



**Newsletter – 27 October 2006**

This is the 97th 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)

1. <b>Time to get writing</b> .....	1
2. <b>The virtual lives of a bone person</b> .....	2
3. <b>An outbreak of book blogs</b> .....	2
4. <b>Ghost doubles</b> .....	2
5. <b>New travel writer competition</b> .....	3
6. <b>Calling tour guides from hell</b> .....	3
7. <b>Brand new Snorkel</b> .....	3
8. <b>From the whiteboard</b> .....	4
9. <b>In the ice of the beholder</b> .....	4
10. <b>The expanding bookshelf</b> .....	4
11. <b>Brush up on your kid lit</b> .....	4
12. <b>Recent web reading</b> .....	4
13. <b>Great lists of our time</b> .....	6

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**1. Time to get writing**

A reminder that the application deadline for our 2007 MA programme is Wednesday 1 November.

Guest writers at this year's workshops have included Lloyd Jones, Hari Kunzru , Anna Funder, Kate De Goldi and James Brown, as well as many professionals from the world of publishing, film, and theatre. In 2007 we expect to offer our MA students special optional masterclasses with distinguished international writers.

Numbered among our recent MA (Page) graduates are Prize in Modern Letters winners Carl Shuker and Catherine Chidgey – along with recently published writers like Rachael King, Paula Morris, Tusiata Avia, Chris Price, William Brandt, Eirlys Hunter, Tim Corballis, Anna Smaill, Hinemoana Baker, Laurence Fearnley, Julian Novitz, Kapka Kassabova, Katy Robinson, Stephanie de Montalk, Kate Duignan, and Cliff Fell. (That's almost a great list of our time!)

On the scriptwriting side of the ledger, Peter Cox devised and developed the multi-award-winning *Insiders' Guide to Happiness* as his major project for the MA in Scriptwriting with Ken Duncum, and recent graduate Matthew Saville's play *Kikia te Poa* has had a season at the Old Fitzroy in Sydney this year. More information here: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/creative-writing/postgraduate.aspx>

## 2. The virtual lives of a bone person

We see that Keri Hulme has begun a blog on Huia's revamped website: <http://www.huia.co.nz/?cat=7>. (If you look around, you'll find other blogs there, too, including one by Victoria lecturer Alice Te Punga Somerville, and another by poet Karlo Mila.) We also have it on totally unreliable authority that the author of *the bone people* can often be found pseudonymously conversing with – and sometimes ticking off – the local literary and publishing communities on the LeafSalon forum: <http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/forum/>

## 3. An outbreak of book blogs

Everybody's doing it - even the *Guardian*, which has just launched a page of book blogs. Kate Kellaway's blog at the top of the page features a rave about Tom Scott & Trevor Grice's *The Great Brain Robbery: What everyone should know about teenagers and drugs*. There are also blogs by poet John Burnside and former Faber editor (and long-time writer and *Guardian* contributor) Robert McCrum, among others. McCrum is not the only publisher who's taken to blogging: Graeme Beattie (formerly publisher at Penguin NZ) has this morning announced the birth of Beattie's Book Blog. Unfortunately we had trouble linking to it from the URL provided – but will bring a viable link to you as soon as we can. In the meantime the *Guardian's* blogs can be found here <http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/books/>

## 4. Ghost doubles

We have always enjoyed the fact that some New Zealand poets have famous musical counterparts: James Brown and Michael Jackson spring immediately to mind. Then there is Gregory O'Brien's wonderful essay, "After Bathing at Baxter's" (first published in *Sport* and available online at the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre: <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Ba11Spo-t1-body-d26.html>) which surveys the world of Baxterian doubles.

We began to wonder if any other New Zealand poets might have doubles elsewhere.

So far we have come up with Brian Turner and Vincent O'Sullivan. New Zealand's Brian Turner is matched by a younger American Brian Turner who has just won the Pen Literary Award for Poetry for *Here, Bullet*, published by Alice James Books ([http://www.alicejamesbooks.org/here\\_bullet.html](http://www.alicejamesbooks.org/here_bullet.html)). His book is about the Iraqi war, where he was a combatant.

New Zealand's Vincent O'Sullivan has his rather decadent and mysterious ghost double in a writer who was once a friend of Oscar Wilde. Wilde wrote of him: "In what a midnight his soul seems to walk! And what maladies he draws from the moon!" More can be found about the older O'Sullivan here:

<http://www.hoganstand.com/general/identity/extras/famousgaels/stories/treasures.htm>

## 5. New travel writer competition

Entries are being sought for the 2007 AA Directions New Travel Writer of the Year Award (this year's award was won by our own Clare Moleta). The winner receives \$1000 and will be sent on an assignment to write a story for publication in AA Directions. The entry deadline is Friday 2 February 2007. For conditions of entry, entry form and information see [www.travelcommunicators.co.nz](http://www.travelcommunicators.co.nz) or email [helen.davies@clear.net.nz](mailto:helen.davies@clear.net.nz)

## 6. Calling tour guides from hell

On the subject of travel, don't forget to keep the snippets of 'evil advice for tourists in New Zealand' coming for our 100<sup>th</sup> newsletter competition. Here are a few more examples from the *New Statesman's* British competition to get the creative juices flowing:

Any passer-by is welcome to intervene in a game of cricket.

Never talk to a man about his wife. The word is "mistress".

If you are so fortunate as to be invited to the Athenaeum Club, do not forget that the members in the library will expect you to take a friendly interest in what they are reading.

The four readers who send us the 'best' pieces of advice for tourists in New Zealand – as subjectively judged by a panel of IIML staff members – will each win a \$50.00 book token. The competition is open only to subscribers to this newsletter, and the result will be announced in Newsletter 100, just before Christmas. Entries to [modernletters@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:modernletters@vuw.ac.nz) by 15 December, please.

## 7. Brand new Snorkel

The fourth issue of trans-Tasman literary journal *Snorkel* was launched online earlier this week. Among the contributions is an excerpt from Ken Duncum's recently premiered play *Picture Perfect*.

[www.snorkel.org.au](http://www.snorkel.org.au)

## **8. From the whiteboard**

Actually, this one's from Edward Albee as quoted by Fiona Samuel in the latest issue of *Playmarket News*:

'Any play that can't be done with two chairs and a lightbulb has got something wrong with it. A play should be able to stand in its nakedness.'

## **9. In the ice of the beholder**

Music, poetry and fiction meet science in this event focussing on the icy continent of Antarctica. 2006 VUW Writer in Residence Bernadette Hall joins novelist (and Victoria creative writing graduate) Laurence Fearnley, composer Gareth Farr and scientists Peter Carey and Craig Franklin to share Antarctic experiences and inspirations at the National Library Auditorium on 8 November, 6-7.30 pm. Tickets \$15 (\$12 students, \$10 members) from the New Zealand Book Council, tel 499 1569 or book online at [www.bookcouncil.org.nz](http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz)

## **10. The expanding bookshelf**

2006 Prize in Modern Letters winner Carl Shuker has just released his second novel – although in fact it was written before *The Method Actors*, the book that won him \$65,000 back in March. *The Lazy Boys* is set in New Zealand, and its US publisher Shoemaker & Hoard describes it as 'a punch in the stomach, a sustained cry; as harsh as *Less Than Zero*, as brutal as *A Clockwork Orange*'. And the main character is a middle-class university student from Timaru... According to the Lumiere Reader's review, the local edition will be released by Penguin on 2 November.

[http://www.shoemakerhoard.com/catalog/lazy\\_boys.html](http://www.shoemakerhoard.com/catalog/lazy_boys.html)  
<http://www.lumiere.net.nz/reader/item/677>

## **11. Brush up on your kid lit**

The Wellington Children's Book Association is running a pub quiz night for those who are knowledgeable on kids' lit. If you have a lot of like-minded friends you can enter with a team of six, or go along and be teamed up with others on the night. The 2006 Jack Lasenby Short Story Award will also be presented during the evening, which starts at 7.30 pm at the Southern Cross on Abel Smith Street, entry \$8 (\$5 WCBA members and students). RSVP to The Children's Bookshop, tel 387 3905.

## **12. Recent web reading**

The new new wave

[http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2006/10/08/make\\_it\\_weird?mode=PF](http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2006/10/08/make_it_weird?mode=PF)

Nobel for Pamuk

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1922680,00.html>

A windfall (and some fallout) for Iron John

<http://insomniareport.blogspot.com/2006/10/iron-john-and-ennui-cartel.html>

The next big thing – from China?

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/10/21/DDGOKLSKNU1.DTL>

Pinter meets Beckett

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/21/theater/21pint.html?ref=arts>

The theatre political

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/20/theater/20pol.html>

Kia ora, Texas-style

<http://www.theartnewspaper.com/article01.asp?id=477>

Translator's notes

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

Impressive resource for comics and graphic novels

<http://www.english.ufl.edu/comics/teaching/>

Second life

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0%2C%2C1930135%2C00.html>

Vegemite, vegemightn't

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,20620744-953,00.html>

Jenny Diski diskies creative writing courses

[http://jennydiski.typepad.com/biology\\_of\\_the\\_worst\\_kind/2006/10/how\\_to\\_become\\_r.html](http://jennydiski.typepad.com/biology_of_the_worst_kind/2006/10/how_to_become_r.html)

Dante Today

<http://learn.bowdoin.edu/italian/dante/>

Belles etrangeres press dossier

(You will need French and broadband)

<http://www.centrenationaldulivre.fr/Belles-Etrangeres-Nouvelle-Zelande.html>

Why not to join a literary movement

<http://gabrielgudding.blogspot.com/2006/10/on-why-not-to-join-literary-movement.html>

Five Robert Hass poems

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/features/feature.onpoets.html?id=178722>

Gerry Evans back in Wales

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/mid/sites/aberystwyth/pages/shipping\\_out.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/mid/sites/aberystwyth/pages/shipping_out.shtml)

A great poem

<http://www.underneaththebunker.com/impossibility.html>

Too many authors

[www.meettheauthor.com](http://www.meettheauthor.com)

Exploring The Waste Land

<http://world.std.com/%7Eraparker/exploring/thewasteland/explore.html>

Jim Crace writes a phantom book

<http://www.jim-crace.com/Useless.htm>

Selling by the line...

<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,,1929849,00.html>

...and by the class set

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1929192,00.html>

What prizes mean to writers

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/manbooker2006/story/0,,1928489,00.html>

Digested Clive

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/digestedread/story/0,,1930046,00.html>

### **13. Great lists of our time**

Those of you who enjoyed Martin Edmond's diary of a taxi driver (which we ran in an earlier newsletter) may also appreciate this companion piece, in which he lists some Sydney street names, noting that he has 'driven down, or past, most if not all of these streets at some time or other...'

<http://fluvial.blogspot.com/2006/09/some-sydney-street-names.html>

Aloha Street, Mascot

By The Sea Road, Mona Vale

Curt Street, Ashfield

Done Street, Arncliffe

Early Street, Parramatta

Fur Place, Rooty Hill

Goodchap Street, Surry Hills  
Herb Greedy Place, Marrickville  
Ice Street, Darlinghurst  
Joy Street, Gladesville  
Kia Ora Arc, Double Bay  
Little Darling Street, Balmain  
Modern Avenue, Canterbury  
Nulla Nulla Street, Turramurra  
Orphan School Creek Lane, Camperdown  
Powder Works Road, North Narrabeen  
Quirk Road, Manly Vale  
Runnymede Way, Carlingford  
Sunning Place, Summer Hill  
Tram Lane, Randwick  
Universal Street, Eastlakes  
Vicar Street, Coogee  
Woolloomooloo Walk, Sydney  
Xenia Avenue, Carlton  
Youth Lane, Burwood  
Zig Zag Lane, Crows Nest