

a fine line

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY

Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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NEW ZEALAND POETRY SOCIETY
Te Hunga Tito Ruri o Aotearoa

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WELLINGTON MEETINGS

Poets' Corner
The Thistle Inn

3 Mulgrave St, Wellington Central
THIRD MONDAY OF THE MONTH
February to November
Starts at 7.30pm with open mic.

To find out who the Guest Poet is, please see:

[http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/
comingevents](http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/comingevents)

DEADLINE FOR JULY ISSUE:

7 JUNE

The Lauris Edmond Memorial Award for Distinguished Contribution to Poetry

Laurice Gilbert

The Lauris Edmond Memorial Award was established by the Canterbury Poets Collective in order to recognise outstanding contribution to poetry in New Zealand. In 2002 John O'Connor asked Lauris's Literary Executor, Frances Edmond, for permission to use her name, and Frances graciously agreed. The Award's purpose, then and now, was to celebrate senior poets who have distinguished themselves without (or with little) public acclamation.

Over time the Award structure evolved, as these things do, and for a period the Canterbury group collaborated with the New Zealand Poetry Society, of which Lauris had been the Patron at the time of her death. The Poetry Society's role as a national organisation aiming at promoting, developing and supporting poetry and poets in New Zealand made this a very good fit. There was joint administration, particularly in the selection of an awardee, and the NZPS committed financial support to the prize.

The Canterbury Poets Collective bowed out in 2009 and the Award is now jointly administered by the NZPS and the Friends of the Lauris Edmond Memorial Award, chaired by Frances Edmond. The Friends are literally and literarily old friends of Lauris's, along with the current NZPS President, who happens to happily share her name. As well as Frances and Laurice, they are: Dame Fiona Kidman (NZPS co-Patron), Vincent O'Sullivan (NZPS co-Patron and currently Poet Laureate) and Professor Harry Ricketts.

Awardees:

The inaugural recipient was Bill Sewell, who received the Award posthumously at the July 2003 '5 Poets' Reading in Christchurch. Brian Turner accepted it on Bill's behalf, with a second ceremony in Wellington (at an NZPS special meeting) to deliver the framed certificate and a cheque to Bill's widow, Amanda Powell.

The Award was subsequently presented in Christchurch to four more outstanding and deserving poets: Jenny Bornholdt, Dinah Hawken, Brian Turner and Riemke Ensing. Diana Bridge received the Award in Wellington, shortly after the September 2010 earthquake resulted in the cancellation of that year's Festival in Christchurch.

2012 was the final time the Award was presented in Christchurch, programme contact Ruth Todd having resigned. She suggested it was time for the Award to take up residence in Lauris's (literary) home town.

Memories from Frances:

"I'm not exactly sure of the sequence of events but Lauris's first book of poems (*In Middle Air*) and the move into Grass Street took place in 1975. The move was certainly late in the year - perhaps October. (I remember carrying loads of

household goods down the path and swearing that I would never live in such an inconvenient place. I never have!)“

2014 and onward

We are enormously grateful to Programme Manager Kathryn Carmody for accepting and absorbing the event into the 2014 New Zealand Festival Writers Week for the first time this year, as the event ‘5 Poets and a Prize’. Frances Edmond chaired the session, which featured readings from Riemke Ensing, Geoff Cochrane, Jenny Bornholdt, Michael Harlow and Vivienne Plumb. At the conclusion of the readings, Laurice Gilbert presented the 2014 Award to a surprised and delighted Michael Harlow.

You can see a photo of this illustrious group on the news page of our website, at: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/news>

We are now happy to report that an additional sponsor has been found for the Award. Thanks to Harry Ricketts and Fergus Barrowman, Victoria University Press is coming on board to work with the NZPS and the Friends. This is of enormous value, both in terms of supplementing the NZPS’s financial commitment to the Award, and for the literary connections available via VUP.

The Friends group has long been working on making this poetry award a thing of beauty and honour. While we don’t yet hope to compete with the resources available to such honours as the Prime Minister’s Award, Arts Foundation Awards or the Poet Laureate position, we believe the Lauris Edmond Memorial Award has the potential to be the prime recognition of poets esteemed by the poetry community itself. Having the support of one of the major publishers of poetry in New Zealand is a huge step forward, and we are pleased and grateful to Fergus for this opportunity to expand the project.



Notice of 2014 AGM

The NZPS AGM will be held in Wellington at 7.30pm on Monday 16th June, 2014. The venue is The Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Thorndon, Wellington, and the meeting will be followed by a reading from a Guest Poet, tba. There will be no open mic.

All current committee members are required to resign, and nominations are now being accepted. This can be by post or email, and nominations must be made and seconded by financial members of the NZPS. Post nominations to: The National Coordinator, PO Box 5283, Wellington 6145; or email to: info@poetrysociety.org.nz Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Agenda:

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2013 AGM

(see below).

- 3) Matters arising from the 2013 Minutes
- 4) President’s Report
- 5) Financial Report
- 6) Proposed Expenditure for 2014-2015
- 7) Election of Officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Members.
- 8) Election of Auditor
- 9) New Constitution
- 10) General Business

MINUTES OF THE 2013 NZPS AGM

Held at The Thistle Inn, 2.00pm, Saturday 20 July 2013.

• **Welcome & Apologies:** Laurice Gilbert welcomed those present. Apologies were offered for Sandi Sartorelli, Gillian Cameron, Gill Ward, Anne Conroy.

• **Present:** Nola Borrell, Karen Butterworth, Carmen Downes, Laurice Gilbert, Jon Schrader, Lonnard Watkins, Alan Wells, Jack Wood. A quorum (6) was achieved.

• **Minutes of the 2012 AGM.** As these were not available in print, they were read out by Laurice from the March issue of *a fine line*.

1. Discussion – there was no discussion.

2. President moved the Minutes be accepted as a true record of the 2012 AGM. Carried.

• Matters arising from the Minutes:

- Auditor: Laurice explained that the election of Steve Veail last year as Auditor turned out to be inappropriate as Steve has no experience with Xero, which is now the accounting programme in use.

– Jack pointed out that there is a Community Course available for Xero training and suggested that we make sponsorship for the course available in exchange for a minimum of (e.g.) two years’ voluntary work.

– Workshops: Laurice reported that Lynn Davidson agreed to get in touch for a workshop when she was planning to be in Wellington, but might have forgotten. Laurice to email her again.

– A further suggestion was made to invite Hinemoana Baker.

– Accounts: that the Society is running at a loss was noted, and Jon asked how long we would be able to run like this. Laurice responded that there needs to be a return to the work of voluntary officers, and this was one of the reasons she has resigned as National Coordinator.

– Change in subscription fees: this was passed at the Special General Meeting in September. Karen suggested that in cases of hardship, perhaps those who still want the postal option could have the magazine emailed to a family member who would print it out for them.

• **President's Report.** This was read out by Laurice.

1. Discussion.

– Lonnard offered to take a look at the Content Management System of the website to see if there was any way to improve it, as IT is his area of interest.

– In response to a question, Laurice explained that her resignation is from the position of National Coordinator, an appointed and paid position, but that she remains available for the position of President, a voluntary elected position.

– Further discussion was around the difference between Governance and Executive function.

– There were other subjects of discussion and Laurice requested that these be saved for General Business as they went beyond the President's report as presented. There was a vote of thanks for the work of the President, and applause.

2. President moved the Report be accepted. Carried.

• **Financial Report.** Laurice presented the draft accounts.

1. Discussion. The accounts weren't completed as Laurice had trouble setting up and using Xero without a bookkeeping background. The outgoing Treasurer, Steve Veail, had no experience with it and was unable to help her.

2. President moved the Draft Accounts be tabled for subsequent completion and auditing. Carried.

• **Appointment of Auditor.** As covered above, the auditor appointed last year was unsuitable, and the meeting agreed the incoming Committee would deal with this once the accounts have been completed for re-presenting at a Special General Meeting.

• **Proposed Budget for 2013-2014.** This has not been prepared.

1. Discussion. Laurice reported that this hasn't been done because the accounts couldn't be completed.

2. The President moved the preparation of the Budget be deferred until the completion of the Accounts and be presented at the anticipated SGM after consultation with the incoming committee. Carried.

• **Election of Officers and Committee Members.**

All Committee Members are required to resign at the end of each financial year.

1. Laurice was the only candidate for President, and the meeting opted to leave her in place for the election as she was also taking the minutes. Laurice was Nominated by Jack, Seconded by Lonnard. As there were no other nominations Laurice was declared elected.

2. Vice-President. Lonnard indicated his willingness to take on this position, and was nominated by Jack, Seconded by Nola. There being no other candidates, Lonnard was declared elected.

3. Treasurer. Sandi Sartorelli had previously indicated her willingness to take on this role, and was nominated by the President. There being no other candidates, Sandi was declared elected. However, this may have to be reviewed if Sandi gets a job at the IRD, which excludes its employees from doing such work.

4. There were no nominations for Secretary and the position remains vacant.

5. Committee members. Jack Wood (Nom. L Watkins, Sec. J Schrader) and Carmen Downes (Nom. President) were willing to join the Committee and declared elected. Gillian Cameron remains a co-opted member as cheque signatory, though Anne Faulkner has resigned from this position as she is leaving the country in a few days. Carmen has agreed to take her place.

The meeting was interrupted by The Waratahs doing sound checks in the adjoining room, and a short break was taken for afternoon tea; home-made muffins were enjoyed by all.

• **General Business.** Discussion resumed about issues that were raised earlier.

1. Laurice reported that there were no offers from members outside the Wellington region to join the committee.

2. Lonnard suggested the NZPS could be an umbrella organisation to endorse or sanction smaller regional poetry groups, with agents in each area. Karen compared it with the NZ Society of Authors, which has smaller regional sub-groups. Laurice pointed out that with only 120 financially current members, that model is quite limited.

3. There was considerable discussion around promoting the NZPS, with suggestions for more services that could be charged for, ie to put more value on our work.

4. Lonnard offered to take over the running of the website, using it as a central coordination point for people to use as a poetry community, in the same way as the haiku community does.

5. Karen offered herself as a mentor for future leadership.

6. Laurice declared her willingness to continue to run the International Poetry Competition (which is self-funded), and to produce the magazine if no-one else was interested in taking that over.

7. Jack would like to look at how to have some youth (18-25) representation on the committee.

8. The new Committee will meet within the next month, before Laurice goes overseas.

The company assembled agreed that hearing The Waratahs rehearse for their concert was a welcome bonus to attending the AGM, and the meeting closed at 3.50pm.



From the President

It's AGM time again shortly, and this is my last post to you as President. Next time it'll be "From the Editor", and I'll have to think up something suitably literary to write about. Good luck with that, as they say.

My call for help to run the Society in the last issue resulted in one very welcome offer. That voluntary job is now being managed from Auckland, and I'm grateful for the assistance. It is my sincere hope that the Society will not now wind up for lack of personnel to keep things running. There is a long and illustrious history of past Presidents, including Lauris Edmond, Dennis Glover, Alistair Campbell, Harry Ricketts, Vivienne Plumb and James Norcliffe, among others, most of whom were hands-on leaders, though it's not required.

Prior to my appointment as National Coordinator (a position now disestablished) the committee traditionally did all the required administrative work. I have attempted to shift as much as I can to online services, to enable easy transfer from one volunteer to another as the need arises. With just a few more details to take care of, I can step back and let the Society follow its own path.

I've had enough feedback from generous members over the years to feel I've done a good job of caretaking, and that you appreciate how the NZPS contributes to the poetry life of New Zealand. Long may it last.

In the meantime, I'm leaving the country on 14th July, for a round-the-world trip with my husband, thanks to my share of the proceeds of my late father's house. I hope to find poetry readings wherever I go, as I did last year when I visited family in Canada. In particular, I'm looking forward to catching up with past-President and published poet Margaret Vos in London. She's offered to take me to the Poetry Library, which will hopefully be inspiring for something similar, it not on such a grand scale, here.

We'll be away for 6-7 weeks, and if there are no new Committee Members to assist the new President, then not much administration will get done in my absence. Just sayin'. I will get the June issue of *a fine line* out of the way before I leave, but the September one will definitely be late, unless someone else wants to give it a go.

So mark the AGM date in your calendar, and think seriously about offering yourself and some of your time to helping the NZPS continue its important work with both emerging and established poets. It's a worthwhile and rewarding endeavour.



About our Contributors

Kirsten Cliff is a free-range writer and book trader, with a love of all things haiku. She blogs at <http://kirstencliffwrites.blogspot.co.nz> and you can read her free chapbook here: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/206750514/thinking-of-you>

The NZPS Committee offers its deepest sympathy to

Kirsten, who lost the roof of her house (and consequently much of the contents) in a recent storm. We wish her a speedy return to normal living conditions.

Keith Nunes lives in rural Bay of Plenty with a retinue of crackpots. His obtuse and melodramatic poems have been published in *Landfall*, *Poetry NZ*, *Takahe*, *Trout*, *a fine line* and *Snorkel* among others and his book reviews appear widely in *Oropi*. His chapbook *Crashing the Calliope* is on the streets. He's a former newspaper sub-editor but has been granted divine forgiveness.

Joanna Preston is an Australian-born Christchurch writer and teacher, whose first poetry collection, *The Summer King*, won both the inaugural Kathleen Grattan Award and the Mary Gilmore Prize.

Vaughan Rapatahana (Te Àtiawa) is a long term resident of Hong Kong, with homes also in Aotearoa and Pampanga, Philippines. Extensively published across a wide array of genres, from philosophy to fiction to poetry and language critique. Ph.D University of Auckland; Poupou Huia Te Reo Te Whare Wānanga o Raukawa.



A Warm Welcome to ...

Alistair Tulett Morrinsville

Carolyn Payton Napier

Ena Were Hamilton

Erin Raill Auckland

Hua Dai Auckland

John Howell Wellington

John Lovell Auckland

Keely Shaw Dunedin

Laura C Davis Australia

Mariela Durnhofer Rubolino Kapiti

Sam Harris Hamilton

Yolande van de Wetering Auckland



Congratulations

Ernie Berry's haiku: 'family/ am i the last to go/ snowmelt' won Honorable Mention in the Basho International Haiku Contest. There were approximately 600 entries. Another haiku was chosen as one of two Runners-Up in the British Haiku Association competition, and will be published in *Blithe Spirit* in May. And he won the final contest of the Fort Worth Haiku Society, which has folded.

Diana Brodie has a poem published in *Ariadne's Thread* (UK). In February, a talk discussion and readings of her

collection, *Giotto's Circle*, took place in London at a meeting of Highgate Poets.

Janis Freegard's poem 'My Little Sister' was Commended in the Magma Poetry Competition 2013.

Anne Hollier Ruddy placed in the '100 Years From Gallipoli' competition, and her poem, 'Re-visioning', will be published in the forthcoming anthology of entries.

Janet Newman won First Prize for Poetry in the Manawatu Women Writers' Association Bronwyn Tate Memorial Short Story and Poetry Competition 2013, judged by Bryan Walpert from Massey University. The poem is called 'For the Forgotten.'

Ex-NZPS-President **Margaret Vos** received 'The Sinister Poetry Award' for her poem 'Coober Pedy', which was published in the March 2014 issue of Dark and Horror Journal *The Poetry Box*. It's her first UK publication since she left New Zealand, and she submitted it after seeing the link in a *fine line*.

Ruth Arnison, Owen Bullock, Kelvin Fowler and **Frankie McMillan** have poems in the 2013 issue of online journal *Deep South*.

Jenny Clay, Maris O'Rourke and **Beverley Teague** have fibs in *The Fib Review* #17, online at: <http://www.musepiepress.com/fibreview/index.html>

Shot Glass Journal #12 (also at Muse-Pie Press) includes poems by **Ruth Arnison, Jenny Clay, and Keith Nunes**.

Laurice Gilbert and **Gus Simonovic** have one and three poems respectively online at <http://sociopoetic.org/poetry/erasure> following an erasure competition that specified using Chapter 33 of Karl Marx's *Capital: The Modern Theory of Colonisation*.

The Typewriter, Vol. V contains poems by: **Jenny Argante, Anne Hollier Ruddy, Susan Howard, Keith Nunes** and **Vaughan Rapatahana**.

RESULTS OF THE KOKAKO HAIKU & SENRYU COMPETITION, 2013

1st: **Elaine Riddell** (NZ); 2nd: Chen-ou Liu (CAN); 3rd: **Cynthia Rowe** (AUS); Highly Commended: **Ernest Berry** (NZ); Dawn Bruce (AUS); Commended: **Eric Dodson** (NZ); **Owen Bullock** (NZ); **Andre Surridge** (NZ).



Noticeboard

DOES ANYONE RECOGNISE THIS POEM?

I've had an enquiry about the following poem extract. The enquirer would like to be in touch with the person who wrote it. It's not familiar to me, so over to you.

Love Song

It was autumn when I found you.
At that place where the Matiretoha-waved-goodbye.
The leaves were falling.
I had been walking on a stone road.
One night we talked until morning.
You fed me sweet potato and fried bread
and then I slept. The fire was warm.
...

If you know the author of (or wrote!) the poem, please contact me at: editor@poetrysociety.org.nz

DONATIONS

The Committee of the New Zealand Poetry Society wishes to acknowledge and thank those who make regular donations to the Society, beyond the membership subscription. **Elaine Riddell** and **Michael Harlow** are generous supporters of our work, which we appreciate.

Barry Morrall was an active Committee Member in the late 90s, when he was responsible for the popular 'Poetry on the Buses' project, which some of you might remember. Barry passed away last year, and to our surprise and delight left us a bequest of \$1000 in his will.

A Christchurch writing group, consisting of Rose Collins, Frankie McMillan, Kerrin P. Sharpe, Tusiata Avia, Barbara Strang and Maria Hansen, organised a poetry workshop that resulted in surplus funds. These generous poets donated those funds to the NZPS, for which we are most grateful.

THE SMALL WHITE TEAPOT HAIKU GROUP

... meets regularly at 7pm on the third Tuesday of the month for about a couple of hours to hear, discuss and critique the haiku.

We do not stick to the 5-7-5 format of the Japanese language style of three-line haiku, as some thinking is that if Basho, the master haiku writer had spoken and written in the English language, he would have used the syllabic format which has developed.

The same guidelines apply: environment, season, nature, the moment, imagery, etc. usually in three lines.

Venue: Avebury House, Eveleyn Couzins Ave, Richmond, Christchurch. Avebury House is in Avebury Park and has been earthquake repaired and refurbished to the new standard. Sundry cost of \$3. The SWTHG will be pleased to welcome you.

CALL OUT/OPPORTUNITY: FORTHCOMING BOOK REVIEW SITE

'What the Bird Said' will be devoted to online criticism of a diverse array of the best contemporary and international

poetry. It will specialise in short reviews of poetry collections and anthologies written in English. 'What the Bird Said' is especially keen to hear from authors and publishers based in New Zealand. Please send a query email to Libby Hart at libbyhartfile@gmail.com if you are interested in having your book reviewed.

Libby Hart is an Australian writer, poet, critic and editor. She is the author of *Fresh News from the Arctic* (Anne Elder Award) and *This Floating World* (shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Awards and the Age Book of the Year Awards). Her new poetry collection, *Wild*, is forthcoming. Please see libbyhartfile.blogspot.com for more details.



Regional report

WINDRIFT GROUP MEETING, FEBRUARY

Bevan Greenslade

Haiku and tanka were invited under 'open' and 'regret or celebration' topics; and Karen Butterworth shared her experience and thoughts on tanka.

Open:

the toddler smiles
at the gosling
foie gras in her picnic

Harumi Hasegawa

This drew admiration and affirmations of comprehension, rather than comment. Harumi adjusted the original 'duckling' to the young of goose, satisfying a member pedant (the Reporter).

the neurologist invites question
I can't think of any
I already asked the wheelchair one
that was more than I came
prepared to know

Lynn Francis

The Group was warned of the pathos to come by "neurologist", a trade redolent with disastrous personal tragedies. Lynn hangs us on the hingeing hook of the middle line – what is "the wheelchair" question, we wondered? So on through lines 4 & 5, then our mind returned to line 3. Suddenly, we got it. Most of the Group are of an age to relate to such consultations. No amending comments.

looking at you
watching me
a display of generations

Annette de Jonge

This began life as a tanka, but Annette honed it after the meeting.

floating on
black velvet
two tugs, breakfast

Jenny Pyatt

It took a while before a member unpacked this as a fishing story, boat or fly line lying loose on early morning's small-riffled water, with a feeding fish feeding the fisher.

absentmindedly
i move the hose
a large skink darts away

Penny Pruden

Wellington's skink populations have shrunk due to cat predation; and this skink is "large", so even more precious. Penny can be commended for gardening in a friendly way to fellow-animals under threat. Her very *gardening* is an extended zen 'moment'. The length of "absentmindedly" troubled a member initially, but its rhythm was felt to fit, and so accepted.

scanner tumbling
like a washing machine
if only it washed clean

Nola Borrell

Originally presented as tanka, now pared to a haiku.

granddaughter turned three
finds she's not
fifty percent bigger

John Ross

John speaks for all grandfathers who wonder at time as against age.

my grand-daughter
does the long jump
un bound feet

Bevan Greenslade

My "un" pun that this was "the" long jump, a *single* leap, was explained - and thus failed. The "unbound" hinting at a cruel custom which previously anchored women to their home, as well as the athletic grand-daughter's exuberant modern freedom to excel wherever her skills lead her, were more easily accepted.

Regret / Celebration:

Somme Cemetery
lichens fight for living room

Karen Butterworth

This had punch; all the hells and bells of WWII came echoing back. And with "living room", came 'lebensraum'.

Memories' lichen fading yet growing, enduring while she lives. Karen trimmed the original 3 lines to the sharper 2.

Tanka talk

Karen Butterworth's tanka talk summarized the essential qualities in modern western tanka as:

~ 5 lines

~ economy of language, under 31 syllables, preferably fewer

~express emotion, directly or by implication

~turning point between first and second parts of the poem (cp. haiku or sonnet)

~western poetic devices may be used sparingly - but never rhyme.

The Reporter offered for discussion, a 5-11-5-11-5 'tanka' followed by a conventional 5-7-5 haiku, as a sort of text-free 'haibun'. Neither the scholarly nor the unconventional offerings generated workshop discussion. One member opined we seemed "just not into tanka".

Reporter opinion/question: I wonder, what *is* the fundamental purpose of having rules and forms defining or describing one type of poem from others?



haikai café

Your bite-sized serving of haiku, senryū, tanka and haibun

edited by Kirsten Clifff

weeping plums –
another fight
about nothing

~ Haiku by Norah Johnson

Chinese New Year
inside the park tent
my fortune told

~ Senryū by Patricia Prime

evening falls
I am unwilling to leave
this fragrant night
so soft its touch
infinite, its starry call

~ Tanka by Jenny Fraser

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

From the Archives

The Poet's Epitaph

St George

No fervid burst of swelling words,
No sculptured pomp - no trumpet tone
Should tell the passer-by who sleeps
Beneath that white and simple stone.
A flower-grown mount - a name alone,
Were all enough to tell his worth,
Whose fairest deeds were little known -
He sleeps in consecrated earth,
But deep in many a sorrowing breast
He has a nearer, holier rest.

No if ye must upon his shrine
Some praise of the departed write,
Oh let it be no word of thine,
Which stranger eyes to gaze invite.
But from amongst those words of light
He modulated into song,
Choose ye what most can charm the sight;
And from the long recorded throng
Of loftier graves that cluster near,
Those touching words shall mark his bier.

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Featured Poet: Vaughan Rapatahana

summer at pagudpud

the waves,
coolly summon;
their incessant demands
irrevocable.

a distant cousin
heatedly thumb-screwing
from above,
continues to coerce:

en pointe
a c r o s s
the white sand hotplate

we take up their offers
that cannot be refused.

Pagudpud is wonderful white sand beach in Ilocos Norte, Philippines.

last time

last time
together,
we seldom spoke,

until
I bought
us
pies
in
Tolaga.

you said
'thanks',

munching –
hungry,
I guess –
after all

your
mahi
in
our kitchen,..

back home
up
the
Coast.

we hit the airport,

I asked
you
to signal,
a.o.k...

last time
I saw
you
alive, son.

a half-smile,

thumbs up,
through
sliding doors,
bereft
of cleaning.

next
we met,
you

were
dead,

stiff
in
a pinebox.

still saying nothing.

we should have
said more
on
that
trip.
together.

Tolaga – small town on East Coast, Aotearoa-New Zealand

mahi – work – New Zealand Maori

fraud

the day lied to us;
quite fulsome
in its full-frontal
refusal
to dawn
the sun.

all those *swift*
promises
to heat
effulgent
mere fiction

&
those
f a r - f e t c h e d
rain
drops

final
insults
limning
this
diurnal
diorama
of
duplicity

Reviews

Magnificent Moon Ashleigh Young (Victoria University Press, 2012). Pb, 94pp. RRP\$28. ISBN: 9780864737632.

Joanna Preston.

There's a new style of poem emerging in New Zealand. Glitterier and more female than the 'Cinema of Unease' aspect of our popular culture, this poetry doesn't so much dabble in the surreal as pull it apart, re-cut it, and stitch it back into a more interesting garment altogether. And Ashleigh Young is definitely a member of this tribe.

Made up of fifty-two poems in three sections, *Magnificent Moon* begins with one of my favourite poems, 'Russell Sprouts'. Ah, you think, so I can expect puns, wordplay. Yes, but there's more to Young than just creative-writing-class games, as the opening poem demonstrates:

Because one night he laid himself down in the dirt
and went to sleep. [...]

naturally, it was him – it was only him, the quiet
one [...]

Oh, you think. *Personal stuff too. Sad bits.* And yes, there is, and will be. But then the poem swerves back into reassurance and strange humour by informing you that said father, far from being dead, leaps

up and over the window ledge
in a perfect Olympian vault
and through the curtains, with barely a rustle.

By this stage, if you're like me, your face will be twitching into a grin. And you won't notice the pun for about another minute and a half.

The poems in this first section nearly all concern her family, and are delightfully peculiar. The middle section of the collection is less successful. The quirkiness feels more forced, more exercise-y. 'The rest is easy', 'All the single ladies', and the three 'Afternoon with —' poems feel like exercises. Bad? No. But not up to the earlier standard. It's particularly unfortunate for the final two poems in this section – 'Buttons' and 'You are now entering'. Poems with lines like:

past houses left out like milk tokens
towards a light that isn't day; only an older, frailer
night

deserve more attention than they're likely to get coming so soon after 'Fitzrovia Shirts ("I am kind / of a big deal").

The third section of the book is darker. Poems like 'Badly stuffed animals' and 'Prey' are uneasy, and circle around the glinting surfaces of the idea of death. The standout poem of this section is an elegy with one of the least likely subjects – Steve Irwin:

A queen-sized sheet blew over the water
folded right in front of him
then bloomed again [...]

Eleven lines that absolutely live up to the back-cover blurb of being "quietly astonishing". Not to mention factually correct. And beautiful.

If you enjoy the strange (and I do), you'll find plenty in *Magnificent Moon* to enjoy. She's got a talent for finding bizarre images that fit perfectly, and a good eye for the possibilities of the world around her. She can also work a rhyme, although you don't notice them until you read aloud (try 'A swim with mum' for starters). The best way to enjoy this collection is to dip in and out of it, concentrating mainly on the poems at either end. I look forward to reading more from Ashleigh Young. Recommended.

Other Animals Therese Lloyd (Victoria University Press) RRP \$25 ISBN 9780864738820

Keith Nunes

Kiwi Therese Lloyd's first book of poetry is a snug jacket on a blustery, winter's day. It gathers under an earnest umbrella a series of poignant and thoughtful works but also includes some light relief for the reader, with its dusky humour and wry asides.

The collection, *Other Animals*, includes at least a dozen poems with 'excellence' written all over them; a horde of quality anthems and a handful of tame temperance sisters on a Sunday stroll, but there are zero 'no shows'. Her poems have been published in a number of literary journals including *Sport*, *Landfall*, *Hue and Cry*, the AUP series *New Zealand Poets in Performance*, *Jacket2*, and *Turbine*. In 2007 she was awarded the Schaeffer Fellowship to spend a year attending the acclaimed Iowa Writer's Workshop.

The six pages of the poem 'Compost' are enthralling. She weaves and threads and completes a garment of wondrous shades with a story and a punch line but with shadows. It starts off tantalisingly:

I'm trying to make my way back
To something I recall was good
But my recollection is a little broke

Having set the scene she flings into one of the storylines:

Because we are trying to be good citizens
We put fruit and vegetable scraps
In a green wheelie bin
I don't know what we think will happen

She juxtaposes the story of the compost nicely with life in her space, then cuts to the chase:

I'm trying to tell you I'm scared

She talks of her relationship and a book she is reading about an angry man and winds it into her storyline

beautifully:

Soon we too will conquer one another
And become 'mutually owned'
Our loves just a happy kind of anger

She finally resolves the wheelie bin/compost quandary
but leaves us hanging with the relationship and her state of
mind. She delves deep into her psyche and finishes with:

I had to go back to this
To flesh
Like air and shelter
I made a list
These things are essential
These things
I said
Must be important

The 'Jane trilogy' is priceless, with its clever back flips
and tortured nuance. Under the headings 'Jane gets a
surprise', 'Jane gets a midnight phone call' and 'Jane has the
last word', Lloyd tells of her protagonist's wrestling with
relationship dilemmas:

In the 'phone call' piece she has a delightful play on
words and misunderstandings while in the final of the
three she says this:

The one time I wore perfume
borrowed from a friend
you said I smelt like the idea of honey
so I spent the rent money
on a bottle of Fendi
but you never mentioned the honey thing again

I love this working in 'Feathers Disks Horns':

I was given some time to think about my actions.
Boxed in by thick concrete walls and bullet-proof
glass, I passed the thinking-time by making
sentences out of the obscenities on the wall; cock
and fuzz were recurring themes. In the park later
I was all thought out – the day flattened thin, my
mistakes circling my feet.

In the absorbing 'Scenes from the Motor-camp' she throws
in a cutie with a barb:

Daisy loves ponies
Daisy loves the sea
Daisy is the reason
You won't come back to me

I enjoyed this from 'Gorecki's Third':

I thought about the men I've loved
Then I wondered
How it would feel to know
Without the merest hint of doubt
That there was only ever one man
And that there will never be another

I pulled more from the poems on the second and third
reads and found she was regularly saying something
profound without me realising it – the sign of quality
poetry, I think. It's a charming debut collection of poems
from Therese Lloyd and well worth the cover charge.

Graft Helen Heath (Victoria University Press, 2012)
RRP \$28 ISBN 9780864737762

Vaughan Rapatahana

I like this book, this first poetry collection by Paekakariki-
based poet Helen Heath. It's good stuff.

Why do I say this? Because, rather interestingly for
a book published by VUP and in league with IIML
(from where Helen graduated in Creative Writing in
2009) there is a tremendous amount of kitchen-sink,
gritty/grotty subject matter here and very little – if
any – clever-dick wordplay, esoteric allusion and long-
winded obscurantist quotation. "Poisoning"; "blinded";
"malignant melanoma"; "ovarian cancer"; "leukaemia";
"extreme damage to his retina" are all in the retinue here
– these descriptions are of a legion of dead scientists and
I haven't yet even mentioned the parallel depictions of
the funereal free-fall of the poet's own family – mainly
Mummy - and friends, where, for example:

...The trickle
of the creek makes me want to pee
(*'Reading topographic maps'*)

Helen Heath writes strong poetry about heart-felt matters
such as – frequently with the taut tautology of her, her,
her, her, her everywhere – her own mother and her own
mother's death and other familiar familial deaths, births
and marriages; about Justine, an acquaintance, losing her
virginity (to her own brother); about the above-mentioned
interpolated sagas of the cancerous deterioration and
subsequent demise of a cachet of erudite scientists; and
so on; in somewhat of a Plathian fashion at times. Take
for example the bitter visceral wrath of the entire poem
'Fairytale ii: Sackcloth' and its nasty, nasty lines:

I hate the bitch, she stole him,
she stole my home and stole him,

I hate Her for leaving and myself for
being a cliché. Daddy you do not do.

Sandwiched in between this veritable wheatloaf of
home truths and bruises and the metastasis of famous
laboratorial figures of the Dead Scientists' Society, is a
rather more exotic filling: a sequence 'about' Heath's return
to a motherland, Greece, and the village of Exogi, in Ithaca
in particular. This section remains somewhat aloof – as in
being far less self-obsessed and more filled with the relish
of dialogues – from the bread and butter contexts of brutal
diurnality on either side, but does further act as somewhat
of a pictorial postcard rendition of the poet's continued
search throughout this collection, to find herself and in

so doing to also lose the luggage of her upbringing. This section is also replete with Greek lingo.

'Graft' refers not only to bribes and nepotism and chicanery, but also to hybridity and intermixing, regeneration and repair and – here even more pronouncedly – to digging, excavating, exploring, as in the words "dig" and "digging" appearing six times in the longer titular poem, where Heath seeks to exhume her mother and then rebury her once and for all:

My Mother's family came
from here

which in the end she succeeds in doing:

and coming up over the sea's horizon –
the morning sun.

Helen Heath's collection, then, is a shovel to both dig up and re-inter her past via a series of recurrent motifs, so as to reconstitute herself more holistically. Which, quite frankly, is what poetry is for. Poetry is a panacea, a searchlight into one's soul that sometimes somewhat miraculously also illuminates others. This book does both parties a favour.

& there is more here, for Heath's journeying, both external and internal, incorporates also different stylistic remedies: from the dense prose-poem of 'Fairytale iv: O Brother' through to the adumbrations and tabulations of 'Show your workings'. There is copious alliteration, as for example the "scares swim in the seen" (from 'Stellar says') and the astute personification as in "The hills are angry parents" (also from 'Reading topographic maps'.) There are also entire poems as metaphor, such as the clever 'Watching for smoke', whereby family is a fire.

But Heath seems not overly enamoured with the photosynthesis of poetic photo-shopping, as she is far more directly driven to expurge and expunge via quite tight, short-lined home truths, as in one of the best poems here:

I killed my mother

Day after day I walked
through the streets
not caring that my
feet strayed all over
the cracks in the concrete
breaking her every day
a little and wishing
her away, cutting her out
of photos with a pair
of nail scissors so carelessly
the little blades' snip, snip
gouging her flesh surely

until she was no longer
where I looked for her

And it is this obsessed thrust regarding her Mother and her Mother's death that marks out *Graft*. Heath, ever the scientist herself (she won the inaugural ScienceTeller Poetry Award), in a line directly descended from her own similarly inclined parents who first bonded "over the varsity dissection table", performs a series of clinically engaged yet quietly enraged autopsies on what Mummy meant, until she eviscerates the specimen with such surgical poetic precision as to live more fully, more bodily herself, given now, however, her concern that this is all an intergenerational thing, as she then contemplates her own daughter and their inevitable schisms:

Now I stop, stare at the photograph,
my mother's brow, her heavy lids,
there, in my new daughter.

I am home now and she will leave me.
(‘Homing’)

And there I will leave it. It's not for Helen Heath to detail many suburban details other than a quick flutter of Holden Toranas and The Cure, and there's obviously no Polynesians of any ilk in Paekakariki, but then again, that's not her intent, so intensely focused is she on rising from the grave, as we applaud this book, the scrolls of her rather lonely journey.



Competitions & Submissions

Mary Charman-Smith May Poetry Competition (UK)

Deadline: 15 May Poems must be the entrant's own work and not have been published, self-published, published on a website or broadcast. Entry one poem £4, three poems £9, five poems £12. Prizes: 1st £100; runner up £25. Maximum 45 lines, not including the title. Poems must be the entrant's own work and not have been published, self-published, published on a website or broadcast. They may not have previously received a written critique from the judge. Entries must be in English. They can be on any subject and in any style or poetic form. Entries cannot be returned, fees cannot be refunded and alterations cannot be made once entries have been submitted. Attached entries must not have the writer's name or identifying marks but all the information required in the entry form must be submitted at the time of sending them. No correspondence can be entered into as the Judge's decision is final. Acceptance of the rules is implied by entry. Entrants who do not comply with the entry rules will be disqualified. Entrants will receive notification of winners via the email address from which the entry was submitted unless they request otherwise at the time of submission. A list of prize winners and short listed entries will be published on the website within a month of the closing date. Please see you keep a copy of your work as entries will not be returned. For more information and to get involved, go to: <http://www.marycharmansmith.co.uk/poetry-competition-may-2014/>

The Stephen Spender Prize 2014 for poetry in translation (UK) Closing Date: 23 May Entry Fee: £5 (free for those aged 18 and under). Prizes: Cash prizes. All winning entries published in a booklet. For entry form and conditions of entry: http://www.stephen-spender.org/spender_prize_2014.html Postal Entries: The Stephen Spender Prize, The Stephen Spender Trust, 3 Old Wish Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 4JX, UK Email: info@stephenspender.org

Shot Through the Heart - Southbank Centre Poetry Film Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 May Entry Fee: £10 per entry (max. 3 entries per person). Love is in the air this summer at Southbank Centre and we want you to create poetry films that explore the joy of first love, the pain of lost love, the confusion of displaced love, the purity of platonic love, or any other kind of love. Shortlisted films will be shown in the Purcell Room, Southbank Centre on Friday 18th July and the winning adult + winning children's films will each receive £500 to be shared between poet and filmmaker, as well as a pair of tickets each to Poetry International's Gala Reading. Both winning films will be shown at 2014's Berlin's Zebra Poetry Film Festival. For full terms and conditions, how to enter, and where to send your films, please visit the competition page at <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/poetryfilm>

New Zealand Poetry Society International Poetry Competition 2014. Received by Deadline: 31 May For entry conditions, entry forms and online entry, please see: <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/2014competition>

David Burland Poetry Prize (UK) Closing Date: 31 May Entry Fee: £8 (first poem). For poems in French and English. 1st Prize £500, (plus recording/ enregistrement), 2nd Prize £100, 3rd Prize £30. Information: www.davidburlandpoetryprize.com

Frogmore Papers Prize (UK) Closing Date: 31 May Entry Fee: £3. For poems up to 40 lines. First Prize: two hundred and fifty guineas and a two-year subscription to *The Frogmore Papers*. First and second runners-up: 75 and 50 guineas respectively and a year's subscription to *The Frogmore Papers*. Shortlisted poets receive selected Frogmore Press publications. Website: <http://www.frogmorepress.co.uk>

Roundel Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 31 May Entry Fee: £3 per poem. Prizes: First Prize £100, Second Prize £50, Third Prize £25. No entry form needed. Poems are welcome on any subject. Maximum 40 lines. Poems must be entrant's original work, unpublished and not already accepted for publication. There is no limit to the number of entries per person. Each poem should be typed on a single A4 sheet. Your name must not appear on the poem. Please enclose a separate A4 sheet with your name, contact details, email address and title(s) of your poem(s). Entries and cheques to: Eric Beston, Roundel Poetry Competition, 26 Dry Hill Park Road, Tonbridge,

Kent TN10 3BN, UK. Cheques payable to Eric Beston (Roundel Treasurer). Please write Roundel 2014 on the back of the cheque. Enquiries: roundeltonbridge@gmail.com

The Templar Quarterly Pamphlet Award (UK) Closing Date: 2 June Entry Fee: £10 for postal entries / £11 for online entries. For portfolios of between 10 and 12 pages of poetry. Prize: One submission will be published as a short Templar Pamphlet with a launch event where the winning poet will be accompanied by another Templar poet and guests. Entries will be read by Alex McMillan along with other readers commissioned at the discretion of Templar Poetry. For further information and guidelines see website: <http://www.templarpoetry.com>

NZPS publication a fine line - call for submissions.

Deadline: 7 June The editor welcomes your contribution. We currently pay a small fee for Feature Articles. See publication guidelines for these and other sections of the magazine at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/aboutsubmissionguidelines>

Poems4Peace 2014 - Poetry Competition. Deadline: 9 June Printable Reality and Splice, in association with New Zealand Poetry Society and Michael King Writers' Centre, invite submissions for 'Poems4Peace' Poetry Competition 2014. The competition is open to all styles of poetry and all poets, all ages and cultural backgrounds. International entries are welcome. A maximum of three (3) poems of no longer than 40 lines per submission. There is no fee for submitting your work. See website for more details: <http://www.thebigidea.co.nz/work/jobs-opportunities/writing-publishing/139822-poems4peace-2014-poetry-competition>

Landfall Deadlines: 10 June for the November issue.

Landfall is open to work by New Zealand and Pacific writers or by writers whose work has a connection to the region in subject matter or location. Work from Australian writers is occasionally included as a special feature. The editor is interested in new work that has not been published before. While many established names appear in *Landfall's* pages, the editor and readers are always on the lookout for exciting work from new writers and artists. If you are a new writer, find copies of *Landfall* in bookshops and libraries to get a sense of what is published. How to submit:

- Email submissions are preferred and should be sent as a .doc or .rtf file to landfall@otago.ac.nz Please save your file with your name, e.g. John Smith submission.doc
- Hard copy submissions should be sent to Landfall, c/- Otago University Press, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054. Please include an email address if you have one, for correspondence. We do not return submissions unless specifically requested (please include a stamped, addressed envelope if you desire this).
- Include the author's name on each page of your submission, in the running head.
- All submissions must have a covering email/letter, providing full contact details, including email and postal addresses, and a brief biography

of about 30 words. • Poets please submit no more than 10 poems per issue. • Do not send work that has been published before. • All submissions will be acknowledged on receipt. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, email landfall@otago.ac.nz. • *Landfall* is published six-monthly. Submissions may be made at any time and will be considered for the next issue. We send acceptance/rejection letters once all submissions have been considered and the issue's contents list has been completely finalised (usually the month before or of publication). Submissions will not be held over for future issues unless you have been contacted and agree to this. Email: landfall@otago.ac.nz Facebook: Landfall Journal

Pilgrimage Call for submissions (USA) Deadline:

15 June Looking for creative nonfiction, poetry, and fiction for a Fall 2014 issue titled 'Silence and Sound'. Full guidelines at: <http://pilgrimagepress.org/guidelines.html>

Segora Writing Competitions (UK) Closing Date: 15 June Entry Fee: £4, adding £2 per subsequent entry, no limit. First prize: £150, Second: £50, Third: £30. Entry details: www.poetryproseandplays.com

Welsh Poetry Competition (UK) Closing Date: 15 June Entry Fee: £4. Prizes: 1st Prize - £400, 2nd Prize - £200 and 3rd Prize - £100, plus 17 runners-up will be published on our web site and in a future anthology. Poems should be less than 50 lines. See competition website for further details and entry form: <http://www.welshpoetry.co.uk/> Competition Judge - www.johnevans.org.uk

Canterbury Festival Poet of the Year Competition (UK) Closes: 20 June The competition is open to poems and poem sequences of any style or subject, up to 60 lines, from anywhere in the world. Send to: Adult Poetry Competition, Canterbury Festival Office, 8 Orange Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2JA, UK, along with an entry fee of £5 per poem. Longlisted entries will be selected for publication in the 2014 Anthology. Shortlisted poets will be invited to read their poems at the Awards Evening on October 2, 2014 (or to nominate a reader on their behalf). <http://www.canterburyfestival.co.uk>

Sweet Mammalian - A New Zealand Literary Journal. Deadline: 21 June Send us your writing, be it a roar, purr or pip-squeak. We will be launching our inaugural issue in early spring and are taking submissions of poetry and short prose work. Send us your original, previously unpublished work; up to 5 poems of any length, and/or up to 2 short prose pieces. Please send your work in a word doc attachment to: sweetmammalian@gmail.com Please include your contact information and a short bio note in the body of your email.

The Double Happiness Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 June Entry Fee: £3 for up to three poems. Poems can be up to 70 lines. Poems can be of any form or style. Poems must be written about aspects of love.

This competition is run by Lost Tower Publications. Prize: The poem judged as the most exciting, dynamic and unusual will receive a £10 prize, a signed poetry book from Rainbow Reed and have their poem published on the Poetry Books, The Wicked Come and Lost Tower Publications websites. Further details found at: <http://losttowerpublications.jigsy.com/the-double-happiness-love-competition>

Earlyworks Press with Circaidy Gregory: Poetry Collection Competition (UK) Closing Date: 30 June Entry Fee: £15.00. 1st prize £100 advance and royalty contract for a collection published by Circaidy Gregory Press. In first instance, send max 3000 words or ten A4 pages of poems. Full entry details on the competitions page at Earlyworks Press: http://www.earlyworkspress.co.uk/competitions_poetry_collection.htm

The London Magazine worldwide poetry competition (UK) Deadline: 30 June Entry fee: £5 per poem. Prizes: *1st Prize: £200 (and published in a future issue of *The London Magazine*) *2nd Prize: £150 (and published on *The London Magazine* website) *3rd Prize: £100 (and published on *The London Magazine* website). website: thelondonmagazine.org/tlm-competition/the-london-magazines-poetry-competition-2014

The McLellan Poetry Prize (UK) Closing Date: 30 June Entry Fee: £5 per poem, £4 each for three or more. For poems up to 80 lines. 1st prize £1000, 2nd £300, 3rd £100 and six commendations of £25. All prizewinners will be invited to read at the award ceremony in Brodick, Isle of Arran on 29 August 2014. Full details (and downloadable entry form) can be found on our website www.mclellanpoetryprize.co.uk



Conjoined Poems

In the last issue of *a fine line* I invited readers to try variations of Eric Dodson's example (*Front page: Anatomy of an idea - Conjoined Poems*). Benita Kape went crazy (in a good way). Once she started, it seemed, she couldn't stop.

The Good Old Bad Old Days

"It was clearly going to be a bad crossing." From: *Vile Bodies* by Evelyn Waugh

It jolly well set the ball rolling.
Was just the beginning!
Clearly life's one hilarious party,
Going from here
To there -
Be it the thing to do.
Bad 'uns and good, and scuttled, a few.
Crossing to 'the' faith only after Vile Bodies.

Impossible

“They departed, the gods, on the day of the strange tide.”

From: *The Sea* by John Banville

They would never have
departed of their own accord,
the way
gods are meant to do.

On death’s bidding
the sea change?
Day slipping, slipping and
of them no word;
the way they might have spoken,
strange and unexpected.

Tide of silence; impossible my grief.

The Joker and Other Stories

“Come, stand beside me on this high parkland and see how
the sun has reached over the eastern horizon.” From: *The
Writing Class* by Stephanie Johnson

Come, in a year of golden weather to
stand on a particular vantage point
beside one who said “once is enough”. Who
me? he jokes as might she also,
this young woman whose hopes he raises
high after disastrous years in Seatoun’s
parkland, and to which she will not return.
And, he got it right.
See, a list is growing; another Booker!
How thrilling;
the West Coast
sun is shining. And it’s a long day so who else
has, with manuscript in hand
reached for
the old world and the new?
Eastern sun pours in on Whiti’s stories:
horizons I humbly honour, pay tribute to Hikurangi.

Quotation of the Month

When composing a verse let there not be a hair’s breadth
separating your mind from what you write; composition
of a poem must be done in an instant, like a woodcutter
felling a huge tree or a swordsman leaping at a dangerous
enemy.

Matsuo Bashō

Are You Leading?

“Are you performing a haka, or just shuffling your feet.”
Hilary Mantel in the *Guardian* series – ‘Rules for Writing’.

Are you leading?
you and the whanau
performing with pride
A many performed thing;
haka on Marae
or the world stage.
Just ask a warrior;
shuffling has no place.
Your `sore but ever-loving *
feet’ mihi to your heart.

* a line from: ‘Papa-tu-a-Nuku’ (Earth Mother) the poem
Hone Tuwhare wrote on the Maori land march 1973.

Likely & Unlikely Tales

“Enveloped in the scent of the first thaw at the end of
January, the cherry orchards smell good.” From: *Virgin Soil
Upturned* by Mikhail Sholokhov

Enveloped in moonlight;
in a grunty moonlight,
the hedgehog
scent out his grassy domain, the nest
of daylight hours before
first devouring a menu of slugs, snail and weka
young which
thaw so favourably his hedgehog taste buds.
At a touch and he will
end his meanderings in a ball.
January I’ve heard him on the lawn.
Cherry; unlikely tales of fruit on spine.
Orchards wherein he may hibernate, lose a little
weight.
Smell draws him to his prey, and our indigenous
snail he seeks.
Good? What good can I find in his introduction to our
shores!

All from Benita H. Kape



Apology

The Editor apologises for getting a name wrong on the
Members’ Poems page in the last issue. The first poem,
‘French exhibitions’ was written by Brigid Barrer.

Members' Poems

all our directions home

the taonga are placed on the sand.
taiaha stand quivering in the wind

speaking to the rōpū of sand-diggers,
fire-lighters, early morning risers.

the people of this place mix easily
with us manuhiri, come to watch.

the greenstone mere smashes
the seashell in half: a clean break

between where we've come from
& where we are now, understood.

we talk on the wind - impatience,
the ragged wave, sinks into the sand.

we listen to a story of sea birds,
how in the evening, their bellies full

they'll spiral upwards on the wind.
when high enough, the leading birds

cry out & begin to fly straight
in the direction of their island home.

the birds on the sea, watching this
lift off & follow

- friends

*you who first rise up on the wind
to see which way for us, we promise*

*to follow. call out loud from above
& we in our numbers will fly!*

the tide turns, we gather the taonga,
put them in the boot of the car

& drive to the whare, where we eat
together quietly - before one-by-one

we rise to the heights & speak
of all our directions home.

Vaughan Gunson

there's a few I've lost

there's a few I've lost, fallen off in the dark
behind a chest of drawers, under the bed,
gone to the place where socks go

I've lost some between meetings
& footpath conversations

some I've lost between the ears,
others between the sheets
(though I'm not so worried about those)

some I've lost through inattention,
quite a few from laziness

some I've sent off to other people,
who've probably lost them, or thrown them away

some I've lost while talking to a friend
in a bar, between the last wine
& the first whisky

some it's dishonest to say I lost
when I never had them

some I've lost were as precious, I would say,
as a shipload of Athenian black-figure pottery
gone down in a storm north of Samos

others no more valuable than receipts in my pockets
that have gone through the wash

there's some I regret losing,
some I can't now remember ever having.

but there's one I've lost
which I hope to find

so I can it read again
like I did when I was 13

in front of a classroom of boys
in their grey school uniforms
all sweaty after lunch

the first poem I ever wrote,
the first time I'd been asked.

Vaughan Gunson

Poems from *this hill, all it's about is lifting it to a higher level*
(Steele Roberts, 2012)