



a fine line

September 2009

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

Website sponsored by: Signify <http://www.signify.co.nz/>
Annual competition, haiku junior section, sponsored by:
Asia New Zealand Foundation www.asianz.org.nz
Meeting venue generously supplied by The Thistle Inn

ISSN 1178-3931
The New Zealand Poetry
Society Inc.
PO Box 5283
Lambton Quay
Wellington 6145

Patrons

Dame Fiona Kidman
Vincent O'Sullivan

**National Coordinator &
President**

Laurice Gilbert

Contacts

info@poetrysociety.org.nz
www.poetrysociety.org.nz

SEPTEMBER MEETING, WELLINGTON

Monday 21 September, 7.30pm

Guest Poet: L E Scott

The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St

Meeting begins with an open mic
\$2 entry

OCTOBER MEETING, WELLINGTON

Monday 19 October, 7.30pm

Guest Poet: Helen Rickerby

The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St

Meeting begins with an open mic
\$2 entry

Meetings Sponsored by Creative Communities / Wellington City Council

Contents

- 2) Feature Article: Poets' Bootcamp *John O'Connor*
- 5) From the National Coordinator *Laurice Gilbert*
Letter to the Editor
About our Contributors
- 6) A Warm Welcome to ...
2009 International Poetry Competition Results
- 7) Congratulations
Surfing the Web
Publications – new books on the NZPS book shelf
Noticeboard
Workshops
- 8) Calls for submissions
Regional Reports: Upper Hutt – Montana Poetry Day *Tony Chad*
- 9) Windrift – June Meeting *Bevan Greenslade*
- 10) Reviews: *Etymology*, Bryan Walpert *Keith Nunes*
- 11) *The Blind Singer*, Chris Price *Harvey Molloy*

- 12) *Fast Talking PI* Selina Tusitala Marsh *Jenny Clay*
 14) *Vivid Familiar* Stephanie de Montalk *Jenny Clay*
 15) *Haiku NewZ: Comment – Haiku Future* *John O'Connor*
 17) Congratulatory
 Competitions and Submissions
 Notices
 18) *Kiwi Haiku*
 Tanka Reflections – small songs of the human spirit
 19) *How it is – Poetry in a Pod* *Gillian Cameron*
 20) *Members' Poems:* Caroline Glen, Ackroyd Jackson, Helen McKinlay, Pita Patter, Clare Ward.

Feature Article

POETS' BOOTCAMP

John O'Connor

I sometimes fantasise about poets. This may seem odd – they're a fairly unattractive lot in general. Nonetheless, my fantasy has them in a deserted army camp (as we don't have any spare prison capacity) with a dozen or so old, leaky and of course pleasingly unhygienic huts scattered around a parade ground in satisfying disrepair.

Given my sneaky nature, the poets are tempted there by the promise of limitless wealth and fame if they attend and are highly placed in 'The Course'. Limos are therefore sent for them and, when they reach the Volcanic Plateau, it's explained that isolation is imperative at this early stage to avoid the media (who are already sniffing about) and, not to worry, the explosions are just the Army sharpening up its invasion techniques. It's hardly Overlord, is it?

Having got the bastards there, and removed the transport (the Army still going for it all around) I welcome them warmly and explain that they'll be in dorms according to preferred genre or approach. Eg: Haiku in Hut A (Heads of Dorm: Pat Prime/ Cyril Childs); Poetry Lite in Hut B (Heads: Jenny Bornholdt/ Bill Manhire); Irish/Maori Affairs in C (Anne Kennedy/ Robert Sullivan); gender issues in D (Bernadette Hall/ Kai Jensen). And so to bed.

Next morning bright and early we meet in the central quad. Really, we're all getting along extremely well. Not since toddlerhood have I been called "Johnny" by my peers with such affection, and my attraction to the opposite sex has increased markedly! (I hastily announce that from now on I'm Superintending Dorm Master – and not to couplet anything about me bursting into the girls' showers when I'm elevated to Cabinet, thank you.)

Then I invite Tony Beyer to join me in front of the delightfully attentive crowd. I explain that the point of this morning's exercise is to break out of our poetic comfort zones – to liberate those aspects of our potentials that, due to our pre-dominantly Catholic and/or disturbed childhoods, we've long suppressed to our collective cost.

They're all familiar with Tony's poetry so I don't have to explain that – apart from the haiku/ tanka sides – it often deals with the everyday of NZ life and history. In this sense it's a social poetry. Again, I don't have to labour its high quality as that's 'universally accepted'. At this point I note James Brown's vigorous assent. "Ahhh," I sigh with satisfaction. "But . . ." and they hang on my hiatus, "even Tony can be improved upon!" "NO! NO!" they cry, "OH NO!!!" I raise my hand, command-ingly. The silence is immediate, palpable. "Ah, yes. Even Tony can be improved upon," I repeat in my most dulcet tones (not very dulcet I admit, but no-one seems to mind). I pause, reminiscent of Hitler at Nuremberg (or wherever that big rally was where he stood around like a dick for ages before speaking). "Yes! And Tony will now show you how he has improved upon himself, in the sense of broadening his oeuvre!" At this point Tony does a double somersault and recites the following poem from the anthology of light verse and light poetry, *The Unbelievable Lightness Of Eggs*:

Postcards From Tomis

1

these are the footnotes of one
who learnt the art of crawling
too late to rescue his career

2

observe overleaf
the clear stream
easing towards the sea

sparkling and softening
through tree shade and light
like the smiles of women

who kneel in the shallows
washing clothes
and how I hate all this

3

summer of giggles
dropped NOS canisters
all over town

the barbarians'
music and motorbikes
louder than ever

The applause is deafening. I let it go on, and on. I recall reading somewhere that Stalin used to do this after giving a speech. The first person to stop clapping and generally going nuts would be whisked off to a gulag. As they're already in a gulag I can't really do this. But I let it run for a while anyhow, out of sheer love of power (short men are like this you understand, ask Gandhi).

I slap the lectern, decisively. Laurice Gilbert jerks awake and asks David Howard what the hell's going on. "John's losing it again." "Par for 'The Course'," Laurice replies. "What was that pathetic noise?" I give her a filthy look.

"The point," I enunciate slowly, in my best Churchillian manner, "is that this piece of light poetry rates for me among the very best of the many first-rate poems Tony has written in other genres. Yet!" – happily observing the distress of those on diuretics – "would he have been, or more to the point *been able to be*, so daring had he been writing in one of his more usual modes?"

"*And what* – you will be asking yourselves — *do I mean by daring?*" I draw myself up to my full four foot seven. "By DARING (in practice – the concept itself is clear enough) I mean the following in concentrated interaction. The knowing irony of Part One; the wonderful contrast of atmosphere (if not authorial attitude) between Parts One and Two, and how the line "and how I hate all this" so nicely actualises/ sharpens the beauty above it (by contrast) and gives us the sense of an intelligent, complex observer/ creator, perhaps initially seduced by the beauty he has himself recalled/ evoked, though ultimately rejecting it; the equally impressive change of atmosphere in Part Three – bringing us (in exiled context) from the distant past to the deafening but still deadening present, whilst essentially maintaining the same persona with its necessarily (but subtly) changing voice. The Classicism of Part One, the Orientalism of Part Two, the global urbanism of Part Three. The alienation and underlying violence of its historical sense, the desperate banality and beauty of it all rescued, somehow, by overarching suggestions of redemptive possibilities – of hope beyond hopelessness."

I pause for breath (deservedly), observe a few of the female poets prostrate on the potty asphalt and reflect how fortunate it is that Glenn is there to revive them.

“Consider,” I continue – hitching my trousers and flipping to another example with characteristic charm – “whether ‘The Darkening Ecliptic’ (the Ern Malley poems, 1944) are not best understood as poetic landmarks (as claimed by the editors of *Angry Penguins*, who should have known better), nor the hastily scribbled fakes (as claimed by their authors, James McAuley and Harold Stewart), but INSPIRED PARODIES which liberated (those unconsciously self-parodying ‘classicists’) McAuley and Stewart from their usual limiting and anachronistic poetic practices? ie, which made their oeuvres more interesting and authentic simply by exploiting the potentials of a much freer approach to verse, and one in which they were naturally gifted – a ‘parasitic’ approach necessarily freer than the various forms of Modernism and the modern they targeted:

It was a night when the planets
Were wreathed in dying garlands.
It seemed we had substituted
The abattoirs for the guillotine

. . . .
Princess, you lived in Princess St,
Where the urchins pick their nose in the sun
With the left hand . . .

(‘Perspective Lovesong’)

*Thy ear is liable, thy food is such
As hath been belch’d on by infected lungs . . .*

(‘Young Prince of Tyre’)

The rabbit’s foot of fur and claw
Taps on the drain-pipe . . .

(‘Sybilline’)

I resigned to the living all collateral images
Reserving to myself a man’s
Inalienable right to be sad
At his own funeral . . .

(‘Petit Testament’)

And much more that’s equally as silly but much more amusing in context. Consider!” I continue in my beautifully elliptical manner, “whether the poetry of Glover, Baxter, Campbell, Stead and Sewell would be as compelling were it not for its essential, individualistic variety?

“Consider – to get personal – trying something different yourselves, and also consider *mixing* different things. Mongrels are usually smarter than pure-breeds after all.

“You may be a very fine poet – there are a good number in New Zealand at present. Perhaps you’ll be finer still. From the prose poem to pao – it’s a large field. Too few of us explore those options. Consequently, we don’t find the full range of our strengths within them. We tend too often to exhaust a few currently popular genres then continue aridly within them till the fashion changes (in most cases), or in spite of such changes in others. Which is to say that, for whatever underlying reasons, WE TOO OFTEN SHORT-CHANGE OURSELVES AS POETS.”

The climax is followed by uninhibited cheering, etc. I let it go on, and on – smile pathologically and retire to an air conditioned suite with a few friends, reflecting as I do so on how common it is for the (so-called) ephemeral parts of a poet’s oeuvre to survive long past the use-by date of the supposedly more substantial work.

The day’s getting hot, very hot indeed. They’re putting an awning over the rostrum for me. We sip iced coffees. Presently I’ll begin my eagerly awaited two hour dissertation on ANZAC surrealist imagery and Hancock’s Half Hour – followed by the endurance awards which, naturally, contribute towards one’s Course Placing.

It gives me considerable pleasure to think that many of the poets are too young to know what I've been – or will be – talking about. "Fellow poets," I rumble (or try to rumble). "FELLOW POETS, we take up the story on the very cusp of the future . . ."

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

There's not much room left for me in this issue. As promised in the last issue, I've included the full list of the competition winners, including all commended entries. On the business side, it's funding grant application time again, and Gillian Cameron and I have been hard at work, trying to persuade Creative New Zealand to resume supporting our activities. Fingers crossed.

We were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Alistair Te Ariki Campbell (ONZM) on the 16th August, after a short illness. Alistair was not only one of New Zealand's finest and most actively encouraging poets, he was also, with his late wife Meg, a Patron of the NZPS for some years. For a full bio, see his entry on the Book Council website: www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/campbella.html and for some tributes, see Beatties Book Blog: <http://beattiesbookblog.blogspot.com/2009/08/alistair-te-ariki-campbell-dies-author.html> *The Guardian* published an excellent and thorough obituary at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2009/aug/24/alistair-te-ariki-campbell-obituary>

"My death is simply this:
I cannot stay awake a moment longer."

RIP to a great man and a very fine poet.

Letter to the Editor (etc.)

Dear NZPS President/Co-ordinator/Editor/All-around keeper of the faith:

Winter is the time of year when I decide which charities I will support. Personally I like to choose one for my own interests (the NZPS), one that changes every year to spread the joy, and one for animals. I'm writing to ask if contributions to the NZPS are tax deductible? I understand the organisation is a registered charity, so I presume they are. Contributions of course would be in addition to the membership subscription.

If I do make a donation, do I receive a separate receipt for tax purposes? And will a contribution encourage the Muse to visit me more often?

Thanks for this information. I, and my blank notebook, eagerly await your answer.

Margaret Vos (Wellington)

Ed's Response: The answer to all questions is yes, though the final one may depend on the amount.

About our Contributors

Gillian Cameron is a Wellington poet and writer of creative non-fiction. She is a committee member for the NZPS, and a past President.

Jenny Clay is a part-time poet, non-fiction writer, and librarian. A book she compiled on her mother, Marie Clay, was published in May; she has two recent online poems in BMP 24.

<http://www.blackmailpress.com/JClay24.html>

Harvey Molloy is a Wellington poet and secondary school teacher.

Keith Nunes is a former newspaper journalist who has had poems published in *Landfall* and *Takahe*, among others. He writes to stay sane.

John O'Connor is a Christchurch poet and critic.

A Warm Welcome to:

Gerard Anselmi, Pukekohe
Siobhan Harvey, Auckland
Bridget Thompson, Nelson

Kees Beentjes, Rodney
Kristina Jensen, Picton
Xan Todd Waiheke Island

Sylva Cornejo, Paekakariki
J Frank Kenney, USA

2009 International Poetry Competition Results

Open Section 1st 'My father's balance' Frankie McMillan, Christchurch. 2nd 'echo' Owen Bullock, Waihi. 3rd 'Ordnance' John Horrocks, Lower Hutt.

Highly Commended: 'White frost' Tom Dowling, Ireland; 'Overture' Amanda Hunt, Wellington; 'Man with two legs' Frankie McMillan; 'She tells you' Catherine Moxham, Palmerston North; 'His first language is Japanese' John O'Connor, Christchurch; 'Process' Pat White, Masterton.

Commended: 'Windmills and Beaches' and 'Raspberry Money' Alison Denham, Waimangaroa; 'The Wind and the Caterpillar' Janis Freegard, Wellington; 'Shoes' Karen Goa, North Shore City; 'Echolalia' Saradha Koirala, Wellington; 'No money in Hungarians' Frankie McMillan; "'They shall entangle this world with iron" Wooden Cup' JM White, USA; 'My father was a hare' Nick Williamson, Christchurch; 'Little Night Song' Cy Mathews, Dunedin.

Open Junior Section 1st 'Sum to infinity' Charlotte Trevella, Rangiora. 1st Runner-up (Secondary) 'She Has Seen Summers' Sonya Clark, Hastings. 2nd Runner-up (Sec.) 'Rhapsodomancy' Rebecca Hawkes, Ashburton. 1st Runner-up (Primary/ Intermediate) 'On the Walk to Separation Point' Oliver Sircombe-Kohen, Upper Moutere. 2nd Runner-up (Prim./Int.) 'So Sad' Yanhao Tay, Christchurch.

Highly Commended: 'Me Little Small' Laura Hadfield, Auckland; 'Night Light', 'Genetics' and 'Brothers Grimm' Charlotte Trevella; 'Alone' Harry Waters, Arrowtown.

Commended: 'On Studying Biology' Sophia Frentz, Tauranga; 'My Father is a Writer' Monique Hodgkinson, Wellington; 'The Bear' Tabitha Manson, Auckland; 'House of Animals' Luke Masters, Auckland; 'Camping' Leika McIver, Palmerston North; 'The Last Formal' Kirsty Plowman, Christchurch; 'Weathervane' and 'Summer etc.' Charlotte Trevella; 'Family Farm' Sam Williams, Christchurch; 'Blow Wind' Room 10, Victoria Ave Primary School, Auckland.

Haiku Section 1st 'fluttering to the creak' Claire Knight, UK. 2nd 'bedside vigil' Ernest J Berry, Picton. 3rd 'great-grandfather's diary -' Sandra Simpson, Tauranga. 4th 'table for two -' Patricia Prime, Auckland. 5th 'the scent of jasmine' Steve Cordery, Tauranga.

Highly Commended: 'boarding school at 7' Melanie Barnes, Upper Hutt; 'picnic area ...' Nathalie Buckland, Australia; 'holding hands' Steve Cordery; 'after the funeral' Helen Lowe, Christchurch; 'new glasses' Joanna Preston, Christchurch; 'christmas lily' Eleanor Rae, Christchurch; 'through the dome' Sandra Simpson; 'camping ground -' Helen Yong, Christchurch.

Commended: 'early snow' Ernest J Berry; 'an ambulance' Owen Bullock, Waihi; 'Heathrow' and '2 am police call' Karen Peterson Butterworth, Otaki; 'winding road at evening' Ngaere Campbell, Coromandel; 'marriage ceremony' Kirsten Cliff, Tauranga; 'city centre' Cameron Elliot, Tauranga; 'dead transistor radio ...' Maureen Irvine, Coromandel; 'twang of the fence wire -' Scott Mason, USA; 'country war memorial' Sandra Simpson.

Haiku Junior Section 1st 'stolen lunchtime' Sophia Frentz, Tauranga. 2nd 'last dance' Sophia Frentz. 3rd 'the tree's reflection' Devon Gurney-Meehan, Christchurch. 4th 'sitting still' Margaret Reed, Christchurch. 5th 'Devils' fingers' Cathy Reimer, Christchurch.

Highly Commended 'power lines buzz' Courtney Barr, Christchurch; 'my face reflected' Harry Frentz, Tauranga; 'autumn leaves' Sophia Frentz; 'midnight my cupcake full' Ashleigh Goh, Christchurch; 'I close the gate' Ben Jenkins, Christchurch; 'flax bushes' Jacoba Kinley, Christchurch; 'spider's web' Charlotte Trevella, Rangiora; 'moon' Felicity van der Pol, Christchurch; 'full moon' Sam Verdellen, Christchurch.

Commended: 'traffic jams' Matilda Boyce, Christchurch; 'midnight' Jared Chin, Christchurch; 'the spaniel's shadow' Jessica Duston, Westport; 'old table' Sophia Frentz; 'a recycle truck waits' Kimberley Gee, Christchurch; 'on a still night' William Habgood, Christchurch; 'jandals float' Danielle Lusk, Westport; 'smoke rises' Ayreton Macdonald, Christchurch; 'empty seat' Charlotte Trevella; 'snow' Felicity van der Pol. *Special Mention:* 'the little old frog' James Criglington, Christchurch.

Congratulations to all our successful entrants.

Congratulations

Your National Coordinator, Laurice Gilbert, has had a poem accepted for the upcoming (November 2009) issue of *Landfall*, edited by David Eggleton, and is too excited to keep it to herself.

Surfing the Web

<http://www.moontowncafe.com/> A free online poetry community with lots to offer, even without the option of paid 'Premium' membership.

<http://www.everypoet.com/index.htm> Ditto, without the paid membership (they suggest a donation instead). Includes ideas for generating poems, links to traditional as well as recent poets and an impressive reading list.

<http://misrumphiuseffect.blogspot.com/> The interesting and inspiring blog of a teacher educator. She reads a lot of poetry, and makes insightful and useful comments on the genre.

<http://nzpoetlaureate.natlib.govt.nz/> The site for new Poet Laureate Cilla McQueen.

Publications

New arrivals on the NZPS bookshelf since the last issue:

Aloe: and Other Poems Diana Bridge (AUP)

The Lustre Jug Bernadette Hall (VUP)

Letters from the Asylum John Knight (Sudden Valley Press)

Selected Haiku Ron Riddell & Raúl Henao (Fundación Zen Montaña de Silencio)

Just This Brian Turner (VUP; went straight out for review, before I even had time to read it!)

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

WRITERS ON MONDAYS, Wellington

The IIML's annual readings are well under way, 12.15pm on Mondays at The Marae, Te Papa.

September's readings include NZPS members: Carol Cromie & Pat White (7 September), and Sugu Pillay (21 September).

Workshops

SOUL FOOD, Wellington

Saturday 12 September, 10am-3 pm, at The Cenacle, 59 Tarawera Rd, Johnsonville. Nourishing the spirit through creative listening to Aotearoa-New Zealand poetry and place; creative response through writing. Leaders: Wellington Poets Anne Powell & Trish Harris. Cost: Suggested koha \$20. BYO lunch; tea and coffee provided. Bookings : Ph. 04 478 8575 or office@cenacle.org.nz

To be followed by: SOUL FOOD, Wellington

Thursday 12 November, 7.30-9.30pm, at The Cenacle, 59 Tarawera Rd, Johnsonville. An enjoyable evening of celebrating our own poetry, and including guided opportunities for writing, led by Wellington poets, Anne Powell & Trish Harris. Cost: \$10 (wine and juice provided) Bookings: as above.

Submissions

Other Poetry <http://www.otherpoetry.com/>

Other Poetry is published three times per year, welcomes new and established poets, and accepts e-mail enquiries. Writer's guidelines are online and payment is £5. There is no restriction on theme, subject, length, or style. Allow six weeks for a reply.

Poems Wanted Poesy, a quality focused wholesale company producing gourmet food products, requires poems. "As our name suggests, as well as being about food we are about poetry. We combine the two by placing small cards containing poems inside the packets of food we produce. We have the potential to publish a large amount of poems in this way and are welcoming submissions. The poems need to be 10 lines or less. We pay anthology rates." For more information contact: alex@poesy.co.nz

Poetry Sz: demystifying mental illness Submissions accepted year-round. Calling for original, previously unpublished poetry written by people who have experienced mental illness. Poems of all topics and styles are welcome. Send 4-6 poems and a short bio in the body of your email to poetrysz@yahoo.com Submission guidelines at: <http://www.poetrysz.blogspot.com/2006/04/submission-guidelines.html>

Regional Reports

Readers are invited to submit reports on local events as they occur. Please email to editor@poetrysociety.org.nz preferably as attached Word or rtf documents, or post to PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145.

UPPER HUTT – MONTANA POETRY DAY

Tony Chad

Upper Hutt City Library was the venue when prize-winners were announced for Upper Hutt's 2009 poetry competition. Local identity Kevin Meehan said he was honoured to read out the winning poem on behalf of his daughter-in-law Kylie, who now lives in Tauranga. NZPS member Robin Fry (Lower Hutt) took second place, with Jessica Le Bas, Nelson, in third place.

Speaking at the Library event as competition organiser, I expressed the hope that this year's theme, Elemental Poetry, had not been responsible for a month of stormy weather! This year's series of events, culminating in Montana Poetry Day on 24th July, was "one of the best years yet", and I am grateful to sponsors Montana, Creative Communities and Valley Micropress. I plan to make next year's event – the 10th – the best year yet!

I believe the format we used this year gave us the most inclusive events ever. We focussed on taking poetry out to the community, starting with a poetry workshop led by James Brown at the end of June. All 20 places were quickly filled, with writers representing all sections of the community from college students to senior citizens. James and I then performed at Pinehaven Library on the Wednesday evening before Montana Poetry Day.

Poetry Day in Upper Hutt kicked off with a 'Golden Oldies' session featuring classic poems in a morning at the Upper Hutt City Library. The popularity of this event led to discussions on setting up regular poetry readings at the Library. 'Pre-Dinner Poems' at 6.30pm started with awards for the Teen-TXT-a-Poem, a Library initiative, followed by readings from guest Chris Price and a selection of local finalists. Mayor Wayne Guppy presented the awards. The evening concert finale at the Mayfair Café was a fascinating mix of music and poetry performed by 'Palindrome': Chris Price with her partner Robbie Duncan. This included improvised live music on guitars and percussion mixed with snatches of 'looped' music recorded on stage and then played back during the performance. All this was a backdrop to Chris's words, in a style reminiscent (to me) of Laurie Anderson. I found the whole concert fascinating, and a full house at the Mayfair seemed equally absorbed!

Upper Hutt City Library did a fantastic job of providing venues and facilitating events. They also ran a very popular parallel event of six poetry workshops for primary school kids, presented by Moira Wairama. These are our poets of the future! Thanks to everyone who took part or attended these events and helped make our celebrations successful.

Results:

- 1) Whenua - Kylie Meehan, Tauranga
- 2) Riverine elements - Robin Fry, Petone
- 3) Moonshine Road - Jessica Le Bas, Nelson

In addition to Kevin Meehan and Robin Fry, local finalists who read their work were Heather O'Brien, Audrey Brassey, Tracey Green, Audrey Harper, Bob Munro, Nola Borrell and Emmett McElhatton.

WINDRIFT – JUNE MEETING

Bevan Greenslade

The remarkable thing about the works submitted for our first haibun workshop was their sheer variety; the unsurprising thing was that no-one felt ready to allow a work to be submitted in entirety to NZPS's report. Instead, I have selected snippets from, and our comments on, some of the haibun which appealed to me.

The most original was Neil Whitehead's satire on travel/ tourism. He offered contrasting nospacenopunctuationastreamofconsciousness prose and simple embedded haiku. Annette de Jonge commented that it would be good set to music; she was charmed by its colours. I thought it would be a good script for a short film – worth discussing with the NZ Film School?

Annette herself recounted an indoor bowls afternoon, finishing with a witty 'concrete' or visual poem:

	green mat	
the left six brown balls		the right six black balls
	very	small
	white ball	

Kerry Popplewell walked her dog in Ngaio Gorge, listening to streams over stones below and birds above – until surprised by an unseen commuter train passing overhead on tracks hidden by the bush.

Nola Borrell was in Banks Peninsula, waltzing alone in an abandoned community hall, noting the grey stone church, observing pigeons from a small patch of native bush but commenting that they were feeding on South American lucerne.

Karen Peterson Butterworth recounted a tour of her ancestral Shetland croft sites. Fisher-farmers in stone-walled thatched homes and nearby vegetable patches, they have left behind stone and greened ground shadows. Her three haiku fitted her story neatly, and thoughtfully led our minds beyond the tale itself. The final haiku line summed it pithily: "from homeland to homeland".

Penny Pruden was fascinated with navy blues: a cat, and a pool. Annette thought it had the makings of a children's story. Penny went on to muse over reasons for lack of acknowledgement via a metaphor of leaving a photo anonymously under a neighbour's neglected barbecue. And Neil admired the phrase "blossom-laden winter".

In my haibun, I recalled two episodes at opposite ends of the world and separated by 40 years, the connecting thread being fresh water. From listening to a cuckoo in the shallows of a Finnish lake, to rescuing long strips of bark from a storm-damaged totara tree in the pool of a Hawke's Bay river. The bark was turned into a 'sculpture' hanging cloud-like from a ceiling at home, finally observing "here ... not yet didymo".

Linzy Forbes' voice was octaves different from the others in its tone. A yarn about going with his young son for cricket and a picnic at a mate's place. But the writer was crook so they had to make do with

watching Black Caps on TV. Then he felt better and they had a picnic on the porch, the kid mowing bricks with a lawnmower. Then his mate drops her pipe. Then they go home. Loose bondage for Kiwi blokes, eh?

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

Reviews

Etymology Bryan Walpert (Cinnamon Press) RRP \$25 ISBN 978-1-905614-73-8

Keith Nunes

Erudite (learned; showing great learning, says the Oxford) comes to mind when reading Bryan Walpert's debut collection of poems *Etymology*. Erudite with gusto, though – no dry explanations of the great meanings of words and things in our universe but rather, a genuinely poetic look at life through a microscope.

What Walpert does for the reader is expand the mind while consoling it. We are taken on a trip into the inner reaches of words and when there, we are entertained with lines such as:

“Shade / is a cold cloth on the head”
“... to the shallows between your lips”
“... as dawn slips the mooring of dark”
“When I touched you, / it wasn't ownership”
“... as my mop drank the day / from the tiles.”

Everyone... needs a room in which
to pass the time, a square
of carpet on which to sleep
then wake in a patch of sun

Then there's a wonderful image created in 'Waterside Pavilion Without Rowboat':

There is a rowboat floating by
that gazebo. Or it was there,
yesterday. Look harder.
Paint as if you remember.
Paint as if you have drifted
up to yesterday, surprising it.

In 'Ode to My Father's 14th Month in Retirement' he finds new ways to couch phrases that have long been trodden on:

Cherry trees warm the blossoms
that held their breaths through
winter ...

...the azaleas, planted
twenty years gone by
with a younger man's back...

Away from the delving there are poems with simple lyrical beauty as in 'Twin Lakes', which has two moons and a boy growing for all to see:

When I turn my head the full moon is cut clean
by the peak, then rises faster than I knew
possible through the clouds. Its twin in the lake
floats at the far edge, at the center. A fish jumps.

Then he completes the circle and offers an inspiring view of what he sees: "The brightest moon/ of my life

is wading, like a child, to shore.”

I particularly enjoyed ‘Operation, October’, in which the writer sees himself as a spitting image of his father but untouched in comparison to his father’s skin which is under the knife of a surgeon; and ‘The Scientist, My Wife, Explains Satellite Imagery’ which manages to interweave some fascinating facts with a love story that raises the question of sex in an inventive way.

Although this his first book of poems, Walpert is well established as a poet and academic. He won the 2007 New Zealand Poetry Society International Poetry Competition, is poetry editor of *Bravado* magazine, which comes out of the Bay of Plenty, and is a winner of a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award for teaching creative writing in New Zealand. He is a senior lecturer in the School of English and Media Studies at Massey University in Palmerston North.

This background all makes perfect sense when you read his works, which stand as an intellectual and imaginative exploration of human relationships and poetry itself. Never overly emotional, Bryan is actually restrained and amusing and can turn a pretty mean metaphor which makes for a colourful and enlightening read.

The Blind Singer Chris Price (AUP) RRP \$25.00

ISBN 978 1 86940 433 8

Harvey Molloy

The Blind Singer opens with a dedication which, on second reading – and this is a book that yields many rewards on a second reading – signposts Price’s concerns: “To Robbie, who hears the sound of the sound.” *The Blind Singer* offers a sustained series of poems all of which explore music, musical instruments, and composition. Price’s experience as a musician and knowledge of music permeates these poems. The book can be compared to listening to a programme of classical music: there is a full orchestra present and the tone is more formal, intellectual, and serious than much contemporary music.

What do we need to do to hear the sound of the sound? We need to be quiet and our acquiescence and silence form a contract with the poet as composer. A key argument running through these poems is that we need to work at listening. We need to be patient, in order to appreciate how a particular sound falls into the larger arrangement of the composition. The poem ‘The blind singer’ ends with the need for silence in order for the song to be heard. At times, Price makes demands on our concentration and we may be tempted to fidget, as in longer works such as ‘Black Sun’ which is spoken by the persona of Diogenes.

The Blind Singer has three unnamed parts. The book opens with the single poem ‘The blind singer’, which sets the stage for the entire work. The main sequence ranges over diverse musical themes with poems such as ‘Euphonium ode’ (a musical fantasia), ‘four photographs of a piano’, ‘Fled is that music’ and ends with the more intimate poem ‘irreversible’ which touches on tempus fugit, “a mirror we’d rather cover”. Throughout the book, Price weaves the motif of light, finally addressing the nature of light and its relation to sound (both waves – only light can be both particle and wave) and our words for light. ‘The Angel Question: An Essay’ begins with a quotation from Einstein: “Strenuous intellectual work, and looking at God’s nature are the reconciling, fortifying, yet relentlessly strict angels that lead me through life’s troubles . . .” Einstein’s angels are akin to Price’s and the poem aims to be a rigorous (if not strenuous) intellectual work devoted to trying to work out the knowledge within poetry, or, to put it another way, to work out what knowledge poetry can claim:

Unreliable

but irresistibly present, a song is a stitch
in time, a knot securing now in the hope
tomorrow might be taken care of.

I took *The Blind Singer* as being a consciously philosophical work concerned with the value of art and poetry in the modern world. If I were to try to convey the book with a single adjective then I’d pick

neoclassical. Price gives her imagination and intellect free range and has the technical skill to play a virtuoso performance.

Fast Talking PI Selina Tusitala Marsh (AUP, 2009) RRP\$25; 72 pp & CD. ISBN 978-1-86940-432-1

Jenny Clay

Selina Tusitala Marsh was the first Pacific Islander to graduate with a doctorate in English from the University of Auckland, where she is now a lecturer. She is a performance poet, as well as writing for the page, and I first heard her reading the poem 'Fast Talking PI' at a Going West Festival in Titirangi. It is a poem with rhythm and power in the repetition of many different descriptions of being a Pacific Islander: "I'm a village is the centre of my world PI", "I'm a cross-gendered, soul-blended, mascara'd PI", "I'm a published in a peer reviewed journal PI", "I'm a gout-inflated, incubated, case study PI", "I'm a vaka PI ... a star-charting PI". Her reading of the poem is on the CD that accompanies the book, one of seven of the thirty-two poems in *Fast Talking PI* with music composed and performed by Tim Page.

The poem which immediately follows it, 'Acronym' is a response to a colleague not understanding what 'PI' stands for in the poem. Selina gives it a twist and suggests for him many other potential meanings of PI: Pass Interference, Parallel Interface, Post Intelligence, Partner Institutions, Programme Instructions and Public Intoxication, although his 'Protocol Interruption' had tragic consequences for the poem. 'A Samoan Star-Chant for Matariki' is also featured on the CD, a poem of calling forth with all the rhythm of the chant.

'Tusitala' means writer of tales, and *Fast Talking PI* contains many tales. 'Calabash Breakers' talks about

the boundaries
always crossed
by someone
petulant

by the "unsettled", "the calabash breakers" like Hinemoa in the story of Tutanekai and Hinemoa, or the "younger brother", as in stories of Maui, the "trouble makers" who "sail the notes of our songs". The poet says,

we should know them
we now need them
to catch bigger suns

The Tusitala section has the more personal poems in the book. 'The Sum of Mum' is about the incubation of the poet's three sons. The math calculations of the time taken for this contrast with her descriptive language:

yolk eyes staring into membrane galaxy
flicking pulse and finger
nail into red-darkness
everything adds up to four

'Cardboard Crowns' is divided into sections of morning, afternoon, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Marsh speaks of working with teenagers, talking about "NZ lit", "cooking with five year olds", and blowing up balloons for kindy kids. The five year olds are "Tagaloo's boat builders" and to the eighteen year olds she throws "out a life line/ but no-one's read it".

In 'Things on Thursdays' Marsh compares all the things that John Updike managed to do and still write and wonders why she couldn't do the same. She describes her acts of juggling, trying to write while teaching, changing the baby, "moving house four times", "wipe the baby", propping up the finances, and interspersed between each activity is "and write", ending with "yeah right".

The poems take a political perspective in the second part of the book, Talkback, in poems such as 'Guys like Gauguin' who regard "the south" as an "erogenous zone", where the women "ripen like pawpaw" and

are best slightly raw
delectably firm

In 'Two Nudes on a Tahitian Beach, 1894' the poet goes inside the painting and becomes one of the subjects, both observed and observing, and speaks for the two nudes:

you Gauguin
piss us
off.

In 'Nails for Sex' sailors steal iron "when the trade supply ran aground" leaving "moaning holes". 'Realpolitik', a poem that includes lines from Captain Cook's journal about disturbing their "happy tranquillity", says,

a woman from Tahiti
could be made
wife for a few
moons, a blade or two.

Marsh plays with possibilities, usage, and interpretations in language from the first poem, 'Googling Tusitala'. In 'Hone Said' the discussion is around what was said, what was heard, and what was said to have been heard, the difference between 'have' and 'am', about interpretation and understanding. Did Hone Tuwhare say,

the only land I have
is that between my toes

or

the only land I am
is that between my toes ?

The book finishes with the poem 'Outcast', with the instruction: "be nobody's darling". It shows the movement from "draw me a paper road I'll sign it" and "show me a mould/ I'll fit it" to "a brown woman walking", getting

beyond the line
the justified edge
that breaking page

with a map in her arms

to get her beyond the reef.

Vivid Familiar Stephanie de Montalk (VUP, 2009) 78pp ISBN 9780864735980 RRP \$25

Jenny Clay

Stephanie de Montalk has written non-fiction: *Unquiet World: The Life of Count Geoffrey Potocki de Montalk*, published in 2001, and a historical novel, *The Fountain of Tears*. *Vivid Familiar* is her fourth book of poetry. On the cover is a detail of a painting by Rita Angus called 'Storm', with bare trees and gathering clouds. A poem in the third part of four of *Vivid Familiar* takes the title of the collection, and describes the painting, where the ghost gums' "rippled arms/ gleam in the rain".

The storm surfaces throughout the book. In 'Lepidoptera' the poet asks whether Darwin foresees the butterflies' "demise in a thunderstorm" or fantasises that they reach the rim of the Pacific, as he leans against the "mast of the Beagle" watching them,

streaming far out to sea
from South America

Vivid Familiar begins with 'Fourteen Thousand Miles' where the drowned sleep "with their eyes open" and eat "with their ears",

simultaneously cleaving
and folding

and caught with

the ocean's halters and ropes
on their long pale bones.

Other poems in the first section relate to the life of settlers after their arrival in New Zealand. 'By the Hour' is a story of colonialism, where the gum diggers "hardset in mud,/ cleared stratified forests of resin", and prospectors "levelled outcrops" and "washed rivers for gold". Land was surveyed, the boundaries mapped,

hidden and visible,
on condition that transit angles
were back-sighted and doubled for accuracy.

At the end of this section is a poem with a disconcerting juxtaposition, called 'Skin and Gristle'. Among the familiar food "fat of lamb" and "pork newly killed" is casually placed "human flesh, well baked ... as tender as paper", and then the list continues with oranges and lemons, "French plums arranged on small plates decorated with lacy papers" and

snippets of chicken,
finely-chopped bone, skin and gristle
seasoned and simmered down for stock

'Eruption, 10 June 1886' circles around the Tarawera eruption and destruction of the terraces; "pink and white parasols were the order of the day". Travellers admired "Lake Rotomahana's tattooed rock and fountain of the clouded sky", and a "morning sighting of an evanescent canoe" was debated, a warning both seen and unseen, perhaps a "trick of the light", "a seed pod" or "an eel pot".

Ideas of presence and invisibility are also in the poem 'Never Entirely' where a missing limb has "nerves without purpose". This is in Part IV, which also contains 'Myth' where "halcyons float/ on the fish bones" during midwinter, and has realms of longing and separation, as in 'The Wishing Tree'.

Physical travels abroad occupy Part III of the book: 'The Road to Everest' under "a zigzag sky", and in 'Way Station':

we take a stony road
to the Balkans.

'Quilted Walls' opens "to the luminance/ of a sultan's tent" and in 'Simply Paris' you can feast and savour and,

See how happy you are
stirred
with a long spoon.

A long whimsical poem, 'Feathers and Wax', forms the second part of the book and feels central to *Vivid Familiar*. It is a poem that deserves more than one reading. The opening comes from Ovid's telling of the myth of Daedalus and Icarus: "the imagined arts....set his mind and altered natural laws". There are references through the poem to the myth of Icarus:

No one expects you to drop
from the sky without a safety harness

and

unlike Daedalus, afraid of damp wax,
the ship sailed close to the water.

The poet boards an airship that arrives at her kitchen window; ascending "the mooring tower" she slips "through an opening/ in the nose of the ship". De Montalk treats ideas playfully in this poem. The companions she has chosen for the journey are a radiologist, a tea taster, and a colour consultant, rather than an aeronautical engineer. The colour consultant, she tells the *sensitiva*, in the "heart of a storm" will help to distinguish between "a hundred shades of blue". Is the storm on the cover carried through into this poem, where the wind strengthens and the sky is "wild with twigs/ gum bark scooped from the lawn" as it intensifies into weeks of rain? In the airship the poet becomes lighter than her surroundings, and is asked to "submit to uncertainty".

The book is divided into journeys through the four parts: the settlers, the fantastical, travels abroad, and longing and recall. De Montalk uses evocative imagery in the poems with glimpses of the real and unreal, the invisible world a step away in the imagination.

Haiku NewZ

COMMENT – HAIKU FUTURE

John O'Connor

In 1995 Kenneth C Leibman, in accepting an article of mine for *Frogpond*, said he thought it was "of educational value [especially to the many] newcomers" of the time. Over the next few years this "newcomer" trend became an influx and with it the (now widely acknowledged) decline in the quality of international haiku in English. Consequently, I left the scene I had joined in the '80s precisely because of its seriousness and achievement. Nonetheless, I stayed in the NZ haiku community, but have now left it also.

There are two problems as I see it. Firstly, haiku basics are no longer well understood. The articles I've published over the last 20 years are still as necessary as at the beginning. Essentially, they point to foundation texts: Henderson's *Haiku in English*, van den Heuvel's *Haiku Anthology*, Higginson's *Haiku Handbook* and Childs' (1st) *NZ Haiku Anthology*. (See 'Guidelines for Writing Haiku', by Cyril Childs and myself. It's a reasonable starting place, if a consensus view.)

Secondly, our HSA-derived mode of haiku has run its course. In other words, it needs refocusing, reinventing, refreshing or (whatever terminology one wishes to use). Better still would be its replacement with something local – with something of our own.

The hard-won 80s HSA mode – once so fresh in the hands of poets like Marlene Mountain, Anita Virgil and Nicholas Virgilio – is so worn/ explored that even the best contemporary poets here and overseas struggle to match that earlier vitality, in my view.

Admittedly, one can experiment. eg: concrete, Dadaist*/ found, surreal*, shape, txt, edited computer, direct speech (single voice), persona/ accent, graphic-word, split word, rhyming, traditional- or European-structure, organic/ alternative structure, computer-structure, syllabic, metre and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E haiku. All have been written (*or would be easy enough to write as samples). A variety of other experiments suggest themselves. eg, colour haiku:

across the red day – / a flight / of blue ducks

black rain – black house / the black street

(and why not, given the acceptance of that approach in other arts? *Sensory* adjectives and adverbs are often unproblematic. It's the abstract cliché-leaning ones, such as beautiful/ beautifully, horrific/ horrifically, that cut the reader out of the poem.)

Or, an overt absence approach, leaving an inferential role for the reader:

not / in the plum tree – / blackbird

Or, introducing an omniscient observer:

“Hi,” she said / feigning pleasure – / add blue sky

Or, assonance and alliterative haiku:

cell – / centering the ceiling / cockroach

Or, two-voice haiku:

‘there he growled, pointing – / “sure,” she smiled / dropping the jug

Or, blending English and other languages (Maori in this case: moon and tattoo):

marama – / his moko / fading

Such things are side issues, interesting in themselves, but unlikely to realign the form. Perhaps such experiments could provide an interval of relative interest whilst a specifically NZ internally coherent approach is developed.

At the time the HAS approach was ‘imported’ here – in the late 80s – it was the only viable option. Trying imperfectly understood Japanese models hadn’t worked for some thirty years. On the other hand, the HAS template: flexible, proven in English and clearly explained, ‘took’ almost immediately. By 1990 numbers of quality haiku were appearing in our previously much-abused Poetry Society competitions and anthologies originated by the late David Drummond.

But the original, long-standing New York-centred HAS of Henderson, Lamb et al had, by the mid-nineties, morphed into a decentralised, fast-growing HAS which, within a few years, found itself operating within an enlarged, ever enlarging international haiku ‘community’.

It goes without saying that quality and vitality are not compatible with such numbers, nor with what had become an ‘encouraging’ ease of publication. The core poets and critics of the original HAS came to an informal working consensus after study and intense debate (see *A Haiku Path*); today’s haijin are in a less geographically fortunate, but otherwise no less challenging, position.

Clearly, one cannot usefully debate with a world movement. If NZ haiku is to find a way again, and preferably its own way (as Japanese haiku has had to at times over the centuries) it will best be found/ created/ developed by serious NZ haiku poets working together in an appropriate forum – as apparently in Australia and Britain, where some elements within their haiku communities appear to have struck their own distinctive notes/ approaches. (Remember, they didn’t have a head-start on us *as movements*. Our haiku was more healthy than theirs throughout much of the 90s).

Given that NZ haiku poets of the calibre of Helen Bascand, Ernest J Berry, Tony Beyer, Nola Borrell, Owen Bullock, Cyril Childs, Catherine Mair, Joanna Preston, Patricia Prime, Sandra Simpson, Barbara Strang, André SurrIDGE, Richard von Sturmer and Alan Wells are still active, to say nothing of the more recent, equally talented haijin intakes, I think we can realistically hope for the emergence of a local haiku that neither ignores, nor uncritically accepts, the usual guidelines.

Some questions: (1) How many colloquial indicators of haiku such as “Haiku is what is happening

now?" apply to HIE? (2) Which assumptions lie behind which indicators? (3) Looking at the formal, developing HAS (and other) definitions of haiku over the years, what are the common, the core and the divergent elements? (4) Which, if any, of the standard 'haiku guidelines', and also Henderson's 'rules', are outmoded, and why? (5) Which, if any, common guidelines might be said to be unclear, even meaningless? And so on. We need to re-examine the basics, if only for clarification and confirmation in most cases.

From this point it's important to generate your own questions. But please include: (6) Which factors can contribute to a positive national character (perhaps with regional variations) in the arts?

Without being serious – ie *without wide reading and intelligent, open-minded debate in an appropriate forum* – a legitimate type of local haiku has no chance of coming into being.

This is the last of my thirty brief critical pieces on haiku for various publications since 1988. The haiku above – my last-to-be-published for the foreseeable future. Other types of poetry interest me more. But it would be great to come back to find NZ haiku confident, competent and above all, itself.

CONGRATULATIONS

- Sandra Simpson has been shortlisted for the True Vine Summer Chapbook Haiku Contest (US), long listed for the With Words Haiku Contest (UK) and won something in the Ito-En Oi Ocha New Haiku Contest (Japan) but as, apart from her haiku, the certificate is entirely in Japanese she has yet to discover what.

COMPETITIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

See NZPS website for a detailed list: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/haikunews/competitions>

NOTICES

Festival of Japan - Results of One-day Haiku Competition, Judged by Ernest J. Berry

Visitors to our stall were invited to read a one-page handout and produce their own haiku within half a day. It was a tall order, but twenty-three people were brave enough to try. The place getters most closely approached the realisation of haiku. This poetic form is deceptively simple, yet complex - but ultimately rewarding. Windrift, the NZ Poetry Society and Judge Ernest J Berry congratulate the winners and all who entered.

SENIOR

1st: Nathalie Evans, Lyall Bay, Wellington:

sunset
across the beach
a flight of seagulls

2nd: Michael Crombie, Mount Cook, Wellington:

Climbing the tree
Sunlight filters through
Gaining perspective

3rd: Raelene Inglis, Hataitai, Wellington:

Red gold
leaves autumn's breath
holding for spring

JUNIOR:

1st: Jonathan Wanty, 13, Johnsonville, Wellington:

winter chill
melts in my mouth
first snowflake!

2nd: Jonathan Wanty, 13, Johnsonville, Wellington:

beat it
mourning day
a star has passed

KiwiHaiku

from power lines
a blue streak – the kingfisher dives
high noon
Jo Wynne

walking to therapy –
her step slows
past the rose bush
Kirsten Cliff

She unpeels damp clothes
pegs them, and pegs one feather –
a small prayer for peace.
Angela Trolove

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

Tanka Reflections

- short songs of the human spirit –

grove at dusk
the trees
have waited
all year for you
to stand under them
Tony Beyer

a downpour
on my birthday
I roll
in the grass
in my togs
Owen Bullock

Members are invited to submit unpublished tanka. Please send submissions to: pprime@ihug.co.nz, or post to: 42 Flanshaw Road, Te Atatu South, Waitakere 0610

How it is

POETRY IN A POD

Gillian Cameron

I'm so into poetry podcasts at the moment - listening to poetry (often read by the poets themselves) and interviews with a featured poet or discussions about their work. The great thing with podcasts is you can carry them round with you and listen to them anywhere anytime.

One site I can really recommend is the US-based Poetry Foundation. Since being the beneficiary of a massive US\$100 million inheritance in 2003 (yes, you read right, \$100M), the Poetry Foundation has gone from strength to strength. See:

www.poetryfoundation.org/journal/audiolanding.html and you will find several great browsing menus - actually it's more a feast than a browse. One menu is *Poetry off the shelf* - a weekly discussion/ interview with a poet reading some of his/her work. One favourite is 'everything plus the kitchen sink' - a reading and discussion of Kenneth Fearing's work, US poet from the 1930s, very clever and still so very modern (recording date 16.2.09). Another is 'the child is mother to the poet' featuring Mary Ann Hoberman, children's writer and poet, very funny (recording date 8.10.08). Also on the same page, different menu, is *Poem for the day* such as Fleeta Brown's 'Buying the King-Sized Bed' and all the consumer angst it now engenders (recording date 7.02.09)

On to another site - the New York Times website. The NYer has a regular reading and conversation with *The New Yorker's* fiction editor, Deborah Treisman, on short stories that have featured in the NYer at anytime over the last 50 years (OK OK not poetry but these are in a class of their own). Sample: 1 June 09, Jonathan Franzen reads Veronica Geng's "Love Trouble Is My Business" and Ian Frazier's "Coyote v. Acme" - an exercise he calls Extreme Writing; 9 June 09, Mary Gaitskill reads Vladimir Nabokov's "Symbols and Signs"; 11 Sept 08, Tobias Wolff reads Stephanie Vaughn's short story "Dog Heaven." I could go on and on about this class act.

However being the NYer they also have poetry - just no poetry podcasts boo hoo (well not that I could find anyway). For a selection of poems go to <http://www.newyorker.com/fiction> and scroll down the page to the poetry section.

I've left the best to last. Go to www.newyorker.com/ and you can subscribe to 4 free issues of the digital New Yorker - which will arrive in your mail box every Monday morning for four weeks. I can't wait.

Poetry is more philosophical and more serious than history, for its statements are in the nature of universals, whereas those of history are singulars.

Aristotle

NOVEMBER DEADLINE is 7th October

MEMBERS' POEMS

Mahogany Furniture

I grew surrounded by its limbs of authority.
It humbled me, taught me respect.
Later, adolescent, I left it for bare rooms
honeycombed inside a city's friendlessness.
Mahogany belonged behind me.

But held me when people shook and trembled
the threads of my mind's web
that spread lonely over my life.
The graciousness it breathed through its rooms
helped steady the fears that often spun
my blood.
Its bookcase kept Shakespeare and Keats
in my head.
My feet, weary from walking the streets for work,
remembered they once trod soundless
on the red carpet that bonded its' tables,
padded chairs, escritoire, sideboard.

In those rooms the straight, dark wood
slept in soundless songs of contentment.
Its weight carried integrity.
Its carvings postured middle-class manners.
Its veneer shone stars of optimism.
The dining table, cornered, uncluttered,
spoke of long friendships.

The six-year-old sat at the mahogany piano.
At her shoulder mother. leaning again,
leaned to study the sheet
where bold crotchets and quavers
demanded another hour's practice tomorrow.

Trees have always grown inside me.

Caroline Glen

First Prize: Open Poetry Kingaroy Eisteddfod 2007

Published in The Tongue Between The Toes (2008)

Spatial Ethics of the Human Body

(A brief treatise on some aspects.)

The body
especially that area below
the sternum
is often hidden from its head (or cranium)
by tables bedclothes and other apparatus.
In these situations behavioural control is maintained
by the grey matter (or brain)
which follows the United Nations'
Interlimb Code of Conduct.

In under the table situations
for example
legs should arrange themselves in pairs
feet together
while the knees must be bent
and held close
or they may begin to quiver
and sometimes wobble sideways
and caress the knees of others.

Also, once the knees unbend
and legs stretch into other legs' territory
intercalf relations
lead to mismatched pairs of feet.
This loss of lower limb control
sends messages to hands to pat the knees
back into place
but often knees belong
to other bodies' legs.
In this case a code broken signal is emitted
and anatomical anarchy results.

Helen McKinlay

The Mummy Man

- *Kate and Gerry McCann said on The Oprah Winfrey Show that they believe a man took their daughter. News, 2009.*

this is the Mummy Man /
he comes in darkness
when you're looking out
the round window.

this is the Mummy Man /
if he gives you anything
it's because Mummy made him
sing on the footpath.

this is the Mummy Man /
the day before tomorrow
the day after yesterday
he turns inside out!

this is the Mummy Man /
in his room he's all funny
& crying – like reading.
that's him in the trees.

this is the Mummy Man /
he goes with you to school.
the Mummy Man is a plastic bag –
the sun on the fridge door.

Pita Patter

Something and Nothing, or a Reflection on Black Angus

They say that black is absence
but white is every colour
that black is nothing
and white is everything –
when sun rises on the bottom flats
and grass winks at paradise ducks
sheep silhouettes find their way
across damp paddocks –

over the road
cow shaped holes bend down
to wet soil.

If white is something
and black is nothing
then sheep eat grass
but the cattle are infinitely deep illusions
that occupy twenty or more spaces
left behind
when day displaced night
an hour or more ago.

Clare Ward

Picasso and the Hat

Before the *Three Dancers* of Picasso
I fell to trance: the dancer in the middle
Is nude, he paints her as a pillar: true,
Pink, and straight: none of the usual riddle.
Whereas the dancer on the left is clothed:
And what a complex thing her attire!
Inviting him to discs and boxes, wreathed
Dimensions, wrought in a fiddly rapture.

Made me think all about you and my hat,
How during love I put it on your head:
And what a difference a hat makes, what
A difference to your look: our bed
Became a sudden theatre, divan
Where I saw you new: my Chicago hat
Made you look a lascivious courtesan
And the singeing pleasures go with that.

What a difference a hat makes! Picasso
Knew it. And now - glory! - I know it too.

Ackroyd Jackson

The Initials Men

KXW halts in the corridor:
RAB is hunched at the photocopier.

The evening is large outside, as if on stilts,
Balanced on the populating streets
Where secretaries go: VXM and AJL.
The corridors are corporate-quiet: paper
Sideways-belched, falls, as if marked by numerous ant-corpse.
RAB sighs, and passing KPS
Exchanges senior eyes with SJD which whisper, "Goner".

Ackroyd Jackson