



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 8 April 2005

This is the 67th in a series of occasional newsletters from the Victoria University centre of the International Institute of Modern Letters. For more information about any of the items, please email modernletters@vuw.ac.nz.

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1. Best New Zealand Poems 05

Poet Andrew Johnston (<http://andrewjohnston.org/>) is the editor for *Best New Zealand Poems 2005*. His books are *Birds of Europe* (2000), *The Open Window* (1999), *The Sounds* (1996) and *How to Talk* (1993), which won the 1994 New Zealand Book Award for Poetry and the 1994 Jessie Mackay Best First Book Award. Since 1997 Andrew has lived in France, where he works as an editor for the *International Herald Tribune*. He also edits *The Page* (<http://thepage.name/>), an online digest of some of the Web's best poems and essays. Andrew would be glad for writers, journal editors, and publishers to draw his attention to particular work by New Zealand poets. Please send any printed material to Best New Zealand Poems, IIML, Victoria University, PO Box 600, Wellington, or email us at modernletters@vuw.ac.nz, putting Best New Zealand Poems in the subject line. *Best New Zealand Poems 04* (www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/bnzp), edited by Emma Neale, was launched last month.

2. Bell Gully National Schools Poetry Award

North Canterbury poet and playwright Bernadette Hall will judge this year's \$1,000 Bell Gully National Schools Poetry Award, to be announced in Wellington in August. Entries have now opened for the Award, which is organised by the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) and supported by leading law firm Bell Gully. Bernadette Hall is looking forward to spending time with a new collection of young people's poetry. "I love poetry because of its intensity and because, at its best, it's full of surprises," she says. "It allows you to express deeply personal things but it's also a really sociable art form. I have worked with composers, musicians and painters and I love the feeling of community that poetry brings. I wrote new school songs for both the high schools I have taught in recently and it was a real thrill to hear 1,000 students singing your words." The winner will receive a \$500 cash prize; a \$500 book grant for their school's library; a year's membership to the New Zealand Book Council; and subscriptions to leading literary journals *Landfall* and *Sport*. Entries close on 10 June 2005.

The winning poet will be announced during the Bell Gully National Schools Writing Festival (20-21 August). Schools are invited to nominate gifted year 12 or 13 students to attend the Festival, which also offers workshops for teachers of creative writing. Entry and nomination forms are currently being sent to English departments at all secondary schools and are also available upon request from modernletters@vuw.ac.nz.

3. Robert Creeley (1926 - 2005)

'Robert Creeley, who helped transform postwar American poetry by making it more conversational and emotionally direct, died on Wednesday in Odessa, Tex. He was 78 and had been in residence at a writers' retreat maintained by the Lannan Foundation,' reports the *New York Times*. The cause was complications from lung disease.

Robert Creeley's association with New Zealand dates from 1976 when he visited at the invitation of the New Zealand Students' Art Council and read in the (then) six university cities, beginning in Dunedin and working north. In Dunedin he also met Penelope Highton, to whom the poem 'So There' is dedicated. They were married in Buffalo, NY in 1977 and have two children, Will and Hannah.

Bill Manhire, who interviewed Robert Creeley for the literary magazine *Islands*, remembers the poet's visit to Victoria University in 1976. 'He gave a

lecture and reading to about 250 students in the non-majoring first-year stream. I recall that he held them for 50 minutes simply by talking about the cadences of poetry, and about the importance of line-breaks. "Imagine," he said, "that I read a line, then go for a walk around the block . . . then come back five minutes later and read the next line. Then I walk around the block again." This stuff transfixed the students, I guess because he was talking about the way language could be a direct transcription of experience, and how words might make feeling and experience into music.' A group of poems written on the 1976 tour was published later in the year under the title *Hello* by Alan Loney at Hawk Press at Taylors Mistake near Christchurch.

Robert Creeley's 1995 teaching residence as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Auckland renewed links with poet friends. He had a founding role in the Electronic Poetry Center at SUNY Buffalo, and took an active interest in the development of the New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre, which features his New Zealand connections on the site.

A memorial gathering for Creeley will be held in the English Department Common Room Rm 426, Arts Building, University of Auckland from 12 noon - 1pm next Wednesday, 13 April. People are invited to bring a Creeley poem to read or a memory to share. And one of the readings at nzepc's FUGACITY 05 in Christchurch (see 9., below) will double as a tribute.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/01/books/01creeley.html>

http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2005/03/31/robert_creeley_78_poet_leader_of_literary_avant_garde/

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/creeley/>

<http://poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C070D0E>

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/authors/creeley/>

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/creeley/creeley.htm

4. Frank Conroy (1936-2005)

Frank Conroy, legendary director of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, also died on Wednesday, aged 69, of colon cancer. We asked one of his former students, Paula Morris, to send us a piece about him. Paula writes:

A writer's writer with a stash of stories (many drinking-related) about other writers – including Faulkner, Cheever, John Fowles, John Irving, and Norman Mailer – Frank achieved early fame with *Stop-Time* (1967), an acclaimed memoir of his youth, nominated for a National Book Award. His other publications include a novel, *Body and Soul* (1983), the essay collection *Dogs Bark, But the Caravan Rolls On*, and the recent *Time and Tide: A Walk Through Nantucket* about his home away from Iowa.

Frank became the director of the Writers' Workshop in 1987 after serving as literary director at the National Endowment of the Arts. His teaching style was notoriously fierce. "Writing is hard," he often said, and his workshops were hard as well. Many students wept; one, famously, fainted. He insisted that becoming a writer was as much a test of character as it was a test of talent – disappointed, perhaps, in the way his own writing career faltered after the early success of *Stop-Time*.

As the director of the oldest and most prestigious creative writing programme in the US, Frank was a high-profile advocate of the arts, a committed supporter of Workshop graduates, and watchful guardian of the Workshop's independence and reputation. He was also an accomplished jazz pianist.

When Frank became too ill to teach earlier this year, a number of Workshop students, past and present, put together a memory book to thank (and entertain) him. Some of those anecdotes are collected at <http://eyeshot.net>. A number of graduates are posting tributes to Frank at the web sites listed below, a testimony to his impact and influence over the last two decades on hundreds of emerging writers.

Links:

<http://babiesarefireproof.blogspot.com>

<http://earthgoat.blogspot.com>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/07/books/07conroy.html?>

5. Snorkelling this way

Snorkel is a new online literary magazine with a special interest in bringing together the creative writings of Australians and New Zealanders, while also welcoming submissions from the wider international community. The first issue is due to be launched on the weekend of 16/17 April, and New Zealand contributors include Andrew Johnston, Sonja Yelich, Bill Manhire and Cherie Barford. Amongst the Australians you will find Michael Brennan, David Musgrave, Melissa Bellanta and David Prater. *Snorkel* is edited by Cath Vidler and Nick Riemer. Cath now lives in Sydney, having spent the last three years in Wellington, New Zealand, where she was a legal researcher at Victoria University and student at the International Institute of Modern Letters. Her poems have appeared in *Sport* and *Turbine* in New Zealand, and *Cordite* in Australia. She remains an avid contributor to the IIML newsletter's Great Lists of Our Time. Associate editor, Nick Riemer is an Australian poet, and the author of *Falling Objects* (Vagabond Press, 1999), and of *James stinks and so does Chuck* (Puncher & Wattman, forthcoming 2005)

The closing date for submissions to Snorkel #2 is 15 August 2005. Full

submission details will appear on the website (www.snorkel.org.au) when Snorkel #1 is launched. Snorkel will be published twice yearly.

6. Wet ink

Wet Ink is another new Australian magazine of writing now seeking submissions for its first issue (to be published December 2005). Its advisory board contains renowned writers, including J.M. Coetzee, Thomas Shapcott, and Eva Sallis. The editors welcome short fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, and general-interest essays. Submissions from new and emerging writers are particularly encouraged. The submissions deadline for the first issue is 1 July 2005. All submissions must be double-spaced, include a cover letter and word count, and cannot be previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere. Manuscripts must include SASE for response. Mail to: *Wet Ink*, P.O. Box 3162, Rundle Mall, Adelaide SA 5000.

7. Pity the poet laureate

April may be the most poetic month, as well as the cruellest. An exhibition entitled '£100 & a butt of sack yearly: the office of the poet laureate' opens on Monday in the Central Library at Otago University. We don't know if the current UK Laureate Andrew Motion is still paid in sack, but feel strong drink of some kind might be needed to complete his latest unenviable task, a poem (or epithalamion) celebrating the wedding of Prince Charles & Camilla Parker-Bowles. We wonder if Te Mata Poet Laureate Jenny Bornholdt is also composing a little something for the royal couple?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/07/books/07laureate.html?pagewanted=all>

8. Poetry, painting, Porirua

Porirua breaks into poetry next week. On Monday, immediate past poet laureate Brian Turner reads from 7.30pm at the Poetry Café (The Dizzy Fish Café and Bar, 1 Selby Place, Porirua). And poets and painters collaborate in an exhibition opening at Pataka Porirua Museum of Arts and Cultures on Wednesday. In *Kissed*, painters Daisy Wood and Kirsty Morison interpret and incorporate poetry around the theme of domesticity and community written by Hinemoana Baker and Helen Heath. *Kissed* is open to the public from 16 April - 8 May 2005.

9. Fugacity

Christchurch also celebrates poetry in April. From 21-23 April Canterbury English and the New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre (nzepec) are joining forces to present three days of readings, launches, discussion and digital outreach with Christchurch poets, student writers and guest readers including Tusiata Avia, Victoria Broome, Fiona Farrell, Brian Flaherty, Paula Green, David Gregory, Bernadette Hall, Michael Harlow, Claire Hero, Jeffrey Paparoa Holman, Jan Hutchinson, Michele Leggott, Graham Lindsay, Selina Marsh, John Newton, James Norcliffe and Konai Helu Thaman. Details at www.nzepec.auckland.ac.nz/features/fugacity.

10. The expanding bookshelf

Just in by airmail is *The Waiting* by Megan Johnson, teacher of the IIML's Iowa Workshop in poetry this summer and Schaeffer Award winner. *The Waiting*, Megan's first collection of poetry, won the 2004 Iowa Poetry Prize. It comes garlanded with praise from Mark Levine, who describes it as 'a reminder that a poetry dedicated to speaking the truth never loses its power to shock a reader into awareness.'

11. Recent web reading

Einstein poetry

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,6109,1440289,00.html>

Paris Book Fair

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=2329&e=2&u=/afp/20050315/ennew_afp/afplifestylebooks_050315174340

foetry poetry

http://www.bookninja.com/magazine/mar_2005/prizes.htm

list poetry

<http://www.dennislist.net/>

poetry vs prose

<http://news.scotsman.com/arts.cfm?id=352752005>

poetry mistakes

http://magmapoetry.com/poem.php?article_id=221

Saul Bellow dies at 89

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/06/books/06bellow.html>

12. Great lists of our time

List of ACME products used in Roadrunner Episodes 1949 - 1994

Anvil
Aspirin
Axle Grease (guaranteed slippery)
Balloon
Basket
Bat-man Outfit
Bed Springs
Bird Seed
Bomb
Bumble Bees (One-fifth)
Cactus Costume
Christmas Package Machine
Dehydrated Boulders
Detonator
Do It Yourself Tornado Kit
Dog Sled
Dynamite
Earth Quake Pills
Electronic Fan
Electronic Motor
Explosive Tennis Balls
Female Road Runner Costume
Frisbee
Giant Mouse Trap
Giant Kite Kit
Giant Rubber Band
Giant Rubber Band
Glue
Grease
Handlebars
High Speed Tonic (contains Vitamins R-P+M)
Instant Road
Invisible Paint

Iron Bird Seed
Iron Pellets
Jet Motor
Jet Propelled Pogo Stick
Jet Propelled Skis
Jet Propelled Unicycle
Jim-Dandy Wagon
Lightning Bolts (rubber gloves included)
Little Giant Do-It-Yourself
Rocket-Sled Kit
Little Giant Snow Cloud
Feeder (makes instant snow)
Matches
Mouse Snare
Nitroglycerin
Outboard Motor
Road Runner Lasso
Rocket Powered Roller Skates
Rocking Horse
Roller Skates
Roller Skis (no snow necessary)
Speed Skates (ice)
Street Cleaners Wagon
Super Outfit
TNT
Triple Strength Battleship
Steel Armor Plate
Triple Strength Fortified
Leg Muscle Vitamins
Wash Tub
Weather Ballon
Water Pistol

<http://www.cerbslair.com/ltcc/acmelist.html>