



Newsletter – 8 February 2005

This is the 65th 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. February: the busiest month?

The literary year kicks off with a plethora of readings in Wellington during the month of February – and that’s without taking the Fringe Festival into consideration. Choose from the following, or feast on them all:

Friday 11 Feb: Tsunami Relief

Eight top New Zealand writers will appear in Wellington to raise funds for relief work in tsunami-affected areas of Asia. Writers’ Tsunami Aid, a night of readings and music, will feature leading poets Kate Camp, Bill Manhire, Vivienne Plumb, Tusiata Avia, Vincent O’Sullivan, Hinemoana Baker and Emily Dobson, and writer/actor Jo Randerson. Kim Hill acts as MC, and James Illingworth adds some jazz piano to the mix, at Downstage Theatre on Friday 11 February from 7.30pm. All proceeds from the evening will go to the New Zealand Red Cross South Asia tsunami appeal. Tickets available on the door for \$25, cash or cheque only.

Friday 18 Feb: Words on Ice

Join three Antarctic Arts Fellows for a reading celebrating the Antarctic in fiction and poetry. Bernadette Hall, Chris Orsman, and Bill Manhire, whose anthology of imaginative writing about Antarctica *The Wide White Page* was published by VUP

late last year, appear at City Gallery on 18 February from 6-7.30pm. All welcome. And writers who would like the chance to follow in the footsteps of these three intrepid poets are reminded that the deadline for applications to the Artists to Antarctica programme is 1 March: application forms and criteria may be found at www.antarcticanz.govt.nz

Sunday 20 Feb: She Walks Past Each Day

An exhibition surveying the work of the late poet and painter Joanna Margaret Paul is still on show at City Gallery. In the gallery at 2 pm on 20 February, Charles Bisley, Jenny Bornholdt, Bernadette Hall, Gregory O'Brien, Bill Manhire and Daryl McLaren will read poems for and by Joanna Margaret Paul.

Friday 25 Feb: The Strange Hours Travellers Keep - August Kleinzahler

In 2004 August Kleinzahler became the world's most famous poet when his book *The Strange Hours Travellers Keep* won the Griffin Poetry Prize (the world's richest prize for poetry at CA\$40,000) against a distinguished international field. Kleinzahler's recently published (and critically acclaimed) volume of prose meditations, *Cutty, One Rock: Low Characters and Strange Places, Gently Explained*, reflects on the life and times of a Jersey boy who had the Mafia for babysitters, a professional gambler for a brother, and who has been a taxi driver, a locksmith, a logger, and a building manager as well as a career poet. August Kleinzahler reads from recent work at City Gallery on Friday 25 February at 1 pm, chaired by Bill Manhire, and jointly presented by the International Institute of Modern Letters and City Gallery Wellington. Further information and background on August Kleinzahler can be found at:

http://www.griffinpoetryprize.com/shortlist_2004.php?t=6

2. Diving into the Fringe

Wellington is about to be inundated with the new, the weird and the wonderful when the annual Fringe Festival kicks off this Friday. Two productions feature the work of IIML students past and present. *Growing Potatoes* will be performed in Freyberg Pool on Oriental Bay, 9.30pm-10.30pm, from 25 Feb - 1 March. The play is written by MA (Script) graduate Janie Walker, and directed by Katrina Chandra (tickets \$12/\$10 students & children). And Wellington playwright Denise Gezentsvey looks set to have a productive year. Enrolled for the 2005 Scriptwriting MA, she has wasted no time in launching herself into the local theatre scene with the premiere of her one-act play, *Considering Rachel*, at BATS from 28 Feb-3 March. It shares the bill with another one-act play, *A Stye of the Eye*, by US playwright Christopher Durang (tickets \$15/\$12 students/unwaged). For further information about these and many other Fringe productions go to www.fringe.org.nz

3. The life of a laureate

Brian Turner has had a busy term as Te Mata Poet Laureate. Among his many activities he has talked to the Maniototo Lions and opened the new fishing room at the Central Southland Art Gallery and Museum, in which the display features four of his poems, as well as teaching at the Bell Gully National Schools Writing Festival, selecting a fortnightly poem for the Otago Daily Times and working with the Otago Department of Conservation to present extracts from New Zealand writing in their

new signage throughout the region. His work will also feature on the walls in Cromwell High's new library, and last week he attended the unveiling of a plaque in the Dunedin Writers' Walk honouring his contribution to Otago's writing. The volume of poetry Brian Turner has completed during his two-year stint as laureate is titled *Footfall*, and will be published by Godwit in March. Turner appears at the biennial Poems on the Vine festival in the Wairarapa on 5 March, as well as at a series of events hosted by Te Mata as part of their own new season wine release/ tasting. The new Te Mata Poet Laureate is announced on 11 March.

<http://www.temata.co.nz/poetlaureate.asp>

<http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/turnerbrian.html>

<http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/events/regular/poemsonthevines.html>

4. The road less travelled

The Nelson poet Alexander Ferguson died recently. His funeral notice began in typical style. 'I, Alexander Ferguson, originally of 1912 Scottish vintage, wish to advise my departure on 7th January for, St Andrew willing, a better place.' He also thanked the dedicated, compassionate staff of the Nelson hospice 'for assisting at my transition.' Alex's notice ended with some well-known lines from Robert Frost, who was a second cousin twice removed:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

5. E tuhi! Get writing! - awards for Maori writers

Aspiring and established Maori authors are invited to submit short stories, novel extracts, short film scripts and stories in English or Maori for this year's 'E tuhi! Get writing!' awards. Judges include Keri Hulme (who will judge the short story category) and Patricia Grace (who will judge the novel extract category); award winning documentary maker, Rhonda Kite who will judge the film script category and TV personality Wena Harawira will judge the Māori language category. There is also a category for secondary school students. Entries close on 15 April 2005: further details and entry forms can be found at www.etuhi.co.nz.

6. Bruce Jesson Critical Writing Fund

The Bruce Jesson Critical Writing Fund provides financial support of up to \$3000 each year for critical, informed, analytical and creative journalism or writing which will contribute to public debate in New Zealand on an important issue or issues. The organisers say: 'Many people - journalists, academics, students, workers and people in all walks of life - have ideas for this kind of work, but can't afford to take the time off paid work, or need help with the cost of phone calls, books or travel. If you fit that description, we want to help you get the time and resources you need.' Full application details are at: www.brucejesson.com/journoprize.htm

7. Literature and the environment

The Australia-New Zealand chapter of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE-ANZ) has recently launched its website. The purpose of ASLE-ANZ is 'to share information and ideas – and to encourage writing and discussion - about literature and the environment, and the relationship between them. ASLE-ANZ hopes to encourage environmentally oriented, nature-literate, place-based writing in Australia and New Zealand; and to nurture ecologically informed scholarship of literature and other cultural creations.' From 31 March to 1 April it will host a conference titled 'Be True To the Earth' at Monash University, Melbourne. Proposals (150 words max.) for twenty minute papers should be sent by February 18 by email to ASLEANZ.Conference@arts.monash.edu.au, or by post to Peter Coleman, Centre for Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, School of LCL, Building 11A, Wellington Rd., Monash Vic 3800, Australia. Further details are at www.asle-anz.asn.au

8. Asia & Pacific Writers Network

In late February 2005, the Asia and Pacific Writers Network website www.apwn.net will be launched. The site will be multilingual, and aims 'to create a portal to the writing culture/s of the region'. They hope to build a good links section, or directory, of writers, writing organisations, publishers, magazines (on-line/print) festivals, bookshops etc. It is not necessary to have a website to be part of the Directory. Writers who wish to be listed are invited to send their name, a brief bio, list of publications (including print, performance, radio, website etc), to Berni m Janssen: bmj@net2000.com.au. Optional extras for the listing are a photo (jpeg), web address and contact details.

9. An honourable bypass

The Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh is to be honoured by having a new 28.2 million Euro bypass named after him in Co. Monaghan, the county in which he was born. The bypass, on the route between Dublin and Londonderry, will be named 'The Kavanagh Way'.

10. The expanding bookshelf

Two novels that explore the darker side of human relationships are the latest work by IIML graduates to see publication. Katy Robinson completed the MA (Page) in 2001, and her first novel *The Linoleum Room* (Random House) will be launched by Bill Manhire at Unity Books in Wellington tonight at 6 pm. And returned expatriate Louise Wareham, who completed the MA (Page) in 2003, has been receiving favourable attention for her novel *Since You Ask* (Akashic): see http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000568uncomfortably_numb.html#more http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c_id=6&ObjectID=10007640

11. Recent web reading

Advice to writers from Jim Crace

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,12084,1405386,00.html>

New direction for Iowa Writers' Workshop

<http://www.whotv.com/Global/story.asp?S=2893741>

Debating the dictionary

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,6109,1374741,00.html>

Atwood invents remote control book signing

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/magazine/daily/10763302.htm>

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20050203.wxsign0203/BNStory/Entertainment/>

Woolf's lighthouse in darkness?

<http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=4055935>

The Burns heritage

<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/opinion.cfm?id=80382005>

Eliot Weinberger: a list of statements on Iraq

http://www.lrb.co.uk/v27/n03/wein01_.html

Bookbuying as protest

<http://www.mobydives.com/xmasblue.html>

Does Poetry Need PR?

<http://www.thepoem.co.uk/offshoots/off1.htm>

Poets in residence

<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/features/story.jsp?story=603888>

Day by day with Samuel Pepys

<http://www.pepysdiary.com/>

12. Great lists of our time

Courtesy of Chris Cochran, a list of magazines found in the loft of the British Antarctic Survey's Port Lockroy base hut (abandoned 1964), Antarctic Peninsula, during conservation work, January 1996.

Punch

New Yorker

Time

Newsweek

Times Science Review

The New Scientist

National Geographic

Discovery

Country Life

Life

Country Fair
Horse and Hound
Tatler
Illustrated London News
John Bull
Lilliput
Maclean's Magazine
Vogue
Man
Woman
Woman's Own
Woman's Illustrated
Illustrated
True Story
Picture Post
Saturday Evening Post
Everybodies
Today
The Wide World
Football Monthly
The Aeroplane
Flight
The Motor
Top Gear
Autocar
The Scots Magazine
Reader's Digest
Awake
Watchtower
Blighty
Beano