



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 24 March 2009

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This is the 138th 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. New Zealand poetry abroad

New Zealand poetry is finding quite a variety of ways into the world this month. Former poets laureate Bill Manhire and Jenny Bornholdt took their work to Scottish audiences last week at the [StAnza Poetry Festival](#) in St Andrews. Bill's contributions as the Festival's official Poet in Residence included university and schools visits, a masterclass, a reading at the Festival launch and another with Simon Armitage, as well as 'an afternoon of Robert Louis Stevenson themed poetry and play' with Scottish poet and Burns biographer Robert Crawford.

In addition, Jenny Bornholdt gave a reading in Manchester, and both poets will attend the launch of the Carcanet edition of [Twenty Contemporary New Zealand Poets](#) at New Zealand House in London on 25 March. The anthology, edited by Robyn Marsack (see item 3) and Andrew Johnston, has been published in New Zealand by

Victoria University Press. You can read Paula Green's *New Zealand Herald* review [here](#).

2. The expanding bookshelf

Suggesting that the recession hasn't yet put the squeeze on poetry publishing, Victoria University Press has started off its publishing year with a further three slim volumes, all by Victoria University creative writing graduates. Stephanie de Montalk's *Vivid Familiar* and Lynn Davidson's first book *How to Live By the Sea* were profiled on Radio New Zealand's *Arts on Sunday* programme <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/artsonsunday> on the weekend, and Tusiata Avia's second book, *Bloodclot* was the subject of a *Listener* [profile](#) last month. *How to Live By the Sea* will be launched at Lembas Café in Raumati South this Sunday.

Further afield, [Karen Anderson](#) has just published her first book of poems, *Punish honey* with the Carolina Wren Press. Anderson completed an MA in Creative Writing at Victoria University in 2000 (the same year as Stephanie de Montalk, Tim Corballis and Kate Duignan), and also has an MFA from Iowa and a PhD (on poetry and science) from Cornell.

3. Best New Zealand Poems 09

With *Best New Zealand Poems 08* (edited by James Brown) due to launch in April, our thoughts have already turned towards the 2009 edition, which also has a Scottish connection, in that it will be edited by Robyn Marsack. New Zealand-born Robyn Marsack has been Director of the Scottish Poetry Library since 2000. After moving to Scotland in 1987, she worked as a freelance editor, critic and translator, and has had a long editorial association with Carcanet Press. Her published work includes studies of Louis MacNeice and Sylvia Plath, as well as the *Twenty Contemporary New Zealand Poets* anthology mentioned in our first item. She lives in Glasgow.

Publishers are invited to send copies of books and magazines featuring New Zealand poetry published this year to BNZP 09, International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University, PO Box 600, Wellington, for forwarding to the editor. Poems published in international journals are also eligible. Poets who think their work may not be submitted by a publisher may send published poems (not manuscripts) to the same address.

4. Poetry on the air

This month also saw the first in a semi-regular series of conversations about poetry between IIML staffer Chris Price and host Bryan Crump on National Radio's *Nights* programme. A few weeks ago they discussed the pleasures of being 'mean' in poetry. The conversations will take place every five weeks throughout the year, with the next scheduled for 8 April at around 8.40 pm. *Nights* listeners will already have heard

Victoria University Press publisher Fergus Barrowman moonlighting as a jazz critic in the same Wednesday night slot.

5. ... and on the wall

Earlier this month Gregory O'Brien read his poetry at St Andrews on the Terrace to a musical accompaniment — and he has a second project involving music, poetry and a church coming to fruition this month. A special one-day exhibition at the Peter McLeavey Gallery this Sunday, 29 March (11-5 pm) will show two etchings the poet has produced to raise funds for the [Maxwell Fernie Trust](#), which has been set up 'to assist up and coming organists and conductors of Choral polyphony'.

After being the organist at Westminster Cathedral for five years, Maxwell Fernie returned to New Zealand where he was appointed musical director of St Mary of the Angels in Wellington. According to the [Listener article](#), O'Brien, a regular at mass there, 'remembers the building positively vibrating with crescendos of organ music as Fernie embarked on one of his renowned extemporisations – "like a Sun Ra concert or something".' The etchings are based on a poem O'Brien wrote for Fernie.

6. Creative writing in print

Online publications emerging from creative writing courses in Australia (and elsewhere) continue to proliferate. The latest of these to come to our attention is *Swamp* <http://www.swampwriting.com/>, 'created by and created purely for postgraduate Creative Writers (from Honours students through to PhD candidates).' Run from the University of Newcastle, their aim is 'to promote Creative Writing programmes within the world of academia, and the general public alike.' The latest issue includes work by 2008 MA (Page) workshop member Kathy McVey, and current MA workshop members Breton Dukes and Bill Nelson.

Another Australian magazine that encourages submissions of from creative writing students on this side of the Tasman is the Adelaide-based print journal [Wet Ink](#).

7. Rebel rebel

Bill Nelson is also involved in a magazine venture on this side of the Tasman – he and IIML graduate Sarah Jane Barnett are guest editors of *Blackmail Press 25: The Rebel Issue*, and they're looking for work that resists tradition, breaks the rules, and broaches subversive topics, politics, authority or the experience of rebellion. They aim to 'give New Zealand writers the opportunity to showcase interesting and original work about being different, unique or just plain disobedient.'

The deadline for submissions is Friday 15 May 2009. Contributors may submit up to three works as MS Word compatible attachments to rebelissue@gmail.com. The current issue of the magazine can be viewed [here](#).

8. From the whiteboard

‘There is no iron that can enter the human heart with such stupefying effect as a full stop placed at exactly the right point.’

— Isaac Babel

9. Think global, act local

The Kreuzberg Summer Café <http://www.kreuzbergsummercafe.co.nz/> on the corner of Cuba and Webb Streets in Wellington has embraced a distinctly localised publication strategy by installing an unusual machine which vends bite-sized stories, poems, comics etc — ‘lucky dip literature’. The Vending Machine itself is described as ‘a modified 1980s fairground Parrot’. Café proprietor Mike says that the vending machine ‘offers a non-threatening way for local literature lovers to buy stories, comics or poems for \$1 in a Café environment.’ Writers who submit can advertise their own stories, websites, novels etc on their work. Work submitted should fit on a double-sided A4 sheet. Writers will be modestly compensated if their art is accepted. Write to mike@kreuzbergsummercafe.co.nz for more information.

For a local publication with more global ambitions, writers might want to check out experimental art magazine *White Fungus* (www.whitefungus.com), which is widely available in Wellington. but also selectively available in the rest of New Zealand and around the globe in locations such as Singapore, Berlin, Tokyo and San Francisco. The tenth issue hit the streets this month after launches in Auckland and Wellington, and includes art, music and words from (among others) Duncan Sarkies, Judy Darragh, Richard Meros, Barry Linton and an interview with Upper Hutt Posse’s Te Kupu alongside writing and art from Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and America. Based in Wellington, *White Fungus* was started by the Hanson brothers Ron and Mark after a four-year sojourn in Taiwan.

10. Pikihuia Awards for Maori Writers

Entries are now open for the 2009 Pikihuia Awards for Maori Writers, which include categories for short stories in English and Te Reo, as well as novel extracts and short film scripts in English. The winners collect a prize of \$2000, and fiction category winners will be published in an anthology by Huia. There’s also an award for Best Short Story in English and/or Te Reo Maori written by a Maori secondary school student, with a prize of \$500. The judges this year are Julian Wilcox, David Geary, Briar Grace-Smith and Rhonda Kite. Entries close on 15 May – full entry guidelines are available on the Huia [website](#).

11. Aloha Pacific writers

April 6 is the deadline for applications for the 2009 Fulbright-Creative New Zealand Pacific [Writer's Residency](#), which offers a New Zealand writer of Pacific heritage the opportunity to work for three months on a creative writing project exploring Pacific identity, culture or history at the University of Hawai'i. Valued at NZ\$30,000, the residency includes return airfares to Hawai'i, accommodation costs and an artist stipend. It is open to writers across all genres, and previous recipients include filmmaker Sima Urale, performance poet Tusiata Avia, playwright Victor Rodger and children's author Saron Aiono-Iosefa. The residency is available from mid-August to mid-November 2009.

12. Sonnets revisited

The New Zealand Poetry Society is hosting a sonnet reading evening for the Wellington Writers Walk Committee next Monday, 30 March, at the Thistle Inn on Molesworth Street, Wellington (7.30pm start, entry \$2). There will be an open mic session – in which 2008 sonnet competition entrants and any others who wish to read a sonnet can participate – followed by readings from prizewinners and highly-commendeds in the [Wellington Sonnet Competition](#).

13. The Duck in the Gun

On Tuesday 31 March the Wellington Children's Book Association celebrates the republication of New Zealand children's classic *The Duck in the Gun* by presenting author Joy Cowley in conversation with writer and children's literature commentator Kate De Goldi. *The Duck in the Gun* was one of 10 children's books worldwide to be selected for publishing in Japan for the Hiroshima Peace Museum. The event starts at 7pm in Turnbull House, Bowen Street (tickets \$10, WCBA members and students \$5, available from the Children's Bookshop, Kilbirnie, tel 387 3905).

14. Recent web reading

[Philip Pullman: The Writer's Table](#)

[The Shining: the recut preview](#)

[Mary Poppins: the recut preview](#)

[WH Auden goes Lego](#)

[Poetical Spanish Kiwi](#)

[Slow words and speedy words](#)

[Animated Rain](#)

[Poetry Everywhere](#)

[Bridget Van der Zijpp reviewed](#)

[Eleanor Catton reviewed](#)

[The art of the conference paper](#)

[Ferrets in a sack](#)

[Authors saying thank you](#)

[Rushdie on novels that become films](#)

[Digital publishing downunder](#)

15. Great lists of our time

A list of stars, asterisks and snowflakes (if they don't display correctly, try this link [http://unicode.org/cldr/utility/list-unicodeset.jsp?a=\[:Block=Dingbats:\]](http://unicode.org/cldr/utility/list-unicodeset.jsp?a=[:Block=Dingbats:])):

- (∇) FOUR TEARDROP-SPOKED ASTERISK
- (#) FOUR BALLOON-SPOKED ASTERISK
- (☒) HEAVY FOUR BALLOON-SPOKED ASTERISK
- (%) FOUR CLUB-SPOKED ASTERISK
- (&) BLACK FOUR POINTED STAR
- (☐) WHITE FOUR POINTED STAR
- () STRESS OUTLINED WHITE STAR
- (*) CIRCLED WHITE STAR
- (+) OPEN CENTRE BLACK STAR
- (,) BLACK CENTRE WHITE STAR
- (-) OUTLINED BLACK STAR
- (.) HEAVY OUTLINED BLACK STAR
- (/) PINWHEEL STAR
- (0) SHADOWED WHITE STAR
- (1) HEAVY ASTERISK
- (2) OPEN CENTRE ASTERISK
- (3) EIGHT SPOKED ASTERISK
- (4) EIGHT POINTED BLACK STAR
- (5) EIGHT POINTED PINWHEEL STAR
- (6) SIX POINTED BLACK STAR
- (7) EIGHT POINTED RECTILINEAR BLACK STAR
- (8) HEAVY EIGHT POINTED RECTILINEAR BLACK STAR
- (9) TWELVE POINTED BLACK STAR
- (:) SIXTEEN POINTED ASTERISK
- (;) TEARDROP-SPOKED ASTERISK
- (<) OPEN CENTRE TEARDROP-SPOKED ASTERISK
- (=) HEAVY TEARDROP-SPOKED ASTERISK

- (>) SIX PETALLED BLACK AND WHITE FLORETTE
- (?) BLACK FLORETTE
- (≡) WHITE FLORETTE
- (A) EIGHT PETALLED OUTLINED BLACK FLORETTE
- (B) CIRCLED OPEN CENTRE EIGHT POINTED STAR
- (X) HEAVY TEARDROP-SPOKED PINWHEEL ASTERISK
- (Δ) SNOWFLAKE
- (E) TIGHT TRIFOLIATE SNOWFLAKE
- (Φ) HEAVY CHEVRON SNOWFLAKE
- (Γ) SPARKLE
- (H) HEAVY SPARKLE
- (I) BALLOON-SPOKED ASTERISK
- (9) EIGHT TEARDROP-SPOKED PROPELLER ASTERISK
- (K) HEAVY EIGHT TEARDROP-SPOKED PROPELLER ASTERISK

* * *

Supporting the IIML

The International Institute of Modern Letters was established at Victoria University in 2001 to promote and foster contemporary imaginative writing. Our founder, philanthropist Glenn Schaeffer, continues to contribute to IIML activities in a range of ways.

While not everyone is able to match Glenn's level of support, we value all those who have helped us to foster the development of emerging writers – for example through scholarships, prizes, and grants. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about continuing your support for the IIML, for example through a gift in your will.

All gifts are managed by the Victoria University Foundation, a registered charitable trust established to raise funds in areas of strategic importance to the University, such as the IIML.

For further information on how you can provide philanthropic support to the IIML, please contact our Director, Bill Manhire, Ph: 04 463 6808, Email: bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz, or Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz