

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
**MODERN LETTERS**

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

**Newsletter – 1 March 2006**

This is the 82nd 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](mailto:modernletters@vuw.ac.nz).

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**1. New Schaeffer Fellow**

Congratulations to poet and historian Alice Miller, who has been awarded this year's Schaeffer Fellowship. Alice was a member of Victoria's 2005 MA, and in September her award will take her to the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she succeeds Paula Morris, Anna Livesey, Tracey Hill and Emily Dobson.

Current Schaeffer Fellow, Emily Dobson, reports that she and her husband Daniel have been enjoying themselves at Iowa:

“Daniel's been able to do a drawing course this semester - thanks to a scholarship for international spouses like him with too much time on their hands! And, of course, the workshop! It's been truly challenging and invigorating. My peers are writing in such exciting territory and I feel like it's raised the bar for my own work. Mary Ruefle last semester was just wonderful, and Mark Levine's workshops this semester are very intensive!”

Images of the Iowa winter and Daniel's beard can be found at [www.flickr.com/photos/rockblue](http://www.flickr.com/photos/rockblue). Ice of a different kind figures in a recent poem published in Turbine: <http://www.nzetc.org/iiml/turbine/Turbi05/poetry/dobson1.html>

Meantime Arda Collins and Dora Malech, Schaeffer Fellows from Iowa who have been teaching summer workshops here at Victoria, are about to head back to the States. We've enjoyed their company, and their students have loved the energy and attention and wisdom they brought to the classroom. We thank them, and wish them all the best.

## **2. Anna Sanderson**

The first \$3,000 Young Park Scholarship has gone to 2005 MA student Anna Sanderson for her book of essays, *BrainPark*. Anna's folio supervisor was poet and essayist Chris Price. Her external examiner was the writer Ian Wedde, who described Anna's book as "a really terrific piece of writing" – "inventive, charming and intellectually playful – an intriguing structure, an engrossing read, a critically astute piece of writing and a mature accomplishment." The scholarship has been inaugurated by Lynda Park in honour of her father-in-law, Ambassador Young Park, who opened the first Korean embassy in New Zealand in 1972.

## **3. Biggs Poetry Scholarship**

As the 2006 university teaching year begins, we are delighted to announce this new scholarship, which has been funded by Peter and Mary Biggs, as a contribution to the Challenge Gift Appeal. The award will go to a poet from Victoria's MA workshop. The recipient will be someone in whose work the examiners see real potential, and the scholarship will enable him or her to continue work on a manuscript, bringing it to the point where it is ready for submission to a publisher. The first award of \$3,000 will be made at the end of 2006.

## **4. Urusula**

Several people have drawn our attention to the fact that the grave of poet Ursula Bethell (<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/bethell/>; <http://www.nzbookcouncil.org.nz/writers/bethellursula.html>) misspells the poet's name. The plaque at the foot of the grave reads "MARY URUSULA BETHELL". Bethell scholar Peter Whiteford (<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/vup/2005titleinformation/vibrantwithwords.htm>) informs us that "the error must be on the part of the plaque-maker. All the evidence I've seen confirms that her name was Mary Ursula, and that is certainly how she signed herself. It's an intriguing error to have made, nevertheless, and surprising that it wasn't corrected. Of course, both her parents were dead by the time she herself died, and the

younger sister, Rhoda, to whom she was very attached, was living in England. Her brother Marmaduke was no doubt looking after the funeral arrangements, and although he was fond of his sister, they were certainly not as close as Ursula and Rhoda. Even allowing for that, it is curious. At least one of Marmaduke's sons, Richard, was quite close to his aunt, and might have been expected to insist that it be corrected.”

We wonder who has the responsibility and the legal right to make a correction. Is it something that might be taken up by the relevant local authority or by, say, the Canterbury branch of the NZSA? Or must it be Bethell's own indirect descendants who correct the error?

## 5. Rachael and Lilian

Congratulations to Rachael King, who has won the NZSA's Lilian Ida Smith award from a field of 65 applicants. The award is made every two years to a writer over 35. Appropriately enough, Rachael is pictured on the cover of the latest *New Zealand Author* holding a glass of bubbly. Her first novel *The Sound of Butterflies* will be published by Black Swan in July. She was a member of the 2001 Victoria workshop, a formidable cohort which has produced a large number of published fiction writers – Paula Morris, Katy Robinson, Jackie Davis, and Prize in Modern Letters shortlistee Carl Shuker.

## 6. Glittering prizes

We have been enjoying the debate/furore at LeafSalon over this year's NZ Post Children's Book Awards – especially the omission of Elizabeth Knox's *Dreamhunter* from the Young Adult finalists' list. See: [http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000901dreams\\_dashed.html#more](http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000901dreams_dashed.html#more). Meantime *Kirkus* (the crucial reviews journal for retailers and libraries in the USA) has just given Knox's novel a starred review. We note, however, that the *Kirkus* reviewer thinks the book is set in Australia.

‘A lyrical, intricate and ferociously intelligent fantasy explores the ramifications of treating dreams as commodities. Laura Hame, the adolescent daughter of the first and most famous "dreamhunter," is content with her privileged life, dominated by her confident cousin Rose. Everything changes when she becomes one the tiny minority able to enter the otherworldly "Place," where free-range dreams can be captured and brought back to be sold--for healing, for entertainment, and for other, darker, purposes. But when Laura's father mysteriously disappears, she and Rose are thrust into a web of official intrigue and deceit, and Laura discovers that there is more to her heritage than she ever suspected. Knox starts off slowly, gradually piling on the details of two utterly convincing worlds--one reminiscent of a genteel, turn-of-the-century Australia, the other arid, unsettling and surreal--both of which mask underlying corruption and grim purpose. The characters display equal complexity, with hidden depths and tragic flaws. Once the plot gathers momentum, it builds inexorably to a nightmare climax that satisfies fully while pointing to the promised

sequel. Provocative and compelling.’

## **7. Going Dutch**

Poets from New Zealand and the Netherlands get together on Friday 3 March in a day of readings and discussion at City Gallery, Wellington. There’s a fee of \$20 (includes refreshments) for the day’s activities, or \$10 for students/unwaged. The event has been organised by poet and neuroscientist, Jan Lauwereyns. Contemporary Dutch poet Marc Kregting will be contributing, as will New Zealand writers Anna Jackson (see item 8), Bill Manhire, and Gregory O’Brien. For more details, check out this story at LeafSalon: [http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000906oarsome\\_.html#more](http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000906oarsome_.html#more)

## **8. The expanding bookshelf**

A trio of poets arrived on the 2006 bookshelf in mid-February. Books by two graduates of Victoria’s Original Composition course appeared from Steele Roberts: Alison Wong’s *Cup* was one of the projects she worked on during her year as Burns Fellow at Otago University, and *Tender* is the second collection of poems from Whitireia Polytechnic’s online poetry course tutor Lynn Davidson. Victoria University English Department lecturer Anna Jackson has released her fourth collection, *The Gas Leak* (Auckland University Press), a sequence inspired by the work of Dutch poet Gerrit Achterberg.

## **9. Dead Poets’ Society**

Here are the answers to the puzzle set by Cath Vidler in our last newsletter:

Frost  
Graves  
Crowe Ransom  
Pound  
Service  
Donne  
Bishop  
Wordsworth  
Marvell  
Hardy  
Riding  
Shakespeare

Another puzzle might well turn up next time around.

## 10. Lyrical Tuwhare

Alongside the more traditional literary fare on offer at the upcoming New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week (14-19 March), the Festival is celebrating poet Hone Tuwhare's work in a cabaret-style concert by musicians from around the country. From Mahinarangi Tocker to Dallas Tamaira, WAI to Goldenhorse, twelve recording artists transform Tuwhare's words into lyrics for songs ranging from rock to reggae, from hip hop to contemporary electronica. Charlotte Yates, who produced the *Baxter* album and show for the 2004 Festival, both produces and performs, and actor Rawiri Paratene narrates the concert series, which runs from 11-13 March, 8.30pm at Wellington Town Hall. There's also a Writers and Readers Week panel on words and music with Don McGlashan, Hinemoana Baker (both of whom appear in *Tuwhare*), Gareth Shute and international festival guest DJ Spooky at the National Bank Festival Club, 12.10 pm, 16 March) Bookings at Ticketek, ph 04 384 3840.

## 11. PlayRight

PlayRight is a competition aimed at promoting exciting and innovative plays written by both new and established playwrights. Writers are free to write a play about any issue or topic that they choose in the style that fits, but each play must consist of only one act and must be no longer than thirty minutes. Nine plays will be chosen to have a public reading at Auckland's The Edge over three nights in May. They will also be judged by industry leaders who will select three plays to be performed over a two week season at The Herald Theatre in November. The deadline for submissions is 31 March, and scripts should be sent to PlayRight, PO Box 68312 Newton, Auckland (smackbang@gmail.com).

## 12. From the whiteboard

There is no perfect time to write. There's only now.  
— Barbara Kingsolver

## 13. Help yourself

A short film by two recent MA (Scriptwriting) graduates has been travelling to some great locations lately. 'Help Yourself', written and directed by Leonie Reynolds (IIML 2005) and produced by Benedict Reid (IIML 2006), has been selected for screening in the 2006 Cyprus International Film Festival. This follows 2005 screenings at the Naoussa International Film Festival (Greece), the ESEM International Film Festival (Armenia), the Anonimul International Independent Film Festival (Romania), and the Wairoa Maori Film Festival. 'Help Yourself' stars Scott Wills, Michelle Langstone and Jeremy Randerson.

## 14. Recent web reading

Janet Frame's poetry

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3585050a4501,00.html>

Bernice Rubens' on book tours, Booker committees, etc

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/extracts/story/0,,1592507,00.html>

A regular letter from Philip Larkin

<http://www.philiplarkin.com/letters/letters25.htm>

Barbellion

<http://www.pseudopodium.org/barbellionblog/index.php>

Nabokov interviews (scroll down)

<http://lib.ru/NABOKOW/>

A novel in a year

<http://www.arts.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/novelinayear/ixnovel.xml&sSheet=/arts/2006/02/05/bomain.html>

Interactive tartan-weaver

<http://houseoftartan.co.uk/interactive/weaver/index.html>

Let's stop publishing books that don't really need to be books

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,923-2022051,00.html>

Wired Tuwhare

<http://www.honetuwhare.co.nz/>

Tube anagrams (censored)

[http://www.boingboing.net/2006/02/22/transport\\_for\\_london.html](http://www.boingboing.net/2006/02/22/transport_for_london.html)

<http://martenhoepla.blogspot.com/2006/02/het-amsterdamse-metronetwerk-in.html>

Anthony McCarten interview

<http://www.almabooks.co.uk/EnglishHarem/EnglHarInterview/EnglHarInterview.html>

## 15. Great lists of our time

Donald Barthelme's reading list

- \* Flann O'Brien, At Swim Two-Birds
- \* Flann O'Brien, The Third Policeman
- \* Isaac Babel, Collected Short Stories

- \* Borges, Labyrinths
- \* Borges, Other Inquisitions
- \* Garcia Marquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude
- \* Thomas Bernhard, Correction
- \* Rudy Wurlitzer, Nog
- \* Isaac B Singer, Gimpel the Fool
- \* Bernard Malamud, The Assistant
- \* Bernard Malamud, The Magic Barrel
- \* Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man
- \* Malcolm Lowry, Under the Volcano,
- \* Samuel Beckett entire
- \* Knut Hamsun, Hunger
- \* Max Frisch, I'm Not Stiller
- \* Max Frisch, Man in the Holocene
- \* Dinesen, Seven Gothic Tales
- \* Tommaso Landolfi, Gogol's Wife
- \* Thomas Pynchon, V
- \* John Hawkes, The Lime Twig
- \* John Hawkes, Blood Oranges
- \* Paley, Little Disturbances
- \* Paley, Enormous Changes at the Last Minute
- \* Susan Sontag, I, Etc.
- \* Tillie Olsen, Tell Me a Riddle
- \* Campbell, Hero with a Thousand Faces
- \* Bellow, Henderson the Rain King
- \* John Updike, The Coup
- \* John Updike, Rabbit, Run
- \* The Paris Review interviews
- \* Rust Hills (ed.), How We Live
- \* Joe David Bellamy (ed.), Superfiction
- \* Pushcart Prize Anthologies
- \* Sternburg (ed.), The Writer on Her Work
- \* André Breton, Manifestos of Surrealism
- \* Motherwell (ed.), Documents of Modern Art
- \* Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation
- \* Hugh Kenner, A Homemade World
- \* Flaubert, Letters
- \* David Mamet, Sexual Perversity in Chicago
- \* Joy Williams, The Changeling
- \* Joe David Bellamy (ed.), The New Fiction
- \* Tim O'Brien, Going After Cacciato
- \* Amos Tutuola, The Palm-Wine Drunkard
- \* Ann Tyler, Searching for Caleb
- \* Kenneth Koch, Thank You
- \* Frank O'Hara, Collected Poems
- \* John Ashbery, Rivers and Mountains
- \* Wesley Brown, Tragic Magic
- \* Roland Barthes, Mythologies
- \* Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text
- \* Robbe-Grillet, For a New Novel

- \* Ann Beattie, Falling in Place
- \* William Gass, In the Heart of the Heart of the Country
- \* Gass, Fiction and the Figures of Life
- \* Gass, The World Within the Word
- \* Mailer, Advertisements for Myself
- \* Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange
- \* Celine, Journey to the End of the Night
- \* Kobo Abe, The Box Man
- \* Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities
- \* Peter Handke, A Sorrow Beyond Dreams
- \* Peter Handke, Kaspar and Other Plays
- \* André Breton, Nadja
- \* John Barth, Chimera
- \* Walker Percy, The Moviegoer,
- \* Jayne Anne Phillips, Black Tickets
- \* Peter Taylor, Collected Stories
- \* Colette, The Pure and the Impure
- \* Raymond Carver, Will You Please be Quiet, Please
- \* John Cheever, Collected Stories
- \* Leonard Michaels, I Would Have Saved Them if I Could
- \* Eudora Welty, Collected Stories
- \* Max Apple, The Oranging of America
- \* Flannery O'Connor, Collected Stories
- \* Ishmael Reed, Mumbo Jumbo
- \* Toni Morrison, Song of Solomon
- \* Carlos Fuentes, The Death of Artemio Cruz
- \* Milan Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting
- \* Wayne C Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction