



a fine line

September 2011

The Magazine of The New Zealand Poetry Society

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

With the assistance of Creative New Zealand

We are grateful to our sponsors: Signify <http://www.signify.co.nz/>
Creative Communities / Wellington City Council
The Thistle Inn; Community Post

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

Contents

- 1) Feature Article: 'An Interview With Frankie McMillan' *Tim Jones*
- 4) From the National Coordinator *Laurice Gilbert*
About our Contributors
- 5) A Warm Welcome to...
Results of the 2011 International Poetry Competition
- 6) President's Report, 2010-2011 *Laurice Gilbert*
- 8) Congratulations
Publications – new on the NZPS bookshelf
Noticeboard (including the NZPS Wellington Meetings notice)
- 9) Featured Poet: Jenny Dobson
- 13) Competitions & Submissions
- 14) Reviews: *The leaf-ride* by Dinah Hawken *Heidi North*
- 15) *The Hill of Wool* by Jenny Bornholdt *Margaret Vos*
- 16) Regional Report – Taupo *Matthew Lark*
- 17) Haikai Corner *Kirsten Cliff*
- 19) Mini Competition
- 20) Members' Poems *Anne Curran, Suzanne Herxhell, Jon Schrader*

Feature Article

An Interview with Frankie McMillan

Tim Jones

(Reprinted and adapted from Tim's blog: *Books in Trees*, September 2009)

<http://timjonesbooks.blogspot.com/>

McMillan is an award winning short story writer and poet. She held the CNZ Todd Bursary in 2005, and in 2009 was the winner of the New Zealand Poetry Society International Poetry Competition, Open Section. She lives in Christchurch with her partner (in a 130-year old house) in the inner city. She is a keen cyclist and lives within biking distance of family members and her workplaces: The Hagley Writers' Institute and Christchurch Polytechnic.

Frankie, you've had poetry published extensively, and your poem 'My Father's Balance' won the NZ Poetry Society International Poetry Competition [Open Section] in 2009. But let's suppose someone is coming to your work completely fresh. What would you like to tell that person about your poetry, and about [your first collection] *Dressing for the Cannibals*?

My poems are characterised by humour, accessibility, with an often faux naïf narrator who makes observations about how it is we are 'so mysterious to ourselves and to the world.' The poems are fictional but have an underlying emotional truth. They reflect my interests: theatre, folklore, memory, family and the peculiarities of being human.

Themes vary, from the nature of illusion – there's some tricky type poems about the world of magic shows and travelling circuses – to power: who holds it on a world scale or in a family context. (The poems on cannibalism were prompted by a childhood horror of being eaten.) There are a number of prose poems in the collection, a form I find really exciting to work with.

I hope the reader always knows where they are in one of my poems, but not necessarily where they are going.

Are you a poet for whom the formal aspects of poetry are particularly important?

No, the formal aspects are secondary to what I see as the exploration of an idea. I attend to certain poetic elements and the overall structure, but am led more by the process whereby words/ thoughts are attracted to each other. (The premise that the first idea is often the best idea possibly reflects my training in improvisational theatre.)

***Dressing for the Cannibals* has a very striking cover, and I see ... that the cover painting is by your daughter, Rebecca Harris. Was this painted especially for your book, or was it an existing work that just fitted perfectly with what you had in mind for the book?**

The painting, 'Night Visitor', was an existing work (2006) which was part of a series exploring the early contact between Maori and Pakeha. There is a sense of mischief in Rebecca's work which resonates with my writing and yes, it fitted perfectly with the book's themes. (Rebecca is represented by Milford Galleries.)

I ... interviewed Joanna Preston, and elsewhere she has commented that "Christchurch is the Motown of the New Zealand poetry scene". (I think she was talking about the level of activity and productivity rather than a penchant for perfect pop singles.) I know that you're an active participant in Christchurch poetry events; do you agree with Joanna that Christchurch is a particularly happening place for poetry at the moment – and if so, why do you think this is?

When I came back to Christchurch eight years ago, I was amazed at how many poetry groups there were, but even more surprised at how many poets belonged to more than one or two. Recently a few of us ex-IIML graduates living in Christchurch (fiction and poetry) have expressed an interest in getting together so possibly yet another group will form! Why do writers, poets, in particular, have a hunger for belonging to groups, I don't know. I do know the poetry group (of which Joanna is a member) has been enormously helpful to me, but possibly so too would a fiction group, of which there seems relatively few in Christchurch.

I have noticed previously that poets seem to be more likely to get together, and work together, than fiction writers. Why do you think this is?

I suppose the obvious answer is that poetry, being a small form, lends itself well to discussion - there are usually no more than thirty lines to consider, unlike a 3,000 word short story or much longer novel. In a two-hour meeting up to eight people can receive feedback on at least one poem each. Performance poetry can also be tried out on a small group to gauge a response. Also I think some newcomers to writing try poetry first and like the support/ feedback a group offers.

We each had our first short story collection published in 2001: in my case, *Extreme Weather Events*, in yours, *The Bag Lady's Picnic* - and, in fact, we read on the same panel at the Christchurch Book Festival in 2002. Are you writing fiction at present? If so, what fiction projects are you working on?

I'm about two thirds of the way through another short story collection. Recently my work has been chosen for *Best NZ Fiction*, 2008 and 2009 (Vintage) which has been encouraging. Now that my poetry book has been launched, I'll probably alternate between the short story collection and further poetry.

How do you work? Do you have fixed times when you write, or do you grab a few minutes' writing time whenever you can?

I'm a binge writer. I think it's more sensible to write each day, but because my teaching and family responsibilities can't always be timetabled. I work flat out when I've got the time. I often seem to be working to a deadline which makes me incredibly focused. In that state I can work up to six hours without a break.

Which writers (of fiction and poetry) have been most influential on your own work, and which writers do you most enjoy reading?

Alice Munro, Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, Flannery O'Connor, Annie Proulx, William Trevor and Lorrie Moore have all been enormously influential on my work. To that I'd have to add playwrights, Beckett and Pinter. New Zealand influences have been Owen Marshall and Shonagh Koea.

Poetry influences have been varied. I like this quote from Bill Manhire: "The thing you know already is the last thing you want your poem to record. Apart from anything else you want the words you use to be part of a process of discovery, part of the poem's life not simply a recording mechanism for an entirely familiar set of observations."

And here's one from Billy Collins: "Poetry is my cheap means of transportation. By the end of a poem the reader should be in a different place from where he started. I would like him to be slightly disorientated at the end, like I drove him outside of town at night and dropped him off in a cornfield."

NZ poets that I enjoy include Michael Harlow, James Norcliffe, James Brown, Chris Price, Bernadette Hall and Cliff Fell. Prose poem writers include Russell Edson, Robert Bly and Charles Simic.

Working in the halfway house

I pick up bad habits like smoking
on the back porch after lights out
and a tendency to see dead people

passing across the sky as stars
say, Freddie Baxter, who jumped

from the Takaka bridge his pockets
weighted with stones, he's there
next to the South Celestial pole

Yours was a slow reckoning
not until spring did your bones
turn to chalk. There's nothing

to dying you said and a small
pride lit your eyes as if you'd

mastered the trick; a clever horse
tapping its name out in letters

would you laugh to know I still
wait for your crossing, matches

in hand to frighten the dark.

Frankie McMillan

from *Dressing for the Cannibals*

Post (earthquake) script:

We're still in our 130 year old house. Neighbouring houses, buildings and shops have been demolished but our damage was repairable. I don't have a regular writing routine to be disruptedam just working up to one of my sessions where I go hard out for several weeks. I haven't written about the earthquake as yet, though I did keep a rough diary after Feb 22nd as a way of coping. (*August 2011*)

From the National Coordinator

Laurice Gilbert

Just a brief word from me this issue. It's customary to publish the President's Report from the AGM in the issue following that meeting, so that's quite enough to be getting from my keyboard. Welcome back to committee members Tim Jones (Vice-President again), Gillian Cameron, Anne Faulkner, Janis Freegard and Linzy Forbes. It's great to be working with such great people, and fine poets besides.

I'm very pleased to report that a new haiku and related forms section appears in this issue, thanks to the efforts of Kirsten Cliff, who offered to take up the reins. Kirsten's new features are designed to be fun, inspiring, educational, and to get members involved. They are:

1. *haikai cafe* - Your bite-sized serving of haiku, senryu and tanka, edited by Kirsten: One of each form to appear in each issue from members' submissions.
2. *Straight From the Haijin's Mouth*: A question put to one or two of our accomplished haijin each issue, starting with the judges of the NZPS International Haiku Competition 2011. Members are encourage to send in questions.
3. *The Haiku Help-Desk*: A section that takes one haiku each issue and discusses areas for improvement, thereby showing readers how haiku works by example, instead of by an article stating what haiku is and is not. Across issues she will show common mistakes and the subtleties of word choices and line breaks in haiku. Haiku that need help will be chosen from submissions to this section by members.

That's it from me for now.

About our Contributors

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

Jenny Dobson is Secretary/Treasurer of the Hawke's Bay Live Poets' Society, and her poems appear in Pipi Café's Poesy Pizza Bread. She has been a past winner and judge of the National Aquarium Seaweek poetry competition and she won the 2010 Sunday Star Times 'Time Out' poetry competition.

Tim Jones writes novels, short stories and poetry. He was awarded the NZSA Janet Frame Memorial Award for Literature in 2010.

Heidi North has recently returned from London, where she worked as an editor. She won the Feile Filiochta International Poetry Competition in 2007.

Margaret Vos is a Wellington poet and founder member of poetry group 'The Academy'.

Never be ashamed of your subject, or of your passion for your subject. Your "forbidden" passions are likely to be the fuel for your writing.... Your struggle with your buried self, or selves, yields your art.

Joyce Carol Oates

A Warm Welcome to ...

John Barlow UK
Wendy Dale Hamilton
Jocelyn Davey Coromandel
Lisa Fernyhough Wellington
Anne Hadfield Porirua
Dominique Harrison Christchurch
Rebecca Hawkes Ashburton
Aleksandra Lane Wellington
Chen-ou Liu Canada
Caroline Masters Auckland
Greg O'Connell Greymouth
Greg Piko Australia
Katherine Raine Owaka
Damien Ruth Paekakariki
Pamela Smith Australia
Lin Wang USA
David Mark Williams UK

Results of the 2011 International Poetry Competition – Congratulations!

OPEN SECTION – 1st: Sue Wootton, Dunedin. 2nd: David Mark Williams, UK. 3rd: Aleksandra Lane, Wellington.

Highly Commended: Anne Edmunds, Christchurch; Catherine Fitchett, Christchurch; Cherry Hill, Christchurch; Michael Harlow, Alexandra; Sue Fitchett, Waiheke Island. **Commended:** Aleksandra Lane, Wellington; Amanda Hunt, Wellington; David Mark Williams, UK; Jo Thorpe, Wellington; Keith Westwater, Lower Hutt; Marion Moxham (2), Palmerston North; Michael Harlow, Alexandra; Stephanie Mayne, Auckland, Sue Fitchett, Waiheke Island.

HAIKU SECTION – 1st: Greg Piko, Australia; 2nd: Tony Beyer, New Plymouth; 3rd: Chen-ou Liu, Canada; 4th: Keith Frenz, Tauranga; 5th: John Barlow, UK.

Highly Commended: Catherine Mair, Katikati; Ernest J. Berry, Picton; Janine Sowerby, Christchurch; John Barlow, UK; Katherine Raine, Owaka; Pamela Smith, Australia; Sophia Frenz, Dunedin. **Commended:** André SurrIDGE, Hamilton; Barbara Strang, Christchurch; Chen-ou Liu, Canada; Duncan Richardson, Australia; Elaine Riddell, Hamilton; Elise Mei, Christchurch; Jeffrey Harpeng, Australia; Katherine Raine, Owaka; Kirsten Cliff, Papamoa; Quendryth Young, Australia; Sandra Simpson (2), Tauranga; Sophia Frenz, Dunedin.

OPEN JUNIOR SECTION – 1st: Maria Ji, Auckland; 1st & 2nd **Runner-up, Secondary:** Rebecca Hawkes, Ashburton; 1st & 2nd **Runner-up, Primary/Intermediate:** Isabella Taylor, USA. **Highly Commended:** Alexandra Morris, Hastings.

Commended: Juliet McLachlan, Christchurch; Lin Wang, USA; Lucy Diver, Auckland; Monique Hodgkinson, Wellington; Rebecca Hawkes, Ashburton; Rosa Ellis-Cook, Arrowtown; Taylor Annabel, Auckland.

HAIKU JUNIOR SECTION – 1st: Amelia Stapley, Christchurch; 1st & 2nd **Runner-up, Secondary:** Harry Frenz, Tauranga; 1st **Runner-up, Primary/ Intermediate:** Olivia Hay-Smith, Christchurch; 2nd **Runner-up, Primary/ Intermediate:** Gabby Dodd-Terrell, Christchurch.

Highly Commended: Dominique Harrison, Christchurch; Emma Olsen, Christchurch; George Lester, Christchurch; Harry Frenz, Tauranga; Juliet McLachlan, Christchurch. **Commended:** Adele Thurlow,

Wanganui; Alexandra Henderson, Christchurch; Anaru Skipper, Arrowtown; Hannah Ban, Auckland; Hugh Mercer-Beumelburg, Christchurch; Jinwoong Choi, Christchurch; Juliet McLachlan, Christchurch; Juliette Newman, Christchurch; Leika McIver, Palmerston North; Liam Kelly (2), Christchurch; Maya Laws, Christchurch; Megan Kivell, Christchurch; Nathan Penrose (2), Christchurch; Nikki So-Bear, Rotorua; Oliver Hill, Lower Hutt; Siew Jey Ren, Singapore.

President's Report, 2010-2011

Laurice Gilbert

Thanks to our Patrons and Sponsors

Many thanks to our Patrons, Dame Fiona Kidman and Vincent O'Sullivan for their support. Our major financial sponsor for the 2010-2011 financial year was the Creative Communities Wellington Local Funding Scheme, and we are grateful for the part this scheme played in enabling us to present our monthly Wellington meetings.

In addition, Creative New Zealand came to the party in the middle of the year, with extra funding to enable us to market and spread the range of our magazine. This funding will end in December, but has resulted in an extra editorial honorarium until then, better pay for our feature and review writers, and distribution through libraries and book stores throughout the country. A big vote of thanks to Gillian Cameron, who obtained the grant, and to Linda Stone, who implemented the project.

The web development company, Signify, continues to host our website for free, for which we are most grateful.

Finally, the Thistle Inn continues to be a comfortable and welcoming host venue for our monthly meetings, and I thank new manager Sara Orr.

Committee

The financial year opened with six committee members besides myself: Gillian Cameron and Anne Faulkner as cheque signatories, Tim Jones (Vice-President), Linzy Forbes, Janis Freegard and Sally Holmes. They have contributed their time generously to supporting my work and I'm grateful for their encouragement. Sally moved out of Wellington during the year, but made the effort to return for our rare physical meetings.

As always, the day-to-day work of the committee has been carried out by me, in my role as National Coordinator, with emailed support, advice and encouragement from the other committee members as required.

Membership

At the end of the financial year in March 2011, we had 264 members. As usual, Wellington remained the biggest membership area, with Auckland and the Far North in second place, followed by the Canterbury region. 21 members lived outside NZ.

a fine line

The magazine is thriving. Feature articles continue to be interesting and of excellent quality, the regular book reviewers have been thoughtful and conscientious, and I'm grateful to everyone who contributes over the year. As well as the extra funding from CNZ for articles and reviews, I have been able to offer from the operating budget a small payment for poems published on the Members' Poems page, which I believe reinforces our position as a serious magazine, rather than a newsletter. All poems published are forwarded to the editor of *Best New Zealand Poems*.

Competition/Anthology 2010

As always, these activities went hand in hand, with the funds raised from one assisting the production of the other. Thanks go to Vivienne Plumb, Tony Beyer, Lynne Davidson and Karen Peterson Butterworth for their excellent judging skills.

Congratulations to Johanna Aitchison and Quendryth Young (Australia) for winning the Open and

Haiku sections respectively. Nalini Singh, a first time entrant, and Ashleigh Goh took the Open Junior and Haiku Junior First Prizes. We are grateful to the Jeanette Stace Poetry Trust for supplementary prizes in the haiku sections.

Asia New Zealand supplied a significantly smaller grant than usual, due to their own diminishing budget, but we are grateful for it all the same.

Our 2010 editor, Barbara Strang, produced another great anthology, which sold out, and we made a small profit overall.

Website

I haven't made as much progress on updating the website as I would have liked. Personal issues interfered with my work schedule over the year, and the website suffered, as being of lowest priority for a share of limited time and energy.

However, there are plans to upgrade the Content Management System behind the scenes, and I am assured the new one will be easier to use than the old one. So there will eventually be a new look, and I may be able to do more work on it in the same time.

As usual, Sandra Simpson has kept the HaikuNZ pages current and topical, and I am pleased we are able to support the New Zealand haiku community in this way. I frequently receive feedback from international correspondents that ours is the best haiku website around.

Wellington Meetings

This year's financial supporter of Wellington meetings has been the Creative Communities Local Funding Scheme. Combined with an increased door charge this enabled us to pay both poets and coordinator, though not travel and accommodation to bring in out-of-town poets.

All the same, we've been lucky with our guest poets: Jennifer Compton (Melbourne), Pat White (Wairarapa), five local members (Jack Duggan, Anne Harré, Tim Jones, Sugu Pillay and Mercedes Webb-Pullman) after the AGM in June; James McNaughton (Wellington), Iggy McGovern (Ireland), Roland Vogt (Lower Hutt) and Niel Wright (Wellington). Our October poet cancelled so we had an open mic night and the audience voted for their favourites, who each received a share of the guest poet pot. November was super special: the Christchurch Writers' Festival was cancelled because of the September earthquake, which meant we couldn't award our biannual Lauris Edmond Award as expected. We held the event here instead, and were delighted to host Diana Bridge (Wellington) for both a reading and presentation of the Award. We enjoyed Melbourne performance poet Randall Stephens in February, and the year ended in March with Auckland poet Robert Sullivan, thanks to NZ Book Month and Robert's publisher, Huia Books. It was a varied and most entertaining year.

Financial Matters

The financial situation has been eased significantly by the CNZ grant, assistance from the Creative Communities Local Funding Scheme, and the increased door charge at the Wellington meetings. We lost a few members after the membership fees went up, but the (small) gain in new members meant that our net income from that source didn't drop. Operating costs remain relatively low overall, and while not a wealthy organisation by any means, the Society is holding its own, and continuing to thrive.

We have a new Treasurer, Steve Veail, who will be presenting the accounts tonight, relieving me of the duty. An audit/ review was not done this year.

Poetry Advisory Service

There were two applications this year. As I said last year, it remains the only poetry-specific assessment service available, and is quick and easy to administer, so will continue.

The Lauris Edmond Award

As mentioned, this was awarded to Diana Bridge this year, but at our Wellington meeting rather than in Christchurch. It is expected that the Festival will once more be functional in 2012, and the Award presentation will return to the mainland.

Thanks to Fiona Kidman, there has been a significant boost to the funds available for the Award, in that she supplied a list of Lauris's friends to whom Harry Ricketts and I wrote to ask for support. The Friends of the Lauris Edmond Award plan to use this as seed money to both cover costs and to try and boost the Award's prestige and reputation. The NZPS will continue to commit \$250 a year to the Award prize money.

Conclusion

Little has changed with the recession as far as outside financial support is concerned, but we continue to be well-supported by our members and I am satisfied there is no danger of the NZPS having to consider a reduction in services. Thank you all for your confidence in the committee's work, and may you continue to enjoy the benefits of membership.

Congratulations

Ernest J Berry had an Honourable Mention in the 2011 Haiku Pen Contest.

Owen Bullock has new work in *paper wasp*, *Presence* and *Notes From the Gean*, and has once again been included in the anthology, *Take Five: Best Contemporary Tanka*. Owen has joined the editorial board for the 2011 edition of this title, and has also become an editor for a new online journal, *Axon: Creative Explorations*, based at the University of Canberra. (*Tauranga Writers Newsletter*)

Greg O'Connell's poem 'No Simple Book' was awarded first place in this year's Page & Blackmore competition. **Barbara Strang** was one of the two runners-up. The poems and judge's comments are on the Poetry Day Competition page at www.pageandblackmore.co.nz Greg has also had three poems published in recent rugby-themed issues of the *School Journal* (Learning Media: SJ1211, SJ2211, SJ4211).

Jenny Powell had two finalists in the Welsh Poetry Competition, and both will be published in an anthology, covering the winners from the five years of the competition. Read her poems at: <http://www.welshpoetry.co.uk/winners.html>

Margaret Beverland, **André Surridge** and **Sandra Simpson** are among the finalists in the Jack Stamm Haiku Award (Australia) and have several poems each published in the award anthology, *moonrise & bare hills*. (*Tauranga Writers Newsletter*).

Adrienne Jansen (2) and **Susan Howard** had poems Highly Commended in the 2010 Gum Blossoms Poetry Competition.

Publications

New arrivals on the NZPS bookshelf since last time:

Sentences of Death Lavender Sansom (Self-published, 2010)

in/let Jo Thorpe (Steele Roberts, 2010)

Inside Outside Brian Turner (VUP, 2011)

poetic explanations Gill Ward (Kupu Press, 2011)

Noticeboard

HAIKU ANTHOLOGY PRICES REDUCED

Wellington's Windrift Haiku Group has decided to reduce remaining stocks of *the taste of nashi: New Zealand Haiku* ed. Nola Borrell and Karen P Butterworth (Windrift Haiku Group, 2008). Special lowest prices for poets with haiku in the anthology and NZPS members are combined in the new price range. The difference between direct sale and postal prices is unfortunately greater than previously, due to changes in postal rates which now classify the packaged book as a parcel. Direct sale copies can be picked up in Lower Hutt and Otaki respectively by contacting: nolaborrell@xtra.co.nz ph (04) 586 7287 or karenpetbut@xtra.co.nz ph 06 364 5810.

If Haiku Aotearoa 2012 takes place in Tauranga next year, copies of *the taste of nashi* will be available there at a special conference price.

Overseas orders will include the applicable economy postage. Bulk sales prices are negotiable.

Prices (\$NZ):

- Anthology poets and NZPS members – direct sales \$12.00
- Anthology poets and NZPS members – posted \$16.50
- Non-members – direct sales \$15.00
- Non-members – posted \$19.50

A postal order form is available from the NZPS website, at:

[http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/files/Windrift Haiku Anthology Prices and Order Form.pdf](http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/files/Windrift%20Haiku%20Anthology%20Prices%20and%20Order%20Form.pdf)

Poetry @ The Thistle Inn, Wellington

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Monday 19th September 7.30pm

Guest Poet: Majella Cullinane (Kapiti)

Incl. her local launch for: *Guarding the Flame*

OCTOBER MEETING

Monday 16th August, 7.30pm

Guest Poet: Bernadette Hall (Christchurch – currently at IIML, Wellington)

Both meetings:

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

Meetings Supported by Creative Communities Wellington Local Funding Scheme.

Featured Poet: Jenny Dobson

My children bring me food

pumpkin soup, etched with coriander
homemade hummus and I think
it is starting, my fifth age, I have turned
imperceptibly, irrevocably to the left –
not lost my line exactly but curved
inflected, leaned a little

Jigsaw

In the end it became a prayer
that jigsaw, a quiet, solitary prayer

and I forgot that it did not belong to me
forgot that I was not alone

the image prevailed
expanding inwards

until there was just me
and the sky

Going Grey

- a synonym

I would like to find
a synonym for Grey

That's lighter than leaden
brighter than dim, that's more
layered than neutral, more playful
than dismal, more astral than ashen
and much more dynamic
than dull

Grey is not colourless
Rather, all colour is met
in Grey, exists, shimmers
just out of sight

Grey is a way into light
and a way out

Grey is a somewhere
in-between place
a grace, a transparent
stage screen, a sorcerer's
dream, a castle, a spire
a tightrope wire
it's a photographic plate
a whisper
it's fate

it's - Mercurial

Grey is a runestone
a moonstone, a great Mountain
Range, a Mare Marginus
Deep mine terrain

Grey is all my years
spun into rain

It's a sea-surge
a merge, a sharp-scissored
snick, a flick
a wick

and Grey is a Brain!
Long may it reign!

Calendar Poems

(I am already half-mad with grief)
number tables grids tuesdays always 3rd from the left
our beginnings and endings so well organised

we are born pushed out with such resolution such rending
such tears and all we own is the date

and every year stamps by and sometimes
I feel so angry at the tyranny and swift sword-cuts
of numbers and I long to just stop counting
at that most spontaneous and sufficient
of integers 2

I have finally taken them from my diary
those calendars. those number grids.
those secretive chronicles. those womanly
registers. My songs My marks My notations

and I find I cannot simply discard them

I would rather they were notched on painted sticks
to be solemnly placed in the mossy cleft of an old willow
or knotted in wool and wrapped about the ever-young
bundles of my children's children or that they had existed
only as pebbles in hollowed stone circles or nights
spent watching for that thin edge of crescent moon
or dances stamped out in gathering places, synchronized
rhythms, arcane circles, joyous, ridiculous celebrations
of female bodies passed on and kept sacred by
cantankerous old crones

Moon, Month, Measure

(The Change is a good term)

My hairdresser has developed a complete inability to understand what I am wanting. Young staff pat my arm and purr "you ok love?"

I take up Teism. I take up Belly-Dancing.

I hydrate and urinate; consistently, persistently

Flesh: over-ripe, redolent, bruised and giving.
A melon melting, cells collapsing. Juicy.

I find myself fascinated by the rhythm of water in the washing machine.
The old simple act of moving clothes in water. The regularity of it.
The woman history of it.

That colour, what is it, cerise? I paint my toenails that colour then it turns up
on a fence around the corner to enchant me.

I read that women need to sleep in absolute darkness except when the moon is full and then they need to
bathe in its light for three nights. I cut out the moon phases from the paper and pull my curtains.

I cast my bread upon the waters. Crumbs I've held dear. There goes me as a scientist, a linguist, a high-
school teacher. There goes my body building medal, my singing career, my novel.

The tomato soup is marvelous. I didn't need a recipe.

There are five gates a woman goes through.
Menarche, Marriage, Childbirth, Child Rearing and this, the fifth gate.

One night I think I am dying. The after-hours doctor is no help. All he talks about is iron levels. So I
look on the internet and find the reassurance of other women. I discover the term PFH, 'period from hell'
and I find 'feelings of doom' in a list of 35 symptoms of menopause.

I love this season. Its rosehips and autumn hydrangeas.
Its quiet clouds. Its moons.

Pavane in 4 Parts

I'd wear an amber brooch
and an apple silk wrap
There would be 3 green beans
and one perfect little white new dug potato
and there would be a poem
and two apricots
as radiantly
warm-hearted
as the sun

Maybe what is true in one universe
(apricots, poem, silk wrap)
is true in another and we are simply
happy for that

Look, she is dancing against the old enemy. She stamps a resilient measure, a wild caper, an abundant
currency

She capers and swings and stamps
She enlists the help of trees
She curves time
She is the author and collaborator of time

She holds time in her hands like water.

Competitions & Submissions

Cha (Hong Kong) Deadline: 15 September A Hong Kong-based online literary journal dedicated to publishing quality poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, photography, graphic fiction and reviews from and about Asia. Non-paying market. Guidelines:

http://www.asiancha.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=41

Carpe Articulum - call for submissions (USA) Deadline: 30 September No page limits. Multiple submissions permitted; submit online via the website. Previously published work is permitted only if the print run did not exceed 2,000 copies. To submit, go to: <http://www.carpearticulum.com/submissions/>

Fleeting Magazine Best Short Writing in the World Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 September *Fleeting Magazine* and *Stack Magazines* are looking for the best short writing in the world, including poetry of any kind (up to 40 lines). Prizes include subscriptions to *Stack*, a personalised monthly selection of independent magazines from around the world. Entry Fee: £1 per piece. Full details from www.FleetingMagazine.com

Healing Poems Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 September For poems up to 40 lines. 1st Prize - £100, 2nd Prize - £50, 3rd Prize - £25. The prizewinning poems will be published in an Anthology. Entry Fee: £3.00 Website: <http://www.thynkspublications.co.uk/competitions>

Poetry Kit Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 September Poems on any subject using any form or style; no length restriction. No set fee for entry but a donation towards the work of Poetry Kit is requested. Poetry Kit provides information and resources for poets around the world. 1st prize: £100. Entry is by email to comp@poetrykit.org after an appropriate fee is paid by PayPal to the account of info@poetrykit.org Further details, rules and information at; <http://www.poetrykit.org/comp2011.htm>

Takahē Poetry Competition Closing Date: 30 September Results will be posted out in Dec. Judged by **Sue Wootton** 1st: \$250; 2nd: \$100. Two Runners up will receive one year's subscription to *Takahē*.

*Each entry must be the original work of the person submitting it; entries must not have been previously published, or broadcast, and must not be submitted elsewhere for any competition, or for publication in any form, until after the announcement of the results of this competition.

*Maximum length for each poem submitted is 50 lines. *Entrants may submit as many previously unpublished poems as they wish, but each poem must be named separately on the entry form.

*Each poem must be accompanied by a \$NZ5 entry fee, and a stamped, addressed envelope for a copy of the judge's report/results. Overseas entrants can either send an International Reply Coupon with their addressed envelope, or add \$NZ2.50 to their total entry fee for handling and postage. Overseas entrants are asked to email admin@takahe.org.nz for advice on payment. A single SAE or substitute will suffice for multiple entries.

*The entrant's name or nom de plume must not appear on the manuscript.

*All entries should be typed on A4 paper.

*Worldwide copyright of entries will remain with the author.

*All entries received will be considered for publication in *Takahē*.

*The judge's decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

*In the event of the competition being cancelled all monies will be refunded.

*No entries will be returned. Entrants can download a poetry competition entry form by visiting: <http://www.takahe.org.nz/competition72.php>

firstwriter.com's Tenth International Poetry Competition (UK) Deadline: 1 October

Poems in any style and on any subject under 30 lines long. All entries submitted online. 1st: £500 plus free licence for WhiteSmoke 2008+ Creative Version; \$150 for best runner-up from USA & £100 for the best runner-up from UK. Ten special commendations will also be awarded and all the winners will be published in *firstwriter.magazine* and receive a subscription voucher worth \$30 / £20 / €30. Entry fees: £3.00

per poem. Or enter 3 for £2.50 each, 5 for £2.00 each, 10 for £1.50 each.

All details, previous winners and online entry facility at:

http://www.firstwriter.com/competitions/poetry_competition.shtml

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

Hastings International Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 15 October Poems up to 50 lines. Prizes: £150, £75, £50 and £25. Winners published in *First Time* magazine, Spring 2012. Entry Fee: £2.00

<http://www.1066hosting.co.uk/josephineaustin/competition.html>

Lucidity Poetry Journal Clarity Awards (USA)

Deadline: 31 October Twice-yearly free contest for poems in any form dealing with people and interpersonal relationships. Authors must be 18+. "We look for poems that have clarity and focus, so the audience can both comprehend and applaud the lines." No email submissions, please. Unpublished submissions preferred but not required. Top Award: \$100, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$25; winners announced in Winter issue. Poems published with poet's permission. Address to send submissions to: Lucidity Poetry Journal Clarity Awards, 23 Bendwood, Sugar Land, TX 77478, United States. Send 1-5 poems, maximum 36 lines per poem including stanza breaks; prefer poems no shorter than 18-20 lines; typed, single-spaced, in standard font. One poem per page. Include author's name, address, phone and email (if available) on each page. Guidelines URL: <http://lucidityjournal.00books.com/>

Sonnet or Not - Cannon Poets Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 October Theme: 'Sonnet or Not'. 14 line poems that in some way reflect the sonnet form. Entry Fee: £4 for first poem; £2.50 for subsequent poems. Website: www.cannonpoets.co.uk

Poetry Opportunity Reminder

Tyneside Poets - Call for submissions from New Zealand Poets. UK Poet Dave Freeman, in association with the NZPS, invites New Zealand poets to submit to the Tyneside Poets blog.

Send 2 or 3 poems in a Word attachment to: tynesidesubs@hotmail.co.uk As always, we advise you to visit the site before submitting, to see what kind of poetry they publish. See:

www.poetrytyneside.blogspot.com

Reviews

The leaf-ride Dinah Hawken (VUP 2011) ISBN 9780864736505

Heidi North

The leaf-ride is Dinah Hawken's fifth book of poetry. By an accomplished poet, this collection explores quite a range of the human condition, "...the drift/ – I want to be held alive/ in a down-welling, up-welling drift."

From the pleasure and delight of a newly born child to the power and play of language; through the atrocities of war and a lament on our own failings, she leads off on a journey through this "leaf-ride of suffering and joy."

I have long been a fan of the way Hawken has of noticing and defining the natural world. And this collection is taut with her characteristic use of imagery and ability to capture exquisite details. For example, in 16 tiny poems 'Tulips':

memento petals
in a small brown bowl
waving

But what is also lovely about this careful deliberation that underpins her work are the bursts of 'wild joy' that come through in this collection. To me, this is when Hawken's poetry is at its strongest; it's elegant, but there is a real sense of fun. I particularly enjoyed 'Building sonnets', where she enters the mysterious world of building through language, her toolbox, so to speak:

It was lifted
off the truck by a black and orange
winch and winch was my beginning
in the coloured world.

Until even the builder is making language quips, which is a lovely bridge to weave us back and forward across the ordinary world until the act of renovating and building becomes "the frame of bones we are alive on.../ the hard shape of a renovated room/ in which a newborn child might lie".

The artful lightness these poems embody is when her poetry really comes alive and sings. The sequence about her granddaughter Elza is also full of delight. The last segment in the collection, it's a nice place to leave us, with a child on the edge of seeking out her own "leaf-ride".

The 'Peace on Earth' series, which was commissioned to accompany a performance of Haydn's 'Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross', takes on the big and terrifying theme with Hawken's gentle grace and attention to detail, which saves it from becoming hyperbolic or clichéd and instead is infused with beauty and tenderness – no mean feat.

I must admit I was vaguely frustrated by the contemplative sequence 'Trying to conjure up someone like you by reading Rumi and Italo Calvino beside lake Geneva after a visit to Turkey' because I was never quite sure who the "you" was. There is a strong political undercurrent on the horror of war running through, but I felt that this sequence wasn't quite as accessible as the rest of the work.

However, in some of the other political poems, when her characteristic gentle grace becomes direct and startling, the effect can be gut wrenching. In 'Where are the girls':

I can take the side
of the woman who sits
head down and hands empty
at the side of her burnt baby.

It is no surprise that Hawken is a psychotherapist and has a history of working with the mentally ill and homeless. The collection is infused with compassion, but also the anguish of what we are capable of:

Oh mother, forgive us. Because
we are soft, we become
too hard and then we do not know
what we do.

The leaf-ride is a skilfully crafted collection that left me with a sense of beauty and hope. It's a work to come back to, and to treasure.

The Hill of Wool Jenny Bornholdt (VUP, 2011) ISBN 9780864736529 RRP \$25
Margaret Vos

It's been a while since I read a poem that made me reach for the dictionary or Google, but I was pleased to learn a few things in Jenny Bornholdt's collection, *The Hill of Wool*. Slyly-named overseas locations (real ones) and enigmatic references (the elephant died in 1900) add to the sense of mystery, chance, uncertainty, and something like the possibilities of alternative histories.

The Hill of Wool is more than a book about memories; it opens the doors to revisionist history, the (in)accuracy of memory, what might have been/what is, and an exploration of how family holds together – sometimes because of, sometimes in spite of, its tensions and its bonds.

The un-NZ locations belie the very approachable family and domestic sphere where her best poetry comes from. The sort that makes you read a poem two or three or more times, mining for more meaning each time, because Bornholdt is expert in applying a poetic eye and ear to ordinary life, and death.

My favourite lines are from 'All Time Moving':

as we unpacked boxes
of my father's impossible handwriting
still unable to figure out
what it was
he was saying.

More wordplay – and I do mean play – is found in 'Tower of London', which builds upon the 'be ye friend, or be ye foe' cadence from children's poems and stories. The spell-like imagery evoked by "be ye cradle salt or blood" seems a departure from her usual sphere, but it somehow works.

However I'm mulling over the division of the collection into two 'books' – there is no clarity to me as to why. Still, I enjoy the poems too much to really care.

Perhaps my biggest criticism of *The Hill of Wool* is the conscious poetry in some of the poems. I don't enjoy poems that are self-referential, or poems about poetry (except for Yeats). It smacks of navel-gazing to me, and I find it jarring. Unfortunately the collection begins with one such poem, rather blandly – or perhaps grandly? – titled 'Poetry'. Similarly, I don't like the movement in 'Pearly Everlasting' from a dreamy image-laden landscape into the self-awareness of "lucky for us/ the tender anchoring/ nouns".

I'm pleased Bornholdt didn't pursue the couplet as she did in her last collection, *The Rocky Shore*. In *The Hill of Wool*, she returned to more focused experimenting with form, like the stitched-together haiku of 'Blossom', or the haunting first/last stanza echoes in 'Undone'. That happens to be one of my favourite poems in the collection, as I found it to be an exact characterisation of one's life after another's death:

Nothing, now, is clear. All's become con-
fusion. All falls dark. The house closed fast
to light. We watch as everything becomes undone.
Ordinary things that used to be so full of wonder.

But there is humour too, in 'Wisdom', and 'Cookbook' which I quote here in full:

Oh the horror
to have a dish
named after yer.

The Hill of Wool makes me wonder what has triggered Bornholdt's examination of the past and of memory, but in the end her poems can stand on their own without that knowledge. I believe this collection will age well, and will continue to increase in meaning as readers themselves age.

If you like Bornholdt's poetry, you'll love this collection; if you didn't like her before, try her now.

PS—a "sett" is a den or network of badger tunnels.

Regional Report

Taupo Fine Fellows - A New Epicentre for Poetics in the Central North

Matthew Lark

What do a post-shop, an organic café, a pilot, a peace activist and a museum administrator have in common?

Well, in Taupo they all contribute to Fine Fellows, a group which makes performing poetry and prose as accessible as possible.

Fine Fellows grew out of a week of events hosted by current treasurer Pat Mckenzie in July 2010. This

included readings by visiting poet Chris Price, and a two-hour reading by Taupo poets at our Post Shop on National Poetry Day. Most of those are now members of the group, which takes its name from an organic café (Fine Fettle), where we meet every two months.

In February an inaugural gathering saw a committee elected, a subscription of \$5 established, and a membership urging this fledgling organisation to fly.

Meetings for performers at Fine Fettle are complemented in alternate months by informal assemblies in members' homes. These are for poets to share work in progress, explore others' work and do exercises in mental agility which keep everyone sharp.

Fine Fellows conducted a reading at Taupo Hospice in May, and has been invited back to read again this spring. We are developing an outreach to read in local retirement communities, and a programme of creative outings for members, who want to use common experience of different places and settings, to inspire their poetry. A first outing to Whakaipo Bay on Lake Taupo in May yielded new work from two of our members.

The group delivered a successful reading for children at Taupo Library during this winter's school holiday programme and plans are afoot to offer more.

With help from Creative Taupo and The Booksellers' Council, we hosted associate professor Harry Ricketts for a full day of lectures and readings for this year's Poetry Day. We plan to invite more poets to read, lecture and work with us.

We really can count a pilot, a peace activist and our exceptional secretary, who works at Taupo Museum, among a growing, diverse membership. Our rules are simple, our outlook is friendly and our output grows in volume and variety every month.

So keep a look out; Fine Fellows will be posting notices of its events on a website near your browser soon.

Fine Fellows committee 2011:

Chair: Matthew Lark

Secretary: Geni Johnston

Treasurer: Pat Mckenzie

Committee member: Roger Marcon.

Haikai Corner

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

summer's night
carnival tents bloom
in the park

~ haiku by *Joanne Rye-McGregor*

20 weeks her belly button pops out

~ senryū by *André Surridge*

I can't explain
what binds me to life
here without you
is it the light on the waves
or the ceiling of white clouds?

~ tanka by *Patricia Prime*

Submissions: Please send your best three unpublished haiku/senryū/tanka for consideration to kirsten.cliff@gmail.com with 'HAIKAI CAFE' in the subject line. ('haikai' = poetic genre including the Japanese short forms.)

Straight From the Haijin's Mouth

I asked this year's NZPS International Haiku Competition Judges, Joanna Preston (Open) and Owen Bullock (Junior), 'What is it about haiku that keeps you coming back for more?'

Joanna Preston's answer: It's less a case of 'what keeps me coming back' than haiku refusing to let me go in the first place! Every few years I decide I want to leave the genre alone for a while, but something will happen that just can't be expressed in any other form, or that announces itself to me that way. And then I'm astounded all over again at the depth and complexity of the genre. For me it's that shock of recognition, of purpose, of rightness, that's crucial in all poetry, but most powerfully concentrated in haiku. And there's no better training for a poet – to be precise, to be good at recognising exactly what elements of a scene or experience are the really important ones, and to be as supple in meaning and frugal in expression as possible. You feel the really good ones in your body, as a physical impact, as well as in your mind. So maybe my need for haiku is a form of addiction, the way runners can come to crave the endorphin high. Or maybe it's the nuclear physics of poetry – the power to blow the world apart packed into a tiny, seemingly innocuous package.

(Read more from Joanna on her blog – A Dark Feathered Art: <http://jopre.wordpress.com/>)

Owen Bullock's answer: I love the variety that is possible in haiku, and the depth that is sometimes held by such few words. That depth is like a lake, you can swim on the surface or dive deep, chase sticks or skim stones. But it is always about what is real, what is experienced, grounded in sensation. The technique is hidden; the approach of the best haiku so subtle that it is as if no effort goes into it, that it tumbles out of the sky fully formed. Haiku takes me by surprise more often than other forms of poetry. My own search as a poet is for truth and simplicity. Truth, in this context, means a faithfulness to what actually occurred. The simplicity required to frame the experience is a great lesson and training ground for any and all writing.

waiting . . .
a leaf falls
into my lap

~from *wild camomile*

(Read more from Owen on his website – <http://www.owenbullock.com/>)

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

The Haiku Help-Desk

Stella Pierides is part of my on-line haiku community and she has kindly let me use her work here as my first haiku help-desk example:

old people's home -
she insists on making her own
bed

To begin with, I'd like to label this as a senryū, as it's an observation of human nature/behaviour; there is no reference to season or the flora/fauna of nature that characterise haiku. Many would still call this a

haiku and this is widely accepted. I prefer to make the distinction as senryū do have a life all of their own that I hope to display in *haikai café*.

This senryū shows promise as the observation is sound; however, minor changes in word choices and line breaks will lift this poem to its full potential.

Line one: The use of 'old people's home' immediately stands out as awkward. I suggest a change to 'rest home', which –

- is shorter (on the page and for reading aloud),
- conveys the same message (readers would still get the image of an elderly group home),
- and most importantly it sets up a strong juxtaposition between 'rest' and the busyness of 'making her own bed' (which wasn't as clear before).

Line two: The line break has been left too long here and this is taking away from the image. I suggest having 'making' as the last word on this line so it -

- looks cleaner on the page and therefore more attractive to read,
- changes the way it's read aloud so now the reader pauses in a more convenient place enhancing the flow of the poem,
- and gives a clear beginning, middle and end which works in the favour of this senryū.

rest home -
she insists on making
her own bed

(The new) Line three: I first thought that 'own' was unnecessary. However when I read the edited version of this senryū aloud I found that the beat of the poem was better with it in and a nice repetition of sound comes through with 'home' and 'own'. When editing haikai I always check that I'm not cutting out words for the sake of shortening. Read your poetry aloud so you'll catch anything that's not working.

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

Mini Competition

My goodness, but we unleashed a wave of creativity with John O'Connor's bird boxes! Seems lots of you like such specific forms, and I was inundated with entries like never before – my short list was 8 poems long, and I didn't want to eliminate any of them. I'd be a lousy judge of our annual competition! In the end I chose one by Kristina Jensen, who wins Paula Green's *Slip Stream*. Congratulations to Greg O'Connell, Maris O'Rourke, and Sandi Sartorelli, who all received consolation prizes for making it so hard for me to choose. Greg gets special mention for the abundance he gave me to select from – he had 3 on the short list!

(1) TERN POEM

Delicate diminutive tern in the air,
makes flying look terribly easy up there.

(2) PUKEKO POEM

Airborn pukeko is all but airy,
wobbling and weaving like a drunken fairy.

Since you like form poems so much, here's another one: write a cinquain. A cinquain has five lines: Line 1 is one word (the title); Line 2 is two words that describe the title; Line 3 is three words that tell the action; Line 4 is four words that express the feeling; Line 5 is one word that recalls the title. Try and make it interesting – that's the real challenge. Prize tba.

MEMBERS' POEMS

Short Takes

Hunker Down Sparrow,
Balance Once More;
That Gust Too Strong,
Jump! – Airborne!

Wheeling –
The Sparrow Snatches
The Locust In Mid-Flight.

My Balcony Compost –
The Sparrows Quite Drunk
On The Rotten Apples.

Nine p.m. –
A Winter Evening;
The Sparrows On
Lambton Quay,
Quite Deafening

Listening –
Not A Breath Of Wind;
My Wind Chimes Tinkling.

General Anaesthetic –
Everything Closes Down.

Jon Schrader

Finding Genealogy

Dame Alison Holst decides
to research war heroes.
Everyone can do it for free
on the Ancestry.com website
but I couldn't do it without
my parents in the same room
to question them about Jack Curran,
my paternal grandfather,
a celebrated war hero.

And so, on an Anzac afternoon
I pick up a folder of papers
collated by an Aunty, now gone.
I breathe more deeply,
sit more quietly
as I read Jack's histories:
a life of military battles,

marriage to Dulcie,
proprietorship of the Palace Hotel,
finally cancer of the larynx.

Meanwhile, there is some small
quarrel between my parents.

Anne Curran

Walk Towards Twilight

In the space between
day and dusk
where sun
and sky are one
or the other
and the white foam
of breaking waves
becomes landed clouds
in a coastal walk
of cataract vision
veiled in mists
of suggestion
and dim recognition
memory hovers
on the edges of land
with a slim hold.

It is an uncertain time
tide shifts pebbles and sand
margins and marks
on the watery page
move and fold
word is blurred
meaning obscured
by the child's mind-
dread of the dark
when the door shuts.

Suzanne Herschell

sunset drives
a lone swimmer
towards the Norfolk pine

Anne Curran

NOVEMBER DEADLINE IS 7TH OCTOBER