



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 9 August 2007

This is the 112th 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. And the winners are . . .	1
2. Category confusion corner	2
3. Writers on Mondays returns	2
4. Mr Pip, Booker Man	2
5. Prize in Modern Letters	3
6. Raising a hue and cry	3
7. The wonderful world of blurbs	3
8. Fund your MA in 2008	4
9. From the whiteboard	4
10. The Cape	4
11. A word from Canada (for Maori Language Week)	5
12. Wellington writers step in to support writers' cottage	5
13. Fulcrum poetry forum	5
14. Recent web reading	5
15. Great lists of our time	7

1. And the winners are . . .

Congratulations to staff and students of Victoria's creative writing programme, who have again been honoured at the Montana New Zealand Book Awards.

Damien Wilkins was back for the second year in a row. In 2006 his anthology of work from *Sport* magazine, *Great Sporting Moments*, won the Reference and Anthology section. This year Damien's novel *The Fainter* was runner-up for the Montana Medal for Fiction. "Reading *The Fainter* is like encountering a modern version of Henry James", wrote the judges, describing his prose as "simply stunning".

IIML director Bill Manhire was also back for a second year. Last year his collection of poems, *Lifted*, won the Montana New Zealand Poetry Award. This year, he won again, if less directly, as one of three editors of Janet Frame's posthumous poetry collection, *The Goose Bath*.

We're particularly delighted to see our MA graduates continuing to enjoy success in the best first book awards. Rachael King won the fiction award for her novel *The Sound of Butterflies*. She was a member of the 2001 MA workshop, which also included fellow fiction writers Jackie Davis, Paula Morris, Katy Robinson, Carl Shuker, and Susan Pearce, whose first novel appears later this year.

The best first book winner for poetry was Airini Beauvais, a member of the 2005 MA workshop. The judges called *Secret Heart* (a collection of prose poems) "resonant, wry, innovative". In accepting her award, Airini made a point of thanking Dinah Hawken, whose Writing the Landscape workshop first made her believe in herself as a writer.

On top of all that, Chris Price's hybrid work *Brief Lives* (shortlisted in the biography section of the Montanas) won the Best Non-Illustrated Book category in the Spectrum Book Design Awards, announced last Sunday evening.

2. Category confusion corner

Speaking of *Great Sporting Moments*, we note that the Wellington Airport branch of Whitcoulls, perhaps in an attempt to maximise sales, has placed copies of the anthology face out in their sports section. The book keeps company with such resonantly titled works as *101 Years of All Black Trivia*, *Inside French Rugby*, and *The Yellow Jersey Companion to the Tour de France*.

3. Writers on Mondays returns

A reminder that our Writers on Mondays series resumes at City Gallery this Monday 13 August with a guest appearance by visiting US poet (and MA workshop convenor) Dora Malech. She appears in conversation with another 2007 visitor to Wellington, the current Victoria University J D Stout Fellow Andrew Johnston, in what promises to be a fascinating and lively discussion and reading. There'll also be a broadsheet of one of Dora's poems, specially produced by Waiteata Press, available for sale at the event, which runs from 1-2 pm.

4. Mr Pip, Booker Man

Winner of the 2007 Montana Medal for Fiction Lloyd Jones continues his dream run with *Mr Pip*, which has been long-listed for the Man Booker Prize. The complete longlist is:

- *Darkmans* by Nicola Barker (4th Estate)
- *Self Help* by Edward Docx (Picador)
- *The Gift Of Rain* by Tan Twan Eng (Myrmidon)
- *The Gathering* by Anne Enright (Jonathan Cape)
- *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid (Hamish Hamilton)

- *The Welsh Girl* by Peter Ho Davies (Sceptre)
- *Mister Pip* by Lloyd Jones (John Murray)(Penguin in NZ & Aust)
- *Gifted* by Nikita Lalwani (Viking)
- *On Chesil Beach* by Ian McEwan (Jonathan Cape)
- *What Was Lost* by Catherine O'Flynn (Tindal Street)
- *Consolation* by Michael Redhill (William Heinemann)
- *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha (Simon & Schuster)
- *Winnie & Wolf* by A.N.Wilson (Hutchinson)

The judging panel for the 2007 Man Booker Prize is: Howard Davies, Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science; Wendy Cope, poet; Giles Foden, journalist and author; Ruth Scurr, biographer and critic and Imogen Stubbs, actor and writer. The 2007 shortlist will be announced on Thursday 6 September, and the winner will be announced on Tuesday 16 October.

5. Prize in Modern Letters

Closer to home, nominations for the \$65,000 Prize in Modern Letters have closed. The prize is specifically intended to honour and acknowledge emerging New Zealand writers. By our count, some 14 publishers have nominated 49 titles by 38 writers. As usual the majority of entries are fiction, but for the 2008 award there is also a strong field of non-fiction candidates. Poetry also figures. We are puzzled by the absence of nominations for some notable emerging writers, including several who have been shortlisted for the various best first book categories of the Montana New Zealand Book Awards. The Prize in Modern Letters shortlisting group – literary broadcaster and reviewer Elizabeth Alley, Dominion Post books editor Guy Somerset, and novelist Damien Wilkins – will now begin the business of serious reading. The date for announcing the shortlist has been extended, and is November 1st.

6. Raising a hue and cry

A lively bunch of emerging writers will be reading at the launch of a new journal of art and literature in Wellington this Friday. The first issue of *Hue & Cry* promises a selection of artist texts, exhibition essays, new prose and poetry, along with specially commissioned photographic works. Edited by 2007 MA (Page) workshop member Chloe Lane, and including work by a number current and past IIML students, it will be launched at Enjoy Public Art Gallery, 147 Cuba St at 6.30pm tomorrow with readings by Ellie Catton, Harry Cundy, Joan Fleming, Mia Gaudin, S K Johnson, Rachel O'Neill, and Lawrence Patchett.

7. The wonderful world of blurbs

The front cover of the Penguin paperback edition of John Updike's latest novel, *Terrorist*, published this week, is blazoned with: "“Brilliant” *Sunday Telegraph*". The unscrupulous soul responsible for this selective quoting took the glowing adjective from the following sentence of Caroline Moore's review of the hardback edition: 'He

is brilliant in his descriptions of dismay, tension and fear.’ However, applying the same logic, any of the following phrases from the review could equally well be printed on the cover: ‘oddly dated and out of touch’, ‘thoroughly creaky plotting’, ‘tired melodrama’ and ‘very shoddy’. In other words we did not recommend this novel. If West End theatres have had the gumption to refrain from this outdated, immoral practice, West End publishers should follow suit.

—Mark Sanderson, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*’s "Literary Life"

8. Fund your MA in 2008

If you’re thinking about applying for the MA in Creative Writing at the IIML in 2008 but are wondering if you can afford it, help may be at hand. Students undertaking the MA may apply for a Victoria Masters [by thesis] Scholarship worth \$15,000. The closing date for applications is 1 November. The country’s largest, privately-funded scholarship programme – the Freemasons Charity – will also award seven scholarships of \$10,000 each, and 25 of \$6,000 each to university students completing their graduate or post-graduate study in 2008. Applicants for the Freemasons’ scholarships must be students completing their degree, no matter their degree subject or faculty. The only other requirement is that they must also take part in a ‘non-academic community activity’. Applications are open until 1 October 2007 and forms can be downloaded from the homepage of the Freemasons website, <http://www.freemasons.co.nz>

For further background on both scholarships, see also:

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/ED0707/S00096.htm>
<http://www.fis.org.nz/BreakOut/vuw/schols.phtml?detail+600368>

9. From the whiteboard

The word connects the visible trace with the invisible thing, the absent thing, the thing that is desired or feared – like a frail emergency bridge flung over an abyss.

— Italo Calvino

10. The Cape

Victoria Creative Writing graduate Vivienne Plumb has a world premiere currently running at Circa Theatre. Victoria University students Rawiri Jobe and Leon Wadham are also making their professional debut as actors in the production. *The Cape* is the story of a road trip to Cape Reinga by four seventeen-year-olds, a play ‘about that moment in any young person’s life where choices are offered and important decisions have to be made. That time when we leave the child behind and are forced to accept the responsibilities of adulthood.’ Directed by Conrad Newport, *The Cape* runs until 7 September; adults \$35, students, senior citizens and beneficiaries \$28, and groups 6+ \$30. For bookings phone 801 7992. <http://www.circa.co.nz>

11. A word from Canada (for Maori Language Week)

Our occasional Canadian correspondent, the New Zealand playwright David Geary, sent us the following message with a new English word for Maori Language Week - we're wondering how it might be translated, if at all:

Thanks for the excellent NEWS FROM THE IIML....I belong to **wordsmith** - they send you a word a day. The pick of the bunch has been 'anecdotage', defined as :

1. the telling of anecdotes
2. anecdotes collectively
3. old age characterized by excessive telling of anecdotes. As in "When a man fell into his anecdotage it was a sign to retire." - Benjamin Disraeli

I thought the third definition quite brilliant. Though, personally, I'm all for old guys who doing nothing but tell stories ... I'm fast approaching one myself. And, surely, that's what being an Elder / Kaumatua is all about. When we stop telling stories we stop fullstop.

ka kite for Te Wiki o Te Reo Maori and arohanui - David Geary

12. Wellington writers step in to support writers' cottage

A group of Wellington writers led by novelist Mary McCallum, have assembled in support of the Randell Cottage. The historic Thorndon cottage needs additional funds to continue its role as a writers' residence for local and French writers, and the new Friends of Randell Cottage Committee includes Montana Award winning writers Rachael King and Jessie Munro as well as Anne Faulkner and Janet Bache. McCallum hints at exciting ideas for lifting the profile of Randell Cottage and raising funds, but is keeping them under wraps for now. Playwright Whiti Hereaka is the current writer in residence at Randell Cottage. Previous residents include Peter Wells, Pierre Furlan, and Annie Saumont. For further information, telephone Mary McCallum on 027 600 3313, or Janet Bache on 027 200 5426.

13. Fulcrum poetry forum

International poetry journal *Fulcrum* has set up a free poetry discussion forum/board. Anyone can join, post, message, and launch new discussion topics, You'll be required to log in on the Facebook site in order to see the page, however:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4089574795>

14. Recent web reading

Stephen Pinker's dangerous ideas

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/otherviews/469317,CST-CONT-danger15.article>

A novel

<http://www.ryman-novel.com/>

13 ways of looking at a blackbird

<http://www.edwardpicot.com/blackbird/>

New Fiona Farrell web pages

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/farrell/index.asp>

Kelly Kilgour reviewed

<http://www.theatreview.org/reviews/review.php?id=878>

Focus Antarctica

<http://www.apublicspace.org/issue4/antarctica.php>

Tuwharetube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9ktXfOuEdQ>

Confessional poetry

<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5948>

Blue review

<http://www.lumiere.net.nz/reader/item/1232>

Philip Pullman's next book

http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/article2176386.ece

NZ digi-poems

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/digital/contest07.asp>

Type the sky

<http://www.slanted.de/node/1361>

Great lists

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/31/science/31tier.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

Birkerts tackles book blogs

http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2007/07/29/lost_in_the_blogosphere/?page=full

New US poet laureate

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/02/books/02poet.html?_r=2&ref=arts&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

Treasure hunt list

http://www.coolercrew.com/medallion.php/hiding_places

15. Great lists of our time

238 reasons why people might have had sex (from a questionnaire developed by Dr. Cindy Meston and Dr. David M. Buss, and reported by John Tierney in the *New York Times*):

1. I was “in the heat of the moment.”
2. It just happened.
3. I was bored.
4. It just seemed like “the thing to do.”
5. Someone dared me.
6. I desired emotional closeness (i.e., intimacy).
7. I wanted to feel closer to God.
8. I wanted to gain acceptance from friends.
9. It’s exciting, adventurous.
10. I wanted to make up after a fight.
11. I wanted to get rid of aggression.
12. I was under the influence of drugs.
13. I wanted to try to get a better mate than my current mate.
14. I wanted to express my love for the person.
15. I wanted to experience the physical pleasure.
16. I wanted to show my affection to the person.
17. I felt like I owed it to the person.
18. I was attracted to the person.
19. I was sexually aroused and wanted the release.
20. My friends were having sex and I wanted to fit in.
21. It feels good.
22. My partner kept insisting.
23. The person was famous and I wanted to be able to say I had sex with him/her.
24. I was physically forced to.
25. I was verbally coerced into it.
26. I wanted the person to love me.
27. I wanted to have a child.
28. I wanted to make someone else jealous.
29. I wanted to have more sex than my friends.
30. I was married and you’re supposed to.
31. I was tired of being a virgin.
32. I was “horny.”
33. I wanted to feel loved.
34. I was feeling lonely.
35. Everyone else was having sex.
36. I wanted the attention.
37. It was easier to “go all the way” than to stop.
38. I wanted to ensure the relationship was “committed.”
39. I was competing with someone else to “get the person.”
40. I wanted to “gain control” of the person.

41. I was curious about what the person was like in bed.
42. I was curious about sex.
43. I wanted to feel attractive.
44. I wanted to please my partner.
45. I wanted to display submission.
46. I wanted to release anxiety/stress
47. I didn't know how to say "no."
48. I felt like it was my duty.
49. I wanted to end the relationship.
50. My friends pressured me into it.
51. I wanted the adventure/excitement.
52. I wanted the experience.
53. I felt obligated to.
54. It's fun.
55. I wanted to get even with someone (i.e., revenge).
56. I wanted to be popular.
57. It would get me gifts.
58. I wanted to act out a fantasy.
59. I hadn't had sex for a while.
60. The person was "available."
61. I didn't want to "lose" the person.
62. I thought it would help "trap" a new partner.
63. I wanted to capture someone else's mate.
64. I felt sorry for the person.
65. I wanted to feel powerful.
66. I wanted to "possess" the person.
67. I wanted to release tension.
68. I wanted to feel good about myself.
69. I was slumming.
70. I felt rebellious.
71. I wanted to intensify my relationship.
72. It seemed like the natural next step in my relationship.
73. I wanted to be nice.
74. I wanted to feel connected to the person.
75. I wanted to feel young.
76. I wanted to manipulate him/her into doing something for me.
77. I wanted him/her to stop bugging me about sex.
78. I wanted to hurt/humiliate the person.
79. I wanted the person to feel good about himself/herself.
80. I didn't want to disappoint the person.
81. I was trying to "get over" an earlier person/relationship.
82. I wanted to reaffirm my sexual orientation.
83. I wanted to try out new sexual techniques or positions.
84. I felt guilty.
85. My hormones were out of control.
86. It was the only way my partner would spend time with me.
87. It became a habit.
88. I wanted to keep my partner happy.
89. I had no self-control.
90. I wanted to communicate at a "deeper" level.

91. I was afraid my partner would have an affair if I didn't have sex with him/her.
92. I was curious about my sexual abilities.
93. I wanted a "spiritual" experience.
94. It was just part of the relationship "routine."
95. I wanted to lose my inhibitions.
96. I got "carried away."
97. I needed another "notch on my belt."
98. The person demanded that I have sex with him/her.
99. The opportunity presented itself.
100. I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex while stoned (e.g., on marijuana or some other drug).
101. It's considered "taboo" by society.
102. I wanted to increase the number of sex partners I had experienced.
103. The person was too "hot" (sexy) to resist.
104. I thought it would relax me.
105. I thought it would make me feel healthy.
106. I wanted to experiment with new experiences.
107. I wanted to see what it would be like to have sex with another person.
108. I thought it would help me to fall asleep.
109. I could brag to other people about my sexual experience.
110. It would allow me to "get sex out of my system" so that I could focus on other things.
111. I wanted to decrease my partner's desire to have sex with someone else.
112. It would damage my reputation if I said "no."
113. The other person was too physically attractive to resist.
114. I wanted to celebrate something.
115. I was seduced.
116. I wanted to make the person feel better about herself/himself.
117. I wanted to increase the emotional bond by having sex.
118. I wanted to see whether sex with a different partner would feel different or better.
119. I was mad at my partner, so I had sex with someone else.
120. I wanted to fulfill a previous promise to my partner.
121. It was expected of me.
122. I wanted to keep my partner from straying.
123. I wanted the pure pleasure.
124. I wanted to dominate the other person.
125. I wanted to make a conquest.
126. I'm addicted to sex.
127. It was a favor to someone.
128. I wanted to be used or degraded.
129. Someone offered me money to do it.
130. I was drunk.
131. It seemed like good exercise.
132. I was pressured into doing it.
133. The person offered to give me drugs for doing it.
134. I was frustrated and needed relief.
135. It was a romantic setting.
136. I felt insecure.
137. My regular partner is boring, so I had sex with someone else.

138. I was on the "rebound" from another relationship.
139. I wanted to boost my self-esteem
140. I wanted to get my partner to stay with me.
141. Because of a bet.
142. It was a special occasion.
143. It was the next step in the relationship.
144. I wanted to get a special favor from someone.
145. I wanted to get back at my partner for having cheated on me.
146. I wanted to enhance my reputation.
147. I wanted to keep warm.
148. I wanted to punish myself.
149. I wanted to break up a rival's relationship by having sex with his/her partner.
150. I wanted to stop my partners' nagging.
151. I wanted to achieve an orgasm.
152. I wanted to brag to friends about my conquests.
153. I wanted to improve my sexual skills.
154. I wanted to get a job.
155. I wanted to get a raise.
156. I wanted to get a promotion.
157. I wanted to satisfy a compulsion.
158. I wanted to make money.
159. I wanted to keep my partner satisfied.
160. I wanted to change the topic of conversation.
161. I wanted to get out of doing something.
162. I wanted to test my compatibility with a new partner.
163. I wanted to get a partner to express love.
164. I wanted to put passion back into my relationship.
165. I wanted to prevent a breakup.
166. I wanted to become one with another person.
167. I wanted to get a favor from someone.
168. I wanted to breakup my relationship.
169. I wanted to give someone else a sexually transmitted disease (e.g., herpes, AIDS).
170. I wanted to breakup another's relationship.
171. I wanted to avoid hurting someone's feelings.
172. I wanted to make myself feel better about myself.
173. I wanted to get rid of a headache.
174. I was afraid to say "no" due to the possibility of physical harm.
175. I wanted to keep my partner from straying.
176. I wanted to burn calories.
177. I wanted to even the score with a cheating partner.
178. I wanted to hurt an enemy.
179. I wanted to feel older.
180. It is my genetic imperative.
181. It was an initiation rite to a club or organization.
182. I wanted to become more focused on work - sexual thoughts are distracting.
183. I wanted to say "I've missed you."
184. I wanted to celebrate a birthday or anniversary or special occasion.
185. I wanted to say "I'm sorry."
186. I wanted to return a favor.

187. I wanted to say "Thank You."
188. I wanted to welcome someone home.
189. I wanted to say "goodbye."
190. I wanted to defy my parents.
191. I wanted to relieve menstrual cramps.
192. I wanted to relieve "blue balls."
193. I wanted to get the most out of life.
194. I wanted to feel feminine.
195. I wanted to feel masculine.
196. I am a sex addict.
197. I wanted to see what all the fuss is about.
198. I thought it would boost my social status.
199. The person had a lot of money.
200. The person's physical appearance turned me on.
201. The person was a good dancer.
202. Someone had told me that this person was good in bed.
203. The person had beautiful eyes.
204. The person made me feel sexy.
205. An erotic movie had turned me on.
206. The person had taken me out to an expensive dinner.
207. The person was a good kisser.
208. The person had bought me jewelry.
209. The person had a great sense of humor.
210. The person seemed self-confident.
211. The person really desired me.
212. The person was really desired by others.
213. I wanted to gain access to that person's friend.
214. I felt jealous.
215. The person flattered me.
216. I wanted to see if I could get the other person into bed.
217. The person had a desirable body.
218. I had not had sex in a long time.
219. The person smelled nice.
220. The person had an attractive face.
221. I saw the person naked and could not resist.
222. I was turned on by the sexual conversation.
223. The person was intelligent.
224. The person caressed me.
225. The person wore revealing clothes.
226. The person had too much to drink and I was able to take advantage of him/her.
227. I knew the person was usually "out of my league."
228. The person was mysterious.
229. I realized I was in love.
230. I wanted to forget about my problems.
231. I wanted to reproduce.
232. I/she was ovulating.
233. I wanted my partner to notice me.
234. I wanted to help my partner forget about his/her problems.
235. I wanted to lift my partner's spirits.
236. I wanted to submit to my partner.

237. I wanted to make my partner feel powerful.

238. Other (please fill in your reasons in the space below).