

a fine line

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2012

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY
Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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WELLINGTON MEETINGS
Poetry @ The Thistle Inn
3 Mulgrave St, Wellington Central
Starts at 7.30pm with open mic.
Entry \$5 (Members \$3)

Saturday 3rd November:

Anthology Launch: *Building a time machine*.

Time: 4.30 for a 5pm start (Please don't come earlier - unless you're bringing a contribution to the refreshments - as there is another event in the church until 4pm.)

Venue: St Andrews on The Terrace, 30 The Terrace, Wellington.

Thursday 19th November:

See the year out in style - Guest Poet: Hinemoana Baker.
Back at the Thistle Inn, as usual.

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Is Reading Poetry Good For You?

Bernard Gadd

[Reprinted from NZPS Magazine February 2004.]

Poetry can confirm who you are and your ideas and feelings. It can bring you what Matthew Arnold called "sweetness and light", or what others have called "noble sentiments". (Though one reader's sweetness and light or noble ideas just might be another's hogwash.)

Poetry can also challenge, prod at complacency, stir conscience and rekindle a child-like freshness in noticing familiar things. It can treat our pet ideas with derision, irony, parody and satire. It can remind us how ambiguous and equivocal meaning can be in real life.

Scott Kendrick's 'Modern Love' is a simple little poem, but the satire aims at more than one target:

I gave my love a questionnaire

Out of a glossy magazine.

My love for her it trembled:

She scored three out of fifteen!

My chosen wailed loudly
'But my love for you is strong!'

All the same I hope a therapist
Can show her where she's wrong.

Poetry can be at times something of a risky venture, taking you mentally to places or notions you might not have come across before. Or even more disconcertingly, where you have been, but with not quite the frame of mind of the writer, as with this summer idyll from Australian poet Judith Beveridge in her sequence *Ten Poems in the Voice of Siddatha Gotama as He Wanders the Forest*:

Today has an easy somnolence.
Winds drift and my head nods.
This wheat is a hypnotist's chain
swaying up remembrance.
Scents mingle, then carry
me off by my disparate parts.

I'm no expert on Buddhism, but clearly the smell of the wheat fields reclaims the senses, and sets off an explosion of memories as if he's suddenly and irresistibly split into the past selves and events that make up the Siddatha of the poem. R.A.K. Mason suggests a use for poetry for those who nod out of sync with the great and the powerful:

If the drink that satisfied
the son of Mary when he died
has not the right smack for you
leave it for a kindlier brew.
For my bitter verses are
steeped in vinegar
useless to the happy-eyed
but handy for the crucified.

Poetry can surprise, and that's one of its joys. In this second section of 'Three Reasons for Sleeping with a White Man', by Tusiata Avia, it's the tone as much as anything that gives an edge to it:

I thought he might rub off on me.
I slept with him and dreamt he was calling me
his Polynesian Princess.
On the wall
the velvet maiden
turns a green shoulder
repositions her hibiscus
and smiles.

Those pictures won't ever look quite the same in future.

More surprising yet is the intriguing imaginative eclecticism of Geoffrey Hills' 'Mercian Hills', written as if for King Offa of Mercia (ruled 757-796), though it could, with a few changes, be written for militaristic leaders today, you might think:

King of the perennial holly-groves, the riven
sandstone: overlord of the M5: architect of the
historic rampart and ditch, the citadel of
Tamworth, the summer hermitage in Holy Cross:
guardian of the Welsh Bridge and the Iron
Bridge: contractor to the desirable new estates:
saltmaster: money-changer: commissioner of
oaths: martyrologist: the friend of Charlemagne.

'I liked that,' said Offa, 'sing it again.'

We don't have to know anything about English history or place names to recognise that here is a lolly-scramble of historical periods.

At the very least well-crafted poems can give us relief from the verbiage that constantly vies for our attention, and a break from the would-be manipulations of commerce and politics. (Not that poets are above a bit of commerce and politics, but at least we can shut the book and say, "So much for that".) We might feel all the better for a little sheer lyricism:

the hammered
tin-plate of

the harbour
makes a music

on the stories
and the light

anneals the
surfaces and

it is always
blue because

it never can
be other

('Beyond', John Allison)

I doubt if reading poetry can much alter who each of us is. I don't think poetry reading or writing is the high road to personal virtue or wisdom. It's a depressing thought that some of the nastiest rulers in history have been poets, sometimes great poets.

But the cheering thing is that poetry can give huge pleasure, stimulate us, reproach us, affirm us, give us a bit of peace and quiet and possibly even some sweetness and light, keeping our minds and our tongues nimble and lively.

A successful poem, in my definition, is a "machine for re-reading".

Michael Hoffman, Poetry Book Society Bulletin, Summer 1999; from: Quote Poet Unquote Ed. Dennis O'Driscoll (Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend, 2008)

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

Many thanks to those of you who took the time to vote, either in person or by post/email on our recent Special General Meeting Motions. All the motions were passed by a simple majority. The increased cost of subscribing to the print copy of this magazine will take effect in the new financial year, ie from 1st April 2013. The 9 of you who are currently receiving the print version because you don't have email at home will not be affected. Remember, also, that the electronic version is available in two versions: a single column for reading on screen, and a double column version for printing out (it's several pages shorter that way).

The 2012 anthology, *Building a time machine*, edited by **Owen Bullock**, is well under way at the time of writing, and orders have already started arriving. You don't need to have a poem or haiku in the anthology to enjoy reading the publication. It showcases many of the best entries in this year's international poetry competition, featuring new names and old, and demonstrating the remarkable talent of many of New Zealand's (and other countries') poets, whether previously published or not.

I like to think that we help 'discover' early talent by means of our competition and ensuing anthology. Many of those who enter wouldn't dream of sending their work to poetry journals (and I started off as one of those), but find this a non-threatening way to share their work. As Competition Secretary, I see many of the same names for several years in a row before a judge or editor finds their work appealing. An anthology such as this is an accessible and informative way to see how contemporary poets are working and to learn from the success of others.

This is not to say you can't do the same thing with regular poetry journals (and indeed I support several journals by subscription), but surprising work turns up in our anthologies that you probably wouldn't see elsewhere - in particular, emerging young poets to keep a watch out for. As a welcome bonus, several well-known and widely-published poets enter regularly, sometimes successfully and sometimes not. The 'blind' judging and editing process ensure that everyone's entries receive the same thoughtful reading as everyone else's, and there is no bias towards known 'names'.

Coming up, then, is our annual anthology launch, an event I thoroughly enjoy. It gives me a chance to put faces to familiar names, and to meet some very excited young poets who are being published for the first time. It's a joy to present the latter and their work to the audience (which generally includes proud family), and I never tire of the task. It is, of course, a Society event, and all members and their friends are welcome to attend. The details are on the front page.

And if you can't make it to the launch and want to buy a copy of the anthology, it is available via the website (either download an order form and pay by cheque or direct credit, or use PayPal), or you can email me at: info@poetrysociety.org.nz

Enjoy Spring – the extra warmth is a great muse, I find.

BOOK LAUNCH, WELLINGTON

Sunday 16th December, 2-4pm

Otari School Hall, 166 Wilton Rd, Wilton

Your National Coordinator, **Laurice Gilbert**, has finally succumbed to peer pressure, and I am launching my first poetry collection, *My Family and Other Strangers*.

A mix of published and unpublished work, the collection pulls together the random variety of styles and forms that characterise my poetry, arranged around the theme of family and the grand cycle of life.

With any luck (i.e. if I get it finished), there will be a hand-crafted version, created from an altered book, which will be raffled at the launch.

All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP (for catering): laurice.gilbert@paradise.net.nz (but don't let that stop you from coming anyway.)

A Warm Welcome To:

Chris Else Lower Hutt

Jacqui Gooding Te Awamutu

Lynne Judge Levin

Moira Cursey Hamilton

Rachel Tobin Paraparaumu

Sunil Narshai Auckland

About our Contributors

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

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

Alexandra Fraser:

Please Include a Brief Bio

In previous lives
I would have had
a great back-story
being born always
in troubled times

But Hamilton
in the sixties
I grew as translucent
and drifting
as river fog

Bernard Gadd (1939-2007) was a prolific poet, editor, critic and teacher. At the time of his death he was a committee member of the NZPS.

Congratulations

Nicola Easthope and **Laurice Gilbert** each had a poem shortlisted (there were 200, out of 6800 entries) in the Bridport Prize.

Kristina Jensen has been busily submitting work, and has had acceptances from Chuffed Buff Books (for their *Journey to Crone* anthology), *Takahe 77* and another Forward Poetry anthology.

Rob King was one of five poets shortlisted for The Ravenglass Poetry Press Competition 2012, and will be published in this year's anthology.

Wes Lee's poem 'Sunflowers', was highly commended in the Poetry on the Lake XII International Poetry Competition, and appears in *Bestiario*, published by Wyvern Works and edited by Gabriel Griffin. For a preview and the chance to buy, see: <http://ilmiolibro.kataweb.it/schedalibro.asp?id=851211> (I didn't manage to work out how to convert the site into English, but clicking the red arrow marked 'Inizzia a leggere' gives you the preview, which is in English.)

Several of our members made it to the Runners-Up list in the Kevin Ireland Poetry Competition, run by the Auckland Branch of NZ Society of Authors: **Maris O'Rourke**, **Sue Fitchett**, and **Jenny Clay**. Special acknowledgment (and a bottle of wine) went to **Siobhan Harvey** and one other. Riemke Ensing was the outright winner, for a poem on love and loss, called 'A different kind of Hemingway episode'. Coming a week after our presentation to her of the Lauris Edmond Memorial Award for Poetry, this was great to see.

Poetry NZ #45, as well as being guest edited by **Owen Bullock**, has contributions from a good number of NZPS members: **Mary Cresswell**, **Eric Dodson**, **Sue Fitchett**, **Laurice Gilbert** and **Patricia Prime**. There are another 9 past members, suggesting that membership is good for your career (though we'd rather you remain with us).

Whitireia's *Eat Your Words* anthology, produced from their competition run as part of Wellington on a Plate, and judged by Hinemoana Baker, has a few members' (along with some lapsed members') names in it: **Kevin O'Donnell**, **Mercedes Webb-Pullman** (who won the last one, and provided the preface for this year's book) and **Laurice Gilbert**. You can buy this delightful tour of Wellington's eateries for \$15 by emailing: cafepoetrycomp@whitireia.ac.nz

Competitions and Submissions

NZPS publication 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>

Behind every war there are good women - Exhibition, Call for Submissions (Australia) Deadline: 11 November To Australian and New Zealand female poets, the proposition is: Behind every war there are good women. Interpretation is up to you, the writer, but the principal aim of this exhibition is to present a diversity of views, ideas and perspectives from women about women and the commemorations and anniversaries of Australia's and New Zealand's military conflicts together with the emotions these evoke. To achieve this, a diversity of poets is required, from those well known in the literary world to those whose poetry may only be known to family and friends. For full details and submission instructions, see: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutwomenandwar>

Silversmith Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 12 November Competition from Maison Vee and *The Journal*/original plus. Theme is 'Earrings'. The winning earring poem will be published in *The Journal* and its author will get to choose a pair of Maison Vee earrings. Free Entry. Entries marked 'competition' to: Sam Smith at *The Journal*: smithsssj@aol.com Website: <http://thesamsmith.webs.com/index.htm#830323055> <http://www.etsy.com/shop/MaisonVees>.

Cordite 41: TRANSPACIFIC - Call for Submissions (Australia) Deadline: 14 November We will accept up to four poems per submission. This includes text, sound, image, video and other digital forms of poetry. We will once again be publishing 30 Australian poets and up to 30 from around the world, forming a double issue of sorts (you do not have to be living in a Pacific region to submit). Please see the full submissions guidelines at: <http://cordite.org.au/submissions/>

Penduline (USA) Deadline: 15 November Call for Submissions: *Penduline*, an online literary journal out of Portland, Oregon, is accepting submissions for its seventh issue, themed 'New Zealand'. Editor Sarah Horner-Olson is a New Zealander; Editor Bonnie Ditlevsen spent three years in Sydney. Thus, they have a interest in promoting the work of Antipodean artists and writers through the *Penduline* publication. "We are accepting submissions of fiction (flash fiction, sudden fiction, short stories, and prose poetry) and artwork. We are NOT seeking the following: works of nonfiction, creative nonfiction, chapter excerpts from novels, or rhyming poetry. Submissions longer than 5000 words will neither be read nor considered." Website: <http://www.pendulinepress.com>

THE iOTA sHOT AWARDS: 2013 (UK) Closing date: 19 November. 2013 iOTA shots Awards for Short Poetry Pamphlets: two, and up to three poets will have their shorter 'poetry shots' published by Templar Poetry. An iOTA sHOT will be whatever you make it as a poet. It may be a series of sonnets, haiku, a sequence, a single narrative poem, a mini-epic or a short collection on a theme; it is both an invitation and an opportunity to produce an innovative, original and imaginative short piece of work. Each winning poet receives £100 and fifty copies of their iOTA shot pamphlet. Each winning poet will be issued with a Templar Poetry publishing agreement which will include the option to submit a full collection for consideration. All poets who submit receive a complimentary Templar Pamphlet. Submission guidelines: <http://iotamagazine.co.uk/iotashots.html>

Cafe Writers Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 November Maximum of 40 lines (excluding title) on one side of A4. Judge: Ian Duhig. 1st £1000, 2nd £300, 3rd £150. Six Commended Prizes of £50. Funniest Poem not winning another prize £100. Entry Fee: £4 or £10 for 3 and £2 for each subsequent poem. Enter and pay online at www.cafewriters.org.uk

The New Writer magazine Prose and Poetry Prizes 2012 (UK) Closing date: 30 November Offers cash prizes as well as publication for the prize-winning writers in *The Collection*, special edition of *The New Writer* magazine each July. Further information including guidelines, prize money and entry fees at: <http://www.thenewwriter.com/prizes.htm> Writers can enter online at our secure credit card server at: <http://www.thenewwriter.com/entryform.htm> Or the entry form can be downloaded from that page on the website and sent in the post with your entry.

Sentinel Annual Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 November For previously unpublished poems. Maximum Length: 60 lines. Prizes: £500 (1st), £250 (2nd), £125 (3rd) and £25 x 5 (High Commendation). All winning and commended poems receive first publication in *Sentinel Champions* magazine. Entry Fee: £5 per poem for the first 2 poems, then £3.50 per poem thereafter. Enter online and pay securely via PayPal or print off an Entry Form for postal entry at <http://www.sentinelpoetry.org.uk/sawc/2012/poetry.html>

Tapestry of Bronze Odes to Olympians Contest (USA) Closes: 30 November The Tapestry of Bronze is sponsoring a series of poetry contests to celebrate Greek and Roman mythology and the Olympian gods. The subject of the eighth contest is Aphrodite (also known as Venus), the Goddess of Love. 30 lines maximum. Prize: \$50 Website: <http://www.tapestryofbronze.com/OdeForm.html>

2012 Anderbo Poetry Prize (USA) Postmark Deadline: 15 December For up to six unpublished poems. Winner receives: \$500 cash and publication on anderbo.com Reading fee: \$10. Guidelines: www.anderbo.com/anderbo1/anderprize2012.html

Magma Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 16 December 1. Magma Judge's Prize. Judge: Gillian Clarke. For poems of 11-80 lines. Prizes: 1st £500, 2nd £200, 3rd £100. 2. Magma Editors' Prize. Judges: a panel of Magma Poetry editors. For poems up to 10 lines. Prizes: 1st £500, 2nd £200, 10 special mentions at £10 each. As part of the prize, all 15 winners will have their poems published in the Spring Issue 2013 and be invited to read alongside Gillian Clarke at Magma's prize-giving event early next year. See website for full details: www.magmapoetry.com/competition Entry Fee: £5 per poem / £15 for four poems for non-subscribers. £3 per poem / £10 for four poems for subscribers.

Best New Zealand Poems 2012 Deadline: 17 December Calling all NZ Poets, regardless of where you live - published anything this year? Send your work to the IIML for consideration in this year's *Best New Zealand Poems* selection by Poet Laureate Ian Wedde. You can find all the details and submissions guidelines at: www.victoria.ac.nz/modernletters/ NB All poems published by the NZPS (either in *a fine line* or in the anthology) are automatically submitted.

Holland Park Press "What's your history?" Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 December Free entry for poems about individual histories with universal resonance. 50 lines or less. One poem per entrant. For poems in English OR Dutch. Prize £100 plus online publication. Please see website for full details: <http://hollandparkpress.co.uk/index.php>

Red booth Review (USA) Reading period closes: 31 December Submission Guidelines: There is no fee for submitting poetry to the magazine. Poems should be sent in batches of 3-10. Email via the website, at: <http://redboothreview.blogspot.co.nz/>

Thynks Pop a Poem on a Postcard Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 December Poems up to 14 lines. Judged by the Thynks team. 1st £100, 2nd £50, 3rd £25 (All 3 prizewinners will have 10 postcards with their winning poem printed on them). Entry Fee: £3. Website: <http://www.thynkspublications.co.uk/competitions> Email: thynkspublications@yahoo.co.uk

16th Annual Robert Frost Foundation Annual Poetry Award (USA) Postmark/email deadline: 1 January The Robert Frost Foundation welcomes poems in the spirit of Robert Frost for its 16th Annual Award. Winner receives \$1,000 and opportunity to read at a Frost Foundation event. Submit two copies of each poem, one with contact information (name, address, phone number, email address) and one copy free of identifying information. Reading fee: \$10 per poem. Please send fees via regular mail, please). Mail your entry to: The Robert Frost Foundation, Attn: Poetry Award, Lawrence Public Library - 3rd Floor, 51 Lawrence Street, Lawrence, MA 0184., USA. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) or an email address if you'd like to receive the contest results. Email submissions are accepted at frostfoundation@comcast.net if you send your entry fee by regular mail. You may submit up to three poems of no more than three pages each. Both published and unpublished works are accepted. See the complete contest guidelines at www.frostfoundation.org

2012 International Poetry Competition - Judges' Reports:

OPEN

Harry Ricketts

756 entries: is that a record? It was fascinating, demanding and rewarding to read such a pile of poems against each other. So, first of all, congratulations to all those who submitted poems, many of which I found moving and often technically impressive.

The process I followed was to read everything, creating three piles: Probables, Maybes, Noes. This left me with 48 Probables, 106 Maybes and 602 Noes. I then reread all the Probables and Maybes, reducing these to 35, then a further reduction left me with 23, which I ranked with considerable difficulty (and reluctance) into the three winners, the seven Highly Commendeds and the 13 Commendeds.

The entries naturally covered a great variety of themes and subjects. There were parental poems and grandparental poems (some very touching ones), travel poems, war poems, poems of love, loss, hope, faith and regret, literary poems, ekphrastic poems, comic and satirical poems (some good ones). There were very few protest poems but perhaps these aren't sent in to poetry competitions. It was noteworthy that quite a number of the entries were set overseas and dealt with international concerns and/or situations. Most poems were in some kind of free verse (including a number of shape poems) but I was pleased to find that quite a few entries were in tough forms. There were several villanelles, an unrhymed sestina, a pantoum, even a ghazal. While some of these were a reminder that it is now considerably harder to produce a decent rhymed poem than an unrhymed one, a number used an elaborate form to great effect.

What was I looking for? No one specific element but certainly poems that sustained themselves all the way through. Many entries contained striking lines, phrases or stanzas but the poem as a whole amounted to less than the sum of its parts. The poems that held me most were those that maintained the sense of a consistent speaking voice, were in Auden's useful phrase "memorable speech".

The Commendeds:

In addition to the spooky 'This Is The Way of It' and 'My Childhood in the Rose Garden', there were some neatly turned playful poems such as 'Five Minutes Peace' which jumped off from the Jill Murphy children's books about the Large family, also the phrase-twisting 'Lexical Lucy' and the sales-jargon-skewering 'Why Asterisks Are Evil' and the lightly satirical 'It a Shame They Stopped Making Snifters'. In a different vein, 'The Blues' cleverly but also poignantly (there's no cure for the blues) set two columns of the same 20 lines parallel to each other but running in reverse order, and 'Visiting Akaroa' memorably evoked Blanche Baughan and her work.

The Highly Commendeds:

These included the excellent trauma-haunted pantoum 'A Familiar Voice' and the equally strong villanelle 'The Monks of Tibhirine'. Both forms are hard to pull off without padding or dud lines, but everything here formally and emotionally earned its keep. Other well-wrought, highly distinctive poems in this category also took the reader around the world: to Uganda in the surreal (but apparently true) 'When Gorillas Wake', to the Gobi Desert in the sacramental 'There Are No Horses in Heaven', to a New Zealand beach in the quietly uncanny 'The Day Death Turned Up on the Beach', to southern Spain in the adroitly scored 'The Alhambra Suite: Five Variations', and to England (presumably) in the splendidly Jamesian 'Henry James Riding a Bicycle'. These seven formed a really strong cluster.

Winners:

These three terrific poems couldn't be more different in manner and method. 'Swimming with Frame' (placed third) loops off from advice to a class writing an essay about Janet Frame into a wonderful metaphorical swoop which is still (in a sense) about essay writing but much more about imaginative free fall. I loved the long confident control of the lines. 'Cathedral of the Poor' (placed second), about Gaudi and the Sagrada Familia, is much sparer, gappier, beautifully chiselled. Either of those two would have been a worthy winner but I settled eventually on 'Ashes'. This was not just because it is a sestina (very challenging technically) but because the highly ritualistic repetitions of the form seem to me perfectly to complement while expressing the powerful emotion of the poem, creating a verbal shrine of mourning for the poet's father. I also admire very much the way the poem's tonal shifts catch how grief slips, slides, jars back. A small point but I very much liked the variant of 'Rumi' for 'room' in stanza four – very witty and apt, and characteristic of the poem's intelligence in addition to its depth of feeling.

HAIKU

Barbara Strang

I have just read through nearly 500 haiku many times. I had previously written on what I would be looking for as judge of the haiku competition*: "They will be written in the present tense, using any of the five senses. They will not state the message overtly, but by implication, using sense impressions. They will avoid abstractions, similes, personification and end rhyme. They will be pruned down to one or two images, maybe with an unexpected link between them..." and I continued with a list of guidelines for writing haiku, gleaned from the last page of Cyril Childs' *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZPS, 1993).

Most of us know these and other "rules" by now. But now I would prefer to say that I approached each of the haiku entries to this year NZPS Competition as a small poem. In common with longer poems I would hope to see beauty and freshness of language, assonance and alliteration, originality and even mystery. In particular I was looking for the ability to use a concise form to suggest a larger whole.

For every competition inevitably there is judgment. As a judge my opinion is personal and I will inevitably have my own biases. I know I like simplicity, originality and humour, and dislike vagueness and sentimentality. Also my own experience of life will probably lead me to favour certain topics.

But it is self-evident: every word must count in haiku, and some failed to make the cut by including too much material, perhaps only one word too much. Some were vague or abstract. Polysyllabic words are hard to incorporate and result in almost certain haiku death, in my opinion. Others told rather than showed. Sometimes what they had to say was obvious. Sometimes it had been said before, too often. In some a link between the two parts could not be perceived.

Haiku are varied and it is hard to compare one with another. Is a haiku which is sad more worthy than one which is a joke? I am not sure of the answer. In the end I went for clarity and originality of the imagery.

Among the hundreds I was gratified to find plenty with beauty, freshness, and a quality that cannot be put into words. I think it is to do with mood, and beyond guidelines and rules. It can only be grasped by reading many haiku.

I was interested that there were amongst the bunch some one line and concrete poems. As I must, I judged these on

having something to say that went beyond mere form.

The first five prizewinners that I chose are fine well-crafted poems, and any of them could have been the winner. All of them are simple but manage to suggest much more; the words may be plain, but they work together smoothly and slip off the tongue; they all contain a sharp realised sensory image. And there is an economy of means – none of them wastes a single word. They are the ones which I consider most successfully avoid the pitfalls, and deliver the haiku moment in a satisfying manner.

The Highly Commended haiku are well crafted works with a sense of surprise. A good percentage of them take risks in form, and carry it off. Among the Commended there are some good senryu. Congratulations to all the prize winners.

I was reminded again that as well as being a challenge, it is such fun to write and share haiku. I would like to thank all the authors who entered for the privilege and enjoyment of reading their works.

1st (Winner, Jeannette Stace Memorial Prize):

between road and bay the old forest one tree wide

I found myself drawn to this superbly executed haiku for its simplicity, clarity, poignancy: and also its relevance, concerning the loss of native bush. Using plain words the writer has used the one line form to build emotional weight. Also there is an added concrete element in the form, echoing the sense.

2nd:

red zone —
on an empty street
a light turns green

Here is another great haiku which also stood out for its clarity and simplicity; and relevance, concerning the Christchurch earthquake. Having witnessed this scene I relate to the writer's image, but I think anyone would. The two colours give it a perfect balance of pathos and irony.

3rd:

bird's hollow bones
piled at the door
your thank-you note

This works as a classical haiku with its lovely image, but surprising with contemporary humour. The implication is that the thank-you note too may be hollow.

4th:

her prognosis
sea foam wobbles
in the wind

This also is faultless. I love this original image, which clearly presents an insecure state of mind.

5th:

morning glory
clings to the tea tree—
his new girlfriend

This one is a traditional haiku in form, but contemporary in theme and humour.

*<http://gurglewords.wordpress.com/2012/03/26/tuesday-poem-six-haiku-by-barbara-strang-open-haiku-judge-of-nz-poetry-society-2012-international-competition/>

Noticeboard

Note from Lewis Scott, Wellington:

I'm sorry to tell you that we've had to cancel our 'Poetry at The Ballroom Café' programme for October and suspend further programmes until February 2013. We've just been advised that Kathy, who runs The Ballroom Café, has had to close the café due to a combination of factors, such as the economic downturn and extensive roadworks outside the building that have disrupted traffic.

We extend our sympathies to Kathy, who has been such a good friend to 'Poetry at The Ballroom Café' since its inception, and wish her well. We do have some good news, however, which is that we have secured a new venue for our monthly poetry programmes and will be starting up again next year. We'll keep you posted. In the meantime, keep poetry alive and we look forward to seeing you again in 2013.

Self-publishing Workshop Opportunity, Wellington

PrintStop is delighted to offer members a special book printing workshop which includes the following:

- 1: Training on setting up your text template in Word
- 2: On the spot cover design (bring your cover images, 1 x profile picture and 1 x cover image)
- 3: Access to our online site and training on how to navigate this site.
- 4: 50 x printed A5 40 page + cover Poetry books

All for the one off price of \$320 + g.s.t [\$368].

We are looking for expressions of interest at this stage. If there is interest, we will be running the workshop on a Saturday from 10am at our offices in Grenada North. Members can bring their own laptops or there will be several machines for use. We will require the text to be all proofed and ready to go on a Word file, and the images to be 300 DPI.

Contact Christine Borra: Christine.Borra@printstop.co.nz Check out the website at: www.printstop.co.nz

Orbit

Some of you will remember (I don't, so forgive me if I get it wrong) this round robin postal workshop that used to run, whereby members shared their work and feedback with distant colleagues. There are similar groups running in the haiku community, and Zazen, in particular, is one I know of that has published an anthology.

Kristina Jensen (who lives on a houseboat in the Marlborough Sounds) wishes to start this up again, and is willing to coordinate the group. She envisages sending out one poem a month to seven different people (because 7 is her lucky number) and giving feedback on the other six. There would be a few rules, mostly about being kind and respectful, constructive and creative, but also honest.

"I have tried a few online groupie things but didn't really like that. I'd like to connect with poets in a personal way, share work and learn from feedback."

If you're interested, get in touch with Kristina directly: umeus@xtra.co.nz

Regional Report

WINDRIFT, AUGUST

Nola Borrell

Our August meeting opened with Laurice Gilbert sharing her two winning [Highly Commended, ed.] haiku from the 2012 NZPS International Haiku Competition. We were very impressed! Ernest J Berry (as usual!) and Nola Borrell were the two other Windrifters in the Award list.

Harumi Hasegawa introduced a new – and welcome – slant. She slipped her own translations of four Japanese tsunami haiku into our anonymous bowls – and then, once we had puzzled and hesitated our way through, revealed the source.

a car

facing upward

death and the spring moon

Mutsuo Takano (transl. Harumi Hasegawa)

Our ritual open category included:

apricots,
assembly of shyness
in the vege market

Harumi Hasegawa

We were somewhat bemused by this, but Harumi, who lived in Central Otago for two years, was a step ahead of Wellingtonians. She was referring to the blush of freshly picked succulent apricots.

kereru
one fat, one thin
waiting for spring

Annette de Jonge

Category two was the frequently used but forever evocative image of the moon. No trouble. Possibilities seemed endless. The following haiku from a first-time-to-Windrifft corresponding member was received with delight. True, we considered the need for line two, but concluded the pauses introduced improved the haiku.

so much rain
and then
the moon drowned in a puddle

Kathleen Browne (Charleston)

pheasant
rising from marram grass
long-tailed moon

Ernest J Berry

Focusing on 'skyscraper', Category three, was a harder matter. Deviser of categories Penny Pruden said, "I find it so challenging to come up with contributions on my own suggestions!"

After workshopping, "thick mist masks the hills/ makes of every small house/ a skyscraper", we decided on:

thick mist
every small house
a skyscraper

Penny Pruden

Orthodox Church
antique art restorer
scrapes the heavens

Neil Whitehead

(who has a gift for creativity and humour.)

At the end of the afternoon, Sally Holmes, former Wellington member, phoned from her new home in Pohara: The right day!

APOLOGY

In the last issue of *a fine line* Charmaine Thomson's book *Licorice* was reviewed with Charmaine's surname spelt incorrectly, both in the title and throughout the review. I apologise to Charmaine for my poor proofreading, Ed.

Featured Poet: Alexandra Fraser

A Good Kiwi Girl

A good Kiwi girl wears black
travels light
can rip her gear off quick
if she's interested keen for action

She'll arrive in a foreign town
friendless homeless
find a flat a job mates
faster than a postcard home

will nanny for the rich
work behind a bar
waitress pick fruit

cheap flight weekends
Paris Prague Rome
has slept in airports
her back-pack a pillow
hitchhikes through Greece

A good Kiwi girl
in four-inch heels
if she's pissed
will arm-wrestle you in a pub
If she's really pissed
she'll let you win

A good Kiwi girl wants
a double-shot flat white
her own back yard
with a feijoa hedge
and a lemon tree

The Perfect Bag

would sling from the shoulder
brass buckles glinting

in the light
a swag of confidence

the perfect bag would carry
all that is needful

to be grasped at midnight
when the earth shakes

the fire alarm screams
the ambulance calls

would hold credit cards
postcards passport

photographs notebooks
pens sticking plaster

medications
 tissues for tears

memory tickets

a mirror for seeing

a map of the past

letters from the dead

and a lost lipstick

used once
 in hope

Dying in Winter

It has been a year of last things

Each one slips past ticked off
almost briskly like the clicking
of familiar beads

The heady scent of freesias is long gone

Each milestone Christmas Easter
birthdays and precious people
propelled by a storm
 of proliferating cells

You march past like a queen
 reviewing troops
we stand to attention
 helpless

And then you reach the end of the line

The trees are black-limbed
 gaunt
you have seen your last blue sky
your last dawn was a quiet thing
 soft pink and grey

and then the rain
 always the rain

@you

you didnt like me yesterday
or like my statuses last week
while I have
assiduously
liked yours
you have not defriended me
so have we broken up
or not?
please tweet at least

The Anatomy Student

I come before you in my bare bones
you see right through me

Metatarsals click on floor boards
your thumb tracks my zygomatic arch

one of my better features
You are a student of anatomy

and you fondle condyles
probe cranial nerve foramina

You seek out the lesser trochanter
the supra-spinous fossa

ball and socket hinge joints slide
as I am folded into your arms

Yesterday you held a preserved
human heart in your hands

I have left my beating heart
somewhere in your vicinity
Do with it what you will

Pakeha Gilt

stories are saved
taken out
polished for an occasion

shiny pieces
in cigar boxes jam jars
carved wooden cases

handed with ceremony
tea and scones
to the next generation

not all treasures
are good for us
some leave a bitter taste

but we will polish them
in our turn
pass the cups
the plates the hurt

“Some Choreography May Offend”*

Dance wilfully
inappropriately
during wakes
at communion
on motorway exits

Music enters the ear
must find its way out feet
make their own decisions
leap tap twirl breathless
rhythm drumming blood

The old lady dances alone
under the disco ball flashing
in her brain
lifts her skirts
pirouettes

**quote from advert for Calendar Girls (adult entertainment) on Hauraki radio.*

haikai café

Your bite-sized serving of haiku, senryū and tanka

Kirsten Cliff

In the footprints
of the wind wolf
deep silence

~ Haiku by Viv Smith

heat wave
the salon paints my toenails
“emerald city”

~ Senryū by Paula Moore

a cluster of small
yellow spheres
glowing in the mist—
lemons
on a lemon tree

~ *Tanka by Richard von Sturmer*

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

Straight From the Haijin's Mouth

Prompted by New Zealand's National Poetry Day in July, I asked the multi-talented Richard von Sturmer, "How do you get your daily dose of haiku and/or tanka?" I have also answered this question, in lieu of being able to find another suitable candidate, and as this is the final in this series.

Richard von Sturmer's answer: On my bedside table lies a copy of *Classical Chinese Poetry*, an anthology translated and edited by David Hinton. In this volume, and in many others, David Hinton provides excellent translations of famous and lesser known Chinese poets. In particular I'm drawn to the main section of the book, which features poets from the Tang Dynasty. The Tang Dynasty is known as the Golden Age of Zen ('Chan' in Chinese) as well as being the Golden Age of Chinese poetry. For Western readers, it's electrifying to read lines by hitherto unknown poets such as Meng Hao-jan and Meng Chiao. The branches of Japanese poetry – in particular waka and haiku – have their roots in the Chinese tradition, and in the wilderness landscapes of mountains and rivers. Here is one poem by Meng Hao-jan:

Anchoring Overnight at Ox Island without Catching up to Hsueh Pa's Boat

Stars spreading across night over Ox Island,
wind failing, my bird-carved boat settles.

After many nights sharing coves and bays,
mist and waves suddenly open between us.

Our song vanishing into empty distances . . .

At dawn we drift boundless lakes,
and who's ever met again out there, in all that beyond?

Kirsten Cliff's answer: I read from Martin Lucas' *Stepping Stones: a way into haiku* (British Haiku Society, 2007) each day, and have been doing so for the past year. Before this, I read from Patricia Donegan's *Haiku Mind: 108 Poems to Cultivate Awareness & Open Your Heart* (Shambhala, 2008) daily, and I recommend both of these books.

Online, I check into DailyHaiku (<http://www.dailyhaiku.org/>) each day, and most days will also see what the Per Diem: Daily Haiku is on The Haiku Foundation home page (<http://www.thehaikufoundation.org/> - midway down the page on the right-hand side).

When new journals arrive in my letterbox, I'll read them on a daily basis until I'm satiated. I've also been involved in writing quite a few rengay this year, and more recently tanka sequences, so at times I am reading haiku and tanka daily, related to my latest linking verse.

Then there is my reading of the Facebook posts and blogs I'm subscribed to. A list of links to the blogs I read regularly appears on my own blog, *Swimming in Lines of Haiku* (<http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.com/>). As for Facebook, I recommend the NaHaiWriMo* community page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/NaHaiWriMo/108107262587697>) where haiku enthusiasts gather to write haiku to a daily prompt. I did this throughout August, and found it to be an inspiring, enjoyable, and encouraging experience.

**National Haiku Writing Month* (<https://sites.google.com/site/nahaiwrimo/home>)

The Haiku Help-Desk

Kirsten Cliff

How to Submit Your Haiku

I've been submitting haiku to journals for five years and now that I'm in the editor's chair, I've noticed large discrepancies in how different poets submit their work. Below is my sample submission, for sending in the body of an email:

Dear (Name of Editor),

Please find below my submission of three haiku for your consideration in (Name of Journal).

Warm regards,

Kirsten Cliff

(New Zealand)

TEXT BEGINS

autumn rain

the sunflowers stand

without petals

*

back and forth

this faded hospital curtain

the scent of daphne

*

under the chrysanthemum pot different lengths of w o r m

TEXT ENDS

Your intro:

I haven't come across a haiku journal that has requested a cover letter. However, I think it's an important courtesy to add a few lines of introduction to your submission. It is polite to put the editor's full name (especially if you are contacting them for the first time). Check the submission guidelines for this information. If you're still unsure, or it's co-edited, then using 'Editor' or 'Editors' is acceptable.

Your haiku:

Placing my haiku at the end of the email between the headings TEXT BEGINS and TEXT ENDS, as well as stating how many are included and placing an asterisk between each one, helps keep things clear. You don't always know how your submission will come out at the other end because different users may have different text reading software. I have had poems arrive in emails to me in one big clump that I've then had to sort out. I'm trying to avoid this by organising my submission in the manner described.

If your haiku have unusual formatting (i.e. centred, italics, special spacing requirements) then make this clear in your intro. For example, my third haiku should appear in one line with five spaces between "pot" and "different" and a single space between each letter in "worm". If things are more complex and you're not sure how it will come through via email, then write to the editor first requesting permission to send your haiku in an attachment.

Your name:

Always supply your full name, even if you have submitted to the journal before. If the name you want to appear with your haiku is different in some way to the name you use every day, then state this in your intro (e.g. I'd like my name to appear in lower case letters only). Most of my submissions are sent overseas, hence the addition of "New Zealand" under my name. This is not always necessary, but a good habit to get into as many editors do require this information.

Your final draft:

Always send the final draft of your poems. It's inappropriate to be contacting editors with changes to your haiku after you've submitted. Most are busy people and give of their time voluntarily. This also means they will most likely not be able to give you individual feedback on your submission.

Unpublished?

If a journal is not specific about what ‘unpublished’ means, then ask, as this does differ. Some consider anything that has appeared in the public forum to be ‘published’. Others are happy to publish work that has previously appeared on your personal blog, or on social media sites. A few will reprint work that’s already appeared in an edited journal if you provide the publishing credit, but this would always be stated in their guidelines.

The last word:

My best advice is to read the submission guidelines of any journal thoroughly. I read them over several times when submitting somewhere for the first time, and always check back on subsequent submissions to reacquaint myself with the specifics and see if anything has changed. If you’re not sure of anything, please ask!

All haiku by Kirsten Cliff, published in *seed packets: an anthology of flower haiku* (bottle rockets press, 2010).

Thank you to all the haijin who have participated in Straight From the Haijin’s Mouth and The Haiku Help-Desk over the past year. These two features are now closing down, but the haikai café remains open for your submissions. Haiku Help-Desk articles are archived at Haiku NewZ (<http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/node/632>) and search “Straight From the Haijin’s Mouth” on my blog to read past questions and answers (<http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.co.nz/>).

Reviews

China as Kafka (ISBN 978-0-9864665-8-8, Kilmog Press, Dunedin, 2011) and *Home, Away, Elsewhere* (ISBN 978-988-19932-2-9, Proverse Hong Kong, 2011), both by Vaughan Rapatahana

Natasha Dennerstein

China as Kafka is a handsome book with a textured, Pinot Noir, hard cover, exquisitely-bound with cream paper. It is a joy to handle, an old-school, artisanal object.

Rapatahana uses unusual typography and orthography in an experimental way that brings to mind the work of David Mitchell, the brilliant and recently-deceased NZ poet (not to be confused with the UK novelist of the same name). In particular, the use of ampersands is a stylistic tic of both poets.

Layout snakes down the page; darts left and right; stretches and compresses. The poet plays with spacing and fonts to emphasise the qualities of certain words. “wilt”, for example, is italicised in ‘good friday, santo tomas 04/22/11’ in *China as Kafka*. The word “crumbles” tilts diagonally down the page in the title poem ‘China as Kafka’. In the same poem, the word “asy mmet r ic” is laid out asymmetrically in a form of typographic onomatopoeia.

‘At Waikanae’ is a lovely, lyrical poem reminiscing about the teenaged poet and his cousin mowing the lawns at their urupa, tending the graves of their whanaunga. Rapatahana repeats the word “whaunanga” several times like a kind of chorus, thereby emphasising the ubiquity of the departed and this concept.

There are elements of concrete poetry in Rapatahana’s work. ‘Angkor Wat, August ’10’ is laid out in tall, majestic piles, mimicking the shape of the temples there.

There are some impassioned poems highlighting the lack of fluency in the Maori language within contemporary New Zealand published literature. Rapatahana’s appreciation for moteatea and all its forms, as an expression of Maori composition and poetry, is asserted in ‘Nga ruri Maori’, where he writes that these under-appreciated verbal treasures are the true poetry of Aotearoa.

The poems of *Here, Away, Elsewhere* are set in Hong Kong - where the poet resides - and a variety of South East Asian locations where he has ‘done time.’ Peppered through this peripatetic journey is the siren song of home, of Aotearoa. From Hong Kong to Hokianga, from Ho Chi Minh City to Hokitika, Rapatahana explores what it means to belong to human society, a foreigner distant from home.

‘looking back, a kiwi’ is a heartfelt cry from a poet living abroad and hearing snippets of news about the bloodbath of infanticide and abuse here and feeling powerless to do anything but wail. In ‘Matakaoa RSA’, the poet expresses the ambivalence of Aotearoa: an anti-nuclear country with a glorious war record; a shared Maori/Pakeha war pride; respect for the departed but unwillingness to militarise. The words of ‘age shall not weary them’ are threaded through: spilt beer and Reveille. ‘Rata villa, Ngawhatu’ is a memory fragment of an admission to an old-school psychiatric facility. The drugs have blunted the experience, the memory of it and the telling. ‘No Surface’ is a casual poem of domestic violence – if there can be such a thing – in which Rapatahana carefully works a metaphor of gardening/topsoil and ends with a fist, which is all the more violent for its surprise and brevity. In the tragedy of ‘I Should Have Done More’, the senseless loss of a youngish life to suicide is simply and effectively expressed.

Alliteration abounds, such as “speeding towards stasis... perhaps a palladium of promise” in ‘filipino fling’ and playful rhyme is judiciously used, such as in ‘two old shoes’. The poem ‘between bards’ contains an absolute killer line: “and in this /cloven crease of time/ I was silent”.

The poems in both volumes are rich in allusion; laden with polyglot reference; peppered with arcane vocabulary.

Rapatahana's pyrotechnic words are a feast for poetry readers. The words "ganglionate", "corybantic", "arenaceous" and "tramontane" are an absolute delight. "the grime-water/sluts/itself/through/his/plaintive/shoe": where else can "slut" be used as a verb, but in 'Mongkok lane'?

Warm auditorium James Brown (Victoria University Press, 2012) ISBN 978 0 864730764 9, \$28 (a found review)*

Mary Cresswell

My stars they are belligerent,
my belligerence defamed,
my defamation's fingered
till my fingers are ashamed.

(*'I'm'*)

Is it not truly something how you can hear small points of light emerging from the brightness? I am tiny in starlight. If I had a window, I would look out of it. ...You're on top of the world—hair you can upbraid, personal pronouns you can take for your own. At least that's what I think about. I don't really know what my bro thinks about.

"OK," I say, "OK." I take a deep breath. I know what James is thinking, but he still has much to learn, especially about conclusions. But there are times I don't know where my words come from. Like now. I mean, what's all this about?

There are rules you can make and rules you can break ... the next instalment must be written by you.

This is where I'm supposed to say how I tried to call out

but couldn't find my voice, how it somehow got lost in the crowd
or the words caught on the tip of my tongue
or simply failed me, then, finally, refused to come.

(*'Your father would never have said that'*)

I begin to climb the tree. Things look different from up here. I pause to chew on a leaf. Afternoon tea without clothes is actually warm fruit infusion ... the mind is first a maze, then a treadmill. I close my eyes in the darkness and then open them. Oh god, oh god, oh god, oh god: I've been orbiting this moment most of my life. Things were better in the old days.

Let the grumblers move to Australia. My dad did it. He went to a place they got given sponges and plastic buckets. "Is this like some metaphor?" I said. There was no one else in the dream, although I always felt I was trying to communicate with someone.

That Wordsworth was right about emotion. We hardly even yell at him (alone up front where he can do least harm), ignoring his distant, waving arm. I asked him what it was like at the bottom of a supertanker; he says he likes my turn of phrase, but I don't trust him.

When the final whistle goes I'm at his side for photos:

I saw that he spoke the truth, for in his practiced hand,
the mere pounamu had indeed become
the green plastic toy, which swung
and shimmered as he advanced toward me
declaiming things about our past relationship
in a language I no longer understood.

(*'The green plastic toy'*)

Dan Chiasson?

Randall Jarrell?

James, James, James: He's a good lad, with a great turn of speed.

*This review was inspired by the publisher's press release reading, "Warm Auditorium is perhaps the best answer to its own poetic challenges." The following constraints were applied: use lines from these poems and only from them; no adding new words or changing word order; tinkering with punctuation is OK.

Mary Cresswell

Kennedy's new book* contains seven poems – narratives, a sonnet sequence and a love poem – which investigate a lifelong quest for northiness. The first begins in the north, in a long-gone Hokianga where derelict mansions collapse into the tidal flats, the ferry only goes two days a week, and Aucklanders are just starting to haul their coffee-makers back and forth for weekends. “... I delve/ into the mud hoping to find bright yellow fists/ of glassiness. There are none. All gone, all/ glue. ...” (“The darling north”) When the weekend ends, we all go south, back to our own ongoing stories where we look back to F E Maning’s “good old times”.

‘Hands on: A handbook’ tells three stories we have known forever; they’re wonderfully done and (like the whole book, actually) use the kind of word play that reminds you that language is worth having. First, there is a trip to Grandma’s house (“Never you mind how I am, said Grandma. I just am,/ nothing you can do about it. ... Mum clicked her tongue over and over, a twig/ in bike spokes. ...”) where the wolf is less of a problem than is the Christmas tree company which wants the house.

Then, “Game Piglet. Raping six miss piggies got you a fort. Around lunch-time a wolf flourished the gate. Ta da.” Dad Pig (PhD in Wolf Stoodies) keeps the three little pigs informed with anthropological field-speak (“Rarely/ have I seen such a display of traditional huff and puff behaviour.”) and hangs in there for them, even in the face of sustained, world-class invective from the Wolf:

Hey ho spittypan

bacyrind./ Why I oughta./ Son this is getting out of hand

or trotter./ Hey ho porkfried sweetsour./ Why I oughta./ Hey ho

schnitzelfunken gebriskemuffin./ Get woughta! yelled Big Pig.

Finally, the long sad tale of Gingerbread Boy, who rises from a baking sheet for “freedom, and ran for it. (I can I can.)” Gingerbread Mama follows, brandishing her White Sunday white-icing handbag, but after great trials she succumbs to Red Fox and GB is left at the end of the boardwalk to get on the bus to nowhere. “There were no stops./ The bus kept going/ and going. Gingerbread Boy/ never got eaten, neither/ did he die.” (This may be because, thanks to his mother, he brought his inhaler.)

‘Hello Kitty, Goodbye Piccadilly’ takes place (physically) in Hawai’i, where we are so far north that the old north is south – and where the bus going nowhere is now TheBus going around and around Honolulu – and there you are, thinking in circles:

Imagine you’d come to Hawai’iki early.

I don’t have Hawai’iki.

Imagine you were in Heaven.

I don’t have Heaven.

Imagine you were in Paradise ...

This chant wanders through the whole poem, answered by the litany: “All day in Paradise”, “your first plan in Paradise”, “in Paradise a funny expression/ sometimes pops out of your mouth”, “In Paradise you try to remember.” In Paradise, in Paradise

You try to remember the shape of the hills/ ... but the only things that come are words/ and so you put them down/ and they will have to do./ But the hills were always going to go anyway./ And the words.

Speaking as a reader, I am very glad indeed the words in this book haven’t gone.

*Information on earlier books is in the author’s Book Council profile <http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/Writers/Profiles/Kennedy,%20Anne>

Mini Competition

The prizewinner is Marion Moxham of Palmerston North, for her ‘translation’ of an Old English poem:

For a Swarm of Bees

Mumbly tip-over buckets mouthing off.

They have wet feet

under foot. Fat dinging bells

hit me over the head.

Wimbly, wombly, stumble over the meadow,
the music diving particles down the toboggan,
a big fat tongue bopping and swapping and swirling
aerodynamics into orbit,
into wild flying storms.

Be gentle my friends.

Mind your manners and do not explode.

A random selection of poetry books will soon be making its way to Marion. Thanks for your entries.

Members' Poems

A Poet's Heart

A poet's heart's an endless thing,
Ubiquitous, encompassing.
It knows no bound nor borderline,
Or darkness where it may not shine.

A poet's heart's a joyful thing,
It likes to laugh, and loves to sing.
It lifts the spirit, holds it high,
Then dances like a firefly.

A poet's heart's a fragile thing,
As brittle as a monarch's wing.
That flutters on a breath of air,
The secrets of its soul to bare.

A poet's heart's a vicious thing,
Its bite is like a hornet's sting.
For it will strike just as and when
It feels the censure of its pen.

A poet's heart's a caring thing,
Both empathy and hope to bring.
A sunbeam's touch it can impart
To mollify the saddened heart.

A poet's heart's a timeless thing,
Whose ancient bell sustains its ring.
That through the years, it may adorn
Those generations yet unborn.

Rod Walford

Things to do before I leave

For Vaughan Rapatahana

Remember the angle of sunlight on a motionless Titahi Bay.
Remember the relentless wind of Wellington
pushing me back home.

Memorise the gleam of harakeke after a southerly;
chase the scent ripped from the rosemary bushes
and the rustle of kōuka sounding
uncannily like cornstalks in an autumn wind.

Purchase a souvenir jar of Marmite,
a polished paua shell, a greenstone tiki,
and a hei matau now made from the jawbone of something dead.

Be grateful I will no longer scorch in the sun but shiver in the shade.
Be grateful I will no longer wear layers in the summer.

Ponder the bottlegreen of the ocean
vying with the navyblue of the harbour
and the mudbrown of the river outflow.

Think about living in the mouth of a fish.

Revisit my memories of a glacier, a beach, a volcano,
and a hill with only
one tree.

Savour the empty roads, the honesty box fruit for sale,
and the familiar greeting by the bank lady whose name
I still do not know after a decade.

Recycle my excess, rehome my extras.

Do not list the friends I have,
the ones I have lost,
or the ones who have left me.

Do not do the haka, but whenever possible say:
aroha, kia kaha, and ka pai.

Note what I love, note what I hate.
Note what I will never understand.

Vow to remember it all
but give myself permission to forget.
Revise history.

Margaret Vos

I
can
write
any old
junk if I
take a form
like this and
fill it up with
words; but is the
result really worth
reading? Is it a poem
that sails off into the
blue empyrea beyond or a
splendid metaphor butterfly
fluttering around live simile
flowers in search of the divine?
Does it express my feelings or my
thoughts? Does it move or stimulate
you? Does it communicate any thoughts
or feelings at all? What exactly does a
poem do? Is it just a pretty little piece
of word-music, full of lilting alliteration
assonance & rhyme, dancing to a catchy rhythm?
Or is it an inadequate description in words of a
picture or a moment frozen in time or a story? Is
a poem like this merely a mathematical exercise? Or
is it a poet's sad attempt to gain attention from
a distant beloved? Ah, love! How much poetry it
has inspired! Words give wings to tongue-tied
desire & the broken heart that wants to fly
free from chains of pain. There is a need
to express emotions & to impress others
with such positive features as we can.
Are you assaulted by a poem's beauty?
Are you attacked by its brilliance?
Can you capture the comic humour
of a negative situation rather
than be held captive by pain?
Can you see a universal in
the particular? Will you
create cascading fresh
waterfalls of watery
words to drown the
spiritual thirst
for art? Is it
possible for
mere words
to assist
another
being
bear
the
pain
that's
implicit
in and part of
the human condition?

Bryony Jagger

After School Song

It's a cinch
he implies

as he rocks in
with his guitar

and into the escarpment
of his bedroom

where he stays
lone as a poplar

playing, foot hard
on reverberate

emerging for Futurama
face creasing

at each burst
of canned laughter.

I ask how was your day?
He looks shocked with amnesia

says ok
without moving a lip

heads back to his room
and the distant tune.

Janet Newman

January Deadline: 7 November

(Though that's not very far away. If you've got something you're desperate to get into the next issue, I'll probably accept copy until about the 15th November.)