



a fine line

November 2011

The Magazine of The New Zealand Poetry Society

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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2011 Anthology

NOW TAKING ORDERS:

ice diver, the 2011 NZPS poetry and haiku anthology, is currently in production and will be delivered after the launch on Saturday 5th November in Wellington (see *Noticeboard*). Edited by Linzy Forbes, the anthology was created from entries to the 2011 New Zealand Poetry Society Competitions: the award winning poems and haiku, and a selection chosen blind by the editor from this year's 2000+ entries. It is a lively mix of work by adults, children, well-known and first-time poets, from fifteen different countries.

The theme of the competition was open, as always. Subjects covered in the book include relationships, loss, landscape, the past, childhood, grandparents, animals, war, food and, not unexpectedly, earthquakes. You can order online at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/2011anthology> (note that the reduced multi-copy price will disappear after the launch), or by emailing for an order form to editor@poetrysociety.org.nz

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Is haiku poetry?

Bernard Gadd

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

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

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

wrecker's yard
last year's colours
on the leaves

Ernest Berry

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

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

Dorothy Bain has a go at Basho's 'A Haiku Journey'

Instead good haiku poets aim at fluency of line, employing cadences based on speech rhythms:

Forsythia blooms
cluster on a fence -
neighbours talk

Jack Galmitz

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

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

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

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

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

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

across the harbour
one raincloud
with its own rainbow
Jeanette Stace

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

Basho's statue -
I stand in his shadow
for the photograph
Cyril Childs

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

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

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

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

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

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

new grass
horse stories
in old mens' voices
Tony Beyer

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

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

hobo
beside the river
dozes on penny royal
Owen Bullock

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

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

snore,
clove

John M. Bennett

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

LeRoy Gorman

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reprinted from the NZPS newsletter, May 2004

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

What an interesting couple of months I've had since the last issue. As well as the Rugby World Cup, for which I set myself the task of watching every game [✓], I've been putting together my first collection, with a view to launching it in early December. Unexpectedly, I also needed to help out our anthology editor, Committee Member Linzy Forbes, who had serious health and technical difficulties [✓]. I've attended a voice workshop, made a radio 'appearance', kept up with my ongoing poetry group, and received a surprising and thrilling invitation to appear as 'Featured Poet, International' by Muse-Pie Press, publishers of *Shot Glass Journal* and *fib review*, for which I needed to come up with 23-25 unpublished poems for the editor to select from [✓]. Phew!

So I haven't managed my usual writing output, and submissions have dried up as I've run out of poems worth sending anywhere. I didn't support those of our members who are currently studying at the IIML when they did their Monday readings at Te Papa, and keeping up with the Poetry Society emails has been ... well, let's not go there.

All of which is to say that my life has been far more interesting and adventurous since I gave up my old job to immerse myself in poetry. It's not for everyone, and I'm grateful that my husband is happy to support me (providing I bring in **some** money), but what a wonderful variety of people/poets I've met as a result.

I've been doing this job for five years now. I don't always keep up, and I seem to find myself apologising a lot (that's the perfectionist in me). Nevertheless, knowing I'm contributing to the development of a new cohort of poets, as well as supporting as much as I can the established ones, is immensely pleasurable and rewarding.

How much poetry are you fitting into your life? Are you reading, writing, attending readings, giving readings, sharing poems with others? With earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, oil spills, and other distracting disasters, it's worth remembering that the still small space within that poetry inspires is available to all of us, however stressed. I'm relieved that there was no disaster at Eden Park on 23rd October (though it was tense enough!), but if there had been, poetry would have been there for me (eventually). I hope it's your

friend in the bad times as well.

I received far more submissions for this issue than I could possibly fit in, particularly reviews. The overflow will be in the January issue, which I hope to have out before Christmas – so you know which poetry collections to give as gifts (including, of course, the NZPS anthology).

About our Contributors

Zarah Butcher-McGunnigle is a writer and student from Auckland. Her poems have appeared in journals such as *Landfall*, *Turbine*, *Otoliths* (Aus), and *Colorado Review* (US). She was the featured poet for *Poetry NZ* #39.

Kirsten Cliff lives on the noisiest street in Papamoa and has written several poems about it. She blogs at 'Swimming in Lines of Haiku': <http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.com/>

Janis Freegard's poetry collection *Kingdom Animalia: the Escapades of Linnaeus* was published by Auckland University Press this year. She lives in Wellington with an historian and a cat.

Bernard Gadd (1935-2007) was a prolific poet, editor, critic and teacher. At the time of his death he was a committee member of the NZPS.

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.

Barbara Strang is a Christchurch poet and editor, who edited the NZPS anthologies *moments in the whirlwind* and *across the fingerboards*.

A Warm Welcome to ...

Anita Arlov Auckland

Linley Edmeades Te Kowhai

Deirdre Harrison Auckland

Anne Hollier Ruddy Auckland

Lois Hunter Warkworth

Sarah Kearns Wellington

Elayne Martin Hamilton

Letter to the Editor

I'm writing in regard to your web page: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/resourcelinks>. I wanted to let you know I appreciate all the effort you must have put into creating this page.

I'm a 7th grade English teacher and I've been including a small 'Poetry' unit in my classroom for a few years now and I thought your page was absolutely wonderful and look forward to using it to assist me in my lessons. Thank you!

This year I decided to do something different and I've been planning something special for my students! We will be working on a poetry presentation focusing on haiku with the children's choice of theme, but it must have a theme! The kids are getting into it, which makes me very excited too.

While I was looking for other poetry and haiku ideas I found this really interesting article that turned out to be a really helpful tool and I find myself using and referring to it often. It provides tutorials and examples of poetry and haiku broken down by class/ age group! I don't have to search through it for age-appropriate material, which I love!

Here's the source: 'Japanese Haiku Poetry Resources' - <http://www.card1616.com/japanese-haiku-poetry-resources.html>

I took time to share this with you because I found this valuable and wanted to return the favor because I found your resource very useful as well. I hope you decide to incorporate the source within your materials; it's always encouraging to see that you can help others out there in the world wide web!

Mrs. Summers' class thanks you!

Terry Summers (USA)

Congratulations

Heartiest congratulations to our Patron, **Dame Fiona Kidman**, who received the 2011 Prime Minister's Literary Award (Fiction), presented in August at Premier House, Wellington.

Trevor Hayes, Joanna Preston, Helen Rickerby and Kerrin P. Sharpe have work in *JAAM 29*.

Margaret Beverland, Mary Cresswell and Charmaine Thomson have poems in *Shot Glass Journal #5*.

Ruth Arnison, Marion Jones, Harvey Molloy and Jan Vernon have work in *Takahe 72*.

Margaret Beverland, Neroli Cottam, Bryony Jagger, Deryn Pittar, Pat Prime, Vaughan Rapatahana, Jon Schrader, André Surridge, Mary Bell Thornton and Jan Vernon have work in *Valley Micropress, September 2011*.

Publications

New arrivals on the NZPS bookshelf since last time:

Briefcase **John Adams** (AUP, 2011)

Nice Pretty Things Rachel Bush (VUP, 2011)

Trace Fossils **Mary Cresswell** (Steele Roberts 2011)

The Same As Yes Joan Fleming (VUP, 2011)

Portals **Robin Fry** (ESAW, 2011)

Shift Rhian Gallagher (AUP, 2011)

JAAM 29 ed Anne Kennedy

Men Briefly Explained **Tim Jones** (Interactive Press, 2011)

Bright the Harvest Moon **John O'Connor** (Poets Group, 2011)

Tongues of Ash **Keith Westwater** (Interactive Press, 2011)

Noticeboard

ice diver

ANNUAL ANTHOLOGY LAUNCH

Sat. 5th November, 4.30pm for 5pm start

Crossways, 6 Roxburgh St, Mt Victoria

Refreshments provided, and all members are invited to attend and support contributing poets, young and not young.

Poetry @ The Thistle Inn, Wellington

NOVEMBER MEETING

Monday 21st November 7.30pm

Guest Poets: Tim Jones & Keith Westwater

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

Meetings Supported by Creative Communities Wellington Local Funding Scheme.

WORKSHOP, Wellington

Saturday 19th November. Venue TBA. Cost: \$50 (non-members \$60).

Brisbane poet Lesley Synge will take a one-day workshop: Strengthening Storytelling – in individual poems and in creating collections.

Lesley will demonstrate ways to assemble works using a framework of storytelling to achieve that goal of completion. Poets should bring poems written already and will workshop assembling these into a publishable collection. As well the group will look at individual poems and consider whether using narrative techniques will improve them. Lesley says, “I bring a novelist's eye to the process, as well as the poet's.”

Interested poets can register by email: info@poetrysociety.org.nz or drop me a line if you're not on email: PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145.

Devonport Writing Walk

“I spent some time walking around Devonport, sitting in different locations and writing. It was a great experience and I thought a poetry walk event would be a great thing to do during November. I'd love to hear from either local poets, or other poets who would like to visit Devonport to write and submit for the [Guerrilla Poetry] event. Then I'll organise a day for a writing walk and coffee meetup.” Naomi Madelin, Devonport guerillapoetevents@gmail.com

Web-based International Initiative Formed To Promote Poetry For Young People:

Poetry Advocates for Children and Young Adults is a new grassroots, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting poetry for every age group. Its growing membership is a combination of poets, authors, teachers, students, scholars, editors, librarians, booksellers, and readers of every age from around the world. PACYA is currently run by a team of 17 advisors who will serve until 2013.

The organization is dedicated to:

- * Speaking out for the need to engage with poetry
- * Creating a global online hub for news
- * Organizing and promoting readings, awards, workshops, and conferences in North America and internationally; reviews, essays, and interviews; learning /scholarly resources; communication and networking; audiovisual archives; collaborative projects; and more at every age level - and addressing the challenges of doing so.

To learn more about PACYA, visit its blog at poetryadvocates.wordpress.com

Competitions & Submissions

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

ANZAC Centenary Poetry Project (Australia) Closing Date: 11 November The ANZAC Centenary Poetry Project challenges poets to answer the following question: What does ANZAC Day mean to you, to today's families, communities or nations? To be in the running to share in the total prize pool of AUD5000 visit www.ozzywriters.com and follow the links to download an entry form. For any queries or if you are unable to download material online please contact the Coordinating Editor at: anzac.poetry@pnc.com.au

Writers' Forum (UK) Rolling Deadline: 15th of every month. Every month Writers' Forum awards £800 in prizes and publishes the winners of their short story, poetry and young writers contests. Poetry contest: Enter online at <http://www.writers-forum.com/poetrycomp.html> Entry fee is £5 for the first poem, £3 for subsequent poems in the same entry. General terms of entry: Rolling deadline - a poem that misses the cut-off point for one issue will be included in the next contest. All entries must be original and previously unpublished - this includes newspapers, magazines, books and websites. Publication on

private online forums that are password-protected and in private letters and emails does not count. You can resubmit a previous entry to Writers' Forum after editing unless it is printed or commended in the magazine. Usual fees apply. By entering, entrants agree for their stories and poems to be published in Writers' Forum if successful. We have no current plans to produce anthologies but reserve the right to include any winning entries in any such projects in the future. Copyright remains with the author. The competitions are open to all nationalities worldwide, but entries must be in English.

Bedford Open Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 18 November. For poems up to 50 lines. First prize, £300, then £150, then £50. Entry Fee: £3.00 http://www.interpretershouse.org.uk/?page_id=29

Cafe Writers Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 November Maximum of 40 lines (excluding title) on one side of A4. 1st £1000, 2nd £300, 3rd £150. Five Commended Prizes of £50. Funniest poem not winning another prize £100. Entry Fee: £4 per poem; or £10 for 3 poems and £2.00 per poem thereafter. www.cafewriters.org.uk

Inspirational Poems Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 November For poems up to 40 lines. 1st £100; 2nd £50, 3rd £25. The prizewinning poems will be published in the 2nd 'Bards at Blidworth' Anthology. Entry Fee: £3.00 Website: <http://www.thynkspublications.co.uk/competitions>

Magma 50th Issue Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 November Poems of less than 80 lines on any subject. 1st £500; first runner-up £200; second runner-up £100. Poems of up to 10 lines will be considered for the Magma Editors Prize: 1st £500, first runner-up £200 and 10 special mentions. Winning poems will be published in Spring 2012 issue and prizewinners invited to a reading in early Spring 2012. Entry Fee: £4 per poem or £15 for four poems. *Magma* subscribers: £3 per poem or £9 for four poems. Enter at: www.magmapoetry.com/competition

The New Writer Prose and Poetry Prizes (UK) Closing Date: 30 November For single poems of up to 40 lines. Entry Fee: £5 for up to two single poems. £12 for a collection of six to ten poems. Website: www.thenewwriter.com/entryform.htm

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

Segora Open Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 November For poems up to 40 lines on any subject, in any form or in free verse. 1st £150. Enter online or by post. Entry Fee: £3.50 for one poem, £6 for two. Add £2 for each additional poem. <http://www.poetryproseandplays.co.uk/index.html>

Guerilla Poetry, Devonport. Deadline: 1 December Write short poems about, or inspired by, locations around Devonport, and selected poems will be printed, written, painted etc onto a medium that can be displayed at that location (or as near to it as possible). With the recent appearance of Graffiti Knitting on the Wharf, and sculpture and other visual art around the village, the appearance of written word art would be very fitting. Blog: <http://guerillapoets.blogspot.com/> Email address: guerillapoetevents@gmail.com Twitter: @guerillapoet1 (ed note: I have no idea how to link this.) Contributors can either hand over the printing and display of their poems to the organiser, or if they have a specific idea they are welcome to create whatever they want and manage the display themselves. I would like to know of all ideas however, just so we can project manage things. It would also be good to be able to attract some local sponsorship for e.g. printing and laminating etc. The date for putting poems up is 16th December. **Naomi Madelin.**

Left Hand Waving Call for Submissions (USA) Deadline: 1 December From now until further notice, we will be accepting poems and creative nonfiction dealing with the hard times, economic and political, that many in the United States and elsewhere are enduring. We see this as our small contribution to the Occupy Wall Street movement. We call it Occupy Poetry (and Other Writing). We look forward to reading your work. Really. Visit the website for details: <http://www.lefthandwaving.com/>

Angels and Devils Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 December For poems up to 30 lines on the subject of family relationships. Can be in English or Dutch. Prize: £100 plus publication in online magazine. Free entry. Further information at: http://www.hollandparkpress.co.uk/magazine_detail.php?magazine_id=124&language=English

Franklin-Christoph Poetry Contest (USA) Deadline: must be received by 31 December

Free contest offers large prize for unpublished poems. Enter by email only. 1st: \$1,000 and publication on website. Ten Merit Award winners receive a high-quality fountain pen (\$150 value). 1-2 poems, maximum 100 lines each. Typed, single-spaced, in standard 12-point font; no name of author on poems. Include contact information (name, address, phone, email) at the top of the email. Poems must be pasted into the body of the email. NO ATTACHMENTS. Guidelines URL: <http://www.franklin-christoph.com/Writing/PoetryContest.html>

Mini Competition

Again, plenty of interest in form poetry, with some excellent submissions. However, while some were great little poems in their own right, quite a few that didn't meet the criteria set out in the challenge. Congratulations to Sandi Sartorelli, who amused me with this offering:

Emergence,
cicada out.
Singing for sex,
must lure a mate!
Emergency.

For her effort Sandi receives Helen Bascand's *into the vanishing point*, courtesy of Steele Roberts, Publishers.

The next competition is for a Glenn Colquhoun poster, again courtesy of Steele Roberts. This is a workshop idea from the UK journal *Msllexia*, and it can take any form you like:

"Google a few bizarre or intriguing deep-sea phenomena and use the information you discover as a basis for a poem. Here are a few suggestions: the kraken, the Mariana Trench, the pelican eel."

Featured Poet: Zarah Butcher-McGunnigle

(A lifetime of sentences)

Soon, I could leave my body without prompts. The artist's concept of the birth of a star, or I broke my name until the fibres separated and lost their coats. My thirst for windows kept me indoors. My gaze wandered across the suburbs of childhood, faces stammering with shyness, bodies masquerading as furniture. Initial mass and luminosity determine duration, but my sensibility comes to require an object. Here, the word "system" implies a level of certainty that is unwarranted. Some of those memories were not written by me, so they are memos, at home on my desk, but still authoritative. Now, instead of a pupil, there's a screensaver. It was late. The room was empty. A lifetime of sentences which at first glance seem superfluous, but whose value is later understood. One thing leads to a mother. Soon enough, a flock of children came running and tapped on the glass. When I reached the bottom of the stares, I looked up.

(The scene is broken for evidence)

Even though I agree with you, it hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, I don't really agree with you. Appears straight forward but is it. Used to have a name but now is "it". So, not to the same state but to the same flow. Signposts, wrong ones or right ones. The pupil is making a choice and you have told it this. The scene is broken for evidence. Today does so in the film, they should know what will happen and that's accomplished by habit rather than attention. It can't be arrested. It's already changed. Point to a place, for example a note on your desk, where you wrote down the original instruction. Thus a jump from a window is taken as a jump from a scaffold. He knows structure rather than significance. Characters in multiple parts which require assembly. Always follow through, even on a minor infraction, so that they know there is.

(A change is as good as a holiday)

Is it that we're not here at the same time, or that we mistake monotony for déjà vu, pressing off-cuts together because it's not the type or quality that matters but the answer itself. A change is as good as a holiday. We're transparent until we move, trying to cope with scissors without understanding each individual word. Did you mean congenial or congenital? A wheel, together with an axle, overcomes fiction. Or we pretend to be blind before breaking into, pointing down and back to avoid damage.

(To leave trees is another signature)

Yesterday those habits were thoughts, development that is discontinuous, like the butterfly's. Its sincerity, the difference between a pupil and its shadow, closes our learning of figure on the surface. Or nerves, a polite you, before photography was invented. Perspective closely linked to the horizon. It's too late, or too soon. With the developed photos come the negatives. Snow is black, teeth are black, the place where she was born, where "shoots" is confused with "stems". To leave trees is another signature. But we still recognize the mediation, like a pattern of shade which must relate to a candle, a blind burning. I close my eyes, so I am alone. I remember not going there, that I know I don't know.

(What we think of as empty space is not)

Collapsing to a point, for example, where hostility leads to other lines of work. Varying lengths. Next to the adaptation of finally, fragility is indicated by the use of recycled materials. One can go readily from the cup on the table in the past to the broken cup on the floor in the future. But not the other way round. And who goes there. And why goes there. The matter of common experience where swamp became paddock. The higher the mass, the lower the temperature. Many of us do not deserve our epithets. What we think of as empty space is not. Wings, or perhaps fins, project outwards and the form lies in the grass, waiting to be found.

Reviews

The Best of Best New Zealand Poems Eds Bill Manhire and Damien Wilkins (VUP, 2011) ISBN 9780864736512

Janis Freegard

Leafing through this collection is like going to a party full of old mates you're delighted to see again and new people you're happy to meet. Most of the well-known names in New Zealand poetry are here: Sam Hunt, Jenny Bornholdt, Vincent O'Sullivan, Elizabeth Smither; the anthology even manages to squeeze in a poem from Bill Manhire, even though he'd specifically tried to exclude himself. (I'm glad he's in there, because it wouldn't be properly representative of the best poems of the last decade without him.)

As you wander through the party, you'll encounter some real gems: the late Alistair Campbell's poem

for his wife, Meg, is truly moving, as is Cliff Fell's 'about a baboon'. Others have a darkly witty tone, like Mary Cresswell's 'Golden Weather (Cook Strait)': "Porpoises played as we packed our sad/ at dawn we skimmed the swells." Subject matter is diverse: along with themes of hospitals (Greg O'Brien's excellent 'Where I went' and Vivienne Plumb's 'Goldfish' – which somehow manages to be both sad and funny), we have skeletons (Peter Bland's 'X Ray'), homesickness (Johanna Aitchison's 'Miss Red in Japan') and James Norcliffe's giraffe that finds itself on the frozen steppes of Russia. I found too many favourites to list them all.

As Damien Wilkins' lively introduction explains, the anthology is drawn from the 250 poems (251 if you count Jon Bridges' poem about pies that Elizabeth Smither sneaked in when she was editing) that have been published over the last decade as part of the online *Best New Zealand Poems* that is hosted by Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters. For each edition, a different editor picks 25 poems that appeared during the year, an idea borrowed from the annual US anthology, *The Best American Poetry*. This variety of editors makes for a more democratic process, although it also means Manhire and Wilkins had a more restricted pool to select from.

The introduction notes the gender mix (38 women to 27 men) as well as the paucity of Māori poets (only Robert Sullivan and Hinemoana Baker appear, as far as I could see) and Asian poets (none, although Alison Wong and Tze Ming Mok appear in the online *Best Ofs*). Pasifika poets are well-represented (Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, Tusiata Avia, Sia Figiel, Karlo Mila and Selina Tusitala Marsh). VUP poets make up 24 of the poets chosen, compared with AUP's 14 and Steele Roberts' 6.

If, like me, you find that notes and biographical details add a welcome dimension to the poems themselves, this book will make you happy. We find out, for example, that Cliff Fell has not had a close encounter with a baboon, but Fiona Farrell's young man in a cave was real. Some poets have let the poems speak for themselves, and that's fine too.

Arranged alphabetically, the collection opens with Fleur Adcock's startling and wonderful 'Having Sex with the Dead':

How can it be reprehensible
The looks on their dead faces as they plunge
into you

and ends with newcomer Ashleigh Young's 'Certain Trees'. This mix of established and newer poets is typical of the book as a whole: Brian Turner, Allen Curnow, Michelle Leggott, C K Stead and Cilla McQueen rub shoulders with more recent arrivals on the New Zealand poetry scene, such as Lynn Jenner and Amy Brown.

Many wonderful poets who made it into the online annual (such as Kevin Ireland, Tim Jones and Emma Barnes) weren't included in the *Best of Best*. Other well-respected poets who released collections during the decade missed out even on the online *Bests*: Hone Tuwhare and Albert Wendt are inexplicably missing, as are Apirana Taylor, Alistair Paterson, Helen Rickerby, Mark Pirie and many others. So does it represent the best poetry of the last decade? Not quite, but then that's not what it claims to do.

It is, however, an excellent overview of recent New Zealand poetry. The editors' restriction of one poem per poet is a shame in some ways because some great poems from the *Best New Zealand Poems* series miss out, but it's good in that it enables a broader view of what's happening in contemporary New Zealand poetry. You'd be hard pressed to find a better one.

Tigers at Awhitu Sarah Broom (Auckland University Press, 2010) 80 pp; RRP \$29.99
Joanna Preston

It's always a little uncomfortable sitting down to read a book that someone has praised highly. How often can books live up to hype? In the case of Sarah Broom's *Tigers at Awhitu*, I sat down to read with a considerable amount of trepidation – which was gone by the end of the opening poem's first stanza.

Now based in Auckland, Sarah Broom lived for many years in the UK. Her work is fluent and assured

in a way that is uncommon in much New Zealand poetry. This is poetry steeped in craft as well as art. Normally I'd quote impressive lines to emphasise my point, but this is poetry of the poem entire, rather than of the singing line. Each poem built up out of unfolding image, the way a good film begins, or a piece of classical music.

Broom's motifs are fundamental things – water, rock, journeys, peril, and above all else, children. Many of the poems are almost dystopian in feel – there is a threat, often unspecified, and you watch it approach (or unfold) in a myriad of different contexts. You have to keep adjusting your sense of who it is that is speaking, and to whom. 'Red Sail', for example, is in the voice of a mother speaking to her child, and follows 'The First Gesture', which is a mother talking to us, and about a child. The shifting perspectives could become confusing in less sure hands, but Broom manages the voices like a choir master. And she doesn't limit herself to any one mode – some poems are definitely lyric, slightly more are narrative (hooray!), and many have strong elements of both.

Unusually, the collection was not completed when it was accepted for publication by prestigious UK publisher Carcanet Press (who also publish poets such as Gillian Clarke, Les Murray and Eavan Boland), so the second section (sixteen out of the of fifty-six poems) was written with the certainty of publication. Unsurprisingly, (and especially as she underwent a major personal crisis in the interim) there is a definite change in these later poems – almost all in the poet's own voice, and with a gaze turned inward much more. Peril is still a theme, but the children who populated the book in such numbers earlier (in twenty-three of the forty previous poems) only reappear in one. For the most part I prefer the work in the earlier parts of the book – the weakest poems of the collection are in this latter section. Having said that, even though I didn't like poems like 'Three Exercises for Oncologists' and 'Panther', they aren't badly written. Just not up to the same standard as the rest.

This is an impressive book. The opening poem ('Snow') is as finely wrought a piece of theatre as a Hitchcock classic, with just as masterful a use of the unsaid. And poems like 'Displacement', 'Twins', 'Muriwai' and 'Rain' are breathtaking. It's not just the crafting of the pieces, but the unexpectedness of them. Like listening to Beethoven or Mozart – until you hear it, you would never have guessed the way the piece would play out. But once heard, once read ... of course! How could the universe have possibly been otherwise?

Recommended with thoroughly immoderate enthusiasm.

Flap – the chook book 2 (The Poetry Chooks, 2010) ISBN: 978-0-473-17670-9 For sale as a Christchurch earthquake relief fundraiser; see: <http://poetrychook.blogspot.com/2011/03/flap-earthquake-fundraiser.html>

Barbara Strang

The cheerful cover depicts a bird (representative chook?) with rainbow wings flying above wolf- and crocodile-like monsters. They are rather sketchy and the bird, looking alarmed, has got well clear. Have the poems within the book taken flight also?

The Poetry Chooks are four Christchurch women writers. I took up their second anthology with anticipation. I expected: poems on children, family, relationships, plants, dying etc, and maybe mention of chickens. I certainly found these, and many other topics as well. I wonder if the group had set exercises on 'blue' or 'war service' since poems with these themes occur more than once.

Victoria Broome's section is entitled "the foreign office", after her poem depicting a day in the life of two people who haven't yet met:

He had two great passions and one dream
Mozart, The Great Wall and romance. In soft
morning light he rode out on a rented bicycle
to see the Great Wall. Smoke and steam rising ...

She has a grasp of the short and sharp as well:

Her black
wings
tucked in,
her eye
open
but empty.

(‘Amberley Beach’)

Here are accessible, warm, well-crafted poems. However there is a tendency to overstate in some, risking sentimentality. In contrast ‘In the Antarctic Room’ counterbalances two realities by placing them simply side by side:

Here is the sound of the whales,
next to Disappointment Island, not far
from the Sea of Calamity, keening, haunting
the carpeted booth and the disembodied
voice that describes them.

*Come on, the dogs are dead,
look they’re stuffed, don’t be silly, get up.
I have to go to the toilet.
Don’t cry. Be good and we’ll go to the café*

Barbara McCartney’s section is “the distance from here to there”, a line taken from her poem ‘journeys’. This work is a series of crisp little sections:

The distance from here to there
lengthens every bend
so much sky
each hill a backbone

We find an appreciation of places and journeys, ranging from the environs of Christchurch, as in ‘Boulder Bay bach’, to foreign locations such as Venice and Capri.

Barbara is a tight poet, but one or two would be improved by cutting endings which fall into overstatement, as in ‘the men running past’. I find the following work is more to my taste as it works by innuendo, leaving room for the reader to insert his/her meaning:

a man who

following an implausible career

silent as a spy

woke like one cheated of sleep

his mind a haunted house

heard on that lakeside morning
the calm-as-milk lapping of water

re-adjusted his intentions

People are found in her poems as well as places, for instance ‘family at war’ is a list of the war experiences of various relations and friends, ending poignantly:

the deserter son
of the widow over our back fence
hid in our garden
from the military police
his terrified boot prints
behind the blackcurrants

Christina Stachurski's section is labelled "the charm of archaeology", a found phrase of Chinese English, from her poem in three sections 'Glass Cases'. China has more than one meaning:

China was at the bottom of the hole,
a place beyond the water
that came when you dug quite deep.
Sometimes broken off pieces came through,
blue and white and special ones with gold
edges when you washed them under the tap.

It's hard to resist the charm of this childhood memory and the cute play on words. Many of the poems invoke such scenes, and she also has pieces on present day foreign travel, which, it turns out, is mostly a path to home. These, such as 'Heaven', build by an accumulation of seemingly casual observations:

In Paris, even the bag ladies are chic.
One we passes buffs an old leather music case
with a chamois. Another tells us off big time
for sitting at the café table next to hers

She meanders on, a tourist in foreign parts, till suddenly we arrive:

God has provided food and they have all the time
in the world to be beautiful in heaven instead.

Catherine Fitchett's section is "as strong as eggshells". She opens with a fantastic poem 'Blue', showing why a settler has lost her taste for cornflowers:

In the last week
they bury her child. The ship is enclosed by sea and sky
the blue of the eggshell she found on the path to the byre.

Catherine's work is innovative. She finds fresh poetry in both well-worn (see the note on her cicada poem) and novel places. She can come up with a striking extended metaphor:

Leaves lie in drifts
the spade-like poplars,
lobed maples, and willow
pointed like diamonds.
(‘The Poker Players’)

It is meticulously crafted, for example 'Pearl':

This poem references a famous painting
by Vermeer. This poem wakes early in the
morning. It picks roses in the garden where
dew sits like strings of pearls on spider webs ...

which rounds off satisfyingly with:

Each pearl contains a small world
like this poem.

As I expected, this second effort by the Poetry Chooks is an accessible and competent collection, and most poems fly:

There is so much I would still ask you, but
you would not know the answers, even if you could speak.
I am the child who has run ahead on the path.
I glance over my shoulder, you are no longer there.
I am as strong as eggshells, and ready to break open.

(‘Kitchen Sonnets’, Catherine Fitchett)

Kingdom Animalia: The Escapades of Linnaeus Janis Freegard (Auckland University Press, 2011) 88pp;
\$24.99; ISBN 978 1 86940 473 4

Joanna Preston

Wellington poet Janis Freegard’s first collection, *Kingdom Animalia* is a suite of sixty-three poems, grouped according to the six taxonomic categories invented by Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus. Bracketing these categories is the seven-part prose poem that gives the collection its subtitle – ‘The Escapades of Linnaeus’.

Many of the poems are performance-style lyrics, with roughly a quarter being typical modern prose poems – page length, and relying on a quirky story, rather than the musicality of the language, to carry the interest. That said, there are almost as many poems written in couplet stanzas, as well as a number in syllabics, and one (not entirely successful) pantoum.

The book is strongest in the beginning – the opening poem, ‘Descent’, does a great job of setting up the themes to follow (the natural world, as seen through – and modified by – a human lens). The mammal poems are an effective way of reappraising human behaviour (the cat-like unfaithful lover, the “piggerly” nature of society in general), and the bird poems provide an effective contrasting ‘otherness’. In later poems though, the references start to feel more tenuous – ‘Zot and the Axolotls’, for example, could just as easily have been set in a butterfly house. In the middle section, poem ordering starts to be an issue – ‘Global Warning’ is both a pun and a serious comment. It’s also only one line long. It needs to be between two thought-provoking poems, otherwise the reader is likely to just groan and move on without noticing its significance. Similarly, putting the fabulous ‘What am I?’ opposite ‘Strike’ is problematic – the second poem gives the first’s game away, and makes both poems feel repetitive.

Freegard has a preference for enjambment – prose poems aside, roughly five times as many poems used complete (or near-complete) enjambment as struck a balance between enjambment and end-stopping. Except her breaks are usually parsing breaks – end-stopping’s plain-clothes sister – which dilute the tension between syntax and line to almost prose levels, functioning only as adjuncts to tone (conversational, prosaic), rather than pacing and/or meaning. A related tendency is the omission of full stops in slightly over half of the poems – after a while, the on-again, off-again nature of her terminal punctuation was distracting.

The other niggle was weak endings. In a number of poems it feels as though she ran out of ideas before the poem was complete, and left placeholders from earlier drafts in situ. So ‘Hens’ finishes with “a dog got them all, in the end”, and ‘My Year of the Ant Gardens’ with “They only ever hurried blithely by”. Or ‘he has your eyes’, where she repeats the point of the poem, just in case we hadn’t got it: “knowing that we’ll never need to answer”. It’s doubly annoying because she is more than capable of nailing endings – ‘The minister speaks’, for example, could have ended with the minister’s revelation. By extending it (and having the minister add his own comment) the poem moves away from being a slightly shocking joke, and into a thoughtful comment on the issue of conservation.

In conclusion, this is one of those collections that simultaneously enchants and vexes. At its best, *Kingdom Animalia* is delicious – often funny, frequently touching, unmistakably modern, and full of swerves and quirks and strange reverses. The collection’s flaws are exasperating because the poet who

not talking
silence slammed
by the door

Ernest J Berry

amidst the rubble
his body mouthing
a silent word

Ariana te Aomarere

"Free Firewood"
hawks hover
over the sign

Kerry Popplewell

without words
he knows
what he is asked
on the street
Anzac Day

Harumi Hasegawa

[Apologies from the editor for leaving this out of the September issue.]

WINDRIFT, WELLINGTON September 2011

Bevan Greenslade

After the AGM, contributions on the 3 themes of open, 'increase' and 'hair' from 7 attending and 2 corresponding members were discussed. These included:

1. open
beautiful lady
waving at me
her white cane

Ernie Berry

snowstorm –
zebra finches
closer than usual

Laurice Gilbert

waxeyes at the bird-feeder
a leaf trembles

Penny Pruden

2. 'increase'
cacophony of flapping wings
as water flies
before ducks mate

Jenny Pyatt

marathon tramp
her alarm rings
and rings

Nola Borrell

waving goodbye
the ryegrass ripples
with cicadas

Ernie Berry

3. 'hair'
my puppy dives
in the snow
in the depths of winter

Harumi Hasegawa

every few minutes
the pianist flicks hair
from her left eye

Neil Whitehead

newborn child
counting each hair
on her head

Kerry Popplewell

her chemo over
afro hairdo
wig hire paid

Neil Whitehead

The Secretary/Treasurer retired - and forgot to bring his contributions! As an esprit d'escalier, sparked by recent Australian natural disasters, he now offers (under 'open'):

digger and dog
under the
apocalypt tree

Bevan Greenslade

METONYMY EXHIBITION, AUCKLAND

Jenny Clay

Metonymy, a project of collaboration between poets and artists, is in its fourth year, and recently showed at the Corban Estate Gallery, Henderson. Writers and visual artists were matched on the equivalent of a blind date, and challenged to produce a work together over two months, and then submit the finished piece for exhibition. Over half of the artworks were chosen for display from the thirty pairs that completed the process. This year the selectors were poets **Siobhan Harvey** and Helen Sword, and visual arts lecturers: Paul Woodruffe and James Cousins.

You have to write bad poems to write good ones

Leonardo da Vinci

Haikai Corner

haikai café - Your bite-sized serving of haiku, senryū and tanka, edited by **Kirsten Cliff**.

bush walk –
across the track
this keruru's shadow
 ~ Haiku by Margaret Beverland

driving past the dairy
the child discovers
her hunger
 ~ Senryū by Karen Peterson Butterworth

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

Straight From the Haijin's Mouth

I asked the co-editors of the latest national haiku anthology *the taste of nashi*, Nola Borrell and Karen Peterson Butterworth, "What is the most valuable piece of advice you have ever received about writing haiku?"

Nola Borrell's answer: At the risk of being contentious (or not published!), I think 'challenge' is a more useful word than 'advice'. Good haiku depend so much more on a way of seeing, or as Martin Lucas (Editor, *Presence*) says:

"To begin writing haiku, and to make progress to any significant extent, requires two gifts:

- The ability to be alert to the subtleties of sensory or psychological experience (i.e. to notice things)
- A sensitivity to the subtleties of language (i.e. to be able to express things)."

<http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/node/460>

A challenge from Martin Lucas stimulated me to look more critically at my haiku. He talks about making a "magical utterance" or a "poetic spell", something archetypal/ rare/ essential, and in poetic language (4th Haiku Pacific Rim Conference, 2009, Terrigal, Australia). This seems more likely to reduce the human focus frequently dominant or at least intrusive in many current haiku, as well as prosy statements masquerading as haiku. <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/node/456>

A specific suggestion (just to keep in with Co-ordinator Kirsten!): early in my writing I received this comment on a mainstream poem: How about avoiding weak endings to lines, such as 'of', 'the', 'in'. Of course. Why hadn't I seen it! Thanks Harry Ricketts (VUW, Co-Editor, *New Zealand Books*). This makes even more sense in haiku - where each word and line ending is that much more significant.

Karen Peterson Butterworth's answer: First the foundation. My artist mother who trained my eyes. When a boring (to me) visitor arrived, "Watch her hands and do me a drawing afterwards." With her water colour tubes laid out on a white enamel tray, "Which colours would you mix for that sunset?" Five minutes later, "Now which?" My music teacher. "When it says 'staccato', leave a tiny gap between each note, and for 'legato', make the notes flow into each other." My Dad, who sang while he turned the separator handle for the cream on our porridge. My bout with polio which gave me five months with nothing to do but read and observe.

Then meeting haiku in my 50s. Reading, listening, attending workshops. No single piece of advice springs to mind, but gradually three pivotal messages crystallized: 1. Learn to recognise a haiku moment; 2. Note it down straight away; 3. Choose, change, chop, and chisel your words till you make them sing.

Copies of *the taste of nashi: New Zealand Haiku* (Windrift Haiku Group, 2008) are still available for sale. Find all the details here: <http://ning.it/o88B0U>

Do you have a question for one of New Zealand's accomplished haikai? Send it in to kirsten.cliff@gmail.com with 'HAIJIN QUESTION' in the subject line and it could be answered here.

The Haiku Help-Desk

In this issue, I discuss a phenomenon I see frequently in haiku posted on social media sites, and also from novices to the form. It's a slip-up I recognise from my own early attempts at writing haiku, so I've used an example here from my beginnings in 2007:

wind pushes
through dry fields
scattering life

Notice how the last line acts as a comment? Line three expresses my opinion of the scene preceding it, and this is not the purpose of haiku. One of the elements that characterises haiku is the presentation of images free from the writer's own judgements: it's the old adage 'show, don't tell'.

Maybe you've noticed this dysfunctional third line in your own haiku. What to do? Return to the scene. Recapture the original haiku moment: what was there to see, touch, smell, hear, taste?

'scattering life' closed down my haiku, leaving little room for readers to have their own emotional response and make connections beyond the haiku itself. So, I went back. I thought about sitting in my camp-ground home: it was summer, hot, I was looking out across empty fields, a gusty wind was blowing my hair, the curtains, the dried stalks of tall grass, and my cabin was swaying slightly as I sat on the small deck.

And that was it! The cabin swaying was the piece that fitted with the first two lines. It provided the element of juxtaposition that was lacking in my original depiction of my experience. (I chose 'caravan' over 'cabin' to create a stronger image.)

wind pushes
through dry fields
the caravan sways

Juxtaposition is the laying of images side by side to compare and contrast them, and is another key characteristic of haiku. I've achieved it here with 'dry fields' and 'caravan': one is natural and the other man-made, but both are moved by the power of the wind, and share this connection, at least in this moment.

My haiku went on to be published in *Kokako* 7 (September, 2008), with thanks to the editor who first pointed out my line three problem and encouraged me to try again. Check your haiku: are you using the last line as a comment instead of staying objective in your sharing of the haiku moment?

Do you have a haiku that could use some help? Send it in to kirsten.cliff@gmail.com with 'HAIKU HELP' in the subject line and it could be discussed here.

The pursuit of excellence is less profitable than the pursuit of bigness, but it can be more satisfying.
David Ogilvy

MEMBERS' POEMS

Iguanodon

No stag drunk on reek of hinds
dashing antlers into branches
but a log of lizard head gatecrashing,
grinding greens in high aspen's dappled awning,
mother of all tall ground-pounders,
thumper thighs bearing
both bulk of towering torso
and meaty-plump forearms.
Like it or lump it.

The beast had ham-fisted
banana-palm, philodendron,
marijuana, rhododendron;
crushed the patch of tarragon
and grundered through liana.
Now stops. Rotates -
a caudal graunch of tectonics,
eyeball's swivel and glitter,
in stillness takes me in.

Hugh Major

During the Storm

I dreamed a fierce wind
tossed me to your side of the bed
where you slept all unaware
of my arrival. When I kissed you,
you awoke with a smile
and we blew each other away.

Laurice Gilbert

JANUARY DEADLINE IS 7TH NOVEMBER

(but there is some wriggle room built in – contact me if you have something to offer but can't make the 7th deadline.)