

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 20th May:
Guest Poet: Liz Breslin (Wanaka)

Monday 17th June:
Guest Poet: TBA

Poetry for Aotearoa: an extended book review

Vaughan Rapatahana

How it all began

Such pitiful pleas –
her thirsty brats.

Husbandless, she
bends her will, grabs
a calabash, heads off
through the ngaio trees
and mamakau ferns.

Such pitiful pleas –
her thirsty brats.

She stumbles. Her curses echo
through forest and starlight.

*Stuff you, moon,
boil your brain with puha,
Put your flat head into the cooking pot,*

*The one time I need you,
you hide
Coward, cheat.*

I am the sleeping moon.
An ashen cloud conceals my beams.

I am aroused, enchanted
This is the wife I dream of.

Don't you know I am no ordinary moon?

Did I set the clouds to stall?

There's no light for Rona.

I slither around her, buffed and highly sexed.
She succumbs.

Wrapped in my sensations,
my reflected-light limbs –
we become lovers.

The story is that she pines for her lost infants.

That's a lie.

We fuse all night long when you are staring up at
us.

But you can't see that far.

Just ask her –

Rona, are you happy?

Oh yes, my love

Oh yes

Come lie with me

Take off your slippers.

Her brats grow, invent haka.

You know where that got them –

No land, no language.

Free entertainment every rugby match.

from *Auē Rona* Reihana Robinson (Steele Roberts, 2012)
ISBN 978-1-877577-85-7 RRP \$25

This entire collection is sequenced and sequestered within the Rona parable, which I have serious doubts non-Māori will be familiar with. So best to explicate it via Reihana's own Notes, from the rear of the collection:

"The traditional story of Rona and the moon opens as she is collecting water for her children. A cloud covers the moon; she falls, spilling the water, and she curses. As punishment she is torn from earth and taken to the moon, still clutching her calabash and holding a ngaio tree."

Auē Rona is an extended extrapolation from this frame of reference and, more, Reihana herself is – to me, at least – indistinguishable from Rona! Thus both equate as a rugged individualist, a rural survivalist, a survivor per se, who stands non-fully-dependent on males and their duffel-bags overstuffed with insecure and immature inanities and insanities, as so well referenced in this collection, where men – and not just white men, it has to be noted – are often portrayed as bloody idiots and worse – as indiscriminate rapists and pillagers of Nature. No wonder Rona/ Reihana is content to stay remote in the Moon/ the Coromandel and sadly, wryly, reflect on the demise of her forests and lakes, her moana me awa, hoki (oceans and rivers, also.)

Moreover, Rona and the Moon is just one – although here the dominant – Māori mythological panorama in this collection. For other mighty Māori myths

also intrude throughout – especially regarding the rapscallion escapades of Māui. As well there is Māori reo here – although never in an extended form, merely as touchstones about kai, manu, ika, te mea te mea te mea (food, birds, fish et cetera) as continually interpolated throughout.

For overall this is a 'very Māori' book. Now, what on Earth and Moon do you mean by that comment, Rapatahana? Surely all poems and indeed all works written by a Māori are Māori works?

No way, Hone, I reply. I would even go so far as to state that there are degrees of being Māori as a writer, as a poet. Something Witi Ihimaera had finally concluded in his later co-edited Te Ao Mārama series, as I note in the following quotation from my forthcoming extended piece entitled 'Māori Poetry in English': "Yet for me [Vaughan Rapatahana], being a Māori poet is NOT necessarily based on nationality/ ethnicity alone. Sid Mead (1997, in Heiss, 2003), for example, believed it should be more: 'Māori writing must categorize itself as something different. Something that is more than being Māori by nationality.' Indeed, later, as the entire Te Ao Mārama oeuvre evolved, Ihimaera et al. seem to make a more substantial stand on their definition, for by 1996, they write: "Our belief is that the more informed a work is by Māori cultural aspects and understanding, reo, whakapapa, mauri, and wairua, the more Māori it is". It would seem that there are qualitative stages of being a Māori writer! Alice Sommerville (2006) is here right on: "The editors' formulation suggests that a Māori writer could possibly produce writing that is somehow not (properly, or sufficiently, or completely) Māori." (Rapatahana, 2012)

Reihana Robinson, in this collection, strongly shows herself to be 'more Māori'. And because of her own manifest staunchness and aversion to bullshit, she is therefore all the more free to not only castigate fellow members of her own ethnicity for stupid, especially macho misdeeds, yet as well can empathize with some Pākehā at the same time – especially fellow wahine, the latter of whom have probably been through the male mill backwards more than a few times themselves, eh.

'How it all began' is a concentric power drill into the lumber store that houses sexualized male-female relationship. This poem is a seductive story of a seduction and the depiction of the co-mingling of loins and the concomitant interdependencies this entails. Rona's italicized responses to the crafty, deliberately cloud-obscuring male moon are revealed to be complete opposites – from the initial frustrated and "husbandless" oath to the glee of an apparently satisfied lover, who is so enamoured that she shuns her own "brats".

Thus also the repetitions and korero between the male-female participants in this poem, which are reflected cadences of traditionalistic mōteatea – here as a type of double-dialogue chant. Which does not mean to say, by the way, that there cannot be wry and clever

statements and imagery in Robinson's poetry, given her distinct lack of inane poetic wordplay and wank throughout the entire collection: she writes well in any format. For example, the last line here is a pithy droll truth that casts caustic reflections from above on both main ethnic groups here in Aotearoa-New Zealand: Māori for letting themselves remain revolving in this Black 'n' White Minstrel routine of haka every All Black game; ngā Pākehā for lapping it up and expecting it and usurping it and continuing to sublimate and dominate and landlord it both linguistically and estate-ically. All for free too.

And then there is the delicious insinuation of Māori curse – te pōkokohua (basically saying 'f*** you' to te marama or the moon) of Rona's anger at the light-fade early in the poem when she searches for water.

And the stark relevant illustrations by Noa Noa van Bassewitz: also reinforce the poet's idiosyncratic vision of a potential wasteland beneath the moon's beams: not beams of mirth either, eh, as Rona and her spouse glimmer down on an off-balance Aotearoa – and beyond, for Robinson's focus, although primarily on her own tūrangawaewae also draws in references to Pitcairn Island, Australia, Spain.

The key point I am pursuing in this review is this. Reihana Robinson's song-poetry asserts a definite gap in this country: that between her own ontological and epistemological Māori Weltanschauung and that of another Worldview whereby poems reflect a separate polite middle-class Pākehā ethos – which is not saturated in a deeply-held heritage mythology, is frequently blind to ethnic devaluation and environmental evisceration within its own borders, and tends to play tepid birthday party snakes and ladders frolics with words.

Auē Rona then may be a bit difficult for some non-Māori readers to ingest, to grasp, to comprehend, to enjoy – indeed for some Māori who could be themselves 'more Māori' eh!

As such this collection is necessary poetry. The gap may diminish just a bit more, the more who read the verse. And reflect on it as the moon waxes.

As noted in another recent review of this collection – it's about bloody time, eh Rona!

Full moon time for Reihana Robinson at last.



From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

I've been a bit lucky this month (April) – I had a trip to Auckland to attend the launch of Maris O'Rourke's first collection, *Singing With Both Throats*. It's one of those books that comes in for review, I read it, and I want to keep it. That happens once or twice a year. Sadly, I don't have time to read all the review books thoroughly, but I read enough of each to decide whether to give them more time. Usually my solution to the covetous desire to own is to review the book myself, but this time I had Fleur Adcock's new collection, *Glass Wings*, come in at the same time. Adcock's collections haven't been readily available for purchase locally, as her regular publisher is Bloodaxe, which doesn't have a distributor in New Zealand. This one has been published by Victoria University Press, and I wanted to keep that too. What to do?

I decided to buy my own copy of *Singing With Both Throats*, leave the reviewing of that to someone else, and review the Adcock (though not in this issue, sorry). That's not to say Adcock is somehow 'better' than O'Rourke – on the contrary; I love them equally. But the Adcock will be launched in May with full literary royalty honours and sell widely, and the O'Rourke is just as awesome and available right now (so buy it – I won't review it any better than that). As with all literature, personal taste is idiosyncratic, and I have a literal and narrative approach to poetry. If, like me, you enjoy accessible and well-crafted poems with a bite, buy the O'Rourke and look out for the Adcock.

While I was in Auckland, I skipped Poetry Live, which I usually attend, and went instead to inside.out, the open mic initiative of NZPS member Anita Arlov. The readers mostly shared their prose, but there were a few other poets as well, and it was a warm and friendly evening. The regulars obviously know each other and their work, which is to be expected, but the atmosphere was supportive and inviting, and I recommend it for an enjoyable literary evening out.

Many thanks to Sue Fitchett, for generously hosting my maiden visit to Waiheke Island (and facilitating a welcome swim at Palm Beach) and to the NZPS Auckland representative, Gus Simonevic, whose usual energetic and enthusiastic manner also made me feel welcome in Auckland. Here's to more literary-focused holidays.



Quotation of the Month

Fundamentally, what I want from poetry is the preciousness and foundedness of wise feeling become eternally posthumous in perfect cadence. Good poetry reminds you that writing is writing, it's not just expectation or self-regard or a semaphore for self's sake. You want it to touch you at the melting point below the breastbone and the beginning of the solar plexus. You want something sweetening and at the same time something unexpected, something that has come from constraint into felicity.

Seamus Heaney

from: *Quote Poet Unquote* Ed. Dennis O'Driscoll (Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend, 2008)

About our Contributors

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

Natasha Dennerstein is a Melbourne-born writer who lives in Wellington. She completed her MA at the IIML at Victoria University in 2011.

Joanna Preston is an Australian-born Christchurch writer and teacher, whose first poetry collection, *The Summer King*, won both the inaugural Kathleen Grattan Award and the Mary Gilmore Prize.

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.

DailyHaiga (haiga), *Moonbathing* (tanka), and a haibun in *Contemporary Haibun 14* (ed. Jim Kacian, Red Moon Press, 2013).

Laurice Gilbert won Second Prize in the Caselberg International Poetry Competition (judged by Greg O'Brien), with her poem "Ten Things I Want To Tell You About My Ducks". The two winning poems will be published in *Landfall* in May.

Vaughan Gunson currently has two collections out and about: *this hill, all it's about is lifting it to a higher level* (Steele Roberts, 2012), available direct from Steele Roberts, and *Big Love Songs* (2013) available as a Kindle ebook from Amazon.com

Charles Hadfield has a poem in the current issue of *Poetry NZ*: 'A Point of View'.

Maris O'Rourke has published her first collection, *Singing With Both Throats*, launched in Auckland in April.

Sue Wootton is one of four finalists for this year's Open Hippocrates Prize for Poetry and Medicine, with a First Prize of £5000, one of the highest value poetry awards in the world for a single poem. Way to go!

US literary journal *Shenandoah's* New Zealand feature includes work by NZPS members **Natasha Dennerstein**, **Nicola Easthope**, **Janis Freegard**, **Siobhan Harvey**, **Sandi Sartorelli**, **Tim Upperton** and **Sue Wootton**.

A Warm Welcome To:

Diana Brodie UK

Heather Buttle Auckland

James Norcliffe Lyttleton

Judy Crews Auckland

Hinuera School Matamata

Kelvin Fowler Lithuania

Laura Hadfield Auckland

Lavanya Karra Christchurch

Rose Anderson Australia

Susan Edwards Waihi

Vaughan Gunson Whangarei

Congratulations

Ernest Berry won First Prize in the Haiku category of the North Carolina Poetry Society's contest, with:

stormy night
a flash of enlightenment
in basho's eye

Owen Bullock has new work forthcoming in *Blackmail Press*, *English in Aotearoa*, *Landfall*, *Poetry NZ* (NZ); *Axon: Creative Explorations* (AUS); *The Cornish Banner*, *Presence* (UK); *Kernels*, *Lynx* (USA); *A Hundred Gourds*, *Contemporary Haibun Online*, *Haibun Today* and *Notes From the Gean* (International). His work is featured in the latest issue of the *World Haiku Review*: <https://sites.google.com/site/worldhaikureview2/march-2013-issue>

Kirsten Cliff has new work forthcoming in *Lynx* (tanka sequences), *The Heron's Nest* (haiku), *A Hundred Gourds* (haiku and tanka prose), *Skylark* (tanka prose), *Kernels* (haiku, senryu, tanka), *Chrysanthemum* (haiku, haiga),

Noticeboard



Notice of Annual General Meeting

The NZPS AGM will be held in Wellington on Saturday 20th July, 2pm, venue to be confirmed. This is a variation on our usual practice of holding the meeting before Wellington's regular July reading, and we hope that interested members will attend from further afield. We will run an open mic afterwards so those who attend have an opportunity to share their work with each other.

All current committee members are required to resign, so nominations are now being accepted. This can be by post or email, and nominations must be made and seconded by financial members of the NZPS. Post nominations to: The National Coordinator, PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145; or email to: info@poetrysociety.org.nz Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Agenda:

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2012 AGM (see final item on Noticeboard).
- 3) Matters arising from the 2012 Minutes
- 4) President's Report
- 5) Financial Report

- 6) Proposed Budget for 2013-2014
- 7) Election of Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Members.
- 8) Election of Auditor
- 9) General Business

Poems in the Waiting Room - Update

Ruth Arnison successfully established a local Poems in the Waiting Room scheme, under licence and start-up grant from Poems in the Waiting Room UK. The poetry cards combine classic poems with new work by New Zealand poets, and they have been welcomed by South Island medical practitioners, rest homes, hospices and prisons.

“In September we’re celebrating the 20th edition of the Poems in the Waiting Room poetry cards and our 5th birthday with a PoArtry exhibition: Bellamys at Five.” This year Ruth has invited artists from around New Zealand to respond to some of the poems which have appeared in the poetry cards over the last five years. She’s updating the blog on a regular basis with artist and poet interviews, information, artwork and poems.

Contact Ruth Arnison at: waitingroompoems@gmail.com You can follow the progress of the overall project at: waitingroompoems.wordpress.com

U.S Slam Poets Return To New Zealand

Ken Arkind and Carrie Rudzinski, U.S. National Slam Champions and international touring performance poets, are returning this May and June 2013 to New Zealand. They will participate in the Auckland Readers and Writers Festival before performing and hosting writing workshops for communities across the country.

Ken Arkind is a National Poetry Slam Champion, Nuyorican Poets Café Grand Slam Champion, published author and featured TED Speaker, who has performed his work in 49 states (USA), Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, the UK, and at over 150 colleges and universities. He is the Executive Director and head Brave New Voices coach for The Denver Minor Disturbance Youth Poetry Project, an independent literary arts organization dedicated to helping Colorado youth find their voices through the media of poetry and performance, and current Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Champions.

Carrie Rudzinski, named “Best Female Poet” and “Best of The Rest” at her first national poetry competition in 2008, is a full time performance poet who has performed her work across the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and India. She represented the Boston Poetry Slam at the 2010 Individual World Poetry Slam, twice at the National Poetry Slam (2010/2011), and ranked 14th at the 2011 Women Of The World Poetry Slam. Most recently, she represented Denver’s Mercury Café at the 2013 Women Of The World Poetry Slam. Her newest collection of work, *The Shotgun Speaks*, will be published in May 2013.

Special guest performances by New Zealand poets Michelle Bolton, Ali Jacs, Dietrich Soakai, South Auckland Poets Collective, Mark Rafills, and Donna Skoludek. For a full list of appearances visit: <http://wordwide2013.blogspot.com/>

For more information or to bring these poets to your city or school, contact Tour Manager Michelle Bolton: mjbolton44@gmail.com or +6421775002.

Tour Manager Michelle Bolton is a poet, event organizer, co-founder of the New Zealand National Poetry Slam, and currently an MC at Poetry Live in Auckland.

Minutes of the NZPS AGM held at Turnbull House, 7.30pm, Monday 16 July 2012

- Welcome & Apologies: Laurice Gilbert welcomed those present. Apologies were offered for Nola Borrell, Judith Clearwater, Nicola Easthope, Fiona Kidman, Wendy Vink, Gill Ward.
- Present: Gillian Cameron, Celia Derby, Anne Faulkner, Laurice Gilbert, Tim Jones, Nick Kyrke-Smith, Sugu Pillay, Kerry Popplewell, Jenny Powell, Helen Rickerby, Lionel Sharman, Jon Schrader, Alan Wells, Jack Wood. A quorum (6) was achieved.
- Minutes of the 2011 AGM. As these were not available in print, they were read out by Laurice Gilbert.
 1. Discussion – see Matters Arising.
 2. President moved the Minutes be accepted as a true record of the 2011 AGM. Carried.
- Matters arising – Kerry Popplewell asked if the Committee could look at the Constitution (as discussed last year) to ensure transparency in our treatment of the Officers’ roles. Laurice assured the members that our practice of continuing to have elections for unfilled roles was in line with the Constitution.
- President’s Report. This was circulated and read out by Laurice.
 1. Discussion. Sugu Pillay complimented Laurice on the quality of a *fine line*.
 2. President moved the Report be accepted. Carried.
- Financial Report. Laurice presented the accounts.
 1. Discussion. The accounts weren’t audited again this year. Laurice reported she wasn’t able to contact the Auditor in time.
 2. President moved the Accounts be accepted. Carried.
- Appointment of Auditor. Laurice suggested we ask Steve Veail (who is a qualified accountant), our former Treasurer, to review the accounts for 2012-2013, as he is now familiar with how the Society works.
 1. Anne Faulkner requested that this year’s accounts be reviewed, given that it was not done last year. The meeting agreed that Laurice should follow this up with our previously elected auditor, Princely Muttiah. Laurice

will do so and arrange for the audited accounts to be ratified at a later date.

2. President moved that Steve Veail be elected Auditor for next year's Accounts. Carried.

• Proposed Budget for 2012-2013. This was circulated and presented by Laurice.

1. Discussion. Laurice reported that we have been running at a loss since the introduction of a paid Coordinator (herself), and the current financial model is not sustainable for more than another couple of years, in spite of her ability to make a profit from such activities as anthology sales (which previously were a loss-making venture).

2. Gillian questioned how many members are emailed the magazine – Laurice estimated around 130 of the 220 currently financial members. Kerry suggested saying something about this in the next issue of *a fine line* and seeking feedback on the situation. Gillian suggested that the membership of \$30 include the e-version of the magazine, and that those opting for the printed version should pay another \$30, which is approximately how much it costs to produce. Anne agreed this seemed fair, since the email subscribers are currently subsidising the print subscribers. Alan Wells reminded the meeting that any change in the sub had to be made at an AGM, with appropriate notice. Laurice noted that it can be done at a Special General Meeting, and that this would also allow for email/postal voting, so the whole membership can have a say. Tim Jones suggested that the few who cannot receive the magazine by email continue to pay the subsidised price. Laurice said she knew who genuinely couldn't (about a dozen, including the National Library), and these were mostly older people. The Committee will meet to discuss this issue further.

3. Jack Wood suggested that the workshops we have been running have been extremely good value and we should be charging more for them, to ensure they contribute to our revenue. Laurice commented that our tax-exempt status means we can't make more than \$1000 profit in a year. Jack noted that as long as the profit is used for charitable purposes, as stated in the Constitution, this isn't a problem.

4. Sugu asked about whether Creative Communities could be asked for \$2500 to cover the Editor's fee that was paid by Creative New Zealand last year. Laurice explained that Creative Communities grants can only be used in the local area, hence the use of this funding for our Wellington meetings. Gillian further explained CNZ's criteria for applications. Jack suggested applying to CNZ for funds for Laurice to arrange workshops in other areas.

5. Before she ended up with a whole lot more work to do, President moved the Proposed Budget be accepted. Carried.

6. Gillian moved a vote of thanks to Laurice for her work, seconded K Popplewell. Carried with acclamation.

• Election of Officers and Committee Members.

1. Laurice pointed out that it is usual for the President to step down for the Presidential election. As she was the only candidate (M. Helen Rickerby; S. Anne Faulkner), the meeting said not to bother, and her re-election was voted on and Carried.

2. Vice-President – Tim Jones declared his willingness to retain this position. M. Anne Faulkner; S. Kerry Popplewell. Carried.

3. Secretary and Treasurer positions had no nominations and were declared vacant.

4. Committee members. The remaining Committee Member, Janis Freegard, was declared elected, subject to checking her agreement, as she wasn't present. Gillian Cameron and Anne Faulkner remain co-opted members as cheque signatories.

• General Business. There was none, and the meeting was declared closed at 8.30pm. After a short break we welcomed our guest, Dunedin poet Jenny Powell.



haikai café

Your bite-sized serving of haiku, senryū, tanka and haibun

Kirsten Cliff

afternoon nap
a black cloud
nestles into white

~ Haiku by Anne Curran

free wi-fi –
a faraway editor
rejects my poem

~ Senryū by Paula Moore

abandoned farmhouse –
this feeling of loss until
I see the walnut
planted at my birth
this tree, my whenua

~ Tanka by Margaret Beverland

Christmas night –
my brother makes
bellbird calls

~ Haiku by Helen Yong

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.

Regional Report

WINDRIFT - FEBRUARY

Ariana Te Aomarere

Our first topic, free choice, ranged from cats and cicadas to chaos and a karate belt.

chaos theory
a coating of frost
on the stove

Ernest J Berry

was generally approved.

on a two-inch ledge
high above the ground
a sleeping cat

Karen Peterson Butterworth

There was some perplexity until Karen explained the cat's paws were draped over the ledge. She will re-word her poem to convey the full image.

cicada song
sparrow shadow
silence

Bevan Greenslade

Puzzlement, until several members reported seeing birds eating cicadas, and Bevan's concise wording was applauded.

The second topic, 'Moving into the sun,' evoked, among other haiku:

moving into the sun
the cat acquires
its shadow

Kerry Popplewell

The response was an approving 'Aah.'

moon moving into the sun
tv screen distorting
a solar eclipse

Harumi Hasegawa

There were nods of appreciation after Harumi changed 'distorting' to 'distorts'.

Nature came to town under the topic, 'Wildflowers'.

a neighbour's neglected lawn
i look forward
to stopping by the meadow

Penny Pruden

Members liked the amount of room this poem left for their

imaginations.

inner city a meadow of wildflowers

Nola Borrell

Comments included, 'Surprise', 'The unexpected'. Nola revealed the meadow was Patanga Meadow at the top of Patanga Crescent.



Competitions & Submissions

Mary Charman-Smith May Poetry Competition (UK)

Closing Date: 15 May Maximum of 45 lines. First prize, £100. Runner-up, £25. Judge: Mary Charman-Smith. Entry Fee: £4, three poems £9, five poems £12. Entry forms and PayPal entry at: www.marycharmansmith.co.uk/competition.html

Montreal International Poetry Prize (Canada)

Deadline: 15 May The not-for-profit Montreal International Poetry Prize offers \$20,000 for one original, unpublished poem no longer than 40 lines, written in any English dialect. Online entries only. Entry fees vary. Please see montrealprize.com for details. Approximately 50 poems will be published in the Montreal Prize's 2013 Global Poetry Anthology. As editors of the anthology, 10 poets from across the globe sort through submissions blindly and select poems for the collection (which serves as a shortlist). The prize judge then reads a blind copy of the manuscript of the anthology and selects the \$20,000 poem. The 2013 Prize Judge is Don Paterson. (Ed's note: It costs just under \$NZ30 to enter a single poem in this competition. Good prize, though.)

The University of London's Human Rights Consortium Poetry Anthology (UK) Closing Date: 15 May

The University of London's Human Rights Consortium, in collaboration with the Keats House Poets and the Institute of English Studies, invites contributions for a new anthology of poems about human rights. Poems should focus on any human rights or social justice issue, national or international, current or historical. Free entry. Prize: Opportunity to be published in a collection by the University of London's Human Rights Consortium; the anthology will be launched at the Bloomsbury Festival at Senate House in London in October 2013. Poets whose work is selected for publication will be eligible for the Spread the Word prize; will receive a contributor's copy of the anthology; and will be invited to the Bloomsbury Festival launch and other performance opportunities organized by the Keats House Poets. Please send a maximum of two poems per poet, of 70 lines maximum per poem. For more information see: <http://www.sas.ac.uk/hrc/projects/human-rights-poetry> email entries to: HRC@sas.ac.uk

The New Letters Literary Awards - Call for Entries (USA)

Postmark Deadline: 18 May *New Letters* magazine invites submissions of fiction, essays, or poetry to the 2013 New Letters Literary Awards. Winners receive \$1,500 for best essay, \$1,500 for best poetry, and \$1,500 for best fiction, and publication in a special 2013 awards issue of *New Letters*. All entries are considered for publication and must be unpublished. First runners-up will receive a copy of a recent book of poetry or fiction from our affiliate BkMk Press. Winners will be announced mid-September 2013. Essay and fiction entries may not exceed 8,000 words; poetry entries may contain one to six poems. \$15 for first entry; \$10 for each entry after. \$15 entry fee includes a one-year subscription to *New Letters*. For complete guidelines, visit: www.newletters.org

The Times Stephen Spender Prize for Poetry in Translation (UK) Closing Date: 24 May Each entry must comprise the following: your translation, the original poem, your commentary. Entry form is essential. Three categories: Open, 18-and-under and 14-and-under. Winners of the Open prizes will receive £1000 (first), £750 (second) and £500 (third); the winners of the 18-and-under prizes will win £250 (first), £150 (second) and £100 (third). There will be one prize (£100) awarded in the 14-and-under category. Check website for full details. Entry Fee: £5 (free to 18s and under). Website entry: www.stephen-spender.org/2013_prize/entry_conditions.html Postal entry: The Stephen Spender Trust, 3 Old Wish Road, Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 4JX UK

7th International Welsh Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 26 May For poems up to 50 lines. 1st Prize: £400, 2nd Prize: £200, and 3rd Prize: £100. See website for full details: www.welshpoetry.co.uk Entry Fee: £4.00 postal or £5.00 online.

NZPS International Poetry Competition closes 31 May. The entry forms were supplied in the March 2013 issue of *a fine line* and can also be downloaded from our website at: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/2013competition>

PayPal is available for online payment, but we are unable to accept the entries themselves other than by post.

Battered Moons Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 May For poems up to 40 lines. 1st £150, 2nd £75, 3rd £50. Entry Fee: £3.00 or £10 for 4. For further information and to enter online visit: <http://batteredmoons.com>

Bridport Prize (UK) Closing Date: 31 May 1st prize £5000, 2nd prize £1000, 3rd prize £500. Ten highly commended prizes of £50 each. Judge: Wendy Cope. The competition includes prose prizes also. See website for full details: www.bridportprize.org.uk Entry Fee: £7 per poem

Cardiff Women's Aid Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 May Theme: Domestic violence/abuse. Judge: Christina Thatcher. For poems up to 40

lines. There is a fiction competition running alongside. Winners receive publication and a copy of the anthology. Any money raised goes to the charity. See website for full details: www.cardiffwomensaid.org.uk/news/creativewritingcompetition.htm Entry Fee: £2.00 for up to three poems.

The Erbacce Prize for Poetry (UK) Closing Date: 31 May In the first instance submit five pages of poetry. The winning collection will be published by Erbacce and the poet will receive a publishing contract. Up to three runners-up may be chosen to have pamphlets published. See website for full details: <http://www.erbacce-press.com/#/erbacce-prize/4533449873> Free entry.

Frogmore Papers Poetry Prize (UK) Closing Date: 31 May Entry Fee: £3.00. For poems up to 40 lines. First Prize: two hundred guineas and a two-year subscription to *The Frogmore Papers*. First and second runners-up: seventy-five and fifty guineas respectively and a year's subscription to *The Frogmore Papers*. Shortlisted poets receive selected Frogmore Press publications. <http://www.frogmorepress.co.uk> <http://frogmore-jp.blogspot.com>

The Ghazal Page - Call for Submissions (International) Deadline: 31 May Ghazals are welcomed for a special challenge issue of *The Ghazal Page* (ed. Gene Doty) on the theme 'Water'. Guest editor for this issue is Kapiti poet **Mary Cresswell**. To submit, please use the journal's contact link: <http://www.ghazalpage.net/information/submitting.html> and follow the journal submission instructions. Subject line: "Water issue". Look for inspiration from water, wherever it is, whatever it's doing and who/what it's doing it to - storms, glaciers, ships and steam engines, boiling into an undersea trench, springing from desert rock, falling as snow. Big surf. Tears. Dark streaks down the sides of subway tunnels. If water could speak we might know why it's always moving... Perhaps use water-words as a radif - perhaps tercet (rather than couplet) ghazals - consider Arabic as well as Persian forms. Ghazals can be unpublished or published (give details of previous publication as well as permission for use). To prime your skill with the ghazal form, check through the excellent collection of essays and articles on the *The Ghazal Page* website. Also see Carol Rumens' *Guardian* article: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog/2008/mar/17/aglutofghazals>, introducing ghazals by Mimi Khalvati. To see how the form can vary, read Natasha Trethewey's 'Miscegenation': <http://www.cstone.net/~poems/miscetre.htm> and Thomas Hardy's 'The Mother Mourns' <http://www.daypoems.net/plainpoems/1017.html>

Mamilla International Poetry Festival - Call for submissions (Israel) Deadline: 31 May Encouraged by renewed hope for the preservation of the ancient Mamilla Cemetery in Jerusalem, ARCH (Alliance to Restore Cultural Heritage in the Holy City of Jerusalem) joins hands with the Mahmoud Darwish Foundation

and Museum and the Campaign to Preserve Mamilla Jerusalem Cemetery in organizing the Mamilla International Poetry Festival, that will take place in Ramallah and Jerusalem between September 7-9, 2013. The festival, whose theme is 'A Dialogue with Memory', was conceived to protect the ancient Mamilla Cemetery from complete and final destruction. by invoking poetry to promote it as a place of living memory and eternal sanctity. During a three-day period, poetic vigils, performances, and readings - both live and virtual - will invoke, imagine, invigorate, and illuminate the lives and memories of those buried in the cemetery. We warmly invite poets to respond to the worldwide call for submissions: <http://is.gd/mamilla>

Poems Please Me Prize (UK) Closing Date: 31 May
Theme: Movement. Poems of 12-40 lines. Prizes: £200 (1st), £100 (2nd), 4 x £25 (Highly Commended). Also, The Artists' Quarter (TAQ) will produce a number of illustrations of the two prizewinning poems. First Prize winner will also receive a canvas print of an illustration of their choice. The winning and commended poems will be published on *Poems Please Me*, along with several illustrations, and on a TAQ website. Entry Fee: £12 subscription for up to 3 poems. Full details at: www.poemsplease.me

Thynks Open Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 May Prizes: 1st - £100 plus publication. Runners-up - Publication. Entry Fee: £3. Website: <http://www.thynkspublications.co.uk/competitions>

Wigtown Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 May In association with The Scottish Poetry Library, a competition for poetry written in English, Scots or Irish Gaelic, or Scots. For poems up to 40 lines. Main Prize £2000, Runner-up £400. Eight additional prizes of £25 each. Judge: Robin Robertson. Also Meg Bateman judges the Gaelic prize: £250. Liz Niven judges the Scots prize: £250. See website for full details: [wigtownbookfestival.com/year-round/wigtown-poetry-prize](http://www.wigtownbookfestival.com/year-round/wigtown-poetry-prize) Entry Fee: £7, 3 for £19. Further discounts apply. Please check entry form.

Wirral Festival of Firsts Open Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 1 June For poems up to 40 lines. Adjudicator: Colin Watts. First Prize £200; Second £75. Three runners up, £25 each. Entry Fee: £3 or £10 for 4 poems. Website: www.festivaloffirsts.com

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

2013 Guy Owen Poetry Prize (USA) Postmark
Deadline: 15 June \$1,000 and publication for an unpublished poem. Submit three to five poems (10 pages maximum), a \$20 entry fee (includes one-year

subscription to journal), and SASE for reply only. Include contact information on cover sheet only. Mail your entry to: Southern Poetry Review, Guy Owen Prize, Department of Languages, Literature, and Philosophy, Armstrong Atlantic State University, 11935 Abercorn Street, Savannah, GA 31419-1997, USA. All entries considered for publication. Visit website for more information: www.southernpoetryreview.org

Mslexia Women's Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 17 June 1st Prize: £2000 2nd Prize: £400 3rd Prize: £200 17 Runners up: £25 each. The tenth annual *Mslexia* Women's Poetry Competition is for poems of any length and in any style. Entry Fee: £7 for up to 3 poems. For more information, and to enter, visit: www.mslexia.co.uk/poetrycompetition

Mslexia Women's Pamphlet Competition (UK) Closing Date: 17 June Prize: Publication of the pamphlet by Seren Books, plus £250, 25 complimentary copies of your pamphlet and 10 per cent royalties from subsequent sales. The second annual *Mslexia* Women's Pamphlet Competition is for collections of 20-24 pages of 18-20 poems, which can be of any length, by poets who have not previously had a full collection published. Entry Fee: £20. For more information, including full rules and FAQs, visit: www.mslexia.co.uk/pamphletcompetition

McLellan Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 June For poems up to 80 lines. Judges Peter and Ann Sansom. 1st prize £1000, 2nd £300, 3rd £100 and six commendations of £25. All prizewinners will be invited to read at the award ceremony in Brodick, Isle of Arran on 30 August 2013. Entry Fee: £5 per poem, £4 each for three or more. Full details (and downloadable entry form) can be found on the website: www.mclellanpoetryprize.co.uk

Poetry Space International Poetry Competition (UK) Closing date: 30 June Prizes: £250, £100 and £50 plus publication for top twenty poems in a prize winners' anthology. Enter at www.poetryspace.co.uk

Call for Applications for National Poetry Day 2013
Deadline for applications: 1 July Sponsored by New Zealand Post, National Poetry Day 2013 will be on Friday, 16th August. This year, something fresh, inventive and exciting - National Poetry Day will be part of the inaugural New Zealand Post Book Awards Festival (12-18 August), a week of literary events celebrating the Awards, finalist authors and their nominated books. Closer to the time, we will launch the festival and post the schedule of events on the New Zealand Post Book Awards website: <http://www.nzpostbookawards.co.nz/> In the meantime, Festival National Coordinator **Siobhan Harvey** is calling for applications for registration of and funding for National Poetry Day events. To request a 2013 festival guidelines & application pack, including National Poetry Day 2013 registration and Funding forms, please contact Siobhan at: siobhanhrvy@gmail.com or write to: Siobhan

Harvey, Festival National Coordinator, P O Box 125 135, St. Heliers Post Office, Auckland 1740. Siobhan will be on hand between now and 16th August 2013 to help any interested parties with advice on applications, funding and organising a National Poetry Day 2013 event. Funding is limited but available. If you would like to apply for funding, please fill out the form supplied in the application pack.

A plug for *Kudos*, the UK-based competition magazine
(because the editor always promotes our competition)

Kudos 95, Spring 2013 runs mainly from the end of March right up to the end of June, and beyond in some cases – £5 (subs: £18/4 pa) with added Xtra *Kudos*: newsletters to keep you ahead of the competition: all the information you'll ever need about current competitions (probably) at your fingertips, rather than having to wander all over the Internet. Example of entries:

Cardiff Women's Aid Creative Writing Competition, for poetry of up to 40 lines and fiction of up to 2,000 words, on the theme of domestic violence/abuse. Prize: Shortlisted poetry and fiction published in an anthology with entrants receiving a free copy. £2 per entry. Deadline, May 31 Cardiff Women's Aid, 16 Moira Terrace, Adamsdown, Cardiff CF24 0EJ. www.cardiffwomensaid.org.uk

Wirral Festival of Firsts Open Poetry Competition is judged by Colin Watts. Prizes: £200, £75, 3@£25. £3 per poem; £10 for 4; 40 lines. Deadline, June 1. FOF Poetry Competition, 71 Alderley Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2AU. www.festivaloffirsts.com

Subscribe to *Kudos* at: <http://www.kudoswritingcompetitions.com>

You can get a free sample copy (*Kudos 94*) from the Editor: editor@poetrysociety.org.nz



Mini Competition

I thought the limerick competition would attract more interest than it did. As it happens, only two people bothered to enter it, and both will receive a random book of poetry from my Steele Roberts pile. Thanks for playing, Maris O'Rourke and Don McLennan. Here are my two favourites of the five they submitted between them (though Maris's one had some help with the rhythm, as she didn't quite have the hang of it. See how easy it is to win these things?).

Logarithmical

Mathematics with terms hyperbolic
increases one's pressure systolic.

When growth exponential
transcends your potential
take copious drinks alcoholic

Don McLennan

Social Media

There once was a young man who wooed
by putting his butt on YouTube.

Got millions of 'likes',
woke up and said "Yikes!

My body has made the 'most-viewed'"

Maris O'Rourke



Reviews

***The Comforter* Helen Lehndorf (Seraph Press, 2012)**
ISBN 978-0-473-17717-1 RRP \$25

Natasha Dennerstein

This is an exquisite collection of poems of a quintessentially kiwi life, from a childhood in small-town, meat-packing Aotearoa, where teenage lovers dream of being international poets and rock-stars ('1987'), to a mature existence with home, hearth and children ('When I Blew Out the Candle').

It must be said that this book is expertly 'curated': the editor has splayed the pieces in an aesthetically-pleasing arrangement, avoiding the too-obvious choice of chronological placement. Overall, the pieces tell the story of a life, individually and as a collection. One of the several themes of this collection is the vexed question of how one manages to live a creative life. The pieces all seem to touch on the balance between creative work and the necessary business of living: of managing children, a relationship, a home.

Every poem sits well on the page. Perhaps emblematic of the collection is 'Alpha', in which each seven-line stanza collects 'like' objects: "fried bread/ whitebait/ shark'n'taties/ pork'n'puha/ liver'n'bacon/ steak'n'kidney/ lamb roast on Sunday". A musical list of a meat-eating New Zealand childhood in freezer-works country. In 'A skull, a silk, a skulk', Lehndorf describes the pressures of parenting small children whilst maintaining an interior life of the intellect. Never does the poet feel sorry for herself; never does she regret the choices she has made.

In 'wood, button, bone', the poet tackles the broad sweep of her own family history via the use of utilitarian objects and practical skills. A lot is packed into five eight-line stanzas: four or five generations of German/New Zealand ingenuity. It is described how these skills and objects boil down to the poet and manifest themselves in the present. There are some killer phrases here: "it is animal, gristle and visceral... The prick of the pin against the skin... The semi-precious. The demi-tasse." Excellent sounds. 'Tincture' shows the poet as a child, rolling words around on her tongue, examining them, turning them inside out. The poet-as-child searches for meaning and examines the ways in which language can explain the world around her, as poets do.

The poem 'Fallback' – with its subtle titular intimation of the American word for Autumn – is a lovely elegiac piece, set at the end of summer. The poet's world is described through produce, home-grown vegetables. It is full of the "Weltschmerz", the "tristesse" associated with the end of summer, along the lines of Keats' "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness". It contains the wonderful phrase "Manawatu gothic".

Each poem is effective and poignant, but as a collection, the over-arching tone is of emotional maturity and the quest for spiritual balance. What one is left with is the feeling that the poet appears to accept her past without regret and remains free of fear for the future. She is living in The Now: her life is what it is. The poet has come to various forks in the road and the poetry rejoices in the selections of the paths taken.

Scenery and Agriculture David Beach. (Wellington: VUP, 2012). ISBN: 9780864737595, RRP\$25.

Joanna Preston.

Scenery and Agriculture is Wellington poet David Beach's third collection. Beach burst into prominence in 2008, when he won the IIML Prize in Modern Letters for his first collection, *Abandoned Novel* (VUP, 2006).

I really enjoy David Beach's work. I possibly shouldn't: he writes what VUP describe as "chopped-up prose sonnets", "blurred ... poetry/prose divide" and "a kind of anti-poet[ry]". Which leads you to expect something deliberately non-musical; language either resolutely blokeish and demotic, or painfully post-modern-fancy and self-conscious. What you actually get are well-made poems, in a voice that re-purposes the language of their source. I can't help feeling a Wordsworthian touch here (despite the blurb's odd declaration that he is an antidote to the Romanticist nature poem) – the language is 'ordinary', but elevated, even slightly formal. More on this later.

The collection is structured in two parts. 'Scenery' is a sequence of twelve poems based on the 2008 'Splendour of New Zealand' calendar. The second ('Agriculture'), is a suite of forty-six poems looking at various aspects of agriculture, some triggered by news articles. The 'Scenery' poems are the weakest – the danger of themed sequences is that individual poems can feel written-to-fill, rather than existing in their own right. Beach brings out the scenic clichés, but doesn't really challenge them. There are a few bits of semi-gothic relish ("it would be/ all one whether to transport or drown them", "still the risk/ of being mythologically harassed") that I enjoyed, but like the roads depicted, they don't really go anywhere.

Where the book comes alive is the 'Agriculture' section. It ranges widely, both geographically (The Amazon to NZ, by way of 17th century England and space) and in terms of subject (the brief [and underhanded] British rubber industry in SE Asia, Fonterra, and the final scene in 'Apocalypse Now').

If some (like the first) are perhaps a bit obvious in their message, the majority are thought-provoking snapshots of what 'agriculture' is around the world, and what effects it has on both the human and natural environments. The last lines of these poems are often an ironic comment or twist – a classic English sonnet approach. (Actually you can get a decent sense of each poem by just reading the first and last few lines, although you'd miss interesting details, and the real point of the poems).

The language of most of these feels lifted from the source, with no obvious boundary between that and Beach's own words. It's a neat trick, that highlights how obfuscationist a lot of public language is. Beach increases this feeling with his syntax – clause after delaying clause leading off into stranger and stranger verbiage. It's easy enough to follow if you're willing to trust him. (Although I suspect it might be offputting to people who pick the book up on the basis of the back-cover blurb's comment that "No hotel lobby or shearer's hut should be without David Beach's third collection".) The tension between the convoluted phrases and aggressive enjambments hold the rope of syntax just taut enough to keep the poem humming. That said, the most interesting poems are where he drops this cleverness, and gives us the surprise of a purely lyric poem. My favourites are *Agriculture 35*, (a love-song and apology to rain), and the lovely *Agriculture 23*:

To stand in a barn's soft light, sniff its
rich, grainy smell, the paraphernalia
of rural toil ...

It's actually a metaphysical contemplation of the barn as a metaphor for humans in nature, but disguised. Nifty!

I enjoyed this collection. There are glitches, but most of it works well, and he has a unique way of doing things. Ignore the backcover blurbs, and give him a try. Thoroughly recommended.



There are no simplistic rules for poets: if there were, any duffer could write poetry. There are, however, rules of thumb, and one of the best is that getting the focus off yourself gives you the best chance of tapping your personal experience.

Clive James

from: *Quote Poet Unquote* Ed. Dennis O'Driscoll
(Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend, 2008)

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

7 JUNE

Members' Poems

celebration

facing the mirror
the stripper
is a joyful mix
of texture & colour

she doesn't know
the muse,
fears no leaving

why should she connect
with visual or graphic death
when there's another
night out
painting the town

clients marriages
seem to her,
assemblages
of broken pieces
with new materials

yet she loves the painter's
tribute to all women,
depicting them
as Figures in Light.

Catherine Mair

Born of the Head of My Father

I am Minerva: molecule muscle &
mystery monument cumulus
cycles of moon

I'm mask I'm mystic weaving
of firmament maze imago
fragment + sum

I'm smile I'm random amassing
of wisdom virginal venal mother
& ma'am

I'm map I'm migrant
I'm freedom impediment
certainty memory every
-thing nothing

I'm myth I'm rumour
madness mendacity
aftermath palimpsest
mellifluence mind

method munificence
meteor massacre
paroxysm patrimony
magma emerging

I'm scribe

Karen Zelas

The year my piano left
I had good intentions
of tolerable silence,
of staying within the lines

I had good intentions
across the Christmas table
of joyful toasts
to sober elephants

across the Christmas table
they saw the uninvited chair
and absent presents
away from home

they saw the uninvited chair
and rusted obligations
as a tan line
on his finger

and rusted obligations
of faded signatures,
just watermarks of liabilities
the year my piano left

Charmaine Thomson

The Devil's Punchbowl

Nylon drip of rain and rustle
the heaving breathing silent climb,
my jacket outlines me. Through
the trees ahead, a faraway sound,
my teenage son is calling.

The gleeful devil cloud
crashes beyond the viewing platform,
films us in dew, we discover
the voices of poets on the way down
engraved on the runners of steps
soft dark lines you can hardly read
love... bone.... rain

Gail Ingram