



**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS**

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 16 March 2007

This is the 104th 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. New Zealand Post supports young poets | 1 |
| 2. Mr Jones goes to Jamaica... | 2 |
| 3. ...and to Berlin | 2 |
| 4. Tuwhare at AK07 | 2 |
| 5. The expanding bookshelf (1) | 2 |
| 6. Anthologies galore (1) | 3 |
| 7. Anthologies galore (2) | 3 |
| 8. From the whiteboard | 3 |
| 9. Anthologies galore (3) | 3 |
| 10. The expanding bookshelf (2) | 4 |
| 11. World Poetry Day | 4 |
| 12. Great national anthems (an occasional series) | 4 |
| 13. Recent web reading | 5 |
| 14. Great lists of our time | 7 |

1. New Zealand Post supports young poets

The search is underway for New Zealand's best young poets as part of the New Zealand Post National Schools' Poetry Award. This is the first time New Zealand Post has supported this competition, which is run by the Institute of Modern Letters. The competition is open to secondary school students in years 12 and 13. Entries must be in by Monday 14 May, and will be judged by New Zealand poet and editor Andrew Johnston. A shortlist of ten talented students will be rewarded with a prize package that includes a one-day poetry masterclass in Wellington with some of New Zealand's leading poets. The shortlisted poets will also receive a package of subscriptions to leading literary journals and writing organisations.

At an awards ceremony and poetry reading in Wellington on Friday 17 August nine runners-up will each receive \$100. One winner will receive a \$500 cash prize for themselves and \$500 for their school library. And this year there's a brand new prize: one finalist will also be offered the chance to take their talent into the realm of music.

Their work will be adapted into a song by a top Wellington musician and professionally recorded at York Street Studios in Auckland. It will then be made available to New Zealand radio stations and is expected to be performed live later in the year. More information is available at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters>

2. Mr Jones goes to Jamaica...

Congratulations to Lloyd Jones, whose novel *Mr Pip* has won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book in the South East Asia and South Pacific Region. *Mr Pip* now goes forward to be judged against the other regional winners for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. The Best First Book Award for South East Asia and Pacific region went to *Tuvalu*, by Andrew O'Connor, which also won Australia's Vogel Prize last year. The Pan Commonwealth judging panel is chaired by Nicholas Hasluck, and the South East Asia and South Pacific region is represented by regional chairperson Dr Christine Prentice of Otago University. The winner of the overall prize will be announced at the Calabash Festival in Jamaica in late May.

3. ...and to Berlin

Lloyd Jones will also spend a year in Berlin from August 2007 as this year's recipient of the Creative New Zealand Berlin Writers' Residency. During the residency, he will work on a new novel as well as two non-fiction projects. *Mr Pip*, published in New Zealand and Australia last year, will be published in a dozen countries this year, including Germany.

4. Tuwhare at AK07

The musicians and bands who set the poems of Hone Tuwhare to music for the well-received show that premiered in the New Zealand International Arts Festival last March are reprising their performance at the Auckland Festival, AK07 this coming Monday. The two-hour production is narrated by *Whale Rider* star Rawiri Paratene with musical interpretations from Goldenhorse to Don McGlashan, Strawpeople to Mahinarangi Tocker, Whirimako Black to Graham Brazier and more. If you look closely, you'll see IIML lecturer and poet Chris Price playing percussion with Hinemoana Baker in the first song of the night. *Tuwhare* is on at the Civic Theatre, Monday 19 March at 7.30 pm. Bookings at Ticketek, tel (09) 307 5000.

5. The expanding bookshelf (1)

Gerry Evans launches his memoir *Shipping Out* (Sarah Bennett Books) at Karori Library in Wellington on Wednesday 21 March at 6 pm. Launch attendees are promised 'ship's biscuits and a tot of rum' to celebrate the publication of this tale of Gerry's days as a merchant seaman. Gerry Evans completed his MA (Page) at

Victoria in 2000. You can hear Kim Hill's interview with him on Radio New Zealand's revamped website:

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/saturday/20070217>

6. Anthologies galore (1)

Three different anthologies are currently calling for submissions from new and established poets and prose writers. The first is a new anthology of poetry about global issues, edited by Hinemoana Baker and Maria Macmillan. The editors write that 'The anthology will feature poems about events and situations in the world that challenge, anger, or excite us, that we fear or long for. From privatisation to peace, from human rights to global warming, from trade to famine, there are important poems to be written. First and foremost this will be a literary volume of top-notch, well-crafted poems. We want writing that raises awareness without resorting to rhetoric, touches on enormous subjects without being heavy-handed, poems that somehow move us and/or inform us without being didactic.' The anthology is a project of Dev-Zone, an independent, not-for-profit resource centre on global and development issues. For more information and submission guidelines, visit www.dev-zone.org/poetry, or telephone 04 472 9549 for information to be posted to you. Submissions to poetry@dev-zone.org by Saturday, 30 June 2007.

7. Anthologies galore (2)

Writers of Asian descent are invited to send contributions for an anthology of creative writing that addresses the Asian experience in New Zealand. Writing which addresses any of the following areas will be especially welcome: growing up an Asian New Zealander; work and the workplace; intercultural friendship and romance; women's issues; 'gaysianz' and 'lesbasianz' come out; past memory and future hopes. For more details and submission guidelines contact Daniel McKay (nzanthology@hotmail.com). Submissions should be mailed to Anthology Project, PO Box 6236, Upper Riccarton 8442, Christchurch by 31 July.

8. From the whiteboard

Let the writer take up surgery or bricklaying if he is interested in technique. There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no shortcut. The young writer would be a fool to follow a theory. Teach yourself by your own mistakes; people learn only by error.

— William Faulkner, *Paris Review* interview, 1956 (thanks to the No. 8 Wire for drawing this to our attention)

9. Anthologies galore (3)

The Australian publisher Black Dog Books has raised its profile here recently with the award-winning YA books of New Zealander Leon Davidson. They are now calling for submissions of stories, poems, graphic stories, illustration, non-fiction, 'and anything else that is interesting and eclectic' to be published in an anthology aimed at 10-14 year olds in September 2007. Very short pieces are preferred. All net proceeds from the book will go to Big Brothers, Big Sisters (a youth mentoring scheme that pairs up kids and teens – see link below). Contributors will not be paid, but will receive complimentary copies of the book. Submissions should be emailed to blackdoganthology@mac.com or mailed to Black Dog Anthology, black dog books, 15 Gertrude Street, Fitzroy 3065 by 5 April. Include your name, age, and some information about your previous publishing history (if any). Contact Lili Wilkinson at blackdoganthology@mac.com for more detailed information.

<http://www.bdb.com.au/>

<http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org.au/bbbsau/>

10. The expanding bookshelf (2)

Novelist Barbara Else, who did the Original Composition Course at Victoria in 1988 and was Writer in Residence there in 1999, has also developed a highly productive sideline as editor of anthologies for children. The latest, *Hideous and Hilarious*, has just surprised the publisher (and its editor) by reaching number 5 on the children's bestseller list (just under the *Chronicles of Narnia*) compiled by Booksellers NZ. She has now edited five anthologies of stories for children, one for teenagers, (two of which have been listed as Notable Books by the Children's Literature Foundation of NZ), and a sixth anthology for children is due out in October this year. Barbara Else's eighth novel is also due out mid-year.

11. World Poetry Day

Apparently next Wednesday 21 March is World Poetry Day. You could have fooled us. We understand that UNESCO has been running this global poetry celebration since 1999. The notion is that every country in the world is mentioned on their website, with links to magazines, organizations, prizes, festivals etc. Try visiting, though – www.unesco.org/poetry – and see if you can find New Zealand. No? We thought not. Sao Tome and Principe is there, however. The site's information seems to be astonishingly uninformed and partial. Under Australia, for instance, they are able to list three poetry prizes: the 'All About Art Birthday Celebration Contest', the 'Arts Queensland Val Vallis Poetry Prize', and the 'W.B. Yeats Poetry Prize for Australia and New Zealand', which last seems to originate from a defunct Geocities site.

12. Great national anthems (an occasional series)

Zimbabwe

Lift high the banner, the flag of Zimbabwe
The symbol of freedom proclaiming victory;

We praise our heroes' sacrifice,
And vow to keep our land from foes;
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.

Oh lovely Zimbabwe, so wondrously adorned
With mountains, and rivers cascading, flowing free;
May rain abound, and fertile fields;
May we be fed, our labour blessed;
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.

Oh God, we beseech Thee to bless our native land;
The land of our fathers bestowed upon us all;
From Zambezi to Limpopo
May leaders be exemplary;
And may the Almighty protect and bless our land.

13. Recent web reading

Film stories

http://www.newyorker.com/critics/atlarge/articles/070305crat_atlarge_denby

Granta's best of the US

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,,2027117,00.html>

More on publishing in the electronic age

<http://chronicle.com/temp/reprint.php?id=4jptkw0p2stthrb0lj22jdnz39bqz0d3>

Animated Plath and Collins

<http://www.artsjournal.com/video.shtml>

Rackett

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=65745477>

Emergencies with Jean-Paul Sartre

<http://www.mcsweeneys.net/2007/1/25smith.html>

The Google library

http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/070205fa_fact_toobin

Time reads books

http://www.time.com/time/archive/collections/0,21428,c_writers,00.shtml

A few Kim Hills

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kim_Hill_%28disambiguation%29

New Sylvia Plath poem

http://www.blackbird.vcu.edu/v5n2/poetry/plath_s/ennui.htm

Icelandic weather report

<http://icelandweatherreport.com/>

Schott in book abuse shock

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/04/books/review/Schott.t.html?ref=books>

Podiobooks

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/01/books/01podb.html?fta=y>

Poet in a palm tree

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6426645.stm

Poetry idyll in the Middle East

<http://www.newstatesman.com/200703050020>

The poverty of the writer

<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/features/article2347523.ece>

Promiscuous materials

http://jonathanlethem.com/promiscuous_materials.html

Some TLS poetry links

<http://tls.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,25345,00.html>

W.H. Auden on the poetry impulse

<http://tls.timesonline.co.uk/section/0,,25345,00.html>

Gary Snyder interview

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/features/feature.onpoets.html?id=179396>

Weird poets

<http://www.mipoesias.com/Volume19Issue3Gudding/jackanders.html>

Bill Knott's a bit depressed

<http://billknott.typepad.com/>

Kirsty Gunn on families and literary scale

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/family/story/0,,2019975,00.html>

Hamster wheel poem

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/%7Edudley/fellows/lit/Infinity/Duhamel.htm>

Jenny Diski's big NZ adventure

http://www.jennydiski.co.uk/keep_still.htm

In defence of creative writing workshops

<http://juliaglassman.blogspot.com/2007/01/yet-another-defense-of-mfa.html>

The poetry wars

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eat-the-press/2007/03/12/literary-feud-nytbr_e_43191.html

14. Great lists of our time

Courtesy of Listlady, almost a decade of hamsters in the news:

1998:

30 September 1998: Record number of complaints received over ad showing hamster's death. :: 11 November 1998: Study finds hamsters navigate by dead reckoning; have excellent sense of direction.

1999:

08 December 1999 - 27 December 1999: Sir Cliff Richard versus the singing hamsters.

2000:

21 January 2000: Apparently deceased hamster revives; gnaws hole in coffin, tunnels out of grave, and finds its way home. :: 20 April 2000: Male Djungarian hamsters make excellent midwives. :: 01 August 2000: Missing snake found stuck in hamster cage after eating neighbor's hamster.

2001:

12 February 2001: Germany faces reprimand for failure to protect natural habitat of endangered black-bellied hamster. :: 17 September 2001: Hamster in plastic exercise ball found rolling along the M6 motorway at Spaghetti Junction in Birmingham. (The Birmingham RSPCA named him "Roly". See also 24 September 2005.) :: 28 February 2001: Six-foot fiberglass hamster from Millennium Dome fetches £3000 at auction.

2002:

13 May 2002: New mobile phone allows text messages to be read out loud by talking hamster. :: 23 August 2002: Bus company apologizes for charging hamster 10p for ride; issues lifetime bus pass.

2003:

29 April 2003: Runaway hamster eludes would-be rescuers. :: 14 May 2003: Escaped hamster starts house fire by chewing electrical cable. :: 29 October 2003: West Yorkshire hamster breeder may have world's smallest hamster. :: 03 December 2003: Oldest hamster food cache found. (Miocene, 17 million years old.)

2004:

08 January 2004: Siberian hamsters used to study obesity. :: 01 March 2004: New hamster escapes in car, runs up £370 repair bill by gnawing

ignition cables. :: 01 March 2004: SSPCA calls for boycott of shop selling hamster-fur coats. :: 05 March 2004: Shop removes hamster-fur coats; issues press release. :: 13 May 2004: Bob the Hamster rescued from inside the dashboard of new owners' car. :: 24 May 2004: Fat Hamster Cheats Vacuum Death. (The best headline of the lot.) :: 20 August 2004: Callous thief uses "lost hamster" scam. :: 27 August 2004: Shop sneaks hamster-fur coats back onto sales rack. :: (27 August 2004: The Telegraph also disapproves of the sale of hamster-fur coats.)

2005:

12 April 2005: Passing police constable rescues hamster from cat; owner sought. :: 25 May 2005: Hamster virus kills three people. :: 27 May 2005: Hamster survives rat poison feast. :: 24 June 2005: Cambridge postman rescues hamster mailed in unprotected envelope. (See 17 January 2006) :: 23 August 2005: Pet shop rents out hamster by the week. :: 25 August 2005: Teenage inventor builds hamster-powered phone recharger. :: 20 September 2005: Fluorescent green hamster sperm used to study human fertility. :: 24 September 2005: Hamster in exercise ball rescued from busy street in Somerset. :: 24 November 2005: Man jailed for 60 days after drop-kicking ex-girlfriend's hamster. :: 02 December 2005: Youths strap hamster to firework.

2006:

11 January 2006: Firefighters rescue hamster with head stuck in cage. :: 17-18 January 2006: Drunken Cambridge students who mailed a hamster (See 24 June 2005) receive heavy fines; are banned from owning animals for ten years. :: 19 January 2006: Rodent-eating snake befriends snack-hamster. :: 14 March 2006: Nanotech helps blind hamsters see. :: 05 May 2006: RSPCA appeals for information on five baby hamsters abandoned outside pet shop in Cornwall. :: 25 May 2006: The Sun says: Freddie Starr ate my hamster. (See also.) :: 02 June 2006: Hamster survives trip through giant industrial metal shredder at recycling plant. :: 26 September 2006: Fudge, a hamster with serious escape-fu: (1.) escaped from his cage in Devon; (2.) turned up in his owner's golf bag while his owner was on a golfing holiday in Scotland; (3.) accompanied his owner around several major golf courses; (4.) was left for safekeeping in a cardboard box in his owner's rented car; (5.) escaped, could not be found, and was assumed lost for good; (6.) remained lost while his owner flew home; and (7.) reappeared inside the car when the next person rented it. The nice lady who rented the car is adopting Fudge permanently, with his previous owner's blessing.

2007:

09 January 2007: Hamster escapes from cage in trunk of car; car stops working; hamster found by auto mechanic. Bill for gnawed wiring: £1000.