



**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS**

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 31 August 2007

This is the 113th 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

1. Prize in Modern Letters judge announced	1
2. Residence seeks writer	2
3. New Zealand and US poetry coming up in Writers on Mondays	2
4. Writing workshops 08	2
5. 'The Pact' online.....	2
6. Successful scripts	3
7. A visitor from Galway	3
8. Going West.....	4
9. Five poets and a baby!.....	4
10. From the whiteboard.....	4
11. NZ Book Month.....	4
12. The expanding bookshelf.....	5
13. A sizeable Scottish prize	5
14. The expanding bookshelf (2)	5
15. Recent web reading	5
16. Great lists of our time.....	6

1. Prize in Modern Letters judge announced

Brigid Hughes, the New-York-based editor of the quarterly literary magazine *A Public Space* and former executive editor of legendary journal *The Paris Review*, is to judge the 2008 Prize in Modern Letters. Hughes will select the winner of the \$65,000 prize for emerging New Zealand writers from a shortlist assembled by a panel of local judges — *Dominion Post* books editor Guy Somerset, former broadcaster Elizabeth Alley, and novelist Damien Wilkins. The shortlist will be announced by 1 November, and the winner will be revealed at New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week in Wellington next March. An interview with Brigid Hughes and the website of *A Public Space* can be found here:

<http://www.mediabistro.com/articles/cache/a5849.asp>

<http://www.apublicspace.org/>

2. Residence seeks writer

Writers who'd like to spend the year working on a project of their choice at the IIML are advised that we are currently inviting applications for the Victoria University of Wellington Writer in Residence 2008. Writers in all areas of literary activity, including drama, fiction and poetry, New Zealand art, biography, history, music, society and culture, are eligible to apply. Applicants should be writers of proven merit normally resident in New Zealand or New Zealanders currently resident overseas. The appointment will be for twelve months from 1 February 2008 to 31 January 2009, with a salary of NZ\$50,000. The appointment is jointly funded by Victoria University of Wellington and Creative New Zealand, and applications close on 15 October. For more information visit <http://vacancies.vuw.ac.nz> (reference no. A318-07Z).

3 . New Zealand and US poetry coming up in Writers on Mondays

A reminder that our Writers on Mondays session next week (3 September) features poet Andrew Johnston in conversation with Damien Wilkins – a rare chance to hear this normally Paris-domiciled poet read new work, and to find out his thoughts on New Zealand poetry as he writes a book on the subject during his year as J D Stout Research Fellow at Victoria. Andrew also returns as chairperson of the rescheduled event with US poet and MA workshop coordinator Dora Malech on Friday 14 September. We're pleased to report that Dora is fit and well and ready for a rematch. Both events run from 1-2 pm at City Gallery Wellington. Admission is free, all welcome.

4. Writing workshops 08

Emerging writers who want to work on their craft with the guidance of experienced practitioners have a selection of four workshops to choose from at the IIML in the first half of next year. Fiction writers can choose between the Iowa Workshop on starting and building a novel with Monica Bergers and the Short Fiction Workshop with Susan Pearce. Poets may attend the other Iowa Workshop stream, enticingly titled 'Making Poetry Dangerous', with Sam Reed. And those people with a particular interest in nature writing (in any genre) could consider Dinah Hawken's Writing the Landscape workshop, which also incorporates a field trip to Papaitonga Reserve near Levin, guided by noted ecological historian Geoff Park. The two Iowa Workshops run during January and February (with an application deadline of 9 November), and the others begin at the end of February 2008 (application deadline 10 December). Further details on all workshops can be found on our website: www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/creative-writing/undergrad.aspx

5. 'The Pact' online

Readers who are curious to hear Barnaby Weir's version of 'The Pact', the poem by Shannyn Boyd selected from the ten finalists in the New Zealand Post National Schools Poetry Award for musical treatment by The Black Seeds performer, can now find it in both audio and visual form on the Web. Wellington VJ and director Rob Appierdo's video is on YouTube, and the song is now available for free download from Digirama – but for a limited time only. Our thanks to New Zealand Post and Loop Recordings Aot(ear)oa for making all this possible.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABSBS_pFQMI
<http://www.digirama.co.nz/AlbumDetails.aspx?MediaID=676262>

6. Successful scripts

Three of the six young playwrights recognised in the ninth New Zealand Young Playwrights Competition are former or current students of the IIML. Our congratulations to Branwen Miller, MA Script graduate, Kate Morris a current MA Script student, and also to Georgina Titheridge, who completed the undergraduate poetry workshop in 2005. Sam Gaskin — another MA (Script) graduate whose revealing encounter with the culture of the Iowa Writers Workshop appears as a Recent Web Reading item below — was among those who achieved a special mention in the Playmarket-run competition, an event that has established itself as an important stepping-stone in the development of new writers for the theatre.

The competition was judged by Stephen Sinclair, Elizabeth O'Connor and Janie Walker, and the winning writers will team up with professional directors, dramaturgs and actors for a week of workshops and professional development at The Edge in Auckland from 3-7 September, culminating in the winning scripts being presented to the industry and public.

The competition is held every two years and young writers are urged to start working towards the next deadline in late 2008. Contact Playmarket (scripts@playmarket.org.nz) for more information.

7. A visitor from Galway

In September current MA (Script) students will have a visit from Irish playwright Ursula Rani Sarma. Sarma co-founded the Djinn Theatre Company in 1999 and her award-winning plays have been translated and performed extensively, both at home and abroad. *The Spider Men* received over 35 productions throughout the UK, Ireland and Europe as part of the National Theatre Shell Connections project before receiving its National Theatre premiere in London in July 2006. She has received commissions from companies such as the Traverse Theatre Edinburgh, The Abbey Theatre Dublin, and the Heidelberg Festival of New Writing. She has also written three plays for radio, and other on-going projects include an Irish Arts Council commission on Inishlacken Island off County Galway, the development of a feature film and a collection of poetry, *Once an Indian Princess*, *Once a Banshee*.

8. Going West

Sarma is in New Zealand as a guest of Waitakere City's annual Going West Books and Writers Festival, which as usual has a lively programme that (apart from Sarma) focuses on New Zealand authors, artists, theatre and music. It's on in Titirangi throughout September, with the Books and Writers Weekend taking place from 14-16 September.

www.waitakere.govt.nz/artcul/ae/goingwest/index.asp

9. Five poets and a baby!

Sunday 9 September is Christchurch Writers' Day. The day includes sessions on fiction, poetry, and non-fiction the last a group of recent Montana New Zealand Book Award winners. We especially like the look of the three o'clock poetry event, which features Andrew Johnston, James Norcliffe, Dinah Hawken, John O'Connor, and Tusiata Avia (now a new mother as well as a poet congratulations!). The Lauris Edmond Memorial Award for Poetry will also be presented at this session. The day is held at the Christchurch Art Gallery.

More information at <http://www.chchwritersfest.co.nz/>

10. From the whiteboard

'It's possible to write about anything in the world, but the slightest story ought to contain the facts of money and blood in order to be interesting to adults. That is — everybody continues on this earth by courtesy of certain economic arrangements, people are rich or poor, make a living or don't have to, are useful to systems or superfluous. — And blood — the way people live as families or outside families or in the creation of family, sisters, sons, fathers, the bloody ties. Trivial work ignores these two FACTS and is never comic or tragic.'

— Grace Paley

11. NZ Book Month

...begins this Sunday with the announcement of the winners of the Six Pack competition at Te Papa and a panel discussion with the six writers to kick off a day of wide-ranging book activities featuring authors from Lynley Dodd and Alison Holst to Patricia Grace and Rachel King. Owen Marshall wraps up the day with the inaugural Janet Frame Memorial Lecture on the state of New Zealand literature. For full programme details check out <http://www.nzbookmonth.co.nz>, or see the *Dominion Post*.

12. The expanding bookshelf

Victoria graduates are doing their bit for New Zealand Book Month. Laurence Fearnley consolidates her position as our contemporary female chronicler of the deep south with her new novel, *Edwin and Matilda*, published next week by Penguin. The second in a trilogy of novels set in Central Otago and Southland, its main location is the old Waipiata tuberculosis sanatorium near Alexandra. And 2006 MA (Script) graduate Rebekah Palmer has a new venture that brings together the worlds of film and fiction with the first children's picture book to be illustrated by artists from Weta Workshop. *Champ the Chopper* features a helicopter that belongs to an organization run by kids who rescue children in trouble. Publisher West Egg Books will donate \$1 from every book sold to a trust supporting rescue helicopters in New Zealand. <http://beattiesbookblog.blogspot.com/2007/08/edwin-and-matilda-unlikely-love-story.html#links>

13. A sizeable Scottish prize

Readers may recall that back in July we ran an item on Victoria creative writing graduate Kirsty Gunn's novel *The Boy and the Sea* (Faber), which had won the Scottish Arts Council's Book Award for Fiction, worth £5000. We are pleased to say *The Boy and the Sea* has gone on to win the supreme prize of £20,000 as the Sundial Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year, announced at the Edinburgh International Book Festival this week. In an interview with the Scotland's *Sunday Herald*, Gunn 'thinks' this most recent novel may be a companion piece to her debut, *Rain* (1994), and raises some eyebrows with her remarks on winning: <http://www.sundayherald.com/arts/arts/display.var.1628016.0.0.php>

14. The expanding bookshelf (2)

Cath Vidler, best known to our readers as the editor of trans-Tasman literary journal *Snorkel* and a tireless purveyor of Great Lists, is publishing a chapbook of poems titled *Cloud Theory* with new Australian publisher Puncher and Wattmann (www.puncherandwattmann.com). To our knowledge the book is not yet available in New Zealand, but we believe it will soon be accessible through the publisher's website.

15. Recent web reading

A visitor to Iowa
<http://www.lumiere.net.nz/reader/item/1276>

Goodbye Grace
<http://maudnewton.com/blog/?p=7928>
<http://www.calendarlive.com/printedition/calendar/cl-et-paley27aug27.0,3972676.story?coll=cl-calendar>

But is it art?

<http://overthenet.blogspot.com/2007/08/but-is-it-art-volume-1.html>

Mrs Winter's Jump

<http://www.lumiere.net.nz/reader/item/1246>

A worrying sports development

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/blogs/shouldhaveworn/2007/08/13/rugby-as-poetry/>

Waiata

<http://www.theatreview.org.nz/forum/topic.php?id=140>

Warwick Roger

<http://beattiesbookblog.blogspot.com/2007/08/warwick-roger-new-zealands-own-grumpy.html>

<http://lucaantara.blogspot.com/2007/08/warwick-roger.html>

Greatest travel books of all time

<http://www.concierge.com/cntraveler/articles/detail?articleId=11341&print=true>

Julian Novitz

<http://www.salient.org.nz/features/under-his-covers-julian-novitz>

Eliot does Prufrock

http://www.hyperlexic.com/ts_eliot_portishead.php

How underpants improved medieval literacy

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-07/uol-frt070907.php

84-484

<http://www.lumiere.net.nz/reader/item/1211>

The decline of the comma

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/17/AR2007071701489.html?referrer=email>

Janet Frame Literary Trust

<http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/node/5534>

16. Great lists of our time

A small sampler of chess openings:

Accelerated Dragon

Bishop Attack - Welling Variation

Capablanca

Creepy Crawly Opening

Double Grob

Elephant Gambit
English - Great Snake
English - Symmetrical Hedgehog System
Falkbeer Counter-Gambit
Fool's Opening
French - Winawer Poisoned Pawn Accepted
Fried Fox
Giuoco Pianissimo
Goff Gambit-Fools Errand-Light Defense Block
Hippopotamus Defence
King's Indian - Classical Queenswap
Orang-Utan Opening
Paleface Attack
Scandinavian "Chase the Queen"
Swiss Cheese Variation

Selected by Listlady from a massive index at:

<http://www.csm.astate.edu/~wpaulsen/chess/index.htm>

<http://thelistserver.blogspot.com>