



Newsletter October 2004

New Zealand Poetry Society

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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

ISSN 1176-6409

New Zealand Poetry Society
PO Box 5283
Lambton Quay
WELLINGTON

Patrons
Dame Fiona Kidman
Vincent O'Sullivan

President
Gillian Cameron

E-mail info@poetrysociety.org.nz

Website
www.poetrysociety.org.nz

☞ Front Page Essay ☞

**What does poetry have to do
with moolah?**

by

Raewyn Alexander

Lyric language flows and audiences are revitalised. Does filthy lucre fit or is payment a slur on the lovely tongue of art?

Arduous or specialised work like that, for instance, of the labourer or barrister results in benefits tallied as proof of worth. Some fee is understood to be due.

Then a poem often appears to be created in a breath and, despite any inherent beauty, many imagine other verses could also arrive effortlessly.

The supposed labours of a poet also have connotations of privilege to some. Possibly poets who mention payment align themselves with people like ditch diggers or lawyers. Both require depth yet are also associated with dirt, while some aficionados perhaps require poems to appear unsullied by the world while clearly springing from it.

There are also innumerable poets, open microphone events indicate they're as ubiquitous as audition wannabes for any national singing 'idol' talent quest on TV. Some poets' packaging is eccentric too and in the slick quick, 24-hour lit supermarket snappy world, what makes the odd poet deserve entertainment dollars?

Recently I resigned from a certain society, weary of being 'told' that I deserved disrespect in literary dealings. Without contrary influence I now have an American agent and a great writing-related job that pays extraordinarily well.

Various bods get past my security system somehow with offers of paid poetry reading work and my tutoring career appears sound, along with publishing ventures.

Expecting payment may result in a boon.

Proof from a tiny sample but close enough to my heart for it to pulse like some horror story demanding to be told.

Horror?

Envy and spite along with apathy and complacency fuels some opposition to paid poetry.

Personified, these vile humours would hiss gossip for one clutch of advantage to rev run-down egos. Complacency sickly settles for the familiar rather than daring to learn life-long in the face of every human storm, lull or puzzle.

No great poetry was ever born from a powdery slug like that.

Although few even globally make a living from poetry, which is not what I advocate, the suggestion of a fee may produce justice.

Fairness influences writing and associated activities with such bonhomie that mainly for that reason I'm inclined to recommend expecting payment for fine poetry.

Business is not verse but poets belong in the world and should be treated, at a certain level, like other professionals.

Raewyn Alexander is a professional Auckland-based writer and editor of *Magazine*, a yearly compilation of poetry and prose.

Our Front Page Essay is a forum for the presentation of a writer's individual take on poetry and its meanings. The views expressed are always the writer's own, and not necessarily those of the New Zealand Poetry Society. If you'd like to contribute a Front Page Essay, please contact the Newsletter Editor.

☞ From the Committee ☞

Introducing committee member **Laurice Gilbert**: poet, artist, audiologist, wife, mother, grandmother, daughter and sister, garden designer, tarot card reader, Feng Shui practitioner, life model, tutor, counsellor, youth mentor, reviewer, student, runner, swimmer, yoga practiser, rollerblader, owner of multiple pets, member of Mensa, knitter, patchworker, gardener, traveller, compulsive reader, sitcom viewer, Billy Joel and Meat Loaf fanatic, Buffy fan, Hurricanes supporter, singer, family book-keeper, Diet Coke addict, compiler of school histories, performer (*Inner Constellations*, 14th – 16th September 2004, Te Papa's Soundings Theatre), winner (Great Kiwi Poet 2001), NZPS committee member (Anthology Portfolio), NZPS Finance Officer (ret.), NZPS Competition Secretary (soon), Taoist Aquarian Horse (wood) ... occasionally she cooks.

(If all this doesn't convince you people don't go on the NZPS Committee just to fill an empty life, nothing will. *Editor.*)

☞ From the Editor ☞

From what source do organisers of poetry festivals, workshops and other literary events select their chosen 'names' as speakers, tutors and performers? So many times it's the same names over and over again – so what about the rest of our poets? Many as good and as newsworthy never get asked to appear.

Perhaps that's their own choice. After all, the primary purpose of a writer is to write – and not all of us want to be in the public eye. For those of us who do – perhaps as a necessary supplement to a limited income – what are the options for getting known and getting asked? The New Zealand Book Council website lists Writers in Schools and it's worth investigating whether you can be added to that list.

My own advice is to get some practice in first in your own community – talking to writers' groups, schools, or your local Friends of the Library, and to organisations like Probus, Rotary and Altrusa. Find out if it's for you, that you will be comfortable with the speaker and teacher role. Some poets I know have even joined Toastmasters to learn how to present themselves to the best advantage. Then what's to stop you putting your own name forward – or asking for a recommendation? It's at readings and in workshops that most poets sell their own work, after all.

And ask yourself this question: Should the NZPS be creating its own list of poets like 'Writers in School' to go on the website? Or is 'word of mouth' still the way to do it? Let us know.

☞ Acknowledgments ☞

Haibun – a vote of thanks to Cyril Childs

From Lynn Frances of Kapiti: In 2004 I started attending Windrift, the Wellington haiku group. Mid-year Cyril Childs sent us a gift of several books, among them the Red Moon anthology *Pegging the Wind*, which I was delighted to borrow.

Cyril's generous support of his friends and fledgling haikai is greatly appreciated. His contribution to the development of haiku in New Zealand is immense. While I have yet to ascertain whether he actually walks on water, I have personally experienced many of his haiku springing to life off the page. Perhaps I will meet him some windy day.

In numerology the number 33 relates to the Master, Jesus.

Cyril's red moon
the master's teacup circles
page 33

Lynn Frances



Please note: The concrete poem *balloon* in last month's front page essay is by Ernest J. Berry and was first published in *RawNervz*.

☞ Obituary ☞

Farewell to Alan Preston

Wellington lost one of its most significant yet perhaps least visible contributors to the local literary community when Alan Preston, owner of Unity Books, died on 2nd September. Alan didn't just support New Zealand books, he also helped keep writers afloat in a more direct manner, with many prominent members of the writing and publishing world spending time behind the counter of the Wellington shop since it opened its doors in 1967. Alan himself preferred to work behind the scenes, but under his gentle guidance Unity became a place where readers and writers, usually solitary animals, have found a sense of community. He will be missed.

☞ A warm welcome to new members ☞

Greg Bartlett from Wellington
Peter Dane from Russell
Jane England from Bahrain
Jan FitzGerald from Tauranga
Jenna Heller from Diamond Harbour
Michael Hendl from Thames
Helen McKinlay from Golden Bay
Clare Mills from Hamilton
Tim Mulqueen from Lower Hutt
Greg Perniskie from Oamaru
Simon Perris from Wellington

Some thoughts on writing a poem

I am not a professional writer or someone who aims at publication to make a living by writing and publishing. In my opinion, poets are rarely professionals, so that writer's block is not a problem. I have written poems off and on all my life, but began to see myself as a poet only at the age of 77. Until then what there is in me of imagination, empathy and creativity went into learning, human relations and teaching. A teacher must know what he is talking about, what people are like, about other cultures and what sort of world we live in.

To those who have the gift, writing is natural. It's like bearing children. What isn't easy is recognising that this child is stillborn, or this child needs some training. The hardest task for the poet is revision with the reader in mind. Not to strive at 'what the reader wants' or 'what the publisher wants' but to make the poem speak for itself, sing its particular little song, so that readers can hear and understand what it is saying – in words, images, rhythms, harmonies and dissonances – even if it demands to be read more than once before it will fully enter the reader's mind and heart.

I am still learning, still too easily content with a rough sketch which seems to present what was taking shape in me. But some poems don't want to be a sketch; they demand to be a fine drawing, etching or painting. I am learning to listen to my poems to hear more clearly what they intend or demand.

When a poem comes right, lives and breathes, however sad or angry it is, what a joy to hear the voice and see the shapely body of yet another family member ready to face the whanau of humanity.

Peter Dane

☞ Upcoming Events...☞

OTAKI

Poetry Feast with Glenn Colquhoun

7.30 p.m. Saturday 30th October

Rangiatea Church Te Rauparaha Street Otaki

Multiple award-winning poet Glenn Colquhoun will read new and unpublished poems. The MC is actor/writer Martyn Sanderson. Also that evening: local poets reading, a Poetry Quiz (with prizes), audience participation in choral poetry reading, an ancient *Maori moteatea* sung by Cheryl Bryers. Wine and canapes. Signed poetry books on sale. Modest cover charge. Further details available from: Judith Holloway, pukehau@paradise.net.nz or from Karen Petersen Butterworth, karenpetbut@xtra.co.nz.

WELLINGTON

NZPS Wellington Meeting

Poets in the Workplace with

Writers International (NZ) Group

Thursday October 21st 7.30 for 7.45 p.m.
(Please note the earlier starting time.)

&

Open Reading

Turnbull House 11 Bowen Street Wellington

Writers International was launched in October 2002 as a group for writers who have come to live here from overseas, and any New Zealand writers who wish to join them. Members hail from Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Iraq, NZ, Spain, the UK and the USA. Meetings include readings by members and by visiting writers, presentations about influential writers, and plans for new projects. The first WI anthology will be published later this year.

Susan Pearce of Writers International says, "Every time we meet, the passion and fervour is almost tangible. We aim to work together to provide ourselves with creative, technical and moral support, and to make the work of international writers in New Zealand more widely known. It's been exciting to hear work from both new and award-winning published writers, and to see new creative partnerships being formed." (www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz)

Three of the members, Basim Furat, Amelia Nurse and Mark Pirie will be our guest readers. Basim Furat was born in Karbalaa, Iraq, in 1967 and started writing poetry when he was in primary school. In early 1993 he crossed the border and became a refugee in Jordan. Four years later he arrived in New Zealand. The death of his father when he was two years old, the fact his mother was left a young widow, and his compulsory military service for the Iraqi army in the second Gulf War have had a large influence on his poetry.

Furat's poetry has been published all over the world, and has been translated into French, English, Spanish, Italian and German. His first poetry book in Arabic was published in Madrid in 1999 and the second one was published in Amman, Jordan, in 2002. He is a member of the Union of Arab Writers and is the New Zealand co-ordinator for *Joussour*, an Australasian Arabic/English magazine. *Here and There: a Selection* (2004, HeadworX) is the first book of his poems translated into English. In it he explores his life as a refugee and his displacement from his homeland.

Amelia Nurse, a Canadian-born New Zealander, writes poetry and short fiction. In the 40 hours of spare time she has each week she works for Radio New Zealand. She has been published in *Trinity Review* (Canada), *Valley Micropress*, *Takahe*, *JAAM*, *Papertigers* and *Muse Apprentice Guild*. She was guest poetry editor for *JAAM 20*.

Mark Pirie of Wellington is the Managing Editor for HeadworX, a small press publisher of poetry/fiction. His poems have been published in India, New Zealand, Australia, Croatia, the US and the UK. In 1998 University of Otago Press published his anthology of 'Generation X' writing, *The NeXt Wave*. He is an editor of *JAAM* (New Zealand), the contributing New Zealand editor for *papertiger*, and serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of *Antipodes* (USA) and the committee of the Wellington International Poetry Festival (NZ).

Salt Publishing, Cambridge, England, has recently published Pirie's new and selected poems, *Gallery: A Selection*. In 2004 Mark co-edited with Michael O' Leary the anthology *Greatest Hits*, an anthology of some of the best and most innovative NZ poetry and prose of the last 20 years.

Future projects include a Spoken Word CD, a verse novella *Tom*, a collection of his writings about music/musicians *Adoration*, and the editing of New Zealand's first Science Fiction Poetry anthology with Tim Jones.

Writers on Fridays

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS

Te Putahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

In association with the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, the New Zealand Book Council, and City Gallery Wellington, the IIML presents a series of lunchtime events featuring writers from Wellington and beyond. Most sessions are open to the public and free of charge, and no booking or RSVP is required, but venues may vary. Check online at:

modernlettersnews@vuw.ac.nz.

☞ Congratulations ☞

A Bell Gully winner

Congratulations to **Poppy Haynes** of Chilton St. James school in Lower Hutt, whose poem *Had I an intelligent dolphin ...* was selected by judge Glenn Colquhoun as the winner of the Bell Gully National Schools Poetry Award.

Poppy, who says she has written poetry ever since she could write, was presented with her prize by Margaret Mahy at a function hosted by Bell Gully and fittingly held at the top of the tallest building in Wellington. A self-described 'English nerd', Poppy says she hopes to follow the example of Glenn Colquhoun and combine poetry with another profession, as a way of life rather than a career: "It just seems to happen naturally alongside other things."

Poppy received a cash prize of \$500, a year's membership of the New Zealand Book Council and subscriptions to *Landfall* and *Sport*. Her school received a \$500 book grant for their library.

You can read the winning poem and others online at www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/schoolspoetryaward/04_winners.htm.



Three cheers for Picton poet

Congratulations to **Ernest J. Berry** on getting First Prize in the Tallahassee Writers Association 17th Anniversary Penumbra 2004 Poetry & Haiku Contest, for the following haiku:

neglected garden
the girl next door's
wild clothesline

He was also a finalist with five other haiku. The judge was Garry Gay, one of the founders of Haiku Poets of Northern California, and president of the Haiku Society of America.

Another haiku by Berry will be November's poem in the UK Snapshot Press Haiku Calendar next year.

first snow
I turn off the radio
to listen

(http://www.snapshotpress.co.uk/haiku_competition_results.htm#calendar_comp.)

Ernie also featured recently on the Shreve Memorial Library's Electronic Poetry Network with his poem running all day long on an electronic message board at the Main Library in Shreveport, Louisiana. Here's one Kiwi poet who knows how to spread himself around.

Other News

From the Sunday Star-Times 19th September 2004

Mustard with your couplet, sir?

Who would want to be Poet Laureate of the United States? Not Joseph Epstein, who writes in *Poetry Magazine* that the position is 'a comical insult to the serious enterprise of poetry'. In Britain, where the position has a longer history, it is usually held by a poet of 'solemn and high-toned mediocrity' – Andrew Motion, the current office-holder, is perfect for the job. Recent US laureates are chosen for their well-meaning, bland, political correctness. They'll never rock any boats. Additionally, laureates feel it a duty to widen the readership of poetry, which Epstein views as a mistake: "Poetry is caviar, an acquired taste, and not for most people, not even for some highly intelligent people." You can't sell it like hot dogs." Alas, many of the poets laureate have seen their job as promotional – 'slapping on mustard while moving the dogs along.'

(from *Arts & Letters Daily*)

Iain Sharp in *Bibliophile* praises the American Ted Kooser's poem *Selecting a Reader*, for its self-deprecating wit, and it's certainly worth reading. Check it out at:

<http://www.poemhunter.com/p/m/poem.asp?poet=10125&poem=97062>

Kooser has just been named as Louise Gluck's successor as Poet Laureate USA – a two year tenure. Sharp also shares with his readers a reason why Robbie Burns has never made it big in Japan. He quotes Derrick McClure of Aberdeen University who has made a detailed study of the accuracy of Japanese translations of Burns – and found them wanting.

From the famous ode *To a Haggis*, he selects the opening lines: 'Fair fa' your honest sonesie face,/ Great chieftain o' the pudding race', transcribed as 'Good luck to your honest friendly face/ Great king of the sausages'.

Report from the *Christian Science Monitor*

Annia Ciezadlo reports on poetry in Iraq, where, according to proverb, 'beside every palm tree you will find a poet' – and this in a country with 38 million palm trees and a population of 25 million people ...

In Iraq, she says, poetry is the national therapy, a cure of ills in the body politic. Even Saddam Hussein has got the bug as he sits in prison writing poetry ('of more vigour than quality', according to report.) Poetry was often used to praise him when he was in power ... and was also one of the few safe ways to criticise his government.

Nowadays, Iraqi poets have a new injustice to protest - the US military presence; reciting their works in public to a cheering male audience who wave daggers and Kalashnikovs in the air.

The poems are generally not written down, but recorded on CD and sold in the markets. The preferred form is *darmee*, traditional oral poetry with 'a complex and untranslatable rhyme scheme and a rollicking irresistible rhythm', composed in slang rather than classical Arabic.

In Iraq, poetry and politics have always gone together. It was used to jumpstart the rebellion against the British in 1917, and it is being used to ferment a revolt against America now.

For the full story go to:

<http://www.scmonitor.com/2004/0817/p01s03-woiq.html?s=hns>.

Publications

Wicked Alice & Dancing Girl

In November *Dancing Girl* (USA) is bringing out a chapbook from Adrienne Marcus, whose poetry and prose will both feature prominently in *Bravado 3* from the Bay of Plenty. *The Resurrection of Trotsky* includes 20 new poems and is the first title to come from this new American publisher. The editor is Kristy Bowen whose magazine *Wicked Alice* does such a fine job with poetry online, and features mainly women poets with strong, individual viewpoints and voices. Bowen's e-mail address is Wickedalicepoetry@lycos.com.

Showcase for North Shore writers

The anthology *Golden Weather - North Shore Writers Past & Present* is a collection of prose and poetry written by writers who have lived on the North Shore of Auckland. Edited by Graeme Lay and Jack Ross, it is published by Cape Catley.

Contributors include Barbara Anderson, A.R.D. Fairburn, Allen Curnow, Maurice Duggan, Janet Frame, Sam Hunt, Michele Leggott, Kevin Ireland, Robin Hyde, Frank Sargeson, Michael King and Shonagh Koea.

Michael King wrote: 'There are more writers and poets to the hectare on the North Shore - and always have been - than in any other part of New Zealand'.

The book was launched by the Mayor of North Shore City, George Wood, on 27th September at the Takapuna Library.

Haiku Festival Aotearoa

The Haiku Festival Aotearoa workshop will take place from Friday March 4th - Sunday March 6th at Stella Maris, Seatoun, Wellington. Full details & a booking form in next month's Newsletter, but NZPS members are advised to register interest as soon as possible. Contact either Nola Borrell, (nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz) ph (04) 586 7287 or Karen Butterworth (karenpetbut@xtra.co.nz) ph (06) 364 5810 or write to 27-29 Kirk Street Otaki.

Here and There

by Basim Furat

Here and There is Basim Furat's third book of poems but the first in English, translated from the Arabic by Muhiddein Assaf, Abbas El Sheikh, Abdul Monem Nasser and Yahya Haider and edited by Mark Pirie.

Those who have heard Furat at poetry venues around Wellington will remember him delivering his poems in Arabic, his voice as plangent as the cadences of the muezzin calling from the minarets of his native Iraq.

His background is one of tragedy – of war, military service and the early death of his father – experience encapsulated in *Coming To Be*:

My father:
An ancient sadness;
My mother:
A book of sadness.
When my father opened the book,
I came to be.

In the title poem *Here and There*, he contrasts the rough-hewn features of 'Aotearoa/My sweet refuge' with 'the glamour of the Tigris'. Unlike his homeland 'Your cities are replete with women and flowers' but 'Your shores are becoming weary/ From the wailing of waves' and 'The hills that never take/ Off their robes of green/ Drive my longing for desert sands...'

Furat, also a photographer, has a penetrating eye for detail and nature. His new landscapes are interleaved with dreams of the old:

In cities exhausted by the sea
I dump my dreams
I have souvenirs from wars
And from cities: wounds
I have the tears of reeds,
The sighs of date palms,
The revelation of oranges
The blood of myrtle...

In his long poems *Infinitely South* and *I Paint Baghdad*, loss and longing are made lyrical – jasmine petals, palms and minarets are glimpsed through the shards of war.

The cadences we remember are for the most part preserved in translation. Had he been writing in English, I wonder whether the poet would have used such words as 'whinnying' so often. Did he mean 'complaining' or 'lamenting'? The translators render some surprising juxtapositions, but the poetry is of experience between hemispheres, between war and peace, home and exile, dream and waking. It has something of the labyrinthine quality of dream states.

The title poems of his two previous collections in Arabic, *The Vehemence of Cooing* and *The Autumn of Minarets*, are included in sections II and III along with some love poems.

'Beneath my tongue/ two rivers are rumbling', writes Basim Furat, summing up for me the spirit of his work. *Here and There* is the first book of Arabic poetry to be translated into English in New Zealand. Perhaps the secret of this considerable contribution is also contained in the poet's own words, "I exchange the splinters of bombs with roses and poems".

(2004) FURAT N. *Here and There*.
Wellington, HeadworX.

Review by Robin Fry

**summer, Hauraki Plains &
after the buddhist comes to call**

by Owen Bullock

summer, Hauraki Plains, the more sustained single work of these two intriguing new chapbooks by Owen Bullock, is a seven-page poem interspersed with brushwork illustrations by Australian poet/artist Janice Bostok.

The nearly austere visual element, sometimes only bordering on realism, captures the mood of the poem well. Bullock's strategy here combines free verse passages with single-line images that resemble a type of solo renga. The observations are sharp and accurate: 'piles of stumps stacked for burning ...' 'brick paths made to be overgrown', recalling the familiar direct but suggestive mode of Bullock's haiku.

The opening and developed refrain of the poem – 'this is New Zealand' – operates in a context more speculative than prescriptive. The poet's voice is at its best accumulating the evidence, dwelling affectionately on its 'peeling-paint/ hearty/ smudged/ purring/ full of prickles/ cheeping and chattering' physical reality. This is a New Zealand with a poster, still in summer, of 'Justin Marshall/ diving across the line/ (faster than a cloud?)' I certainly felt at home in it.

Each of the fourteen shorter poems in *after the buddhist comes to call* faces a computer-generated abstract by eRiQ, a Tauranga graphic designer. Just as dryness and simplicity suited the other book, the complexity of sounds and ideas here is well-matched in visual form.

The poems are varied in their wit and range of references, from anecdotal in *Inheritance* to pop-cultural in *light*. I enjoyed being in the company of a poet flexing his muscles, extending the scope of his voice, yet one favourite was *on the wind*, a poem whose best features are generated by the physicality of grit and dust.

untitled music, towards the end of this more diverse selection, is a departure towards confident satirical humour and ideas about sound. Both these elegantly presented titles will, deservedly, enhance Owen Bullock's reputation as a poet worth listening to.

(2004) BULLOCK, O. *summer, Hauraki Plains*.
Tauranga, Hen Enterprises. \$10.
(2004) BULLOCK, O. *after the buddhist comes to call*.
\$12.50
available CWO from Hen Enterprises
PO Box 13-533 Grey Street Tauranga.

Review by Tony Beyer

∞ Websites ∞

The Big Idea – what's it all about?

Welcome to The Big Idea, an online community of New Zealand's creative industries. Committed to supporting the expansion of work and income for New Zealand's creative practitioners, the site provides access to networks, industry news, current job opportunities, professional development, forums, international news and much more.

The health of the Creative Industries is vital to the cultural and economic well being of Aotearoa, New Zealand. The Big Idea is committed to the innovation of virtual community as a way of providing alternative networking and information sharing across all the creative sectors.

The Big Idea was launched by the Arts Work Project in 2002, a partnership established by Creative New Zealand in 1999 with Auckland City, Auckland New Ventures, Artists Alliance and Work and Income - Auckland Central.



Its aim has been to support the expansion of work and income opportunities for artists and other creative people working in the arts /creative industries sector.

In 2003, The Big Idea Charitable Trust was formed to manage the ongoing development of The Big Idea website and to initiate new projects in line with the purpose of the Arts Work Project.

Go to <http://www.thebigidea.co.nz> to sign on.

A folio feast online

Leonardo's notebooks with sketches by the great genius and notes in mirror writing, the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, a priceless treasure of Northumbrian art, the *Luttrell Psalter*, with its fascinating glimpses of medieval life ...

Discover these and much more with the British Library's award-winning system, Turning the Pages. First you'll need to download Macromedia Shockwave version 8.5 (free of charge), if you haven't already got it. Then you can enjoy the *Sforza Hours*, a Renaissance masterpiece by Birago and Horenbout, or the *Golden Haggadah*, a lavishly illustrated 14th century Hebrew manuscript.

Or perhaps you'd like to sample the *Sherborne Missal*, a magnificent 15th century service book, or *Anatomy* by Vesalius, a landmark medical work of the 16th century, dip into *Blackwell's Herbal*, George III's personal copy of a beautiful botanical text, or even enjoy the Sultan Baybar's *Qur'an*, a masterpiece of Arabic calligraphy, or the *Diamond Sutra*, a Chinese Buddhist scroll printed in 868 and the world's oldest, dated, printed book.

All these delights await you, and the British Library promises to add more. They're also working on producing alternative, more accessible versions of each of the Turning the Pages volumes, and promise they'll be available for you online very soon. Go now to <http://www.bl.uk/collections/treasures/digitisation6.html>. Nourish soul, mind and heart with this lavish feast of folios outspread before you.

☞ Out & About ☜

DUNEDIN

Upfront - Spotighting Women Poets

August's Upfront was well attended, with a good variety of work represented at open mike. Jenny Powell-Chalmers and Kaitrin McMullan performed entertaining pieces with gusto. Other readers were Carolyn McCurdie, Lee Smith, Ann Jacobson, Anna Kelly, Debbie Williams, Katie Conklin, Kaye McKenzie-Cook, and Sienna Smale-Jackson.

Our first featured poet was **Lydia O'Dwyer** (aka Lydia Edwards), a psychotherapist with a diverse background evident in the thematic range of her poetry. Her prose piece *Order of Service, Concerning Janet Frame* (published *Takaha* 51) was written during Janet Frame's memorial service and examines the compulsion to write and the transforming impulse of the imagination:

Writing as salvation. It's a war zone out there. A person can drown in other people's words. There's how many words floating around in the universe?

Little sound waves, waving since forever, with other people's names attached to them. 'I wrote that,' they say. I. I.

Diane Brown, our second featured poet, read excerpts from her latest book of poetry *Learning to Lie Together* (Godwit 2004). With characteristic humour and frankness, these poems chart the journey between past and present lives, as the poet moves from Auckland to Dunedin. The physical distance between the two cities, and the unfamiliar southern landscape, become poignant metaphors for grief, loss, discomfort, change and adaptation:

Sutherland Street, early morning

you know how things happen
one day you're living
in Auckland with your kids

the next, you wake up in Dunedin
in the house you've just bought
with your lover, *what the hell*

have I done, you ask yourself
like every bride and groom
before the honeymoon's over

a week later, you wake early
your lover is snoring
so you go into the front room

where boxes of books cover
the floor, and from the bay
window, you discover the city

on the horizon, Mt Cargill
vaguely reminiscent of Rangitoto
below it to the right

the still harbour
port and starboard lights
marking a channel to go by

and you know, in time
you might be able to say
you live here

Report by Sue Wootton

HAMILTON

Hamilton Poetry Group met for the first time since completing a poetry writing workshop with Jenny Argante in Hamilton recently. The group will finalise a name at the next workshop – there has been a suggestion for the 'Alive Poets Society' - a take-off from Robin Williams' movie *Dead Poets Society*. This name suggests vibrancy and we want this for the group!

We discussed how to manage the group, venue, etc., and decided to share the responsibility of food and 'operations' so that it did not become one person's responsibility - or burden. Anna Drever will send reminders and 'garnish' the table (with food) for the next meeting on Friday October 15th 7 –9 p.m. at the Satellite Campus, Hamilton University, the theme for which will be Hallowe'en.

We all spent forty minutes on writing - no talking - then shared our work for critiquing. We're trying to be open, honest, and caring. We also welcomed Natalie Alexandra along from the previous Hamilton 'Wordweavers' poetry group. For more information, contact Roslyn (ph 07 825 2221).

Report by Roslyn Cunnington

NELSON

Nelson Poets

The September meeting was definitely one of quality as opposed to quantity with a small group of 20 people. Michael Lee, recently returned from Australia shared some of his experiences with us. Betty Don, Carol Ercolano, and Margaret Fearn shared their poems, all written on the theme of *Cold Feet*. Betty and Carol then sang Betty's *Cold Feet Blues*.



Colin Gunn shared poems by some of his favourite Irish writers as well as a ditty about his mischievous fingers. We were held spellbound by Jessica Le Bas' poignant poems. Gaelyne Pound's poems reflected on how our perceptions as children and as adults collide. Kathleen Graham shared her thoughts on what it is to be a New Zealander, and it was great to have Rosemary Purse reading again. Mark Raffils concluded the evening with his usual dry wit.

Live Poets meet at Kafeine, New Street, at 7.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month - everyone is welcome.

Quotation of the Month

Poetry need not rhyme – if it has reason.

Leigh Vickridge

PICTON

Picton Poets

Yours truly was in the gun, with *Life Lines*, being a collection of poems, some my own but mostly not, sacred and profane, musical and other, all personally significant in some way or other from my three-score and fourteen years.

The reading induced lots of spontaneous participation by the audience with similar memories. On our next meeting day, in an extension-after-lunch, we are to experiment with a private version of a Readers' Theatre in which anything entertaining or edifying that could be read or performed around the group might find itself on the menu.

Any readers who would like to come along could get details from me on ACES2@xtra.co.nz

Report by Sandy Arcus

WELLINGTON

Wellington Windrift

For our September meeting, the first given topic was 'Spring'. Kate Docherty brought us white blossom under dark skies, while unseasonal storms reduced Elena Lindsay's pear blossom to speckles on the ground and Kerry Popplewell's track to a stream. Blackbirds were nesting, willows budding, daffodils and violets braved changeable climes.

The second topic 'Elevator' produced lingering odours both sweet and unsavoury among more uplifting images. Some of us were diverted onto escalators, others rushed for the stairs and a jockey was caught dismounting from his elevator shoes.

The haiku bowl provided colourful surprises ...

jet boat
blasting through
a rainbow

Jeanette Stace

flash of blue –
kingfisher grabs a worm
from a blackbird

Karen Peterson Butterworth

We discussed pruning trees and the judicious pruning of haiku, reassigning personifications and other literary devices more

appropriately to other poetic genres. Ernest Berry and Victoria Haughey intrigued us from afar with curlews, confessional and shapely cypress. Annette de Jong offered rich musical imagery, and an experienced birder reported her experiences of life's unpredictability:

binoculars
I look at gulls
and hear mapgies

Nola Borrell

In a renga exercise facilitated by Karen Peterson Butterworth we progressed tangentially from an elevator stalled between floors to arrive at the cat's bowl, having touched on terns, reflections, white shorts and restructuring en route. We are getting the idea of ricocheting off an image instead of telling a narrative.

Report by Lynn Frances

NZPS Wellington Report of September Meeting

Poets in the Workplace: Dinah Hawken & Rachel Bush

A delight to hear Dinah Hawken of Wellington and Rachel Bush of Nelson, pilot poets in the Poets in the Workplace Scheme. Gillian Cameron outlined this service which she initiated and facilitated with NZPS backing, Creative NZ and Wellington City Council funding, and in liaison with Vivienne Plumb and Bill Manhire.

Dinah's placement is at the Wellington Botanic Gardens, Rachel's at the Midwifery Section of Wellington Public Hospital. The resident poet works the equivalent of 24 days over a period of two or three months with the host organisation on a fee for service basis. The idea came from UK's Poetry Places scheme, which put poets in a great variety of locations such as zoos, law firms, Marks & Spencers, and even fish and chip shops. (Fleur Adcock had a placement at Kensington Gardens.)

Dinah said that she was both excited and daunted by the appointment. She has devised a programme linking the Gardens with her work at IIML where she leads a course called 'Writing the Landscape'. Her students are writing a series of riddles, 'Where am I?' as a teaching resource.

Dinah read from *The Harbour Poems*, written in the Gardens (*Oh, There You Are Tui!*) Here are two verses from that sequence:

The harbour is hallucinating. It is rising
above itself, halfway up the great
blue hills. Every leaf of the kohuhu
is shining. Cicadas, this must be the day
of all days, the one around which
all the others are bound to gather ...

Who is she? She is trimming the smallest
fingernails, she is threading honeysuckle
through trellis. She is the context, the swell,
the breathable air. She is singing,
she is swinging the girl on the swing
in the park. She is fluent and steady and unpaid

We have come to the place in the text - a clearing –
where a man and a woman have intentionally met.
They have come together (remember) under a totara tree:
will they
take this tree to be the tree of life, to have and to hold
from this day forward, in fall and in flower
and in seed and in root and in stem and in branch
and in leaf?



Shortly before Dinah took up this position, her mother died. Her poem *Hope* aligns grief with the nature of trees and 'their knowledge of green'. Dinah cherishes the grand old trees in the gardens - the big gum tree near the playground, the hinau near the tree-house, and especially the oak on the ground in Glenmore Street. Her new poem, *Helping hands - Wellington Botanic Gardens, 2004* is about her mother and old trees.

A second new poem, *Leaving Footprints - Bolton St. Cemetery, July, 2004* mourns the recent desecration: 'A tui comes into the garden and does not sing'. Also well-received were Dinah's haiku-like poems accompanying photos taken by Otari gardener Timothy O'Leary.

Rachel, who is at the beginning of her placement, says she goes around with notebook and eyes open in the neonatal intensive care unit. She made a memorable beginning by falling ill on her very first day, and landing in A & E.

Rachel's focus is 'Nurses and their Direction with Patients'. She is working with nurses to use poetry with patients, and has a course with new graduates in November. She read mainly from her second collection *The Unfortunate Singer* (Victoria UP, 2002), with one or two poems from *The Hungry Woman* (Victoria UP 1997).

What a variety of subjects! Rachel's first poem *The Strong Mothers* is a delightful reminder of the capable and unsung women of her youth, who 'understood about/ greens and two classes of protein', tested jam in a saucer, and sang in the church choir. 'Mothers were there like the sun,' said Rachel.

In *Songs of Scotland* Rachel contrasted sung lines with a modern response 'O can you sew cushions? / I surely can but mostly/ buy such things, the Warehouse/ for instance, even if it's so horrible inside'.

Waves links the apparent sound of old BBC broadcasts with talking to her daughter in a London hospital. Her bent towards the unexpected juxtaposition of subjects is highlighted in *Tendrils*: octopuses mating, rubbing muttonbird grease into boots, and mid-winter. *Possibilities* considers the awkward nature of hospital visiting, *Airport* praises the merits of reading poetry while waiting. *Bird and Mud Flats and Yellow Trees* tells of a kotuku near a motor racing track.

Eggs (from *The Unfortunate Singer*) holds the simplicity of William Carlos Williams' famed poem, and is for a friend who supplied Rachel with the 'most free-range eggs in the whole of New Zealand':

Thank you for the two small
pale, smooth (as young skin
or the surface of a doll's face)
eggs from your only
living bantam.

Thank you too for the three striped
white and grey feathers you stuck
in the carton where the eggs
sat side by side.

Later I held their quiet coolness
the curve of these eggs,
one in each hand.

Look Here, Rachel's concluding poem, illustrates her zest for life with its immediacy and action.

Ever wondered how Dinah gets that wonderful stillness into her poems? In reply to a question from the floor, she said that she practises t'ai chi, and also walks before writing. That could be the clue. Rachel, for her part, is appreciative of a disciplined framework to facilitate her own writing. Our alert attention and warm applause showed our pleasure with these two accomplished writers - and the Scheme.

The Open Reading included new readers Simon Perris and Linda Bremford. Dilys Rees read a memorial poem to her brother who died in June. Basim Furat read in Arabic from his new book *Here and There* (2004, HeadworX) and Mark Pirie translated. This is Basim's first book to be translated into English.

Report by Nola Borrell

NZPS Wellington Report from August Meeting*

Poetry from Whitireia

(* This couldn't be published in last month's Newsletter for reasons of space. Editor.)

As always it was a pleasure to welcome the Whitireia Creative Writing Course students, this year tutored by Lyn Davidson.

First up was Susannah, who entertained us with *It's Hindi for Tiger*, an exuberant recollection of a 2-year-old's joy in activity and the excitement of the word 'bugger'. Susannah's poems contained generous insights into a child's thought processes, and her pantoum about a Kiwi Christmas in Canada was particularly evocative.

Next, Tash presented an eclectic selection covering nature images, ugly ducklings, nursing experiences and love. In *Cinderella*, 'a morepork moreporked in the native night', and in *Fat* a fussy and demanding hospital patient declared, "I'd rather die than let you make me fat", as she wasted away.

Desiree followed with *Adios*, a poignant recollection and description of her Venezuelan homeland. I was moved by her line: 'my brother and I will have to die somewhere else'. This was followed by *Under the Southern Stars* in which Desiree appreciated the New Zealand way of life by listing many qualities absent in her adopted country.

Other poems explored further sad memories, love and language. In *Watermarked* she informed us: 'now that I live in English, I get goose bumps. When I lived in Spanish, I had hen's skin'. I particularly liked *Lingua Franca*, a love poem in eight languages. When I asked Desiree for a copy to print in this report, she said she'd already submitted it to *Poetry NZ*. Watch out for it.

Colleen, another relatively new immigrant, shared a lyrical collection that included *Sonnet for Precious Gems*. In this poem she effectually used a metaphor of children as jewels of many kinds and hues, all of value. In *Dance* she celebrated music anthropomorphised as a shaman, evoking the magical 'language of the tango'.

Next Lynn read two thematically related poems. *The Hills of Home*, based on childhood memory, illustrated the alienation brought on by frequent changes of residence all over the country. In *From There* a similar concept, the diaspora of family, showed the benefits of accepting where we are at any given time, and the comfort of relating to present surroundings. The two poems, despite surface differences of unhappy and happy recollections, complemented each other perfectly.

Finally, Nazarene in a spirited reading of *What's in a Poem?* showed great promise as a performance poet. There was a distinctive rap influence in her reading, as she journeyed to self-awareness through poetry.

She told us Kabir, an Indian mystic from the 15th or 16th century, has inspired her. His philosophical view of love led her to use Maori myth as a basis for her poetry, and she gave us permission to print *Moana and Tangaroa* (below).

Nazarene finished with *Kia Ora For That*, an amusing and thought-provoking glimpse at the darkness hidden behind the seemingly open and funny Maori mode of speaking.

Moana and Tangaroa

Ocean vast
Deep blue green
Just a façade
Of a fury unseen

All that she holds
And all that she knows
Storm in her rage
When her psyche is engaged

Wave has arisen
For a moment
He is tops
Before he'll merge
In her ocean
As a drop

Moana is the ocean
She's the woman
Of the sea
Tangaroa is her lover
He's her wave
Come to me

Cherie amour
Agape mou
Taku manawa
Aroha ahau

Tangaroa he adores
All that Moana
Has to give
And he knows
She is all
That he needs
Come and live

In my heart
Be my heart
In my ocean
Of bliss abyss

Live with me
Be with me
We will move
Endlessly

That's one myth
From the ocean
Of their love
Let it be
Tangaroa and Moana
Is a poem of the sea



Nazarene Rihari

Many thanks to the six poets for sharing their work, and introducing us to some developing poetic voices.

Report by Laurice Gilbert

Other News

Griffin deadline fast approaching

A quick reminder that the deadline for the C\$80,000 Griffin Poetry Prize is approaching. Books must be submitted postmarked no later than **December 31st 2004** for books published between January 1st and December 31st 2004. Please remember to complete all necessary customs/duties paperwork when shipping your entries to ensure delays are avoided.

The Griffin Trust is also pleased to promote poetry publishers' electronic newsletters and e-mail mailing lists on its web site. If you are a publisher of poetry and you would like us to add information about your electronic newsletter, bulletin or mailing list to this section, please contact info@griffinpoetryprize.com with the subscription instructions.

If you have any questions regarding the rules, or would like to download an entry form, please visit our Web site, at www.griffinpoetryprize.com.

Competitions

San Francisco International Competition Haiku, Senryu, Tanka and Rengay

Sponsor: Haiku Poets of Northern California.

Deadline:

Haiku, Senryu, and Tanka In hand, October 31st
Rengay In hand, November 30th

All entries must be original, unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere. There is no limit to the number of submissions. A first prize of \$US100 will be awarded in each of the four categories. Second and third prizes of \$US50 and \$US25 will be awarded for Haiku only. Contest results will be announced at the first HPNC meeting in January.

All rights revert to authors after the contest results are announced. Winning poems will be published in the Spring/Summer issue of *Mariposa*, the membership journal of the Haiku Poets of Northern California. This contest is open to all except the HPNC President and, for their respective categories, the contest co-ordinators and the judges (who will remain anonymous until after the competition.)

Haiku, Senryu & Tanka Submission Guidelines.

Type or print each entry on two 3 x 5 cards. In the upper left corner of each card identify its category as Haiku, Senryu, or Tanka. On the back of one card only, print your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (optional).

The entry fee is \$US1 per poem. Send haiku, senryu and tanka submissions, along with entry fee, to HPNC, c/o David Grayson, 9874 Golf Links Road, Oakland, CA 94605.

Rengay Submission Guidelines.

All rengay must be titled. For two people (Poet A and Poet B) follow this linked format: 3 lines/Poet A, 2 lines/Poet B, 3/A, 3/B, 2/A, 3/B. For three poets (A, B, and C) the format is: 3 lines/A, 2 lines/B, 3 lines/C, 2/A, 3/B, 2/C. Type or print each rengay on three letter-size sheets.

Include full authorship information, stanza by stanza, as well as all poets' names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses (optional) on one copy only. On the other two copies, mark stanzas with letters only (poet A, poet B, poet C) to indicate the sequence of authorship. The entry fee is \$5 per rengay. Send rengay submissions, along with entry fee, to HPNC, c/o Fay Aoyagi, 930 Pine Street, #105, San Francisco CA 94108.

**Logan Writers Guild
2004 Short Story & Poetry Competition**

Conditions of Entry

Entry must be a short story (with all of the elements defined) to a maximum of 2000 words, or a poem to a maximum of 40 lines. The competition is open now for submissions, and the **closing date is 31st December 2004**. Please note that faxed, e-mailed, hand-written, unsigned, unreadable or late entries will be considered ineligible. All entries must be written in English, but may be on any subject and in any genre. Type should be 12 point Times New Roman or Arial. Lines 1.5 or double spaced on A4 or 8 ½ x 11inch white paper with 3.8 cm (1½ inch) margins on both sides and 2.54cm (1 inch) margins top and bottom. Do not use legal size. All pages must be numbered with the story title on every page. In the case of short stories, do not staple manuscript pages together.

Stories and poems should be original and the exclusive work of the author. Copyright remains with the author. All entries must not have been previously published in any print or digital media whether for pay or not or be currently entered in any other competition.

Entry fee is AUD\$5 per entry with a maximum of 5 entries per person. All entries must be anonymous & accompanied by a separate, completed and signed entry form for each entry. No responsibility can be accepted for lost or damaged entries, although every care will be taken. **Manuscripts will not be returned**, so entrants should keep copies of their work.

Winners agree to have their works read on Radio 101FM – Logan and be published in an anthology with a CD of all the major prize holders' work narrated. Please note the anthology will be available for sale worldwide.

Judging. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Winners will be announced on April 1st 2005. Your short story or poem will be used by Logan Writers Guild Inc as part of training workshops to further develop the skills of LWG members.

Logan Writers Guild Inc is a non-profit organisation. The money raised through this competition will be used for future biennial competitions, biennial writers' festivals, training and development of Logan writers.

A **general critique** can be done on one short story or poem for an additional fee of **AUD\$15**. There will be only one general critique done per entrant, so if you submit multiple entries, please indicate on the entry form which short story or poem you want critiqued. The critique will be done after the announcement of winners and before June 30th 2005.

Prizes:

Short Story

First Prize \$1000, Second Prize \$500 \$100 & Third Prize \$250 \$50

Poetry

First Prize \$500, Second Prize \$250 \$50 & Third Prize \$125 \$25

Entry forms can be downloaded from the website at www.loganwriters.net, or from Logan Writers Guild Inc, PO Box 391, Woodridge, Queens 4114 (please send SSAE), or e-mail us at competition@loganwriters.net.

☞...Poetry Advisory Service...☞

Set up to provide writers of poetry with a written critique of a sample of their work, PAS offers focused and constructive feedback from an individual member of an experienced and published panel of poets selected for their proven teaching skills.

For further information, contact:

Poetry Advisory Service NZPS
PO Box 5283
Lambton Quay Wellington.
info@poetrysociety.org.nz

☞ Regular Gatherings ☞

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



AUCKLAND

Poetry Live meets at the Grand Central, 126 Ponsonby Road on Tuesday nights from 8 p.m. Contact: Judith McNeil (ph 09 360 2510), co-ordinator of Poetry Live & four-by-two publishing.

The Glad Poets of Henderson meet at the Waitakere Community Resource Centre Ratanui Street Henderson on the last Sunday of each month at 2 p.m. All welcome. Contact Barry (ph 09 832 4605).

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

BALCLUTHA

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

CHRISTCHURCH

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

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

A haiku group, **The Small White Teapot**, meets upstairs at the Mainstreet Café Colombo Street at 7.30 p.m. monthly, 3rd Tuesday. Contact Barbara Strang: ph 03 376 4486

CROMWELL

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

DUNEDIN

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

DUNEDIN (*continued*)

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

GOLDEN BAY

Joe Bell from Milnthorpe is the Convenor of **The Golden Bay Live Poets Society**. This Society has a monthly Performance Night at the famous Mussel Inn Bush Café at Onekaka.

(For dates go to www.musselinn.co.nz.) Visiting poets are most welcome. For news of meetings contact Joe (ph 03 524 8146, fax 03 524 8047; or e-mail gbaybell@xtra.co.nz).

HAMILTON

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

HAWKE'S BAY

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

KAPITI

Mahara Poetry Group meets at Mahara Gallery, Mahara Place, Waikanae, at 7.30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of every month.

LOWER HUTT

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

NELSON

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

OPOTIKI

Opotiki Writers meet at 10 a.m. on the last Wednesday of the month at the Opotiki Hotel, for chat, support and motivation, all loosely based on our writing experiences. Contact Ann Funnell (ph 07 315 6664 or e-mail timann@paradise.net.nz)

PICTON

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

PORIRUA

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

ROTORUA

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

TAURANGA

Bravado @ Browsers. Poetry live at Browsers Bookshop, 26 Wharf Street every 2nd Sunday at 1 p.m. Featured poets and open mike. **Poets' Parlour** is a workshop meeting monthly for 3rd Sunday 12.30 p.m. in the Robert Harris Café, State Insurance Arcade, off Grey Street. Bring copies of work in progress for constructive feedback. Contact Jenny Argante (ph 07 576 3040, e-mail: jenny.argante@xtra.co.nz).

TIMARU

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

WANAKA

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

WELLINGTON

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

Bluenote 191-195 cnr Cuba Street & Vivian Street, **Poetry Studio** every Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 p.m. Free admission. ph 04 801 5007. Also at **Bluenote** performance poetry most Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. Contact Blaise Orsman (mob 025 616 04 53) or Blue Note (ph 04 801 5007) after 4 p.m. to confirm.

Cafe Poetry to Go at The Rock Café 4 Glover Street, off Ngauranga Gorge (up from LV Martin). If poetry is new to you this is the place find friends, learn to read aloud and exchange tips and books. Last Thursday of the month, supper provided, gold coin donation appreciated.

Contact Stephen and Rosa Douglas (ph 04 569 9904, or e-mail DouglasSR@xtra.co.nz or phone 04 5699904).

Poesis: Poetry and Religion Forum

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

Open Readings, Newton. Bar Edward 167 Riddiford Street, Newtown Every Sunday at 7 p.m. all ages welcome with an emphasis on young writers For more information, phone Amelia 021 0401 932 (fearieamelia@yahoo.com.)

WEST COAST: HOKITIKA

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

WHAKATANE

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

WHANGAREI

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

We're interested in what you're doing & who you're doing it with - poetically speaking. Brief reports of activities and special occasions are welcome in the Newsletter.



The stars, Natasha

Tim Jones

I belong to Aotearapa, an 'amateur press association'. The members write a contribution every few months and send enough copies to the APA's administrator so that one copy of each submitted contribution can be sent to every member in the two-monthly mailings. Invented in the pre-Internet days, an APA is like the offline version of a blog.

In your contribution, you can write what you like. In May 1992, I wrote:

"I'm still working at the Distance Teaching Unit of University Extension, making raffia baskets for our brave lads at the Front, who carry them as they go 'over the top' and into action against the enemy, the Merovingian Knights. How well I remember, Natalya, the snow, and the ice, and the breath of our troops rising like the smoke of battle into the frosty air. The sound of their boots as they marched down that iron road still echoes in my ears. Prince Alexei, the noble Kavalero, that sly old devil Koroviev—all of them vanished like starlight in the shadows. And I remember you beside me, Natalya, and think of those times, and wonder whether you still remember me, there in that great palace of yours, with your footmen and your fine silks."

I broke off for a time, then finished:

"Well, it is warm in the computer room tonight, Natalya, and outside the stars shine down in the popular 'Constellation' pattern. As I near the end of this page, what parting message should I send to you, as you look out your high tower window, or walk the echoing halls in which your family has lived for a thousand generations? All I ask is that, as you draft economic recovery plans for your beloved Motherland, you look up from your projections of cash flows in Tashkent for long enough to see those stars. They were shining when macroeconomic indicators lived in the forest and knew no shame. They will still be shining when the World Bank and the IMF are no more than names whispered on the breeze. One day, Natasha, you and I will meet amid their cold orbits, and walk through the cosmic background hand in hand."

Hmm, I could do something with that, I thought. But what? I tried turning it into a short story without success. So I wrote a poem instead, trying to focus on the strongest images, and to remove the material derived from the degree in Russian I was then doing (stand up, Tolstoy and Bulgakov!).

Here's the result:

The stars, Natasha

Natasha, fundamentals are strong,
key indicators steady.
Leave your books, Natasha,
let your computer
draw patterns on its screen.

Walk with me through the heavens.
Along cold orbits
the spendthrift stars
squander their assets on light.
The World Bank

is unamused; the IMF
is noting down their names.
So take my hand
let's drift away
into the cosmic background.

That poem was published in the US, nominated for a 2001 Rhysling Award (the international award for science fiction poetry), and reprinted in my poetry collection *Boat People*.

Yet it does not quite capture the wistfulness and bizarre humour of the original. I wish I'd heard of prose poems back in 1992. Now that I have, I'm going to see if the original piece will work in that form, because I sense there's still something inside it, waiting to be let out.

Tim Jones

(You will see from this contribution that we are extending the idea of TalkPoem to include published poets talking about a poem and how it came to be written. Editor.)

☞ KiwiHaiku ☜

the cough mixture
works after
two vodkas

Betty Ann Matthews
(Nelson)

Please submit KiwiHaiku to Owen Bullock (PO Box 13-533 Grey Street Tauranga or by e-mail to bullocktrail@xtra.co.nz - preferably but not essentially with a New Zealand theme.



NOVEMBER DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 23rd