



a fine line

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Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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ANTHOLOGY LAUNCH

Join us to celebrate the launch of
our 2008 Anthology: *Before the Sirocco*
edited by Joanna Preston
Saturday 8 November, 6pm
Turnbull House, 11 Bowen St, Wellington
Refreshments supplied.

NOVEMBER MEETING

- celebrating our 'new home' -
Monday 17 November, 7.30pm
The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Wgtn
Open mic, followed by a reading from:
The Academy

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Feature Article

A Note on Stencils

John O'Connor

Inasmuch as anything is new, the stencil is a new type of light verse. As the name suggests it gives an indication of a scene by the use of a few simple images. But not just of any old scene. Stencils are social; they are about people and/or groups of people. A few points are essential by way of introduction and contrast.

Firstly, their main function is to entertain. They aim to produce a lightening of the mood, the lifting of an eyebrow or a smile; but not a titter, a belly laugh, horse laugh etc. That is to say; it is a *humorous* form of verse, rather than being comic, burlesque, satiric or whatever.

Secondly, like a number of other light verse forms, the stencil can go beyond its initial function. Its secondary purpose is to give enough of a picture for the reader to be spontaneously drawn into — and imaginatively “fill out” — some of its vacuums or sensory/social possibilities.

Technically, it presents a few interacting images within the set structure of four short lines and a variable rhyme scheme. Eg, we might start with a generalised image (virtually a sign/indicator): “country fair”. The next image might be on a smaller pictorial scale, it ‘fits within’ the first: “tiny tots’ races”. The last (multiple/dispersed) image might be smaller still: “on all the balloons / clown faces”:

country fair
tiny tots’ races —
on all the balloons
clown faces

Given the ubiquity of haiku within NZPS it’s perhaps useful to point out some of the differences and occasional similarities of the two forms. Like the classic haiku, the stencil should ideally carry the reader with it — ie, it should exceed/over-spill its form/structure. Haiku often do this by the concentrated juxtaposition of images. A typical good haiku is a tightly or reductively focused moment of perception/insight which suggests the essence of an experience, or of something — “the thing itself”.

In contrast, the stencil is loosely and lightly suggested/outlined and is a little more inclusive of imagery/data. Where the haiku can be mysterious in its (vernacular) apprehension of the unity which underlies the ordinary (often *driving* inwards or downwards), the stencil is a celebration of the everyday in its own varied terms (it *tends* outwards, towards its own type of stuff).

Again, where the classic haiku is primarily a serious poem which *may* at times employ the lightest touch of humour, whimsy etc to recontextualise (and thus freshen) its purposely commonplace imagery, the stencil is a humorous poem which *must* have a touch or suggestion of seriousness (not essentially for contrast and the hint of completeness, those are collateral benefits) but for the (in this case light) grounding which all types of poetry and verse must have if they are to succeed.

Lastly, figures of speech and abstract language — discouraged in haiku because they lead away from the “thingness” or “suchness” of the moment towards interpretation — are perfectly at home in the socially expressive stencil.

To illustrate. The shared topic of the verses below is a painting class. Firstly a stencil:

night class Art
someone's sky is black –
behind the teacher's back
self-portrait

now a haiku:

art class –
 the black sky *slashed*
by red

I'd suggest these guidelines for the form:

- 4 short lines
- a rhyme scheme (any rhyme scheme)
- present tense
- humorous, with a touch of seriousness (keep it light)
- titles are generally unnecessary

A few more examples:

Arts Centre
poetry reading –
the lack of "breeding"
very pleasing

rugby game
getting rough –
grandstand boyfriends
acting tough

Christmas break-up
Gargoyle Press –
the receptionist's "little
black dress"

church hall –
 ball after
 ball after ball –
"The Juggler"

marching practice
Hagley Park –
boots whiter
after dark

after the ball –
who would have guessed
that Tony & Paul
both loved stars?

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

It's getting perilously close to the launch of our annual anthology as this goes to press (not really, but I like the feel of the word 'perilously' in my mind, and I haven't managed to work it into a poem yet). So much to do: confirm numbers for the caterer – and hope there aren't too many late RSVPs, – arrange for the liquid refreshments – ditto, – write a welcome speech, schedule the readers into some sort of coherent

order, and start addressing envelopes so I can send out the pre-ordered copies after the launch is over.

And as if that isn't enough, the launch also marks the opening of the 2009 International Poetry Competition, so there's the sponsors to arrange, the entry forms to review and update, the international promotion to start.

And the January issue of *a fine line* has to go to the printer at the beginning of December, so you get it before Christmas instead of halfway through January, giving me 2 weeks less than usual to put it together.

It's all under control (I keep telling myself that!), and at least I don't have the additional pressure I put on myself two years ago, when I signed up for National Novel Writing Month, at <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>. I wrote a 50,000 word novel in the space of 30 days, despite there being a major snafu with the production of the anthology in the middle of it.

Sadly, I didn't back my novel up after the first 20,000 words, so I lost most of it in the Great Computer Crash of 2007, but it was fun to do.

I've really enjoyed reading the poems in the Bookhabit.com online poetry competition with which the NZ Poetry Society is collaborating. The first week would have been really easy to win for any moderately competent poet, such was the unfortunate quality of what was uploaded, but from Week 2, word had spread and the quality (and competitiveness) improved markedly. Check it out at www.bookhabit.com and see how the vote went.

About our Contributors

Nola Borrell is a Lower Hutt poet, co-editor of *the taste of nashi*, and the 2008 judge of the NZPS international junior haiku competition.

Anne Harré is a Wellington writer and musician, who edited the 2003 NZ Poetry Society anthology, *the enormous picture*.

Nancy Loader lives in Christchurch and finds reading poetry easier than writing it.

Harvey Molloy is a Wellington poet who recently published *Moonshot*, his first poetry collection.

John O'Connor is a Christchurch poet. His 8th collection of poems, *Cornelius & Co: Collected Working-Class Verse*, will be released early next year.

A Warm Welcome to:

John Adams Auckland

Charlotte Bergman Porirua

Stephen Giles Auckland

Friederike & Philipp Hoepfer Christchurch

Sarah Johnson Raglan

Saradha Koirala Wellington

Anne Lee Wellington

Keava McKeogh Hamilton

Mac Miller Hamilton

Sally Mubarak Auckland

Beth Rust Hastings

Julie Sargisson Auckland

Lisa Stanley Lower Hutt

Mere Taito New Plymouth

Jules Walker Auckland

Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history.

Plato

Letters to the Editor

Riposte

Birds & Crits

– in reply to EB's Letter to the Editor (*a fine line*, September 2008)

Birds need hollow bones
to make them light
& wings to flap
to give them flight

& beaks to stick
into the ground,
and little legs
to hop around

& eggs to sit on
in the nest,
& chicks to feed
to teach to test

they do not need
some "twaddling" crit –
they aim a splash of 'Twink'
at it!

John O'Connor (*Christchurch*)

Scam results

I'm sure that all of you poets out there are familiar with the spam merchants, "poetry.com". Most of us have, at some time, actually believed their spiel. However, here's a new twist: today I have received an email to my very old Hotmail account (one I check only infrequently) and there I discover that my poem 'A Lonely Old Man' is in the selection process.

Wow... The curious thing is that I've never written a poem called 'A Lonely Old Man,' let alone submitted anything to these carpetbaggers. On their email there is no link to 'my' poem...

John Irvine (*Coromandel*)

Ed's note: Poetry.com goes under many aliases in its mission to separate you from your money. One of their favourite tricks is to 'vote' you one of the world's Top 100 poets. Should you, as an inexperienced and little published poet, find yourself elevated to this lofty position, beware – demands on your chequebook/credit card won't be far behind. Our website has an entire page devoted to scams and how to spot them: see

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

Congratulations

Michael Harlow has won this year's *Bravado* poetry competition, with NZPS Committee member **Tim Jones** in second place, and 2008 Robert Burns Fellow **Sue Wootton** in third. **Pat White** and **Frankie McMillan** were among the other 5 prize winners. And Michael Harlow will be Robert Burns Fellow in 2009. Nice touch.

Sue Wootton has a story, 'Virtuoso', in the New Zealand Book Council's 2008 *Six Pack*.

Helen Lowe is making a big splash with her recently-released Young Adult fantasy novel *Thornspell*. You can read the first chapter at www.thornspell.info. Helen herself is featured by her publisher at:

<http://outoftheseos.typepad.com/blog/2008/08/introducing-helen-lowel.html>

Sugu Pillay won Second Prize in the Playwrights Association of New Zealand Competition, Teen Actors Scripts Division, for her play 'The Facts'.

Publications

New arrivals on the NZPS bookshelf since the last issue:

The Rocky Shore (VUP), the latest from Jenny Bornholdt, containing six long poems.

Beauty of the Badlands(VUP) by Cliff Fell.

Kokako 9 (Ed, Owen Bullock & **Patricia Prime**) is out, with contributions from lots of familiar names. It also contains the details of the 2nd *Kokako* International Tanka Competition, closing 31st Dec.

Paneta Street (HeadworX) by Michael O'Leary is a mix of new and archived works from earlier days.

My Iron Spine (HeadworX) by **Helen Rickerby** is a rich and delicious collection of textures and lives. This is Helen's second collection, and it's been a long but worthwhile wait. You can hear her interview with Lynn Freeman (Radio NZ National's Arts on Sunday) at

http://www.radionz.co.nz/_data/assets/audio_item/0005/1740785/art-20080928-1450-

[Writers_Block_Helen_Rickerby-m048.asx](http://www.radionz.co.nz/_data/assets/audio_item/0005/1740785/art-20080928-1450-Writers_Block_Helen_Rickerby-m048.asx)

Get Some (AUP) by Sonia Yelich. Eminently readable.

Noticeboard

For a complete list of regional events, and to find the poetry meeting in your town, please go to our website:

www.poetrysociety.org.nz

WHITIREIA COMMUNITY POLYTECHNIC CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAMME 2009

Enrol by 30 November. Develop versatile skills across a range of genres (fiction, poetry, scriptwriting, non-fiction, writing for children). Or write a major manuscript with support of a mentor and workshops. Study full-time or part-time, on campus or online, for personal satisfaction, diploma or degree. Whitireia encourages dynamic and excellent writing from a very diverse range of writers. More details at www.whitireia.ac.nz or contact Lynn Davidson, lynn.davidson@whitireia.ac.nz

EDITOR OF FROGPOND TO VISIT NZ IN 2009

George Swede, well known North American haiku poet, and editor of the Haiku Society of America's journal *Frogpond*, will be visiting New Zealand early next year. Wellington's Windrift Haiku Group is inviting him to their February meeting, which has been brought forward to Thursday 5th February 2009, at 1 pm. Most of the meeting will take the form of a question and answer forum with George.

Windrift invites any interested NZ Poetry Society members to join them at the meeting.

Expressions of interest are invited now to help Windrift determine numbers and find a suitable venue for the meeting. Address these to either:

Karen Butterworth, 29 Kirk St Otaki 5512, ph 06 364 5810 karenpetbut@xtra.co.nz or Nola Borrell, 177A Miromiro Rd., Normandale, Lower Hutt. Ph: 04 586 7287 nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz

thick fog lifts -
unfortunately, I am where
I thought I was -

wind change
the tumbleweed now chases
the kitten

George Swede

POETS WANTED FOR CHRISTCHURCH READINGS

If any poet will be holidaying in Christchurch from mid-March to end April, and would like to take part in the Canterbury Poets Collective autumn series of readings, please contact Judith Walsh at: njw@clear.net.nz

Workshops & Residencies

2009 SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOP, IIML, WELLINGTON **Applications close: Monday 10**

November. The 2009 workshops will run from 6 January- 20 February, and will meet for 3 hours on Tues. & Thursdays. **Iowa poetry** "This workshop will look at the ways different traditions, movements, and writers explore or eclipse personal materials in their poems. While examining how others have treated both the person inside and the person behind the poem, we will consider how we ourselves might proceed as writers." Workshop convenor Lucas Bernhardt worked for a variety of mental health and social service organizations before earning MAs in English and in Writing from Portland State University, and an MFA in Poetry from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. All enrolment information is available at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/modernletters/creative-writing/undergrad.aspx>

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO/CNZ WRITER IN RESIDENCE 2009 **Applications close: Monday 10**

November. The position is open to poets, novelists, short story writers, dramatists, and writers of serious non-fiction. The appointment will be made on the basis of a record of publications of high quality.

The Writer is required to live in Hamilton during the tenure of the award. There are no teaching or lecturing duties attached to the award, the sole purpose of which is to give the Writer the freedom to write. It is expected the Writer will participate in the cultural life of the University. Enquiries can be made to Dr Sarah Shieff, telephone 07 8562889 extension 8425, email sshieff@waikato.ac.nz Applications should be made on the University of Waikato Application Form, available from <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/hrm/vacancies/280305.shtml> or contact HRM at jobs@waikato.ac.nz, telephone 07 838 4003, facsimile 07 856 0135.

RANDELL COTTAGE/CNZ WRITER'S RESIDENCY March 2009 - September 2009 **Applications close:**

Friday 14 November Applicants must be NZ citizens or NZ residents and should be writers whose work has already been published and well received. The project proposal submitted by the writer may be in any genre: fiction, children's fiction, poetry, drama, biography, other literary non-fiction, or art topics.

Randell Cottage has two bedrooms and a separate writing studio and is located in Wellington, within walking distance of the National and Turnbull Libraries. The residency includes a monthly stipend as well as accommodation.

Application forms and further information from: www.randellcottage.co.nz or The Secretary, Box 11-032 Wellington, or email: randell@writerstrust.co.nz

TASMANIAN ISLAND RESIDENCIES 2009 **Applications close: 30 November.** Applications are invited from published writers from all around the world. Writers living on islands are particularly encouraged to apply. Residencies are available between March and November 2009 for writers who have published work on any subject, in any form including poetry. To obtain application form email: admin@tasmanianwriters.org or see www.tasmanianwriters.org/resappform.doc

Competitions & Submissions

A substantial list of international competitions & submissions is available in the Members Only section of our website, www.poetrysociety.org.nz/members. In the interest of saving you time and space, from this issue this column will give only the essential details and the website address of non-New Zealand organisations, so you can check out for yourself any that interest you.

Muse & Stone Call for Submissions (USA) Postmark Deadline: 15 November.

[http://www.waynesburg.edu/index.php?q=Campus Life/Student Activities and Organizations/Muse and Stone](http://www.waynesburg.edu/index.php?q=Campus+Life/Student+Activities+and+Organizations/Muse+and+Stone)

Odes to the Olympians Contest (US) Closing date: 15 November. Free to enter.

<http://www.tapestryofbronze.com/OdeForm.html>

Poetry Prizes from *The New Writer* magazine (UK) Closing date 30 November.

<http://www.thenewwriter.com/entryform.htm>

Bird's Eye reView Call for Submissions (USA)

Postmark Deadline: 1 December. <http://www.birdseyepoetry.org/id5.html>

The Petra Kenney Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 1 December.

www.petrapoetrycompetition.co.uk

Best New Zealand Poems, 2008. Closing date: 22 December. Editor: James Brown. Poems need to have been published in the 2008 calendar year, and may have appeared in books, journals or online publications (editions of selected poems will not be considered). We recommend that writers check with their publisher before sending books in, to avoid double-ups. Work should be addressed to: BNZP Editor, c/- International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University, PO Box 600, Wellington.

SPS Studios Poetry Card Contest (USA) Deadline: 31 December.

<http://www.sps.com/poetry/index.html>

Eclecticism - e-zine submissions Ongoing themed submissions – check website.

<http://www.eclecticzine.com>

Surfing the Web

<http://www.harpers.org/archive/2008/09/hbc-90003617> A sort of reflection on the current world financial situation, by American poet Charles Bernstein. Worth reading; it's not what you expect.

<http://www.poetryarchive.org/> Ever wondered what TS Eliot sounded like reading 'The Wasteland', or William Carlos Williams, 'The Red Wheelbarrow', or even Tennyson reading 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'? Wonder no more. The Poetry Archive has these and many more.

<http://www.poetryvisualized.com> And for a complete contrast, this site contains videos uploaded by contemporary poets and film-makers of assorted quality. They include videos and animations accompanying the work of published poets like Billy Collins and Edgar Allan Poe. A bit of exploration turns up some gems.

<http://international.poetryinternationalweb.org>

Poems in both their original languages, and in English translation. A fabulous website if you want to read (and hear) excellent poetry from other cultures.

<http://www.alibris.com/about> An alternative to Amazon.com. Now there are even more poetry books available to you at competitive prices.

<http://www.vroomvroomvroom.co.nz/usefularticles/The-Poet-of-New-Zealand.asp> Proof, if it's needed, that poetry doesn't have to be confined to serious literary journals and *The Listener*. Thanks to **John Irvine** for the pointer.

<http://www.writersdigest.com/101BestSites/> For those of you not confined to a single genre. Here are all the writers' sites you could ever imagine needing. It's what I'd be relying on if I had time to write, and there's plenty for poets.

<http://www.poetrykit.org/q&a.htm> Now, here's something for the technicians amongst us. At the time I

became aware of it, this Q & A forum had questions about the use of gerunds and of punctuation on it, with extensive discussion. Who knows what other enlightening topics will arise? Worth a look.

Regional Reports

Readers are invited to submit reports on local events they attend. Please email to editor@poetrysociety.org.nz or send hard copies to PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145.

WINDRIFT, WELLINGTON

Bevan Greenslade

Skype - ?: As host for the August meeting, I demonstrated Skype conversation with a family member. Only communication between two sites seems to be possible on this freeware. We hope to use a multi-terminal process. If anyone has experienced advice on this, we are (like Dumbo) all ears.

There was a wide range of haiku proffered in the given categories for our workshop: Original, Spring, and haiku with the following lines: "southerly change", "with each breath", "dreaming".

diamond
her hand
on mine

Ernest J Berry:

watched for -
a postman cycles by
not pausing

John Ross (newcomer)

Penny Pruden lamented:

gale-force wind
torments the trees
Spring arrives

Sally Holmes Midgely left us laughing:

southerly change
the leaves flip sides

Kerry Popplewell smelled summer y-cumen in:

manuka scent
with each breath
I inhale summer

Nola Borrell's lean verse was again athletic:

dreaming
I lead the field
dreaming

Irene Ruth dreamed of the consolations of cold and skilfully included all three given lines in one haiku!:

southerly change -
don't shatter with each breath
my mid-winter dreaming

Contact: Nola Borrell. Ph: 04 586 7287. Email: nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz

Reviews

Echolocation Angela Andrews (Victoria University Press) RRP \$25.00 ISBN/ISSN 978 0 86473 563 8
Harvey Molloy

In *Echolocation* Andrews investigates the life stories of her Dutch grandparents and how, despite many years living in New Zealand, like all immigrants they are never able to leave the old country behind. This investigation dovetails with an account of her pregnancy and the birth of her child.

All of this might seem very familiar, perhaps even *too* familiar, to readers of New Zealand poetry, as the concern with family histories and family life runs through much contemporary work. On first reading, I felt that the book was too locked into following these set concerns and perhaps too tightly orchestrated. However, *Echolocation* succeeds by Andrews' almost virtuoso arrangement of sounds. More than any other book I've read over the last year, *Echolocation* demands to be read aloud so that the subtle alliterations and rhythms can be heard. On first reading, I appreciated the precision of the poems but on second reading, when I read the poems aloud, I was delighted by their craft. It's hard to quote one or two lines as an example of this patterning, but consider the alliteration of the last two lines of 'Opa':

Wide stars, small shells,
the open span of sand.

The beauty of the lines shows you good poetry at work: in nine words Andrews creates a vast panorama of space.

The careful shaping of sounds also suggests one of Andrews' themes: our lives are in some ways vibrations in time. We speak, we move, we love, we leave resonances. Here's the opening of 'Leaving Glenview Road':

Our lives are left as hollows
in the carpet, and heavy spaces
on the walls. I can name them.

One of the activities of poetry is naming the hollows and spaces of our lives and Andrews so quietly states this that nothing seems affected (and listen to the lovely alliteration of "lives" and "left" and "hollows" and "heavy"!)

Andrews is a doctor who completed her MA in Creative Writing at Victoria University in 2005, and occasionally you can detect what feels like the 'creative writing exercise poem' in the book. Here's 'How to have a baby':

Have an epidural
Have a Caesar
give birth in the Coromandel hills.

Do we need any more 'How to' poems? This one seems to have been cooked in a classroom. But in the main, *Echolocation* avoids the formulaic. It's a subtle, impressive, tightly controlled book that requires more than one silent reading. *Echolocation* is Andrews' first book and in her next book I'd like Andrews to free herself from the very strict control I think she's imposed on herself in terms of her subject matter and to give herself more room to breathe.

Poems Adrift Meg Campbell (Te Kotare Press, 2007) RRP \$20 ISBN 978 0 9597765 0 8

Nancy Loader

Meg Campbell was born in 1937 in Palmerston North. She married Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, also a poet, and lived for the rest of her life in Pukerua Bay, Porirua, a setting that inspired more poems. Her first book of poems, *The Way Back* (1981) won a PEN award. *A Durable Fire* (1982) further reflected her experiences with severe depression and its treatment in a psychiatric hospital in the 1960s. She published six books of poetry over the last 25 years.

The title of this, her final, collection of poetry is appropriate. It clearly reflects the style and content of the poems which are one woman's musings on the paradoxes of life, death, love and relationships over a period of about 12 years. There is nothing profound or startling in this collection, it is easy to read and well laid out. The poet explores her own feelings about her life and approaching death with a degree of equanimity.

A lengthy introduction by John O'Connor places the poet's work in context with time and place, and the overall evolution of poetry in New Zealand.

Many of her poems are about her deep, sometimes turbulent, but lasting relationship with her husband. The collection starts with the poem 'Too Free With Words':

I can't explain what binds me to the life
here with you. Without urgency I mull it over.
It's your footfall, marking your movements
through the house, something I need to secure
the rhythm of each day. If I call to you,
and if I find your chair empty,
I trail off to find you, to ask you what you
think of this or that notion. I always
loved you more than those other women
obsessed about you
...
I was yours for life - if you wanted me,
and it is still the same. Nothing has changed.

The reality of the sad fragmentation of families is clearly expressed in 'Take-Aways'

Some children pass away
from our lives. Not dead,
but, all the same, missing.
Their mothers, once partners
to our sons, take away the kids.
...
We count what we have left -
four out of eleven. We'll make
four into a multitude.

'Publishing My Poetry', which completes the collection, is amusing and will strike a resonance with all those on the brink of becoming published poets.

I should have known
that the large spider in the bath
and the dead bumblebee
in the dining room were,
of course, bad omens.
The news was that my brave
book was in danger of being
aborted so late in it's gestation -
not aborted, but miscarried !

Meg Campbell died on November 17, 2007, and *Poems Adrift* was launched the next day.

A New Zealand Fable Music by Eric Biddington, Poetry by Elizabeth Smyth (Eric Biddington, 2008)

Anne Harré

Featuring

Oleg Korotovych – Violin

Iryna Ioenko – Viola

Gretchen Dunsmore – Clarinet

Tjasa Dykes – Flute

Iola Shelley – Piano

It is an adventurous undertaking putting poems down on CD, but to be honest, I'm not entirely sure it works. What troubled me were neither the poems nor the music, I was simply puzzled about what the CD was actually trying to do, or be. Was it a CD of poems with music, or music with poems? Is one supporting the other or vice versa? Or should I simply let it all go and just sit back and listen? So many questions, so little space!

The poems themselves could very easily stand alone and Smyth has already had a considerable body of work published. Her poems and short stories have appeared in the anthology *New Zealand Short Short Stories* and *Beyond the Tobacco Bush Beyond the Cocoa Bean*, and she is a recipient of the NZSA mentorship writing programme. The topics are homely and intimate, the use of imagery sparse. Had I had a copy of them in front of me I would certainly have wanted to re-read. (On that note, it would have been a good addition to the liner notes to have had the poems printed).

The music, just as easily could stand alone. Well-known Christchurch composer Eric Biddington has a number of recordings already available. For this recording he has gathered a group of highly talented musicians (all members of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra), and recorded in the acoustically fabulous Chapel of The Music Centre of Christchurch. Biddington's music has a plaintive, lilting quality that lends itself to the intimacy of these short chamber works.

So, on the one hand the poems work, on the other hand the music works, but together they proved problematic. Thematically the poems bore no relationship to the music which ultimately acted as a pleasant interlude to the voice of Smyth reading her own work. This in turn left the music hanging and, to a certain extent, undervalued.

It is an ancient idea, that of having music and poetry appearing together on the same bill. Troubadours of old were well versed (excuse the pun) in the art. I will satisfy myself by saying that this CD is a snapshot of works in time, a record of creative endeavour. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this particular CD you can contact the NZPS National Coordinator for details. Personally I would recommend that if you're interested in Biddington's work, hunt out a recording that shows his work off to its full advantage.

I Want More Sugar by James McNaughton (Steele Roberts NZ, 2008) 63pp RRP \$19.99 ISBN 978-1-877448-26-3

Nancy Loader

This is James McNaughton's second collection of poems, which is described as "the long awaited thesis to his previous collection *The Stepmother Tree* (2001) which was a critically acclaimed and controversial cosmic cult classic".

Does it live up to the hype ? Definitely.

I Want More Sugar is a collection of 27 poems written over a period of about 7 years. Some have been published previously in literary magazines and will be familiar.

McNaughton covers themes of modern life, values, perceptions, nature, travel and science. Many of the poems were written whilst he was travelling through Asia including Tibet, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and the Himalayas.

The collection is divided into 4 parts which broadly speaking stretch from politics and society today (part I) through experiences in Asia (part II and III) and then come full circle in part IV as he re-explores his own culture from a different perspective.

McNaughton seeks to educate and illuminate in his poetry, but rather than hectoring he does this in an ironic and pleasing way. His tone is simultaneously relaxed and engaging.

The first poem in the book, 'The Waistland', starts by mimicking the opening lines to Eliot's 'The Wasteland', but it develops quickly into its own contemporary theme.

Autumn

April is the most expensive month, hollowing
phantom pangs of hunger, raising
the colours of Coke and McDonalds
in a triumphant seasonal franchise, mixing
memory and fat and cheap sugar.

It continues to explore the movement and feelings around the transition between Autumn and Winter very effectively :

The body slackens, loosens its resolve
to renege on the loan. All mottles and curls,
it's autumn.

A gull drifts like a cinder
Over the cold anvil of harbour...

Suburbs rest in weak sun
on rumpled, dressing-gown hills...

Her mind fills and drains like a rock pool.
It clouds, it abandons her...

In the third section of this poem, 'A Demi-deity's New Diet', he brings together obesity, Plato's chariot, Rachel Hunter and the restoration of celebrity on achieving a media regulated body size.

Fat is the new four-letter word;
Fat is the new Fall.
Now a fat black horse plunges
before Plato's chariot.

Transformed, Rachel visits us
as a younger woman.
She's been lifted
by the slim white horse of celery

to her rightful height
on the Mt Olympus of celebrity.....

'Proverbs from Down Under after Blake's 'Proverbs from Hell' ' is thought provoking and had the additional effect of driving me back to read Blake's original (or at least some of it.) McNaughton's version is a little more depressing than Blake's, however:

The road to excess
is paved with credit cards. The nakedness
of women is a biological imperative...
Without man nature is glorious...
Many shall starve so that one stands on Mars.

As the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys, he lays his hands on the most trusting boys..

Some are a little lighter :

The New Zealander is human
The plough demands gratitude from the cut worm.
Crooked roads without improvement are public roads.
On Sunday bury your head between death and sports.
Conservation hurts business, Judgement Day will end pollution..

In part II we find 'Immense Festival from 'The Magic Mountain''. This poem celebrates the human form in a style similar to Neruda, although I suspect that McNaughton is being ironic. You can take it either way.

What an immense festival to cherish them,
These delicious places of the body.
Which celebrates to die without complaint
afterwards. Yes, my god, I want to breath
the odour of the skin, of your kneecap,
under which the clever articular
capsule secretes all its slipping oil.
Let me touch my mouth devoutly to your
femoral artery, which beats with the face
of your thigh and which is divided low
into the arteries of the tibia....

'Mekong Moon', written in Laos. and 'Cicadas', written in Japan, both give a sense of those places.

Part III consists of a single poem in 8 parts called 'Colours'. It's languid, relaxed, conversational and stimulating. It centres on a dive in the Maldives, but branches out into relationships – father/daughter, husband/wife, the physical properties of light and evolution amongst other things. 'Feathers' is the first part:

This patient voice in my mind as I lie
floating on my back thirty metres down,
encased in ocean, neutrally buoyant,
breathing bubbles into the silent blue.
And now a living, twisting cloud of fish
Above me make a tunnel to the sun.

Red

It's not uncommon here in the Maldives:
it rains, the streets become a blazing sauna.
Beyond the turquoise harbour, a rainbow

charts the progression of seven colours
as they are lost in an ocean descent,
according to my Chinese dive master.

In part IV the author returns to New Zealand in Spring/Summer and celebrates those seasons in 'Face':

The sun opens its palms
and a fleet of black ships
are launched on Wellington's sundials

and in 'Summer Time':

Summer time is recorded
by the cooling
Lawn Master 4000. It's ticking
becomes drowsy and lengthens

like the days,
like shadows lengthen.....

Birdsong is plucked from the trees
and pressed into dark blue wine.

Thus the poet comes full circle from a dismal Autumn, with similar thoughts about the human condition, through an Asian summer and back to Summer in New Zealand with a focused concentration on the celebration of life and nature.

Overall this is a very enjoyable, well crafted book of poetry which I would encourage people to buy for themselves or others as a gift. Visually it is attractive; the book cover illustration is taken from a photo (by the author) of multi-coloured Prayer flags in a blue-skied Tibet. The printing, alignment and paper quality are perfect .

When the Met service is advising me to wear four layers of clothing to remain comfortable, 'Colours' is the poem that I will curl up with again and again.

Haiku NewZ

Nola Borrell

CONGRATULATIONS

- to winners in the Katikati Haiku Contest:

Senior section: Eduard Tara, Romania (1st), **Elaine Riddell** (2nd) and **Kirsten Cliff** (3rd), **Nola Borrell**, **Helen Yong** and **André Surridge** (all Highly Commended). The best local haiku was written by Jan Goldthorp.

moonlight
the stream flows from shadow
to shadow

Elaine Riddell

Junior section: Erika Cabrales (1st), Sophie Gibson (2nd), Hannah Botha (3rd), Sophia Frenz and Jessica Polwarth (Highly Commended), Hattie Sutcliffe and Casey Rameka (Commended).

See comments by the Judge (**Sandra Simpson**) on:

www.poetrysociety.org.nz/haikunews

The prizegiving ceremony was at the Haiku Pathway on 4 October, preceded by the Wai Tako drummers, a traditional Japanese drumming group from Waikato University.

This was part of the Katikati Mural Contest and Arts Festival which included a haiku-photo display. Those who rose to a tight deadline: **Margaret Beverland**, Nola Borrell, Owen Bullock, **Catherine Mair**, **Pat Prime** and André Surridge. See: <http://www.katikati.co.nz>

- To Andre Surridge for a haiku and 2 tanka in 3LIGHTS Gallery. www.threelightsgallery.com

- To Ernest J Berry for 2nd place in Kukai 13:

autumn light
the porch icicle
lit from within

- To Sandra Simpson for 1st in the miniWORDS contest (UK).

- To Pat Prime for work in *Tanka Prose Anthology*, *Santa Fe Poetry Broadsheet*, *Haibun Today* (tanka prose - if

you're interested in the relatively new concept of tanka prose, see *Haibun Today* - Sept 25, 27 & 29 in particular); 3Lights Gallery, *Blithe Spirit* and *paper wasp* (haiku, tanka); *Ribbons*, *Atlas Poetic 2*, *Gusts*, *Modern English Tanka*, *moonset* and *Tanka Splendour* (tanka); *Takahe* and *Stylus* (reviews). There's more! ...

For the less prolific and directed among us (most!), why not put 'SSS' above your computer screen: 'Send Something Somewhere' - say, monthly (an Elizabeth Smither idea).

on the gravel path
to the open-cast gold mine
magnolia heads

Pat Prime (Time Haiku Award)

- Extra: Ernest Berry was alerted to his haiku on a website called 'Poetic Currents' and commenting on 'Bush's War'.

old garden shed
the insecticide can
full of spiders

COMPETITIONS AND SUBMISSIONS (See NZPS website for a more detailed list.)

Nov. 30 James W Hackett Award. Cost: £3/\$US6 up to 3 haiku; £1/\$US2/ haiku thereafter. 3 copies on cards. Contact details on back of one card only. SSAE, 2 IRCs. Publication in *Blithe Spirit*. Cash prizes and free sub to BHS. Judges James Hackett & David Cobb will choose winning poems from a provided short list. Send: Hackett Award, Newton House, Holt Rd., North Elmham, Norfolk NR20 5JQ, UK.

Dec. 15 *Prune Juice*: New biannual journal (print and digital) of senryu and kyoka (humorous tanka) edited by Alexis Rotella. 'Gently humorous to the most wicked satire'. Up to 10 senryu and/or 10 kyoka at a time. Minimum age: 16. All submissions to rengagirl@yahoo.com No attachments. Subject line: 'Prune Juice Submission'.

www.prunejuicejournal.com/submit.htm

Dec. 31 *Kokako* Tanka Competition. Cost: \$2/ tanka or \$5/3 tanka. Overseas: \$US1/ tanka or \$US3/4 tanka. 2 copies with contact details on one copy only. Publication in *Kokako*. Cash prizes. Cheques to 'Kokako'. Send: Kokako Tanka Competition, c/- Patricia Prime, 42 Flanshaw Rd., Te Atatu South, Auckland 8, NZ.

Dec. 31 *White Lotus* Haiku Competition. Cost: \$US5/ 3 haiku or \$US2/ haiku. 3-line haiku only. Unlimited entries. Two copies, one with contact details. One haiku per sheet or card. Publication in *White Lotus*. SSAE. IRCs not accepted. Cash prizes. Entry forms on website. Winners announced Feb. 1. Send: Shadow Poetry, 1209 Milwaukee St., Excelsior Springs, MO 64024, USA.

Dec. 31 First international erotic tanka contest. Cost: \$US1 per haiku. No limit on number. Submit on index cards. Minimum age: 21. Judge: Pamela Babusci. Cash prizes. SSAE + 2 IRCs. Post to: Karen Shiffler, 1464 Lake Road Webster, NY 14580, USA. (Questions, with: 'Erotic Tanka Contest' in subject line: moongate44@gmail.com)

Jan 31 Kikakuza Haibun Contest. First international haibun contest to be launched in Japan. Cost: Free (to entrants outside Japan) Maximum length: 30 lines. Include at least one haiku. A4 paper with contact details at foot. Judges: Nobuyuki Yuasa and Stephen Henry Gill. Send to: Kikakuza (c/o Kifuu Futagami), 117-1 Nakogi, Hadano-shi. Kanagawa-ken, Japan 257-0024

NOTICES

Publication: *Wing Beats: British Birds in Haiku: "... full of acute observations, artistically moving, and intellectually stimulating - a very important book"* (William Higginson). Indeed, it is exquisitely presented, and will appeal both to haiku writers and birders.

Written and compiled by John Barlow and Matthew Paul, with contributions from over 30 other haiku poets, the book is illustrated by Sean Gray and features a foreword by the leading bird writer and

BBC producer, Stephen Moss.

The authors say, "The short poems in *Wing Beats* offer insight into the heart of the lives, behaviours and characteristics of British birds. Moreover, being haiku, they often contain underlying insight into the heart of our own lives as well".

Detailed appendices include taxonomy, English and scientific names of birds, season words, a British status and season words list and select bibliography. \$US40 (incl p & p) from Snapshot Press, PO Box 132, Waterloo, Liverpool 22 8WZ, UK www.snapshotpress.co.uk

Ed's note: This was the final Haiku NewZ column by Nola Borrell. The editor thanks Nola for the enormous contribution she has made to this publication over the last three years. Any offers to continue the column can be sent to editor@poetrysociety.org.nz or PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145.

Tanka Reflections

- short songs of the human spirit -

street busker
head tucked in tight
as if to listen
curls over his violin
stroking its strings
Patricia Prime

This is the final tanka selection from Catherine Mair. The editor thanks her for her contributions to *a fine line*.

KiwiHaiku

red sky
early morning frostbite
sheep panic
Mac Miller

My washing machine says – *Ohakune Ohakune Ohakune*
Jennifer Compton

Please send your KiwiHaiku submissions to Patricia Prime at pprime@ihug.co.nz, or post to: 42 Flanshaw Road, Te Atatu South, Waitakere 0610.

[Poetry] is the art of making urgent values manifest, and of imposing them on the reader.

Jack Gilbert

Mini Competition

Art proved a popular topic for poems. This competition elicited more entries than any of the others, and as usual the decision was a difficult one. You're all so talented! Congratulations to David Gregory, Christchurch, who receives a copy of *New Zealand's Favourite Artists 2*, by Denis Roberts (not Denise, as I mistakenly printed in the last issue!), Saint Publishing, 2002.

What They Give You to Say

From the paintings of Joanna Braithwaite

There the human floats in the old levitation trick;
some suggestion of landscape, another life within
the body outline, cross-section of aeroplane
where the passengers' souls are stashed in the racks
while the craft bows and curtsies in the nor-wester;
a nausea of warped gravity forcing you to live
immediately within your skin, the danger that even this
will become a flight of

small blue birds.

What am I saying in response to what
they are saying, heard as some noise through
the thin wall of your canvas?

Tempting to put the ear so close,
the eye against the body outline,
to find a whisper
about me, about all the others
hoping for a safe landing.

Be careful when opening the lockers,
things may have moved in flight.

David Gregory

The next mini-competition subject is Sport. The prize: *As if Running on Air – The Journals of Jack Lovelock*
Ed. David Colquhoun; Craig Potton, 2008. editor@poetrysociety.org.nz by 15 November.

MEMBERS' POEMS

Resurrection

Fresh from a Health and Safety course
I saw the mahimahi drop
Between the wharf and the boat.
The boy slipped in straight after.
"He's got it!" I heard them cry,
Hauling them both on board
In mingling streams of blood.

Trundling on a stainless bier
Toward the gross weigh-in
It raises and interrogative head,
"Are we there yet?"

The father offers sticking-plaster
to his only son.

Julie Ryan

An elephant by any other name...

*(on whether a sonnet is still a sonnet without
any guidelines or boundaries to identify it as such.)*

If the elephant lacked a great, long trunk
and didn't have big ears,
if an elephant weren't 10 feet tall
with balls the size of piers,

if it weren't all-over wrinkly grey
but an attractive spotted cream,
had paws with pointy fingernails,
and instead of honking, screamed,

if it lived in sun-drenched Malibu,
wore shades and had a tan,
read Thoreau, Plath and Kerouac
drank absinthe, waved a fan,

if it were only five feet four
and rode a Harley D,
had breasts the size of cantaloupes
and ate buttered scones for tea,

if it listened to the classic bands
like Floyd and Zeppelin,
collected Warhol paintings,
took the odd pipe of opium,

if it were all those other things,
and I asked you right up front..
could you in all fidelity say
it's still an elephant?

John Irvine

Sifting Sands

The winds of memory blow the dust of the past
onto the beaches of the future

Dust and sand intermingle
Strange creatures roam lost on the beaches
Lifeguards appear
Humour, philosophy, buddiness

Creatures emerge as Playful Puppies

Marilyn O. Young

Counting Time

Today it hums,
the rock and roll of Napier's shore
rolling up my hills
it soothes and the corners
are smoothed
like stones rolled down
the steeps of Shakespeare Road
where it rocks the hearts of lovers
who gather in pockets
and stroll holding hands.

Today it sings me to sleep
like a mother
and before the lullaby ends
we leave,
before change,
before we speak,
before the tide comes
that thumps the shore
with legs that crash
with feet and fists
that lands in balls
and smash
and push the shore away.

But for now we sing a lullaby,
together sing and sleep
and sleep and sing
and we leave
before the change.

Rosetta Allan

I saw... the war

Flame leaps high to lick the stars;
the sky is now the colour of Mars.
Terrified voices screaming loud.
No living trees are to be found.
Outlines of buildings burning bright,
Sword on sword, the sound of light.
I seek some way out, I must,
away from clouds of smoke and dust.

Sally Mubarak (Aged 12)

That Time Of Year

I watch them growing taller day by day
million upon million pushing the in-betweens aside
while I temporize, watch and wait, observe
the six day vision filled with everywhere green
displaying fashionable white
dots.....

Soon I will turn evil, cursing the cattle beast
for their life sustaining habits and set upon the croft
with deliberate defiance.

Soon, when my procrastination has passed
I'll grasp the handle of my trusty machine
and, execution style,
embark upon a rampage of utter destruction,
laying row after row the verdant to rest.

Meanwhile, I am content to watch the grass grow
curbing my six day itch.
Tomorrow I'll mow.

Debbie Williams

At Taupo Swamp (where they once brought the Queen)

a paper cup rolls on the highway where in a dream
once she had died floated up to the rescue team
pleading in vain I'm down the bank please find me
while they talked among themselves

driving home from the movie where Helen Hunt whined
fetchingly & finally won her man the delectable Colin
Firth she feels lonely but that will pass

a Landrover stolidly hogs the centre lane cruising
at 90k she turns on her headlights acutely attuned
to danger overtaking it on the left

at least today she will not die in Taupo Swamp where
just last week were crumpled cars & flashing lights
where they once brought the Queen what on earth did
she say ooh what a lovely swamp

a paper cup rolls on the highway she is careful to
not swerve & misses it nevertheless

Lynn Frances

January Deadline: 15th November

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