



a fine line

September 2007

The Magazine of The New Zealand Poetry Society
Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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SEPTEMBER MEETING

Claire Beynon, Dunedin

preceded by open mic

Monday 24th September 7.30 pm

at Paramount Theatre Lobby

Courtenay Place, Wellington

OCTOBER MEETING

Glenn Colquhoun

preceded by open mic

Thursday 18th October 7.30pm

at Turnbull House, Bowen St, Wellington

NOVEMBER MEETING

Anthology Launch

Saturday 10th November 6pm

at Turnbull House, Bowen St, Wellington

Feature Article

Writing Poetry for Children

Jenny Argante

Poetry is about discovery, and in introducing a child to something new, poetry adds value to the description, as each chosen word adds value to the poem. Poetry is a means of providing children with a vocabulary to sort things out about the known and unknown world.

Poets make links between things that to the unobservant eye or inexperienced mind don't obviously connect - comparing *and* contrasting. Sometimes this chimes with the child's own individual or offbeat take on things. Sometimes it awakens a different kind of looking at what is 'ordinary', showing us that nothing ever is.

Writing such poetry isn't easy. Writing for children in any form is no soft option. They're an exacting audience and finding ways to please them is a challenge. Only write poetry for children if you've got something special to say to them.

Remember, children are born with an inbuilt lie-detector to sniff out what's false or inconsistent, and despise language that 'talks down' to them. Work hard to create words and phrases that work for your reader, who is more important than you.

John Agard says an idea for a poem is "like an electric switch. You fit together feelings, pictures, dreams, happenings, with words instead of wires to make the electricity, but it's the idea which switches on the poem". Bright sparks don't borrow or repeat ideas; they create their own. Write about what matters to you, and make it

matter to your reader.

When you write about your feelings, be specific about the thing that made you sad or happy. Share your amazement at what's in the world - and beyond it. Write 'play poetry' – nonsense rhymes and riddles. Write story poems about people and places. Write what you know, and what you want to discover. Write in your own words: the best words, in the best order. You'll know you've done that when the poem is finished so that no single word can be replaced without damaging the whole. Find the beat of your poem and keep to it – the music in the words.

Ideas come from anywhere, anytime. Keep a notebook with you, and write them down however silly. Stay closely in touch with 'the child within' (child-like, not childish). Come to everything as if for the first time. Bubble over with the desire to 'show and tell'. Explore the here and now – remember, all good writing is contemporary. Share the past, too. Michael Rosen says, "Writing a poem teaches us how to remember ... it's a way of holding on to memories – a bit like a photo album."

Invite children you know to share the process and contribute to it. Involve your reader from the start with a 'bang' opening (the hook) then let them get on with it. Don't spoon-feed them. Within the progress of a poem, create problems and difficulties. Sort everything out before the end. Give readers enough to work with, and they'll come up with their own interpretations, sometimes better than your own! A poem is a shared work that needs both writer and reader.

The test of a good poem is that it works on the page and when spoken. Own any poem, your own or another's, by reading it silently then aloud. Start collecting children's poems that work for you in a folder or file. The more poetry you read, the better you will write – and, no, you won't lose your personal style in reading the work of others.

Words are the raw material of poetry, so work hard to expand your vocabulary. The sound of words is satisfying: globule, brouhaha, elbow, cumquat, splat ... but words mean something, too. Make sound and sense work properly together.

Learn as much about poetic techniques and forms of poetry as you can. Borrow a few books from the library, and buy the ones you like best. Go online and find writing websites and exercises you can turn into poems. Share the company of poets in workshops and writers' group.

Be true to your own imagination. Only then can you share with your reader your individual expression of things observed and experienced. That's the buzz, the thing that gets you going. You still need to think before you write, think while you're writing, and think about what you wrote. Redraft, revise, rewrite. Don't be satisfied until it says exactly what you wanted it to say.

Poetry is reaction and response: making you understand what you see, think and feel. What exactly does a rhododendron look like in the rain? What specifically do I know about Einstein? What precisely do I feel when I'm asked a question and I don't know the answer?

If you can't be exact, specific and precise, you've got no business writing anything - let alone something as wonderful as poetry for children.

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

How did you enjoy Montana National Poetry Day this year? I managed to get to two events: Dinah Hawken's relaxed and informal reading at Unity Books, and the Wellington launch of *Poetry Pudding*, edited by Jenny Argante and published by Reed, including readings by **Robin Fry**, **Tim Jones** and **Harvey Molloy**.

Inexplicably, there were no copies of the book available to buy at the launch, but I intend to get my hands on one as a Christmas present for my grandchildren. What better way to introduce young children to poetry than through the fine and entertaining words of local poets, a satisfying number of whom are members of the NZPS and/or known by me, and are therefore real people, not dead names.

I wanted to go to other events, particularly to see and hear Sam Hunt again, a forty-minute drive away at Upper Hutt. However, I have to confess that even he couldn't get me out of the house on a cold Friday night at the end of a working week when the first Lions game of the season was on Sky.

I've now been in this job for a year. There have been moments of panic – funding application and report deadlines spring to mind – as well as great satisfaction: getting the Constitution changed, getting the magazine out for the first time, upgrading the website to make it a current and informative resource. The latter will be a

continuing project, thanks to a free workshop I did in August with Zeald.com, a business consultancy for small and medium businesses.

Working with a spread-out committee is proving interesting. Instead of planning ahead for 3-monthly meetings, preparing an agenda and laming sure I've got everything photocopied and ready to distribute, I find we have email 'mini-meetings': flurries of messages back and forth as needed, until an issue is resolved or expenditure approved. Much more difficult to take coherent minutes of, to be sure, but timely and effective when there are deadlines to meet and decisions to make. I will be meeting with James Norcliffe and Helen Lowe at the beginning of September, while I am in Christchurch to chair the "Five New Zealand Poets" session at the Christchurch Art Gallery. As well as enjoying my first visit to the Gallery, I hope I will meet a few of our Christchurch members in a small step towards properly 'nationalising' our Society.

And in other news, I will be the guest poet for the Poets' Pub meeting in Lower Hutt on 1st October.

About our Contributors

Jenny Argante is a tutor for Waiariki Institute of Technology's online Certificate of Creative Writing, and a member of Tauranga writers, as well as the Bravado Editorial Collective.

Nola Borrell is a Lower Hutt poet, practitioner of haiku, and past member of the NZPS committee. She regularly collates the Haiku NewZ.

Cyril Childs is a past-president of the NZPS, who edited the two NZ haiku anthologies published by the NZPS (1993, 1998).

Robin Fry, a former broadcaster and journalist, now retired, lives in Petone. She has written three collections of poetry.

Bernard Gadd is an Auckland writer and publisher who contributes regularly, and is a committee member.

Jan Hutchison came 1st in the Bravado International Poetry Competition, 2006. A recent collection of her poems is *Days among trees*, published by Steele Roberts.

Vivienne Plumb is a past-president of the NZPS, who is currently the inaugural Rotorua Resident. Her new play, *The Cape*, opened at Circa 2, Wellington, on 4 August.

Joanna Preston is a Christchurch poet. A selection of her work was published in Carcanet's *New Poetry IV* anthology.

Bryan Walpert lectures in creative writing at Massey University. He won the Open Section of this year's NZPS International Poetry Competition.

Letters to the Editor

To rhyme or not to rhyme, that is the question.

I have a longstanding problem for which I am seeking a 'human' rather than 'academic' solution. This concerns 'contemporary versus traditional' forms of poetic expression. I am of an age that exposed me to classical poetry. I therefore became reasonably familiar with such poetic 'greats' as Byron, Keats and Tennyson.

Perhaps because of the ravages of age, I find I am unable to identify with the non-rhyming style of contemporary 21st century presentation. I admit this may be my lack of appropriate academic training, but I feel that modern verse is an exercise in literary expertise rather than a simple and sincere expression of human emotion. My preferred style is [that of] Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robbie Burns, PB Shelley and Lord Byron:

The Brook

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out amongst the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

... *Tennyson*

To a Mouse

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rousbeastie,
O what panic's in the breastie!

... *Burns*

I admire the delightful simplicity and the obvious affinity with nature that these poems indicate and wonder whether [these poets] were ever aware of metaphor, alliteration or onomatopoeia, etc.

I understand that poet[ry], as in all other aspects of human endeavour, must continue to evolve, but we of the older generation still treasure the fine things instilled in us during our most impressionable years. We experience happy nostalgia when we come across those rare appearances in print of poems that we were familiar with long ago.

So how about i ...give we [sic] older (sentimental old codgers) folk an injection of poetic youth and devote a small section of a *fine line* to traditional rhyming verse?

Patrick L. Glasson (*Christchurch*) abridged

Ed's note: Patrick's contribution to the tradition of rhyming verse can be found on the Members' Poems page.

They love our poetry here...

Begin my dream, It's a great honour for me be NZPS member! I don't have words to describe my emotions because I love (it's my life) write, and I'm loved New Zealand, Aotearoa and his people! One more time, thank you very much! Maybe I'm a first Portuguese in NZPS! I will commemorate with my family, friends and literature companions! Be NZPS member make me feel best man, best writer, you Laurice understand, I wrote love words to New Zealand and my project (poetry book New Zealand dedicated) It's very important to me. I hope share with others writers love expressions and beautiful words!

Hugo Justo (*Portugal*)

More international recognition

Thank you for a *fine line*... (I) am thoroughly enjoying their content, so many informative items to peruse & fascinating reviews and articles. I've come to realise from the listed residencies / workshops your relative nearness to Japan, China, India, and how exciting it must be to visit and learn in such countries/.

Curiously enough you have helped me link in to the UK haiku scene which I've been having problems with. I had heard of Snapshot Press – which seems rather American in fact – but now have Haiku Presence / James Hackett & others to contact – perhaps we haven't as vibrant a Haiku culture as you have?

Your wide coverage of comps & projects has inspired me to broaden my submissions, e.g. Ludberg calendar and Global Poetry Anthology...I also enjoy the reviews and there are a couple of books I would like – haven't tried to track them down yet but I assume Amazon will oblige?

Claire Knight (*United Kingdom*)

Out of us all / That make rhymes / Will you choose / Sometimes - / As the winds use / A crack in a wall / Or a drain, / Their joy or their pain / To whistle through - / Choose me, / You English words?

Edward Thomas (*from Words*)

A Warm Welcome to:

Judi Bagust North Shore City

Janette Barclay Mt Maunganui

Wanda Barker Raglan

Mandy Bowden Nelson

Em Hofstede Takaka

Hugo Justo Lisbon, Portugal

Jenny Palmer Auckland

Dilys Rees Wellington

Banjo Sijuade Ogun State, Nigeria

Jocelyne Thebault Versailles, France

Congratulations

- to Fleur Adcock, daughter of New Zealand Poetry Society founder Irene Adcock, for the award of an Honorary Doctorate from Victoria University.

- to James Norcliffe (NZPS Vice –President) whose book *The Assassin of Gleam* (read it – it’s great) is on the short list of the Esther Glen Award of the LIANZA Children’s Book Awards.

2007 International Poetry Competition – Placed Poets

Open (702 entries)

Highly Commended *The Third Daughter*, **Sarah Broom**, Auckland; *Talkin’ Blues*, **Cliff Fell**, Motueka; *If we grew back, we grew down*, **Tim Upperton**, Palmerston North; *Hen*, Jane Weir, UK; *The Odd Sock Exchange*, Mark Williams, UK.

Commended: *If you dream of a ladder...* **Helen Bascand**,

Christchurch; *DROWNING THE WATERFALL*, **Claire Beynon**, Dunedin; *The world also is a place*, **Michael Harlow**, Alexandria; *Nachtigall*, **Alice Hooton**, North Shore City; *Shaking*, Catherine Moxham, Palmerston North; *Doggie Bones*, **Vivienne Plumb**, Wellington; *A dullness that will not gleam*, **Tim Upperton**, Palmerston North, *INSCRIPTION*, Rae Varcoe, Auckland; *Who was that last sentence again?* **Pat White**, Masterton.

Open Junior (505 entries)

Highly Commended *A Poem About a Poem; Conspiracy Theories; En Garde; For the Empty; Looking up from Tartarus; Poetry in the Garden* – all by Emily Adlam, Auckland; *Translating Laughter*, Mary Dennis, Wellington; *The politics in Belarus*, Sophia Frentz, Tauranga; *all star*, Amy Pepper, Hastings; *Seventh night in a row* and *What Snow Feels Like*, Mengyun Rao, Auckland; *Then, as now*, Kate Slaven, Christchurch; *Family History and Recipe*, **Charlotte Trevella**, Christchurch; *stage secrets*, Alisha Vara, Christchurch.

Haiku (630 entries)

Highly Commended: an effort, Tony Beyer, New Plymouth; starry night, John Bird, NSW, Australia; mackerel sky - , Janice Bostock, NSW, Australia; summer sale, **Greeba Brydges-Jones**, Christchurch, pain fades, Amitava Dasgupta, TX, USA; a long white cloud, **Robin Fry**, Lower Hutt; late autumn, **Catherine Mair**, Katikati; west coast holiday, **Barbara Strang**, Christchurch; spider web, Quendryth Young, NSW, Australia.

Commended: house for sale, Anne LB Davidson, ME, USA; taffeta folds, D Claire Gallagher, CA,USA; gone from the window, Jeffrey Harpeng, Qld, Australia; clear crisp day, Kees Hulsmann, Qld, Australia; rush hour, **John Irvine**, Coromandel; cracked pitcher, Scott Mason, NY,USA; dark, **Kerry Popplewell**, Wellington; dark pines, Lyn Reeves, Tas., Australia; abandoned cabin, Bruce Ross, ME, USA; a sign, **Janine Sowerby**, Christchurch.

Haiku Junior (807 entries)

Highly Commended: ‘paua shell’ and ‘windy day’, William Davidson, Christchurch; gorse flowers, Harry Frentz, Tauranga; ‘changing leaves’ and ‘leaves underfoot’, Sophia Frentz, Tauranga; autumn, Bede Gorman, Christchurch; new grave, Jared Harrison, USA; The saddest moment, Tui Matenga, Christchurch; evening, Bailey McIntosh, Christchurch; tentative paw, Kate Slaven, Christchurch.

Commended: Look down, Jack Andrews, Tauranga; The deserted red scarf, Ellie Braddock, Arrowtown; bitter day, Charlotte Fairhurst, Tauranga; winter’s first fire, Sophia Frentz, Tauranga; midnight, Bede Gorman, Christchurch; Gutter board at school, Brodie Hutton, Christchurch; early morning, Sophie Mannis, Christchurch; Words playing, Mengyun Rao, Auckland; aged stool, Kate Slaven, Christchurch; moonlight, Jared Van Vianen, Christchurch.

Noticeboard

For a complete rundown of regional events, and to find the poetry meeting in your town, please go to our website: www.poetrysociety.org.nz Please email updates, additions & changes to: info@poetrysociety.org.nz

WRITERS ON MONDAYS, WELLINGTON

July –Sept 2007

www.feelinggreat.co.nz/readers-and-writers/11224-writers-on-mondays-series

This is the IIML’s annual series of readings and interviews with local and international writers, in partnership with the City Gallery.

SELF-PUBLISHING?

Expressions of interest are invited for a weekend workshop at the University of Waikato in Tauranga to be held on October 6th & 7th, with Ocean Reeve of Publish Me! and Zenith Print, and creative writing tutor, writer and editor Jenny Argante. This is aimed particularly at people with a specific publishing project in mind, or with a completed manuscript. Learn how to assess your content and ensure that your finished book is properly presented, whether your life story as family heirloom, or something based on experience or expertise for sale in bookshops and online. Expressions of interest: for further information or to enrol, please email Nyree Sherlock at UWT: nyree@waikato.ac.nz Ph. 07 577 5376. Or enrol online at: www.uwt.waikato.ac.nz/register

WRITING WORKSHOPS

Write Out West – Whaingaroa – Raglan

Here's your chance to get creative in beautiful Raglan – Whaingaroa. During September and October, Raglan Writing Group will be hosting a series of workshops by some of the Waikato's best and most inspiring writers. The workshops include: 8th September Action Fiction! Writing for children with G. Brassi; 23rd September Stories in Song: song-writing with Lynne Wilkins; 30th September Memoir & Life Writing with Beryl Fletcher; 7th October Poetic Mind with **Wanda Barker**.

Workshops run for a full day and cost \$60 each, with a \$10 discount per workshop if you attend two or more. All workshops will be held at the Old School Arts Centre in Raglan. For a brochure or to book your place, phone Sarah on 07 825 8938 or email sarah.writer@paradise.net.nz

LOOKING FOR A CREATIVE WRITING COURSE?

The School of English and Media Studies, Massey University, offers a broad array of creative writing and performance papers: poetry, fiction, playwriting, media script writing, travel writing, life writing, creative non-fiction, writing for children, drama in performance, creative processes. Go to our website: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutmassey> to learn more about the courses available and other useful information.

Surfing the Web

www.eratiopostmodernpoetry.com There is some interesting poetry on this site, but I was particularly taken by the concept of *Telemetry*, an ongoing dialogue in verse between poets.

www.poemhunter.com The place to go to find your favourite classic poems and poets. They have contemporary ones too, and a fun mini-quiz (not poetic).

www.poetryireland.ie Poetry Ireland – see how an organisation similar to ours functions with 6 staff members.

www.thenewword.com/index Creative New Zealand's introduction to NZ literature in a variety of genres, profiling some of our best writers (thought not any of their work). There is an excellent list of publishers, if you're looking for one, and it's pleasing to see the NZPS listed as a Literary Resource.

Publications

New arrivals on the NZPS bookshelf since the last issue:

Just Poetry by Alistair Te Ariki Campbell. This new collection contains an account of a happy childhood in the Cook Islands, as well as reflections on a recent visit to Rarotonga as an honoured guest. Publication date: September 2007; Price \$19.99; ISBN 978-0-473-12489-2 (*HeadworX*).

Cold Comfort, Cold Concrete: Poems & Satires by Scott Kendrick (Seraph Press, RRP \$25) Here's a cool idea – open one side of this book and read poetry; turn it over and open the other side for satires originally published in the underground newspaper *The Babylon Express*. From Seraph Press, the publishing imprint of **Helen Rickerby**.

The Search by Mark Pirie (Earl of Seacliffe Art Workshop, RRP \$29.99) Poems and stories from Pirie's early writing years, along with some new Wellington poems.

Residencies & Awards

NZSA FOXTON FELLOWSHIP 2007

Closing date: 30 September

Applications are now being called for the 2007-08 New Zealand Society of Authors Foxtton Fellowship. The annual Fellowship is generously donated by Peter and Diane Beatson and provides the successful applicant with \$6500 and a one month residency in their holiday house at Foxtton Beach. The award is open to writers of fiction, poetry and drama who are members of the NZSA. Results will be announced on November 12. The residency may be taken up during the any month mutually agreed by the Fellow and the owners of the cottage. For an application form, write to: Foxtton Fellowship, NZSA, PO Box 67-013, MT Eden, Auckland 1349 or email programmes@nzauthors.org.nz

FUND YOUR M.A. IN 2008

Closing date: 1 October

If you're thinking about applying for the MA in Creative Writing at the IIML in 2008 but are wondering if you can afford it, help may be at hand. Students undertaking the MA may apply for a Victoria Masters (by thesis) Scholarship worth \$15,000. The country's largest privately-funded scholarship programme - the Freemasons Charity - will also award seven scholarships of \$10,000 each and 25 of \$6,000 each to university students completing their graduate or post-graduate study in 2008. Applicants for the Freemasons' scholarships must be students completing their degree, regardless of their degree subject or faculty. The only other requirement is that they must also take part in a 'non-academic community activity'. Application forms can be downloaded from the homepage of the Freemasons website www.freemasons.co.nz For further background on both scholarships, see also www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED0707/S00096 and www.fis.org.nz/BreakOut/vuw/schols (Source: IIML)

Competitions & Submissions

Wow! It must be the time of year for it; opportunities abound, and there are lots more in the haiku pages. The \$NZ is still manageably high, and some of these are free. For a full list of competitions and submissions please go to the Members' page of our website.

hutt (ezine): is accepting submissions. See www.papertigermedia.com.hutt/submission for submission guidelines.

The Spiral Poetry for Peace Competition 2007 (UK)

Closing date: 4 September

In support of peace initiatives taking place in London between the 9th and 16th of September and globally on the 21st September, Spiraluniverse is supporting the week by running a poetry competition to explore what peace means to us. Entry is free and can be done on-line (entering as many poems as you like) at:

www.spiraluniverse.org/index.php?fcall=peace07b Entries must be no longer than 20 lines. The winning poem will be announced on the 9th September, at the start of the London Week of Peace and used as the theme for a one page flash website designed by a leading web design company.

Funny Paper Poetry Contest (USA)

Closing date: 5 September

Free entry humour & light verse contest offers modest prize and online publication. Top award \$US100. Submission guide: 1-3 poems, maximum 16 lines per poem. One submission per entrant; previously published work may be submitted if you own the rights, but notify if accepted elsewhere. Guidelines are at: www.funnypaper.info Email entries are accepted if pasted into the body of the message - NO attachments. email: felixkcmo@AOL.com

Greensboro Review Literary Awards (USA)

Closing date: 15 September

Highly recommended free contest from reputable journal offers \$US500 for poetry and short fiction. No length limit for poetry; stories should be 7,500 words maximum. Unlimited number of free entries makes up for the no-simultaneous-submissions rule. Guidelines at: www.uncg.edu/eng/mfa/gr

Poetry Super Highway 2007 Competition (on-line)

Closing date: 22 September

I've featured this website previously, in *Surfing the Web*. Now it's running a competition that's worth looking in to: as well as shares of the entry fees as prizes, there are also sponsors' prizes, mainly consisting of poetry books published by the sponsors. <http://poetrysuperhighway.com/pshco.html#prizes>

Troubadour Poetry Prize (UK)

Closing Date: 30 September

For poems of up to 45 lines. 1st prize £1000, 2nd £500, 3rd £250 plus 20 commendations at £20 each Judged by: Helen Dunmore and David Constantine. Entry Fee: £5 per poem if less than 4 poems submitted, or £4 per poem if 4 or

more poems submitted. Contact: Troubadour Poetry Prize, Coffee-House Poetry, PO Box 16210, London W4 1ZP.

[Email: CoffPoetry@aol.com](mailto:CoffPoetry@aol.com)

Familia Books Writing Contest (USA)

Closing Date: 30 September

Neutral contest offers prizes up to \$500 for prose, \$100 for poetry, on the theme "Things Mother Taught Me". Winners published in anthology. Fifty percent of the profits from the book will be donated to shelters for mothers and their children escaping from abusive relationships. Entries should reflect life's lessons learned from one's mother, regarding values, ethics, relationships. They should be generally positive, but may explore areas of disagreement or conflict with one's mother. Submission details at: <http://www.familiabooks.com/entercontest.html>

Second Light Poetry Competition (UK)

Closing Date: 1 October

For women poets aged 30+. For poems of up to 80 lines. First prize £300, second prize £100, third prize £50. Judge: Carole Satyamurti. Entry Fee: £3 for one poem, £7 for three poems, £12 for eight poems. [Website: www.poetrypf.co.uk/secondlight.html](http://www.poetrypf.co.uk/secondlight.html)

Turbine

Deadline 23 October

Turbine is the online journal of fiction, poetry, essay and memoir published in December each year by the International Institute of Modern Letters. *Turbine* is now inviting submissions for this year's issue, and is seeking exciting new work by writers from all over New Zealand. Submission guidelines can be found at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/turbine/submissions

The Open Poetry Sonnet Competition (UK)

Closing Date: 31 October (closing at midnight GMT)

Entries invited from anywhere in the world for this inaugural competition. Top prize is £1400, second prize is £750 and third prize is £350. For more details, see the website: www.sonnetcompetition.com

National Poetry Competition 2007 (UK)

Closing Date: 31 October

For poems of up to 40 lines. First prize £5000. Judges: EA Markham, Michael Schmidt and Penelope Shuttle. Entry Fee: £5.00 for first poem then £3.00 for each subsequent entry. Website:

www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/npc/npcrules

Swift Satire Poetry Competition (UK)

Closing Date: 31 October

For unpublished satirical poems on a topic of social/political importance. The poem should be satirical (e.g. Juvenal satire), in modern poetic form, innovative in advancing current poetical boundaries and have a strong political or social message in the 'spirit of Swift'. First prize: 1000 Euros, Entry Fee: £3.60, payable on-line, or waived on request for low-income entrants (students, senior citizens, unemployed). Website:

www.swiftsociety.com/competition/competition.html

Seafield Writing Competition (UK)

Closing Date: 31 October

Theme: 'The Road Not Taken'. For short stories of up to 2000 words, for poetry of up to 30 lines. Prizes: first prize £100 for each category. Entry Fee: £5 per entry. Contact: Seafield Publishing, Flat 2, 83, Greens Place, South Shields NE33 2AQ

Crab Orchard Review "Adolescence" Issue - Submissions wanted (USA)

Postmark Deadline: 31 October

Crab Orchard Review, a prestigious journal from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, seeks submissions of poetry, stories and literary essays (original or translations) on the theme of "The In-Between Age: Writers on Adolescence". Writers whose work is selected will receive \$20 per magazine page (\$50 minimum for poetry; \$100 minimum for prose), two copies of the issue, and a year's subscription. Editors say, "We are open to work that covers any of the multitudes of ways that the transition from childhood to adulthood in the teenage years defines us and, in turn, defines the world we live in." See submissions guidelines at: www.siu.edu/~crborchd/guid2.html

Blackmail Press special issue - Crossed Cultures call for poetry submissions

Deadline: 1 November

This issue of Blackmail Press will be dedicated to poems that explore the experience of crossing between cultures.

All submissions welcome. Submissions from emerging poets are encouraged. International poets are especially welcome. White, yellow, brown, black or some colour in between, tell us your viewpoint or story. Poems should be in English although poems in another language with English translation are acceptable. Blackmail Press is an international poetry ezine: <http://nzpoetsonline.homestead.com/>
Send email copies to Guest editor Renee Liang: docrnz@gmail.com

Regional Reports

Readers are invited to submit reports on local events as they occur. Email to: editor@poetrysociety.org.nz

WINDRIFT

Nola Borrell

Mid-winter meeting. July. The Wellington Haiku Group welcomes the warm room. Host Bevan Greenslade neatly orders haiku and tanka into 3 bowls – open, winter, and ‘despised life forms’.

It’s always remarkable what writers put into haiku. Today’s cluster includes Napoleon’s bones, expletives, Elephantipes yucca, prostate and a barefoot librarian. Ariana jokes, “I don’t know if I’ve had a haiku moment, but I may be approaching one”.

young lovers
their initials
oozing sap

Ernest J Berry

morning cheer
text from my daughter
a haiku

Irene Ruth

great-grandad, toddler
inch forward, clinging to
their walking frame

Neil Whitehead

And then, Winter. More predictable images this round – though there were exceptions:

apple feijoa crumble
please, gurgles my mouth

Ariana te Aomarere

August campsite
in the morning
bootlaces upright

Kerry Popplewell

mid-winter lunch
a family of starlings
feed on grass grubs

Annette de Jonge

Glimmers of Issa surfaced in writing on mice and mosquitoes, borer and blowflies.

midwinter - a line of ants
to where the jam jar sat
last summer

Karen Butterworth

Our list of corresponding members is growing. Irene Ruth – despite out best advice – shifted to Napier in late July.

Reviews

End of the Snapshots, Bernard Gadd, Sudden Valley Press, 2007. 60 pages, \$18.

Robin Fry

This attractive publication with its fuchsia pink cover offers new and selected poems by that versatile man of letters, Bernard Gadd. The tiny cover illustration from a 10th century Anglo-Saxon text indicates some of the content. This poet is steeped in history and has spread his net wide to capture the voices of the past, be it Sir George Grey reflecting on the raw provisional nature of the country he is governing or Phar Lap that “prince of horses”.

While Head of English at Hillary College, Bernard Gadd began publishing to provide relevant texts for his multi-cultural pupils from the literature of their mother tongues. He gives the lie to that old adage, “those who can’t, teach”. In his retirement from the classroom he has continued to produce an abundance of literary work of many kinds including fresh poems – fluent and fervent in their deep commitment to social justice.

we hauled with a will
coasts from dark seas

everywhere paradise
smelled of blood
(James Cook)

Whether Gadd is writing of an Inca child walled in rock; of the giddy joy of St Francis; a young girl giving birth or the dreadful barbarity witnessed by the missionary who “attends a little dying” in the 1830s his poems are empathic and compassionate.

Where the poet appropriates voices from the past – *Immigrant labourer; Grandfather, 1940s; Grandmother, Pokeno (1914–1919)* – his ear for their language is unerring.

This collection also contains small personal poems, *A little script for Keisha Castle-Hughes; Walker*, (the private world of a girl with a walkman?) and a variety of forms from the title poem comprising six small poems linked with asterisks to the suite of three longer poems under the title *James Cook*.

There are a number of ecphrastic poems such as *The man in the Breughel painting*, where the skaters are merely objects in a winter world of other natural objects and *St Francis and the birds*, after the painting by Stanley Spencer. Often the subject speaks directly to us, like the flea in a painting by William Blake.

Without straining to be inscrutable, I sense that Gadd, as a reader, is prepared to work for his rewards and expects his readers to do the same. He may not have much sympathy, I suspect, for recent movements in the United States and elsewhere to bring poetry into the mainstream and even to popularise the art. Nevertheless, this poet and his collection ends his collection with a beautiful and accessible small poem which should satisfy any and all poetry readers:

a thousand tanka
yearn for you, I wish
no more paper
only the living tree
and under it, you

The Year of Adverbs, Elizabeth Smither, Auckland
University Press, 64 pages. RRP \$25 ISBN 978-1-86940-394-2
Jan Hutchison

As I finished reading this book, I was struck by Elizabeth Smither’s marvellous language. The lines were controlled, yet images charged through the poems with intensity.

Smither reaches to the heart of things. She could be describing her own art here:

From the Lincoln Center three Brandenburg concertos
by Bach...

In days my daughter will give birth.
The strings roam deeply over what seem
muscles of music, stretching, not breaking
and the heart held in them, jubilant, not aching.

(Near birth)

Smither is one of New Zealand's most distinguished poets. She has written many fine collections, including *Red Shoes*, which resulted from her term as Te Mata Poet Laureate in 2003.

Her poems tease and scrutinize a subject with darting phrases, aphorisms and images. They often end with a compelling metaphor:

Death
is individually tailored, Like all things.

A dusty angel, with heavy wings
and a pocket of tools, like a lock-breaker

but gentleness as well, a concern
to take each prize into his hands.

(The death of old women)

Smither's range of topic is inexhaustible – from family and friends to a horse playing the accordion; from philosophical ideas to a beginning sculptress. In the title poem, she writes waggishly, quirkily of adverbs, and she comments on the habits of adjectives which:

are often lewd, wrapped in mufflers endlessly

(The Year of Adverbs)

Her poems are mostly short and sometimes they contain subtle rhymes. Images leap across edges and alter our perceptions; sometimes the images engage with those in other poems. We are thrown off balance. Here is Smither writing of the scent of five lilies:

and so beneficent it bursts the boundaries
not just of its own petals, its stamens
its deep scent on the air assaying

but engulfs the air in a deep kiss
as if a wedding is announced
just beyond the curve of the sofa.

(Christmas lilies)

What makes Smither's poems so good? Her language is vital and clear; her expression is original and often witty; her voice is idiosyncratic; she looks at things in a refreshing manner. She observes the moment as it passes; observes the life inside a detail; observes the life within a gesture. Her attention comes from a compassionate eye. When she writes of death, there is no despair, for the form of the poems is orderly and thus the reader is consoled by the detachment of everything that exists beyond:

and then whirling in fire, melting at last into
your most beautiful expression, then calmed
prepared to be scattered to the winds.

(To Mai, a month after her death)

Elizabeth Smither writes joyful and passionate poetry that conveys a sense of wonder. And the music of her language propels the reader forward.

Incognito (AUP, 2007) RRP \$25.

Joann Preston

Jessica le Bas's *Incognito* is a solid New Zealand first collection. Fifty poems, split into six sections. There is the usual (verging on inevitable) proliferation of the anecdotal – roughly half of the poems don't aim to do more than relate a (mildly) amusing story, which is a pity. (Too many for my taste could fit nicely into "Kids Say the Darndest Things!") Often there are phrases which promise something interesting, but then aren't developed – the references

to magic and religion in 'the footpath' for example, or the first section of 'weight'. Or the glorious last line of 'a cold spell':

"And in the distance, an orchard of blistering apples."

Wonderful imagery, but the poem that it ends doesn't match it, either for interest or lyricism.

For the most part, her ear is very good, but there are a few places where it is clear that she hasn't read the poems out loud: try saying "ewes mew" ('man at Oturehua') or "he rolls his tongue dumb" ('another Zagreb').

A few too many poems end in bathos, like 'old haunts': "Our mother survived to tell the story. / She is buried by the sea." or the frankly horrible "Either way you look at it/ Waitangi Day is still my mother's birthday/ and we celebrate" ('my mother's birthday'). I'm also not convinced that her four prose poems *are* poems. But my most serious concern is her overuse of epigraphs – eight poems are subtitled "after ___". To have so many so overtly signalled as indebted implies that she has trouble generating original ideas. Citing the source of inspiration in an epigraph sends the reader to consult the original, and most of her poems suffer by comparison. For example, her prize-winning 'and I have something to expiate' takes its theme and title from DH Lawrence's 'The Snake'. Both deal with guilt and the poets' behaviour towards an animal, but le Bas doesn't move beyond this. Lawrence's poem has a powerful subtext, playing out his favourite themes of mythic sexuality versus conventional religious doctrine. Good as 'and I have something to expiate' is (and it *is* a good poem), it lacks the depth and resonance of Lawrence's. It's enough to acknowledge the origin of the poem in an endnote when the debt is this superficial.

But then there are poems like the gorgeous 'There's a love', which show how the anecdotal can be made to carry real emotional weight – the poet's father, having read a news story about a crematorium whose ovens broke down, insists that his daughter get proof that he *will* be cremated:

Tell them to cook you
a batch of bloody scones if you have to

It rises above the anecdotal by the way it plays gently against our fears of death, and the dignity we are accorded (or denied) afterwards.

Another gem is 'for that extra distance'. It's a stunning poem; quiet, sad, clear-eyed. The presiding imagery grows organically out of the opening:

When I arrive you are in your chair
clutching the armrests like the sea is pounding
over you, on a rock perhaps, at Muriwai.

She even manages a pun on the word 'flounder'!

This is a good first collection. Some really accomplished poems, and a number in the last section that show ambition – a quality not to be undervalued. There is certainly enough to signal the emergence of real poetic potential.

Airports and other wasted days, Kevin Ireland, Hazzard Press, 2007., 70pp, ISBN 978-1-877393-34-1
Bernard Gadd

This is a collection of light and often chatty poems on more or less any topic that crosses the writer's mind. It's an old fashioned looking cover, and the lines of most poems are tidily penned into regular stanzas. The language is modernist – relaxed but not colloquial. The first section is the title section and includes some observations which any traveler can relate to:

Airports are trick mirrors. You step through
and discover yourself in another airport -
(The true alternative to airports)

Or about travel brochures:

Yet the word that really glues my jaws
is exotic
(Air Exotica)

Although sometimes:

It cannot be believed. Sets like this
are pure show business.
(Kennedy Airport)

The rest of the book is on a huge range of topics, though not much to do with the sub-title's 'wasted days'.
Ireland says it himself:

This is the thirteenth poem,
I have written since I set out
on a new Journey to nowhere

in particular.
(A thirteenth poem)

Among poems I enjoyed were 'Starting the day':

You start today with a declaration.
It is something the birds
shall always believe in.

...

I am new to this thing.
My hands cling to the wind.
I am blown away.

and 'This is Goodbye'

The man with the white glove
holds the corner of a handkerchief
at one eye.

A grain of dust has blinded him.
He is furious that we will think
he is going to cry.

There are several on poetry or poets, including 'A literary confession':

painting is obviously for rough diamonds,
and writing is for gentlefolks.

There is only this curious literary problem
of where the smells keep coming from.
And the sordid bloodstains on the carpet.
And the sinister laughter. Sometimes, after
a bout of writing, I don't feel at all well.

But further into the collection there is a sense that the language is becoming garrulous;

We are all nourished by force-fed slabs
of rant and bluster buttered with

verbal goo and gutturals.
(Much talk)

and a feeling of writing being done to fill up pages to make a publishable collection. But it picks up at the end, and concludes light-heartedly with blokes swapping trade secrets till the poet confessed "and they had not reckoned on anyone/taking on a dirty dangerous job like that".

Anthologies are such wonderful things; a house without an anthology of good poetry is restraining itself too much – *Shirley Hazzard*, in *Listener*, August 18 2007.

Haiku NewZ

Nola Borrell

CONGRATULATIONS

- to Owen Bullock, whose autumn haiku was a runner-up in the Snapshots Calendar Competition, 2007. Vanessa Proctor, now of Sydney, and a member of the NZ-based Zazen email workshop, has 2 haiku in the runners-up section.

- to **André Surridge** for winning The Elizabeth Searle Award, a special additional prize in the Kaji Aso Studio International Haiku Contest.

lavender stalk
the weight of one
white butterfly

André also received an Honourable Mention, as did the ubiquitous **Ernest J Berry**.

- to Ernest J Berry for 1st and 5th places in Kukai #6.

heartwood
the softness
of a termite

- to Ernest J Berry for a haiku on the electronic message board of Shreve Memorial Library, Shreveport, Louisiana.

www.shreve-lib.org

crevasse
my shadow's head
disappears

- to Patricia Prime for third prize in the Tofu Haiku Competition, Canada.

daylight saving -
the pattern of muslin
on a tofu block

Do not despair if your beloved haiku submission disappears. It may surface unexpectedly, transformed. A haiku of mine, submitted a year ago, 'suddenly' appeared on a website - in Slovenian.

HAIKU WORKSHOP

(Cyril Childs)

A haiku workshop, taught by Cyril Childs, was held in Port Chalmers as part of activities associated with Montana Poetry Day. Haiku by those who participated, together with a collection of haiku books, were displayed in the Port Chalmers branch of the Dunedin Public Library. Paul Chapman, one of those who attended the workshop, has since had haiku accepted for publication in *Kokako*, including –

in my study
overlooking the sea –
a fossil fish

HAIKU PATHWAY GUIDEBOOK

(Sandra Simpson)

The new Katikati Haiku Pathway guidebook is now available. It features a complete set of the 30 poems engraved on boulders - including the three latest additions - short author biographies, a potted history of the project and a map of the pathway. It is a lovely keepsake or would make a great gift to send overseas.

Handsomely produced (even if I do say so myself!), the book sells for (including post & packing within New Zealand): \$7 for 1; \$12 for 2 (for orders of more than 2, please inquire to 82 Grace Rd, Tauranga, or phone 07-577-6676). Send a cheque (made out to the Katikati Haiku Pathway Focus Committee), your name and postal address to

Sandra Simpson, 82 Grace Rd, Tauranga 3112. Details for those ordering from overseas are on the website, www.poetrysociety.org.nz/haikunews/haikuhappenings

HAIKU AOTEAROA 2008

(Barbara Strang)

For anyone who is still unaware, a conference for writers of haiku and related forms is due to take place at Bishop Julius Hostel, Waimairi Road, Christchurch, on the weekend 18-20 April, 2008. We aim to provide a programme appealing to beginners, experts and everyone in between. Already we have expressions of intention to attend by well-known haiku writers from New Zealand and Australia, including Richard von Sturmer, who will give a live performance of his tanka films. We are really looking forward to this, and also to the launch of another New Zealand Haiku Anthology.

We welcome feedback about the programme or any related matters. Please contact Barbara Strang, bhstrang@yahoo.com; Anne Edmunds, aged@paradise.net.nz; or Judith Walsh, njw@clear.net.nz.

JEFFREY HARPENG - NEW HAIBUN COLLECTION

Quarter Past Sometime has just been released. Joanna Preston writes, "At their best, haibun combine the expansiveness of fiction with the precision of haiku. Jeff Harpeng is a master of exactly that. This collection is a rollercoaster ride, swooping and soaring and confronting you abruptly with a ground that you had forgotten was there. From the world of the deaf to the world of memory, from elegy to celebration in a single sentence. This is generous, expansive poetry without pretension – a ride anyone can get on. It welcomes you in, tucks you up safely, and scares the bejesus out of you. It is addictive. And fine poetry indeed."

on his doorstep
stepping out in hiking boots
grow forget-me-nots
the day fading
we drive toward
the stony moon

AUS\$15 plus postage. Post Pressed, 324/50 Macquarie Street, Teneriffe 4005, Qld, Australia.

<http://www.postpressed.com.au/verse/quarter.html>

THE SKIPPING STONES

Have you read this online journal? Vanessa Proctor of Sydney, formerly of Wellington, is guest editor of Issue 2.

<http://theskipppingstones.net/>

REVIEW

Kokako 6, 2007, edited by Patricia Prime and Owen bullock, available through the editors (pprime@ihug.co.nz; bullocktrail@xtra.co.nz)

Cyril Childs

The editors of *Kokako* are well justified in expressing pleasure and pride in this issue. It is one of the best issues so far of a magazine that, together with its predecessors *WinterSpin* and *Spin*, has provided the major, almost sole, regular outlet for haiku and related genres in New Zealand.

This year *Kokako* inaugurated an annual tanka competition: the results of the first are presented in this issue. The tanka form of today stems from the poetry of the imperial court in Japan and is evident in records as far back as the 8th Century AD. On contrast, the haiku form emerged several centuries later from the social pastime of composing linked verse, *renga*, among the lower strata of Japanese Society. Both forms have not been adapted into many languages and cultures around the world.

The tanka competition was well-supported: over 230 entries were received. Tanka's current popularity in the western world arose in the USA and it is not surprising to see several well-known American poets feature among the twenty-seven prize winners. Two that particularly appealed to me:

meeting the artist
in the crowded gallery
I started to praise
the painting that hangs
on your bedroom wall
Dee Evetts (USA)

given a lifetime
I could not record
all within this acre -
the mercies of summer grass,
the kindnesses of drifted snow
Michael McClintock (USA)

Another group, apparently selected from general submission, appears later in the issue. There are also strong ones here:

;
In a pour of light
See how the infant
Cups her hands -
Gathering shine
From the moon.
J.K. Murphy

and eastwards
from this cliff-top park
the Pacific
as vast, as mutable
as dreams used to be
Amelia Fielden

I was taken by some mind-sticking images in the haiku section: 'after dinner liqueur/firelight enhances/the turn of her neck' – **André Surridge**; 'some are the wind's/some are the river's -/willow leaves falling' – Jeffrey Woodward; and Marie Summers' one-liner 'outgrowing the trellis not once has this rose bloomed'. I also enjoyed from **Sandra Simpson**, the delightfully simple 'our footprints/obliterating/the dotterel's'.

At fifteen pages, this is the biggest section in the issue, but overall the least satisfying. It may have benefitted from more rigorous selection and fewer pages.

Mishap and adventure at Omaui and Mokemoke estuary near Bluff also feature in my family folklore so **Barbara Strang's** fine haibun "The Omaui Road: The grownups are behind a newspaper. Something is being decided..." was of special interest to me. There are other strong haibun here too by Julie Beveridge and Graham Nunn.

A small but interesting section of linked verse includes two by experienced practitioners **Catherine Mair** and **Patricia Prime**, typically reflecting their friendship, humanity and keen observation:

...draping her long skirt/like a tablecloth/the pre-teen
in the deep blue sky/above Waihi Beach/ascending hawk
with the lower paddle/the canoeist scoops/a cup full...

Three excellent book reviews by **Bernard Gadd** and Owen Bullock almost conclude the issue. One of the books is a collection of haiku by Jack Galmitz with translations into Japanese by Ban'ya Natsuishi. These interesting haiku test the boundaries of the form. I welcome Bernard's comment: "Haiku as in this varied collection usefully challenge our inclination to try to hold genre like haiku and tanka to tidy definitions. But where a poetic form is still in a phase of vigorous growth in a diversity of languages, definitive precision will inevitably fail".

The last page of the issue announces the 4th Kokako Haiku and Senryu Competition and proudly proclaims "Now International!" One small suggestion: how about an index at the back of each issue as in *Presence* (UK) and *Frogpond* (USA)?

Kokako should be a primary choice for all serious writers of haiku and related forms in New Zealand. If you can't afford to get it yourself, persuade your library to get it.

COMPETITIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

Sept. 10. 12th International Kusamakura Haiku Competition. Limit of 2 haiku. Cost: Free. Many prizes. Results in November. Magazine with all entries, Feb. 2008. Entry via email form on website.

www.jonet.ne.jp/kusamakura/english/haiku.html

Sept. 15. HSA Bernard Lionel Einbond Renku Competition. A renku may consist of 36, 20, or 12 stanzas written by two or more persons. Any one author may appear in no more than three different renku. Cost: \$US15. Cash prizes, publication in *Frogpond*, and HSA website. Einbond Renku Contest, c/o Marlene Egger, 7527 Brighton Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84121-5316, USA. www.hsa-haiku.org/hsa-contests.htm#einbond

Sept. 19. 9th Annual HIA Contest. Limit of 2 haiku. Cost: Free. Results: November 19 in HI journal and website. The Haiku International Association (HIA), 7th Floor Azuma building, 2 - 7 Ichigaya, Tamachi. Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 162-0843, Japan.

Sept. 22. Still in the Stream Haiku Contest. Poems should express wabi sabi, yugen, or karumi. Cost: Free. Website publication. Book prizes. Previously published haiku eligible, if copyright allows it. Entry by email.

www.stillinthestream.com/files/haikucontest.htm

Sept. 30. Eucalypt 3. Tanka. Guidelines can be found at www.eucalypt.info. And check the AUSTLIT website for records for nearly 100 tanka published in *Eucalypt*.

www.austlit.edu.au

Sept. 30 RH Blyth Haiku Award. Limit of 10 haiku. Cost: £5/\$US10/€8 for up to 3 haiku; £1/\$US2/€2 for each subsequent haiku. Results Oct. 28 or Dec. 3. Publication in *World Haiku Review*. The World Haiku Club HQ, Leys Farm, Rousham, Bicester, England OX25 4RA. In addition, send entry also by e-mail to:

susumu.takiguchi@btinternet.com.

Sept. 30 Tanka Splendour Contest. Submit either a group of up to 3 unpublished tanka or 1 tanka sequence of any length. Cost: Free. Publication in *Tanka Splendour 2007*. Book vouchers. TS2007 Contest, pob 767 / 1250, Gualala, CA 95445, USA. The judges are the contestants (via email).

Third New Zealand Haiku Anthology

Deadline: October 6. New Zealand Haiku Poets are invited to submit haiku for a NZ Haiku Anthology to be published early in 2008 by the Windrift haiku Group. Send up to ten haiku that have not previously appeared in either *The New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (1993) or *The Second New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (1998), and not under consideration elsewhere. With these exceptions you may submit any haiku that are your own original work. Haiku themes may be NZ or universal, and may include Senryu. Those whose haiku are accepted will be offered reduced price copies of the anthology and, if sales permit, a small payment. You will be advised in December whether your haiku have been accepted.

Submission details: Submit five full sets of haiku, neatly typed or printed on A4, leaving at least two lines blank between haiku. The selectors will nominate haiku to the editors. On one set only, include: name address, phone no., email address if applicable, and any previous publication details. Please keep a copy as entries will not be returned. To have results posted to you, please enclose an SSAE. Otherwise, results will be advised by email. Post your submission before 6th October to:

Nola Borrell, 177A Miromiro Rd, Normandale, Lower Hutt 5010. **No email entries please.** Inquiries : Nola Borrell, Ph.04 586 7287, email: nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz or Karen Butterworth, 29 Kirk St, Otaki, Ph. 06 364 5810, email: karenpetbut@xtra.co.nz

Oct. 24 Samhain Haiku Contest. Cost: €10/\$US12.50/£7.50 per haiku or €20/\$US25/£15 per 3 haiku. Cash prizes. An Runaí, Smurfit Samhain International Poetry Competition, Maggie Dan's, An Panc, Gort a'Choirce, Co. Donegal, Éire.

Oct. 31 Kokako International Haiku Contest. 2 copies of each poem with name, address and other contact details on one copy only. Cost: \$NZ5/3 haiku; or \$US1/haiku. NZ cheques payable to Kokako. Publication in *Kokako 8*. Cash prizes. Patricia Prime, 42 Flanshaw Rd, Te Atatu South, Auckland 8, New Zealand.

Oct 31 Haiku Presence Award. Cost: £5/\$US10/€10 for up to 5 haiku; additional entries £1/\$US2/€2 per haiku. Publication in *Haiku Presence*. Cash prizes. <http://freespace.virgin.net/haiku.presence>

Oct. 31 Haiku Poets of Northern California. Haiku, senryu and tanka. Cost: \$US1/poem. Results: Jan 2008. Publication HPNC *Mariposa*. Cash prizes. Full details from www.haiku-poets-northern-california.com/hpnc2003.html

Oct. 31 Snapshot Press Tanka Collection Competition. 40 - 100 tanka. Cost: £20/\$US30 a manuscript. Results: by Dec. 31. £200 and publication of collection as a perfect-bound book by Snapshot Press in 2008. snapshotpress.co.uk/tanka_competition_details.htm

KiwiHaiku

curlew
earth curves
its call

Ernest J Berry

cicadas
the stream
drowned out

Barbara Strang

Please send you KiwiHaiku submissions to Richard von Sturmer, 18 Crocus Place, Remuera, Auckland 1050. Email address: rvonsturmer@yahoo.com

Tanka Moments

shut inside
I cannot see the sky
I know
only shadows of flying birds
on early morning walls

from the third floor
doves drop small sacrifices
this morning
I am offered half an eggshell
a clutch of white feathers

Elaine Riddell

Members are invited to submit unpublished tanka, even if you've never tried one before, to bernardgadd@xtra.co.nz
Those published will also appear on the Anglo-Japanese Tanka Society on-line site.

How it is

Writing Residency – Hong Kong

Vivienne Plumb

Late in 2006 I was invited on a month-long international writing residency programme attached to the Honk Kong Baptist University situated in Kowloon Tong.

Kowloon Tong is a relatively green area with some free-standing residential houses – an expensive form of housing in Hong Kong, as most people live in the high rise housing estates that are everywhere and can climb up to seventy floors in height. It is close to the old airport site. The new airport is situated on Lantau Island, but anyone who flew into Hong Kong in the past will surely not forget the feeling that you were about to land right in the middle of the city.

On the programme with me were seven other writers: two 'nature' poets from Washington State, USA, Mike O'Connor and Jim McNulty; Funso Aiyejina, a Nigerian writer and academic who now lives in Trinidad, and whose book *The Legends of Rockhills* won best first book in the African section of the Commonwealth Writers' Award a few years ago; Marion Bethell, a lawyer and Bahaman poet from Nassau; and Rita Ann Higgins, from Galway, Ireland. There were two Chinese writers: Liu Ka-Shiang, a 'nature' poet from Taiwan, and Cji Zijian from the city of Harbin in the far north of mainland China, who has published many books of prose and folklore and stories for children.

The Hong Kong students were polite, although quite shy, and extremely well-coiffed and fashionably dressed. Rita, the Irish poet, dubbed them the “Bling Dynasty”. They knew a lot about their own history of Chinese poetry, but I was unsure how much they knew about modern Australian, American and New Zealand poetry.

We stayed on campus throughout our time at the University. For the month in residence I was free to work on my own writing, but also spent time speaking to several different classes at the university, judged a poetry competition in which the poems had been written in English, spoke on a symposium and at a seminar, and gave several readings, both at the university and outside.

One of our most enjoyable nights was a reading we were invited to attend at the Hong Kong University library, where many local writers read from a collection entitled *City Voices*. This is an anthology of Hong Kong prose and poetry in English from 1945 to the present, edited by Xu Xi, a Hong Kong writer who also resides for some time each year in New Zealand. This reading featured Agnes Lim, David McKirdy, Nicole Wong, Ya Se, Hark Yeung Wai Man and Jam Ismail, among others. It was great to meet some local writers.

We were also invited to read at the Fringe Club, a regular reading venue, particularly for poetry, organized every month by American writer Madeline Slavick, and Martin Alexander, the poetry editor for the Asia Literary Review.

I spent a lot of time reading Chinese works in translation borrowed from the excellent Hong Kong Baptist University Library. I would recommend the ‘Misty’ Poets – Gu Cheng, Yang Lian, Duoduo and Bei Dao (recently living in the USA but about to return to Hong Kong). Prose I enjoyed included Ma Jian’s *Stick Out Your Tongue*, novels by Ba Jin, Yu Hua’s *To Live* and *Chronicle of a Blood Merchant*, *Silver City* by Li Riu (translated by Howard Goldblatt) and of course *The Monkey Stories* by Wu Ch’eng ‘En.

Rita Ann Higgins and I became good friends over the month we were there. While on a long bus drive back from Lantau Island to see the Big Buddha, I asked Rita how she began writing. She told me she started because she “used to tell a lot of lies” and had “a wild imagination”. Then she admitted that at twenty-two years old she was diagnosed with TB. She had to recover in an isolation ward, and began writing when the TB patients were offered a workshop in creative writing.

Her first poem was a soliloquy to a dog her sister had, that she liked to feed liver and potatoes to. Rita thought the diet was too rich for the animal, so she wrote about that. She said she didn’t know any rules so she broke them all.

She is now one of two hundred artists and writers in Ireland who get paid twelve thousand Euros a year by the Irish government to keep producing work. A writer can be voted on to the list by a panel and the list is reviewed every five years.

Rita has published about seven collections of poetry, the most recent of which is *Throw in the Vowels* (Bloddaxe, 2005), containing new and selected previous work, and a great read. Rita is Galway-born, has been writer in residence for Galway County and at the National University of Ireland in Galway, and has been a recipient of the Peadar O’Donnell Award. She is fluent in the Irish language, and you can read more about her, and read her poems, on her website: www.ritaannhiggins.com

Talk Poem

Bryan Walpert

Interruption to a Journey

by Norman MacCaig

The hare we had run over
Bounced about the road
On the springing curve
Of its spine.

Cornfields breathed in the darkness,
We were going through the darkness and
The breathing cornfields from one
Important place to another.

We broke the hare's neck
And made that place, for a moment,
The most important place there was,
Where a bowstring was cut
And a bow broken forever
That had shot itself through so many
Darknesses and cornfields.

It was left in that landscape.
It left us in another.

To put a hare at the centre of a death poem — as the 20th century Scottish poet Norman MacCaig does in 'Interruption to a Journey' — is cheeky. It is easy to fall into bathos. One reason this poem works for me is the speaker's discomfort with the poem's entire pretext, suggested by the struggle of the speaker to take the event seriously, and the way the poem settles into a larger meditation.

The poor hare is subject to some linguistic disrespect when MacCaig says it "bounced about the road / On the springing curve / Of its spine." That is hardly the language of grief. The discomfort of the speaker with the poem's occasion continues in the next stanza when it tries to get more serious. The personification "Cornfields breathed" — in the context of a dying hare — comes across as rather portentous. So MacCaig deflates it with "and the breathing cornfields," a repetition that mocks rather than underscores.

Yet somehow the poem resolves in stanza three into something quite serious. MacCaig gives up the figural for the literal — "We broke that hare's neck" — to look at the event straight on, without sentimentality. The shift in tone provides the context for reading "through so many / Darknesses and cornfields." The repetition is again scornful of "cornfields breathed" (and by extension "bowstring"). But rather than mock the use of personification to mourn the trivial death of a rabbit, the line to my ears mocks the speaker's attempt to gild the lily with figurative language at all. The literal suffices.

That is quite a shift. Initially the speaker seems uncomfortable trying to find pathos in such a trivial event as a hare's death and so mocks himself for doing so. In the third stanza the speaker accepts the weight of the event and mocks himself not for using figurative language to suggest importance where there is none but for using figurative language to impose importance where it is already obvious.

The poem has recognized itself not as elegy but as elegiac. Elegies lament a particular death; the elegiac poem mourns the inevitability of loss (e.g. Hopkins' 'Spring and Fall'). The poem is occasioned by the hare, but the poem's central concern is with the way death — like life — happens, while we're making other plans, while en route from "one / Important place to another." The wonderful play on words in both the title (the journey of the hare, the journey of the speaker, life's journey) and in the final line (he shifts from physical to emotional landscape) strengthen the effect. The death left the speaker in a different mental space. It is MacCaig he mourns for.

Best of all, the poem can be read as an *ars poetica*. A lyric poem interrupts the journey of narrative. A lyric poem's province is not so much our stories as the singular moments within them, moments when you stop the car, get out, and take a good long look at the landscape that's — too quickly — passing.

MEMBERS' POEMS

The Other Woman

The other woman is my friend, he said
While he stood on our rug and
I sorted a lifetime of books into two piles.

We shared an experience, a hotel room,
her house, her marital bed, he said
While sitting on our settee in front of our fire.

She was nice to me, he said
While he sat on our bench on our deck and
I held my breath and squeezed the tears away.

You need to see someone, he said
While leaning in our kitchen and drinking from our
cups.

I do, I thought.
Someone who will darn my heart
Weave together the raw edges of gut
Tie knots
Mend me.
Stitch me up so that hurt can never seep in.
Someone who will let me know that the other woman
is not his friend
That she was a five-minute movie
That she has been canned - she is no longer showing
Banished to a back-room she gathers dust.

A round woman in a round tin.

Barbara Bailey

Spring's Awakening

Drear Winter draws his mantle sere
To his cold self in passing by
And rails at Sol whose warming presence
Drives melancholy from the sky.

Rejoice Earth Mother, greet Creation
Emerging shyly from your womb,
In perfumed innocence, golden, dancing;
Nature's beauty ousts retreating gloom.

Spring awakens – worlds rejoicing;
Youths and maidens – rites of Spring;
Landscape clad in living raiment;
God's in his Heaven; let the Welkin ring.

Patrick L. Glasson

Poem about My Father

My father painted the window sills
door jambs
window frames
all around
so often sanding down and sanding down
brushing dust onto the carpet

Quality white enamel paint
smallish brushes
tiny brushes for the corners
in many coats, pink primer then
white for first and second
the third to see your face in

My father painting in old tweed trousers
tied round with rope
the colour of his hazel eyes
and fine hair the shade
of speckled eggs
or faded autumn leaves
flitting to the ground
like the fine dust
of sanded paint
falling, as I said: onto the carpet
the green carpet

Suzanne Vaassen

Crossing the snow

i.m. Janet Frame

Afterwards, we return to the gallery and
stand before the vast winter picture.
Fence posts and trunks of trees are sunk

deeper in snow. Yet every colour is present
in the white. As if even here, she can
not efface herself.

We stare at the farm house, the windows
that shutter out the cold. We long to cross
the paddocks to the back doorstep –

find inside the loaf of kibbled wheat
rising on the hearth – bread seeded with
windy days. We pause at the edge

of the yard. Under the ice
green stalks of grass light up the darkest place.

Jan Hutchison

(from: 'Days among Trees', Steele Roberts, 2005)

Luminosity

Watching the fairy boats
Lip the waves
Contort candidly amid azures and mauves
Sprinklings of stars glisten on the bay
You apply rubies to cheeks
Silver and gold to wrists and ankles
You shimmer, astonish
We're rising above gardens
All touched by rain where
Jesus' champagne eyes
Are bravura bookends for
Verses of the poets
Where the space between us
Is charged,
Where a kiss is a life's work
Where minutes elongate and
Callow youths are incandescent
Here amid the luster and brilliance
We meet
For the first time
Can you feel it?

Keith Nunes

Members of the New Zealand Poetry Society are invited to submit their published or unpublished poems to editor@poetrysociety.org.nz Maximum length (including stanza breaks): 40 lines.

January DEADLINE is 7th December