fiction Award. Hazard Press published *Parrot Parfait* last year and will shortly bring out *Come Yesterday*.

Constructive Editing by Jenny Argante @\$7.50 is a guide to close editing. 'The only true writer is a re-writer' say the experts, and Jenny explains the process of revising a first draft to publishable standard. The writer as reader gets a lucid explanation of editing for content and readability. Jenny Argante is poetry editor of *Freelance Magazine*; book news editor for the *Society of Authors* and your newsletter editor.

summer, Hauraki Plains is a long poem with sumi-e illustrations by Janice M. Bostok, @\$7.50, and Hen Enterprises has also published *after the buddhist comes to call* with illustrations by eRiQ @\$12. These poems by Bay of Plenty writer Owen Bullock launch a series of chapbooks intended to showcase the work of local writers and illustrators in an affordable and compact format. *summer, Hauraki Plains* is a verbal portrait of a particular time and place essentially New Zealand. *after the buddhist comes to call* is a series of poems written as half-humorous, half-serious responses to a Zen philosophy of accepting life as a random mix of pleasure and pain.

Please send your cheque or money order with any order to:
Hen Enterprises PO Box 13-533 Grey Street Tauranga

Voices: a book of poems on a journey through the grief of losing a child

Margaret Gillanders & Sandie Legge

This is narrative as therapy, and the poems are neither great nor particularly good or bad, but simply written from the heart. Therefore, inevitably, they create something to which a reader can relate. As Malcolm says in *Macbeth*, 'Give sorrow words;/ the grief that does not speak/ whispers o'er fraught heart/ and bids it silence.' It is the silence and the emptiness that remains when a child is lost that these two courageous women have addressed in *Voices*. This was self-published with a grant from Creative Communities in Dunedin and is admirably presented with strong artwork donated by Pauline Bellamy, Manu Berry and Hugh Manson.

For sale @ \$5 (SAE please) from Sandie Legge PO Box 6297 Dunedin North.

œ Congratulations œ

...to **Ernest J. Berry** of Picton who was Highly Commended in the British Haiku Society J.W. Hackett International Haiku Award. This year there were over 400 entries from 94 poets all over the world, and the judges selected only two winners and four highly commendeds. This is Ernie's haiku:

plum blossoms
lovers looking everywhere
at each other

... to **Beverley George**, generous and friendly editor of *Oz* haiku magazine *Yellow Moon*, in which so many New Zealand poets have appeared, for being joint winner of the 2003 Hackett Award this year (sharing with Ross Figgins, USA).

... to all the winners in this year's Katikati Have-a-Go Haiku Competition, too numerous to display except for two. First, Best Local Haiku by **Carol Ramsey** of Katikati:

the shag
replete
awaits the next flow

And second, the haiku by the Overall Adult Winner, **Andre Surridge** of Hamilton:

conversion –
the sun
falls between goalposts

Among the runners-up were **Ernie Berry** of Picton, **Sandra Simpson** of Tauranga and **Tony Beyer** of Auckland. You can read the full report and winning haiku at www.katikati.co.nz/kk_text/haiku_comp.html.



☯ Websites ☯

Chat up a writer

Peter Beatson of Massey University has created a mailing list chat forum called 'litnz' for New Zealand writers. The list allows you to exchange ideas, news, information or just plain gossip with all others subscribed to it. To subscribe, follow these steps:

- ❖ Send a message to majordomo@massey.ac.nz
- ❖ Do not write anything in the subject line.
- ❖ In the body of the message write ' subscribe litnz' then ' send' the e-mail.
- ❖ If you want to leave the list, do the same, but write unsubscribe instead of subscribe.
- ❖ Once you are signed up, send your messages to tolitnz@massey.ac.nz

☯ Reviews ☯



The Oral Traditions of Ngai Tahu

Rawire Te Maire Tau

Rawire Te Maire Tau is an historian who is a member of the Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu tribal council and who represents Tuahuriri Runanga. His book is a stimulating examination of the relationship between oral tradition and historical evidence, and makes an important contribution to our understanding of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Traces of Ngai Tahu's past are found in lore passed down by previous generations that were transcribed into written records by tohunga from the 1840s onwards – as whakapapa, karakia, waiata and placenames. The problem has always been to know what is myth and what is history.

In this scholarly work, Tau examines minutely the nature and forms of Ngai Tahu oral tradition and how they might be interpreted to explain the iwi's past. His principal sources are family manuscripts never before been made public. Tau says he wanted to use them to expose 'the explosion of utter nonsense from false prophets, Maori and Pakeha' over the past decade. He takes the key events, personalities and relationships delineated, and compares them with those of other tribes.

The Ngai Tahu were a migratory people and iwi in both islands share common ancestry and stories, making such evolutionary study possible – of events, personalities, hapu, migration routes, enemies and allies, and battles lost and won.

Sometimes in Western history there has been an over-dependence on written record, on what has been set down by those who have a vested interest in presenting one viewpoint, the dominant argument. In *The Oral Traditions of Ngai Tahu* we see how myth, ritual and custom can be used to further understanding of the past and of a community. Historical events create spiritual metaphors: symbol and tradition become the means by which tribal mana is established and maintained.

Annotations and maps guide the reader through these sources under the expert leadership of Tau. There is also a comprehensive index, making this a magnificent resource for anyone working on tribal or family histories.

(2003) Tau, Rawire Te Maire. *Nga Pikitura o Ngai Tahu/ The Oral Traditions of Ngai Tahu*. University of Otago Press. rrp \$49.95. ISBN 1 877276 27 8

Gallery: a Selection

Mark Pirie

Mark Pirie is in the vanguard of New Zealand's next generation of contemporary poets. At the very tender age of 29 he has a publishing record to die for. His previous five books of poetry have come out over exactly five years. Since the publication in 1999 of his first book *Shoot*, he has gathered unabated momentum as the wunderkind of New Zealand's Gen Xers.

His record also includes a collection of short stories and the pivotal anthology, *The NeXt Wave: New Zealand Writing*, edited by Mark and published in 1998 by the University of Otago Press.

Gallery: a Selection is exactly what it says: a compilation of Pirie's work from his five previous books *Shoot*, *No Joke*, *The Blues*, *Reading the Will* and *Dumber*. So if you've missed these titles now is your chance to catch up with this beautiful production from Salt Publications.

Pirie is a predominantly urban poet who would rather stumble rhetorically through a disharmonious streetscape punning than attempt to ignite a worn and formal conversation with New Zealand's picturesque landscape. For Pirie the landscape is only there to be recorded and selectively edited as if in Photoshop, played around with, as if it were just one blurted shot taken from a car and pulled randomly out of the vast album of human experience.

His style is visual, direct and witty, and experiments with different fields of perception, from cinema's coded auguries to the inner thoughts of ravaged humanity. Pirie delights in investigating the many voices and cameos we humans inhabit, from a Cambodian refugee girl sitting alone at school lunchtime to a call guy's vented spleen.

Slapstick or black comedy often intrudes to disrupt a tense situation and undercut the psychological drama. He is ironically aware of the self's awkward nature - of how our camera bag strap keeps getting in the way, or how we spoil everything with that big pink blur of a thumb in the top right hand corner of the frame.

In Pirie's work, there's both a hint of homage to literary and musical masters and also a growing dialogue with his Australasian contemporaries such as Anna Jackson and Paul Hardacre. Pirie's not adverse to the pun either as suggested by his poem *Easy*:

if you think
life's not bad enough
go home
write a poem,
send it to someone
and then just wait
for the rejection.

Pirie sits on the cutting room floor of life and edits our existence as caught on his hidden camera, devising illogical jump cuts and updating formulaic mythologies - as in *Headbanger*, a contemporary take on the Samson & Delilah saga. He also casts his directorial eye over notions of New Zealand history, Maori relations, literary authenticity and concepts of patriotism. Mark Pirie beautifully curates this multi-angled collection of human stories - some tragic, some enlightened, but all framed in *Gallery*, his newest exhibition catalogue.

(Review by Brett Dionysius)

Copies of Pirie's *Gallery* are available from Addenda in Auckland @ \$29.95 & from Unity Books in Wellington.

Spirit Songs

Ron Riddell

These read as if written first in Spanish and then translated. Spanish has always seemed to me a more economical and melodious language than English, and this could explain some minor infelicities of diction that sometimes marred Riddell's elegance of expression.

However, most of the poems do rise above artless simplicity to a more forceful poignancy, as in *The Doves of Peace*:

Has anyone seen
the doves of Palestine
flying above the ruins of Gaza;
above the temples of Haifa;
the minarets of Damascus,
the date palms of Basra?

has anyone seen
the doves of peace flying home
above the phantom marshes
to roost in the rooftops of Jerusalem

Even here though my mind wandered off, distracted by those semicolons and by the question as to whether you need to qualify the doves as 'doves of peace'. The dove itself is such a universal symbol *for* peace that it seemed unnecessary.

Overall I felt that most of the poems, whatever their merits in Spanish, would have benefited from more stringent editing – and perhaps, also, from a less literal translation. Translating poetry is always going to be tricky – language isn't only sense, but sound, and there's a cultural underlay that can't always be transposed.

For example, a stern editor might have queried how in one verse of *The Stolen Land* the aboriginal people are rendered speechless/dumb, and then in the next they are 'bereft and moaning/ Their only sound, deep earth groaning'. Here logic kicked in and I asked, 'If it is the deep earth that is groaning, how can it be *their* only sound'. Further, isn't it anthropomorphic to ascribe 'deep groaning' to the earth?

This pausing to ask questions slowed my reading. Eventually I decided to approach *Spirit Songs* as a private commentary rather than a considered body of work offered up for public scrutiny. From this perspective, *Spirit Songs* became a gift from a friend to be accepted for what it was and not for what I wished it had been.

"...footprints he lays down
among fish-heads, flotsam,
driftwood and stones

trailing off the horizon

to the wharenui
of land, sea, sky."

For me it was those times when Riddell let go of conscious poesy that he rose to the best of himself.

(Review by Jenny Argante)



Out & About

NORTHERN LIGHTS POETRY TOUR

presented by
The New Zealand Poetry Society with the
assistance of Creative New Zealand



Nick Ascroft
Emma Neale
James Norcliffe

Day 1: Gisborne - Wednesday 5th May

2 p.m. Reading at Gisborne Girls High School *
Evening Public reading at Muir's Bookshop *

Day 2: Opotiki & Whakatane - Thursday 6th May

11 a.m. Reading at Opotiki College *
2 p.m. Reading at Whakatane High School *
8 - 9 p.m. Reading: East Bay Live Poets &
Whakatane CAC *

Day 3: Tauranga - Friday 7th May

10.30 a.m. Reading at Otumoetai College *
1 p.m. Reading at Tauranga Boys College *
6 - 8 p.m. Bravado Poetry Competition
Prizewinners Awards
Washington Room, Hotel Armitage,
Willow Street

(Enquiries: Jenny Argante ph 07 576 3040, or e-mail
jenny.argante@xtra.co.nz)

Day 4: Tauranga - Saturday 8th May

12 - 2 p.m.
Poetry in the Park – Yatton Park, Greerton

Open Air Celebrity Reading with Music, Dance & Arts
(Enquiries: Jenny Argante ph 07 576 3040, or e-mail
jenny.argante@xtra.co.nz)

6. 30 p.m.
Celebrity Reading
University of Waikato in Tauranga
Room 106 Bongard Centre Cameron Road
Enquiries: Karen Tindall ph 07 577 0620, e-mail
tindall@waikato.ac.nz)

Day 5: Rotorua - Sunday May 9th

1 - 2.30 p.m.
Celebrity Reading - Rotorua Mad Poets Society
Exhibition House RAVE Hinemoa Street

* For detailed information on venues, etc.
please contact Tour Co-ordinator David Howard:
maxgate@clear.net.nz or ph 03 482 1092

DUNEDIN

Upfront: spotlighting women poets



Upfront's first meeting on 30th March at Cobb & Co was a great success with about forty people present (including a sprinkling of men).

Martha Morseth began the meeting with a poem, *Working in the Cracks Between*, sent by Jenny Argante in honour of the occasion and, as Jenny said, 'for women writers everywhere'.

The first reader in the open mike session was Gail Whiteman from Wellington who read humorous rhymed poems, some from her forthcoming book, *Fractured Fairy Tales and Raunchy Rimes for Grownups*. There was good variety in the content and style of the open mike poems. Readers were Sue Wootton, Laneene Rutherford, Leonore Smith, Cynthia Greensill, Penelope Todd, Ana Kelly, a 7th form student from St Hilda's Collegiate, and Pam Morrison who read *Mother at Ease* which appeared in the March 27th Listener.

Sienna Smale-Jackson, our first featured reader, is an 18-year-old student at the University of Otago. Her poems were fresh approaches to every-day life, such as *On Becoming a Vegetarian* and *Secrets*:

“...we go round to
some friends' house for
afternoon tea.
their kitchen is like
the inside of a tree;
floors, ceilings, walls
all built from richly-stained
split timber, the light
falls out of the sky
and down through high,
sloping windows
onto us...”

(from *Secrets*)

The second featured reader was Kay McKenzie Cooke, the 2003 Montana 'First Book of Poetry' winner. Kay's poems are always impressive, many touching upon feelings that ordinary people experience. Now that her sons have gone off flatting, Kay is undergoing the empty-nest syndrome:

basketcase

After the last one leaves
my eyes in the mirror stare back

as if at a loss. I warm up
every room in the house, I cry

and taste salt on my teeth. I think about buying
either a cellphone or a basketchair

and at the supermarket, select odd things
like feta cheese, loose-leaf tea
and Paul Newman's salad dressing.

*For goodness sake, give your mother a ring,
she's feeling bereft,* Robert e-mails one of our sons
half in jest.

Here we are then I think as we cook ourselves
one chicken breast each, just you and me reduced
to using one side of a bath towel each.

Ending the evening was Jenny Powell-Chalmers, author of four books of poetry, who began with *Madonna of the Braided River* from her next book, *Madonnas*, a collaboration with Auckland poet Anna Jackson. Other poems Jenny read included one from *Hats*, Jenny's second collection. *Death in the Bowl* is a humorous retelling of the trauma experienced when pet fish die: "During our goldfish phase/ we went through 20 or 30 ..We were flushing/each death away,/ becoming mass murderers/ with no motive."

Jenny's recently published book, *Double-Jointed* is a collaborative work with ten poets who have Dunedin links. The poem *Jalousie* was written in conjunction with James Norcliffe. It begins:

“the shadows of the slats
fall in rungs across the floor

I am taking off
my gold spangled dress

in the photograph people
laugh and raise their glasses

I can see you
watching me uncover

on the wall there are black
swans frozen on a white late

in here it is ice cold
my breathing shudders...”

Cobb & Co proved to be a suitable venue – with a comfortable room and the opportunity to buy wine and coffee.

(*Report from Martha Morseth*)

TAURANGA

In April we concentrated on work in progress, with about eight poems were circulated for critical feedback. The surprise and pleasure are always in how different each poem is from any other. There was comment, also, on how, after only a few meetings, a noticeable improvement can be seen in much of the work that was shared. We then took home a handout, Simon Armitage's wonderful *Poetry Testing Kit*, which can be found online at <http://www.poetrybooks.co.uk/page.asp?idno=62>.

The next meeting of Poets Parlour will be on Sunday May 23rd at 12.30 p.m. in the Robert Harris Café, State Insurance Arcade, off Grey Street, Tauranga. Enquiries to henerprises@xtra.co.nz, ph 07 576 3040.

With elegant diction
& precise vocabulary
I spoke to you
presenting
dreams, ideas
& everyday instruction

The more I talked
the less you understood

Today, silently,
I hammered at your brain.
Now you comprehend
everything.

Clio

WELLINGTON

Poetry Studio launched on Anzac Day

An exciting addition to the Wellington art scene kicked off on ANZAC Day. The Poetry Studio is a hot new venue for open mike poetry. Live poetry has attracted growing audiences in recent years as people tap into the energy and fun of it. "Come up to the microphone and do your thing," said Poetry Studio's Steve Booth. "It's fun to take part or to sit back and listen."

Bluenote Bar is already the home of Jam Session on Tuesday nights and Mad Genius Songwriters on Thursday nights. Now they're opening up their doors to the poets of Wellington – every Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m. "There's a great vibe at Bluenote that we wanted to tap into," added Steve, who introduced the first evening.

Poetry Studio is free and open to everyone. "If you're in town on a lazy Sunday come and check us out," says Bluenote owner Liz. "People can enjoy their favourite tippie while listening to the poetry, and we'll also have coffee and hot soup."

Poetry Studio is about stepping up to the mike and having a go. Over the next few weeks, the show will be hosted by a range of MCs, including well-known poetic personalities Mike Webber and Martin Doyle, hot new talent Jess Bromley, and Steve Booth – the poet with the Moët.

For further information, contact Liz at Bluenote, ph 04 8015007, or e-mail to bluenote@paradise.net.nz (website <http://come.to/bluenote>). Or phone Steve Booth on 04 477 0156 (poetrystudio@paradise.net.nz).

Overseas

Shortlist for Griffin announced

The Griffin Poetry Prize (worth \$80,000 Canadian) is the most lucrative to accept books of poetry from any country in the world - 'Poetry Without Borders' – and is awarded annually for the two best books of poetry (including translations) published in English the previous year.

This year there were submitted a record-breaking total of 423 eligible books from 15 different countries. The finalists – three Canadian and four International – will be invited to read in Toronto at the MacMillan Theatre on June 2nd. The winners, who each receive C\$40,000, will be announced on June 3rd at the fourth Griffin Poetry Prize awards event. The shortlists are as follows:

International

Notes from the Divided Country

by Suji Kwock Kim

The Ha-Ha by David Kirby

The Strange Hours Travellers Keep

by August Kleinzahler

The Owner of the House

by Louis Simpson

Canadian

Now You Care by Di Brandt

go-go dancing for Elvis by Leslie Greentree

Loop by Anne Simpson.

Judges for 2004 are the distinguished poets Billy Collins (U.S. Poet Laureate 2001-3), Bill Manhire (New Zealand's inaugural Poet Laureate) and Governor-General award-winner Phyllis Webb (Canada).

The Toronto-based Griffin Trust was created to serve and encourage excellence in poetry written in English anywhere in the world. Publishers in the calendar year of their publication must submit eligible collections of poetry, including translations

Submissions

New issue of *The Surface* now online

The theme is *Technology*, and you can find it at www.surfaceonline.org. Editor Thomas Cochrane welcomes submissions of poetry, prose, journalism, photography, paintings, prints. New themes coming up for the next few months are as follows:

Magik & Myth: -The extraordinary in everyday life, the unexpected, the hidden. Lies and illumination. Deadline for copy and artwork on or *before* 10th June 2004.

Nature and Nurture: The way things are and the way things have become. Deadline for copy and artwork on or *before* 10th August 2004.

Sound: Vibrations and reverberations in the air. Deadline for copy and artwork on or *before* 10th October 2004. Website <http://www.surfaceonline.org>

Anzac Day UK

Mike Subritzky's poem was read at an Anzac Day service in London this year. Here's the report that appeared in the *New Zealand Herald* on 22nd April 2004, reprinted with permission – and our thanks.

Poem from heart of NZ teen to be read in Abbey

by Elizabeth Binning

As a 15-year-old schoolboy Mike Subritzky knew little of war but he knew enough to write a poem so moving that it will be read at a special Anzac day service in Westminster Abbey. On Sunday, after the Waikato man leads a parade of war veterans along Te Awamatu's main street, the words of his 38-year-old poem will echo through Britain's most famous abbey.

Every year the New Zealand and Australian High Commission in London organise a commemorative Anzac Service at Westminster Abbey. This year Mr Subritzky was asked if his poem *Pastures Green* could be used as one of two readings from New Zealand and Australian poets.

"I was deeply humbled," said Mr Subritzky, a former serviceman who has won awards for his poems, many of which were penned in between gunfire on his 13 tours of duty.

A nun at his primary school introduced Mr Subritzky to poetry. *Pastures Green* was part of a high school assignment, written after the announcement that New Zealand would contribute troops to the Vietnam War.

Mr Subritzky is one of only two men in the country to have served in the three Services. He joined the Navy at 17, then joined the Army, where he worked for 20 years. In 1985 he spent two years with the Air Force as an instructor.

The 53-year old is now an active member of the Te Awamatu RSA and this week has been out selling poppies. Mr Subritzky has led the local Anzac Day parades for the past 10 years. He said it was exciting to have his poem read out in such a special abbey, a place where many famous writers and poets, including Charles Dickens, are buried.

Pastures Green will be printed in the Order of Service and read by Lord Freyberg, a member of the House of Lords. The exclusive ticket-only service, led by the Dean of Westminster, will follow a wreath-laying ceremony in London.

Pastures Green

Pastures green, poppy fields,
graves for soldiers fallen.
A wooden cross marks a resting place,
a thousand miles from loved ones.
Rusted wire, silent guns,
trenches torn and broken.
A helmet rests on a rifle butt,
the tools of war unspoken.
Anzac Days, colours blaze,
their battle honours borne on.
Old men march and a bugle plays,
in memory of the fallen.

Mike Subritzky, 1965

œ Competitions œ

Kokako

NZ Haiku & Senryu Contest

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



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

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

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

Haiku Presence Award

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yellow Moon Nutshell Competition Closing date May 21st 2004.

Prizes as follows:

- A. Cinquain. 1st & 2nd prizes \$70, \$30.
- B. Idyll (country life, to 22 lines.) 1st & 2nd prizes \$70, \$30
- C. Limerick (page of 3) 1st & 2nd prizes \$70, \$30
- D. Humorous Poem (to 24 lines) 1st & 2nd prizes \$70, \$30
- E. Tetractys (page of 2) 1st & 2nd prizes \$60, \$30

\$3 per entry. Winning & Commended poems published in *Yellow Moon*. Entry form essential. Information as above.

Yellow Moon Chaucerian Challenge Closing Date 31st May 2004

Two equal first prizes of \$100 plus publication (with highly commended poems) in *Yellow Moon* 15, Winter 2004 for a poem up to 20 lines in modern language but heroic verse (rhymed couplets) about a person in the workforce of the 20th or 21st century. (See article in *Yellow Moon* 14 on writing this form.) Entry form essential. Information as before.

BNZ Katherine Mansfield Awards

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

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

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

Full details about the Awards will be available from 1st May 2004 when the 2004 Awards open. The closing date is 30th June 2004.

You can enter online from 1st May 2004 onward at www.bnz.co.nz/kmawards.

Mslexia (UK) Women's Poetry Competition

Mslexia is a best-selling national UK magazine for women writers. (You can subscribe from New Zealand.)

With a First Prize of one thousand pounds sterling (approx. \$NZ3000) this is worth entering – and there's a 2nd Prize of 500 pounds (\$NZ1500) and a 3rd Prize of 250 pounds (\$NZ750). The **closing date is 31ST May 2005**, and the judge is well-known British poet Selima Hill.

Competition Rules

- Poems can be any style, any length, and any subject. Sequences will be judged as separate poems.
- Poems should be in English (incl. dialect English) and not published or accepted elsewhere. Poems that have won or been placed in other competitions are not eligible.
- Poetry should not be a translation of another writer's work.
- Each poem should be typed on one side of A4 paper.
- The entry fee is 5 pounds for up to five poems. You may submit as many poems as you like provided the full entry fee accompanies each entry of up to 5.
- A sterling cheque is required from overseas entries, made payable to Mslexia Publications Ltd. You cannot submit by e-mail unless you have first phoned the Mslexia office (00 44 191 261 6656) and paid by MasterCard or Visa.
- Poems will be judged anonymously. Please don't write your name on the same page as your poems. Enclose a separate sheet of paper with your name, address, phone no., e-mail address, plus the titles of all poems submitted.
- Please mark your envelope 'Women's Poetry Competition'.

Send all entries to:
Women's Poetry Competition
Mslexia Publications Ltd.
Freepost NEA5566
Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE99 1BR

E-mail: postbag@mslexia.demon.co.uk
Website: www.mslexia.co.uk

Warning: poetry can shorten your life

Poets die young - younger than novelists, playwrights and other writers, according to US researcher James Kaufman of the Learning Research Institute at California State University. He says, 'It could be because poets are tortured and prone to self-destruction, or it could be that poets become famous young, so their early deaths are noticed.'

Among the entire sample, poets died significantly younger than both fiction writers and non-fiction writers."

On average, poets lived 62 years, playwrights 63 years, novelists 66 years and non-fiction writers lived 68 years.

Kaufman has also studied poets and mental illness. "What I found was that female poets were much more likely to suffer from mental illness and attempt suicide than any other kind of writer and more likely than other eminent women," he said. "I've dubbed this the ' Sylvia Plath Effect' ."

But Kaufman thinks there could also be a more benign explanation for a poet's early demise. "Poets produce twice as much of their lifetime output in their twenties as novelists do. If a budding novelist dies young, few people may notice."

Kaufman said poets should not worry, but should perhaps look after their health. "The fact that a Plath may die young doesn't necessarily mean an Introduction to Poetry class should carry a warning that poems may be hazardous to one's health."

(*Xtra Online News Report April 2004*)

Regular Gatherings



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

AUCKLAND

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

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

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

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

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

BALCLUTHA

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

CHRISTCHURCH

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

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

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

CROMWELL

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

DUNEDIN

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

DUNEDIN

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

GOLDEN BAY

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

HAMILTON

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

HAWKE'S BAY

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

LOWER HUTT

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

NELSON

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

OPOTIKI

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

PICTON

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

PORIRUA

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

ROTORUA

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

TAURANGA

Poets' Parlour meets on the second Sunday of each month at 12.30 p.m. in the Robert Harris Café, State Insurance Arcade, off Grey Street. For more information please contact Jenny Argante (ph 07 576 3040, e-mail: jenny.argante@xtra.co.nz).

TIMARU

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

WANAKA

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

WELLINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

Poesis: Poetry and Religion Forum

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

WEST COAST: HOKITIKA

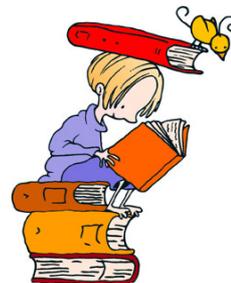
Contact Don Neale (ph 03 755 7092) or e-mail: startledworm@paradise.net.nz for news of the winter meetings of the **Hokitika Wild Poets' Society**.

WHAKATANE

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

WHANGAREI

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



Spirit of the Hour

A silly idea of Betty' s, but best to say nothing. Putting down empty cups, brushing off crumbs, we drift away.

Out in the garden trees lean closer, nodding wisely. Friends and strangers circle the empty pond, two by two. The air fills up with words, stroked to deeper meaning by a listener's response. The house stands by, solid and agreeable. In its spaces are hoarded pockets of silence that allow expansion.

During a fallow period there may be no acknowledgment of the harvest planned for. What seeds are here for planting? What little growths obliquely hint at flowering?

In the games room, a ping-pong ball is bounced fiercely to and fro. Pausing in the doorway, a passer-by could make a meaning out of such hot exchanges tempered by rule and laughter. No winners. Only a shared desire to reach some agreed standard.

Many of us are writing now. Even while we deny it, the impulse is there to perform the set task, explain ourselves, explore a circumstance.

Beyond the grey stone floor of the hall elaborate tiles rebuke the plainness, scorn rag-rug disguises. Up above are rooms I don' t know, rooms not yet explored. Some of these you have broached and entered. Overhead, too, is the light-well, put there to encourage access to the heavens and shed a gleam on dark places.

I do not know these rooms. I do not know this building' s history. I do not know what is locked away inside these other, human shapes that move and signal. Are they choosing words to tell a story or to hide a story? Will it be private and individual, or spread itself out to become, from one building, a town, a nation, a world newly-made?

From the shrubbery, the bickering of two in opposition sends out a ripple of disquiet that touches us all. On the path, expert and novice attempt to fuse explanation, understanding.

Church bells ring out a measured peal. But there is no bird-song, although these cloudy dimensions were meant to be tested by the sweep of wing, safely tied at the corners by phrase and rhythm. Footsteps, light and hurried, echo down a shadowy corridor. We are returning, counted in and reckoned. The door stands open. We turn expectantly, as it moves, widens.

A silly idea of Betty' s, we all agree. So why do we await an entry? Who will be first to introduce the spirit of the hour?

JB

Note: 'Workshop writing on a theme: *Spirit of the Hour* – here taken to mean the Muse'.



☞ Talk Poem 4 ☛

Room	table	window	chair
Room			
table			
window			
chair			
there is something			
missing			
here.			

This small poem by New Zealand poet Jenny Bornholdt contains many features common to contemporary poetry. Yet at first glance it appears prosaic, simplistic and perhaps a little dull. Some people might even question whether it really deserves to be called a poem. Where are the deep insights into the human condition that people typically expect of poetry, and where is the high poetic language?

On closer examination, however, the poem reveals itself to be much more poetic than it first appears. It has two distinctive rhythms—' Room / table / window / chair' in the first half and ' there is something / missing / here' in the second. It also rhymes, the end of the first rhythmic section, ' chair' , chiming perfectly with the end of the second rhythmic section, ' here' . The two sections are also linked by the rhyme between ' chair' and ' there' , and the second section also has the two strong half rhymes between ' something' and ' missing' . For a poem with only nine words, that' s a fair amount of lyricism—albeit unobtrusive.

But does it add up to anything? The first rhythmic section presents the bare bones of a scene—a sketch. Significantly there are no adjectives whatsoever. It is as if the scene is in black and white and it is up to the reader to apply the colours.

And that is precisely what the poem encourages us to do in its second rhythmic section. It doesn' t ask directly, but instead points out exactly what underwhelmed readers may well be thinking, that ' there is something /missing / here' .

But why does the poem go to the trouble of actually pointing out what some readers might see as its primary failing? Perhaps to encourage them to fill in all the things they might feel are ' missing' . By doing so, the second rhythmic section of the poem coaxes the reader' s imagination to participate in the production of meaning.

The poem, once the reader has digested the implied invitation of the second rhythmic section, really only consists of four words. These are repeated because they are the same four words of the title. ' Room /table /window /chair' the poem repeats: think about these. It is almost the quintessential minimalist contemporary poem. It provides the bare minimum of a scene, no narrative, no imagery, no action, no dialogue—and then points out that there is something ' missing' .



The word 'missing' gets a line to itself, perhaps further drawing attention to the poem's preoccupation with absence.

In fact the entire layout of the poem is awash with space and gaps—it is certainly unencumbered by detail.

The most obvious absence in the poem is that of a person or people. All the signs of human habitation are there, but the room is a still life, with the crucial absence being life. Objects can tell a story, but here there is not enough to go on to construct a narrative. Certainly the reader's imagination has a lot of work to do if it is expected to create characters and a drama on the bare stage provided.

Yet the few details provided could suggest the bare essentials necessary for writing—a room, a table, a chair and a window. And these are not too far removed from the kind of environment where reading might also take place. Significantly, there is neither pen nor paper in the room, but reading material, in the form of the poem itself, is hugely present, and indeed central to the very existence of the scene. Is this a further clue, not only for the reader's imagination to get involved in the poem, but for the reader themselves to be placed in the room? Is that what is missing? Is the poem trying to forge a link between the writer and the reader, between writing and reading? Or is my imagination running away with me?

by James Brown



Written for the Whitireia Community Polytechnic Online Creative Writing Course Poetry module as a sample of critical analysis of a poem. Reprinted with thanks, and with the kind permission of the author and of the Whitireia Community Polytechnic.

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

☞ KiwiHaiku ☞

screaming wind –
already the flag is fraying,
he hugs his friend

(May 29, 1953)

Sandra Simpson
(Tauranga)

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

Some ideas for writing in a workshop setting

Quickies:

What's your favourite kitchen appliance and why?

What are three things that could never be photographed?

Name four jobs that no one has ever thought of before.

Discursive:

List the differences between children and adults.

There's no progress without discontent.

"Hate is just a failure of the imagination". Graham Greene

Based on a Book:

Interview a character from a book - write it as though it's the transcript of an interview.

Write a letter to a character in a book.

Write a summary of the book for a seven-year-old.

Topics for Short Stories:

From a window.

An unusual love story.

My life was boring until ...

Poetry:

Write a 'sick in bed' poem describing your feelings about being confined to bed by illness.

Write a poem in the form of a letter, beginning 'Dear ...'

Write a poem that will persuade someone to do something or to believe in something.

(A few of over 600 suggestions to be found in *Everything I Know About Writing* by John Marsden – why not request it from the library and make your own selection?)



**June Deadline
May 24th 2004**

Proxy Voting Slip for NZPS AGM June 2004

I hereby submit my proxy vote for the 2004-2005 New Zealand Poetry Society Committee.
Note: Margaret Vos (current President) & Laurice Gilbert (current Treasurer) are not standing for this election.

Tick box or write in your preferred candidate

		Seconded by:
President:	<input type="checkbox"/> Gillian Cameron (Wellington)	Cheri Pinner
	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vice-President:	<input type="checkbox"/> Vivienne Plumb (Wellington)	Laurice Gilbert
	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretary:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treasurer:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member(s)*:	Margaret Vos	Gillian Cameron

** Members can be co-opted onto the Committee during the year*

*You must supply the following information and sign this form in order for your vote to be counted.
 The form must be received at the NZPS Office by Monday 7th June.*

Member name: Date:

Member signature:

Please post to:
 Proxy Voting NZPS
 PO Box 5283 Lambton Quay
 Wellington
info@poetrysociety.org.nz