



Newsletter – 9 August 2006

This is the 91st 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. Iowa Workshop (i): Starting and building a novel

We thought readers might like to know more about each of this summer's Iowa workshops. Check our next newsletter for details of the poetry workshop. Here Curtis Sittenfeld describes what she plans to cover in her course.

‘This workshop will focus on starting and building a novel. How is the novel's longer form similar to and different from the form of stories? We will pay particular attention to structure and plot development, and the way in which the novel affords greater complexity in both. We'll also analyse novels' ample opportunity for characters to be defined-and then to change. We'll read novels by authors who have created a sustained narrative arc while also breaking that arc into manageable, "bite-sized" pieces: *Atonement* by Ian McEwan; *Happy Baby* by Stephen Elliott; and *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?* by Lorrie Moore. As with any creative writing class, language will be a major concern. Among the central questions we'll ask about language will be, what makes a given piece of work engaging and alive? How can a writer inject flair and energy into his or her work while maintaining clarity?’ In six weeks, students will produce between 75-100 pages, as well as an outline for the rest of the

novel.’

For information on Curtis Sittenfeld, see www.curtissittenfeld.com. Course information and an application form are available from the IIML, ph (04) 463 6854, fax (04) 463 6865, email modernletters@vuw.ac.nz or see www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters. The deadline for applications is 10 November 2006.

2. Jack Lasenby Award

The Jack Lasenby Award is an annual writing competition run by the Wellington Children's Book Association in honour of one of New Zealand's finest writers for children. It's open to children and adults in alternate years and this year it's for adults, to write a story for children, max 1200 words. Writers must live in the Wellington Region, as defined by the Wellington phone book. The prize is \$500, entry is free, and the closing date is 30 September. Entry forms from airlys@xtra.co.nz, or from the Children's Book Shop Kilbirnie, or from libraries.

3. The expanding bookshelf

This week sees the launch of *Brief Lives* (Auckland University Press), a genre-defying hybrid of prose poetry, fiction, biographical dictionary and essay by Chris Price, poetry workshop convenor at the IIML. *LeafSalon* (www.leafsalon.co.nz) describes it as ‘highly readable and recommended’. Chris Price is interviewed on National Radio’s Arts on Sunday programme this weekend.

4. New Zealand Book Month — and the festivals beforehand

The website for New Zealand Book Month is now launched, complete with blogs from Going West director Murray Gray, novelist Jenny Patrick and literary man-about-Wellington Craig Gamble. Book Month runs, oddly, from 18 September – 15 October, perhaps to steer clear of the Christchurch and Going West writers’ festivals, which have just released their programmes (or almost – the full Christchurch event programme is due for release today).

Going West retains its emphasis on New Zealand writing with Paula Morris, Kate Camp, Chris Bourke, Karlo Mila, Patricia Grace, Gregory O’Brien, Jenny Bornholdt, Roger Hall, Chris Price, Glenn Colquhoun, Tusiata Avia, Selina Tusitala Marsh and Julian Novitz appearing.

Christchurch has NZ poets Bill Manhire, Bernadette Hall, and Paula Green alongside internationals Iggy McGovern (Dublin), Ishle Yi Park (New York) and Felix Cheong, Paul Tan & Madeleine Lee from Singapore. International fiction writers attending include Marcus Zusak, Glen Duncan, Emily Darwin, Stuart McLean, Celestine Vaite and Robert Goddard.

Both Going West and the Christchurch Festival feature Samuel Johnson Prize winner Anna Funder, whose non-fiction bestseller *Stasiland* uncovers previously untold stories of victims (and perpetrators) of East Germany's notorious secret police. For full details, visit

www.goingwest.co.nz

www.chchwritersfest.co.nz

<http://nzbookmonth.co.nz>

5. Curious questions

A different editor each year ensures that *Best New Zealand Poems* (www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/bnzp) avoids capture by a single editorial taste. One poet unavoidably absent from the *Best New Zealand Poems* 05 line-up was Bill Manhire, winner of the poetry prize at the recent Montana New Zealand Book Awards. In the wake of that success, some of us at the IIML wondered which poem the BNZP05 editor Andrew Johnston might have selected from *Lifted*, had he not been precluded from doing so by the fact that Bill is, as Andrew's introduction makes clear, 'effectively the publisher of *Best New Zealand Poems*'. No surprises here, perhaps: Andrew says he would have opted for 'Kevin', the poem that finishes the book, with its final line about 'the dark furniture of the radio'.

6. Creating Gallipoli

Applications are now open to artists wishing to apply for the 2007 Creative New Zealand Gallipoli Residency. The recipient will spend four months hosted by Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Gallipoli, Turkey. It is envisaged up to ten residencies will be offered over the next few years. The aim is for the artists in residence to produce work that projects a new perspective on the site of a battle which was a seminal event in shaping the nationhood of both Turkey and New Zealand. Applications are sought from established artists across all forms of arts practice, however, for the 2007 residency, the following disciplines will be prioritised: ceramics, painting, dance, theatre, photography, sculpture, writing/playwriting, filmmaking and interdisciplinary visual arts. Applications for the 2007 residency close on 29 September 2006. Further information is available on Creative New Zealand's website <<http://creativenz.govt.nz/resources/forms-guidelines/index.html>> .

7. From the whiteboard

Sartre on genius: 'not a gift, but the way a person invents in desperate circumstances'.

8. August – the most poetic month?

Wellingtonians are spoiled for choice when it comes to poetry events over the next few weeks. Here's a thumbnail sketch of what's on (all events barring Ian Wedde's reading are at City Gallery):

14 August: Irish poet-physicist Iggy McGovern appears in Writers on Mondays (1pm); and Wellington poet, novelist and art writer Ian Wedde reads at Bar Bodega in the evening, courtesy of the (normally) Porirua-based Poetry Café.

16 August: The 'PoetryMath' series (which kicked off last night) continues with readings by Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, Meg Campbell, Tony Chad and Peter Olds (7 pm)

21 August: Cilla McQueen flies in from Bluff to appear in Writers on Mondays (1pm), with thanks to the Poetry Society.

23 Aug: Iain Sharp, Joy MacKenzie, Bill Dacker and Richard von Sturmer are the PoetryMaths (7 pm)

28 Aug: Victoria University Writer in Residence Bernadette Hall tells us what she's been up to this year in Writers on Mondays (1 pm)

9. But wait, there's more...

This Friday there's a concert by Dutch percussionist Arnold Marinissen, who will perform Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonate* at the Conservatorium Concert Hall (New Zealand School of Music, Mt. Cook Campus) at 12.10pm (entry free). Schwitters (1887-1948) was a collagist and Dadaist who 'undertook radical experiments in such fields as abstract drama and poetry, cabaret, typography, multimedia art, body painting, music, photography and architecture.' (See <http://artchive.com/artchive/S/schwitters.html>)

On Saturday Dylan Thomas's classic tale *Under Milk Wood* opens at Downstage (Bookings 801 6946, www.downstage.co.nz).

And from 16-19 August Victoria University's directing students present *Caged Birds*, an evening of short plays by Fiona Farrell (*Chook Chook*), Anton Chekhov (*The Boor*) and new NZ playwright Kate Morris (*Consuming Vanessa*). A journey through the eyes of various 'birds', these productions combine to form a critique of society and the various cages put in place to manipulate, destroy or contain their inhabitants. Studio 77, 77 Fairlie Terrace, Kelburn, 7 pm. Tickets \$12 waged, \$8 unwaged. For bookings ph 463 5221 or email lee.barry@vuw.ac.nz.

10. Recent web reading

Nigel Cox 1951-2006

http://www.listener.co.nz/issue/3454/features/6607/under_the_sun.html

Last words

http://www.newyorker.com/critics/atlarge/articles/060807crat_atlarge

How words fail

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/features/feature.onpoetry.html?id=178505>

Even those who do show up are often late

http://www.southmanchesterreporter.co.uk/news/s/216/216023_dead_poets_society.html

Are Angels OK?

http://www.listener.co.nz/issue/3454/artsbooks/6595/heat_light_and_sound.html

A guid wee novel frae Scotland

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/digestedread/story/0,,1833914,00.html>

Food for thought

<http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=20060724&s=franklin072406>

Enter the catacombs!

<http://www.triggur.org/cata/>

The Brick Testament

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

Subtle science

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/subtle-science/0,,1835675,00.html>

David Malouf

http://australia.poetryinternationalweb.org/piw/cms/cms/cms_module/index.php?obj_id=7286

Ern and Iris

http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/kmko/02/ka_mate02_edmond_ma.asp

Poets behaving badly

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/books/its-poets-at-arms/2006/08/07/1154802819591.html>

Jack Kerouac: Belief and technique for modern prose

<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/kerouac-technique.html>

hoopedoodle

http://visit.thebookbar.com/blog/_archives/2006/7/12/2105747.html

The battle for Brick Lane

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/05/arts/05bric.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

The (Canadian) ladies who read

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20060804.wfiction05/BNStory/Entertainment/home>

Pacific poetries

<http://www.asu.edu/pipercwcenter/how2journal/current/pacific/index.html>

11. Great lists of our time

The American Library Association's 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of 1990–2001

1. Scary Stories (Series) by Alvin Schwartz
2. Daddy's Roommate by Michael Willhoite
3. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou
4. The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier
5. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
6. Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
7. Harry Potter (Series) by J.K. Rowling
8. Forever by Judy Blume
9. Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson
10. Alice (Series) by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
11. Heather Has Two Mommies by Leslea Newman
12. My Brother Sam is Dead by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier
13. The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger
14. The Giver by Lois Lowry
15. It's Perfectly Normal by Robie Harris
16. Goosebumps (Series) by R.L. Stine
17. A Day No Pigs Would Die by Robert Newton Peck
18. The Color Purple by Alice Walker
19. Sex by Madonna
20. Earth's Children (Series) by Jean M. Auel
21. The Great Gilly Hopkins by Katherine Paterson
22. A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle
23. Go Ask Alice by Anonymous
24. Fallen Angels by Walter Dean Myers
25. In the Night Kitchen by Maurice Sendak
26. The Stupids (Series) by Harry Allard
27. The Witches by Roald Dahl
28. The New Joy of Gay Sex by Charles Silverstein
29. Anastasia Krupnik (Series) by Lois Lowry
30. The Goats by Brock Cole
31. Kaffir Boy by Mark Mathabane
32. Blubber by Judy Blume
33. Killing Mr. Griffin by Lois Duncan
34. Halloween ABC by Eve Merriam

35. We All Fall Down by Robert Cormier
36. Final Exit by Derek Humphry
37. The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
38. Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George
39. The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison
40. What's Happening to my Body? Book for Girls: A Growing-Up Guide for Parents & Daughters by Lynda Madaras
41. To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
42. Beloved by Toni Morrison
43. The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
44. The Pigman by Paul Zindel
45. Bumps in the Night by Harry Allard
46. Deenie by Judy Blume
47. Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes
48. Annie on my Mind by Nancy Garden
49. The Boy Who Lost His Face by Louis Sachar
50. Cross Your Fingers, Spit in Your Hat by Alvin Schwartz
51. A Light in the Attic by Shel Silverstein
52. Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
53. Sleeping Beauty Trilogy by A.N. Roquelaure (Anne Rice)
54. Asking About Sex and Growing Up by Joanna Cole
55. Cujo by Stephen King
56. James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl
57. The Anarchist Cookbook by William Powell
58. Boys and Sex by Wardell Pomeroy
59. Ordinary People by Judith Guest
60. American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis
61. What's Happening to my Body? Book for Boys: A Growing-Up Guide for Parents & Sons by Lynda Madaras
62. Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret by Judy Blume
63. Crazy Lady by Jane Conly
64. Athletic Shorts by Chris Crutcher
65. Fade by Robert Cormier
66. Guess What? by Mem Fox
67. The House of Spirits by Isabel Allende
68. The Face on the Milk Carton by Caroline Cooney
69. Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut
70. Lord of the Flies by William Golding
71. Native Son by Richard Wright
72. Women on Top: How Real Life Has Changed Women's Fantasies by Nancy Friday
73. Curses, Hexes and Spells by Daniel Cohen
74. Jack by A.M. Homes
75. Bless Me, Ultima by Rudolfo A. Anaya
76. Where Did I Come From? by Peter Mayle
77. Carrie by Stephen King
78. Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume
79. On My Honor by Marion Dane Bauer
80. Arizona Kid by Ron Koertge
81. Family Secrets by Norma Klein

82. Mommy Laid An Egg by Babette Cole
83. The Dead Zone by Stephen King
84. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain
85. Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison
86. Always Running by Luis Rodriguez
87. Private Parts by Howard Stern
88. Where's Waldo? by Martin Hanford
89. Summer of My German Soldier by Bette Greene
90. Little Black Sambo by Helen Bannerman
91. Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett
92. Running Loose by Chris Crutcher
93. Sex Education by Jenny Davis
94. The Drowning of Stephen Jones by Bette Greene
95. Girls and Sex by Wardell Pomeroy
96. How to Eat Fried Worms by Thomas Rockwell
97. View from the Cherry Tree by Willo Davis Roberts
98. The Headless Cupid by Zilpha Keatley Snyder
99. The Terrorist by Caroline Cooney
100. Jump Ship to Freedom by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier

Out of 6,364 challenges reported to or recorded by the Office for Intellectual Freedom, as compiled by the Office for Intellectual Freedom, American Library Association. (See Background Information: 1990–2000 under The Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2000.) The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom does not claim comprehensiveness in recording challenges. Research suggests that for each challenge reported there are as many as four or five which go unreported.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bbwlinks/100mostfrequently.htm>