



## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 16 December 2008

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This is the 135<sup>th</sup> 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. Houdini and Mata Hari star in Adam Prize winner's work

Lynn Jenner was awarded the 2008 Adam Prize in Creative Writing for her mixed-genre work *Dear Sweet Harry* in a function held at the Adam Art Gallery last Wednesday. Supported by Wellingtonians Denis and Verna Adam through the Victoria University Foundation, the \$3000 prize is awarded annually to an outstanding MA (Page) student at the International Institute of Modern Letters. Examiners described *Dear Sweet Harry* – a work which interweaves historical characters such as Harry Houdini, Mata Hari and Katherine Mansfield with members of the author's own family – as a hard book to categorise, but praised it as 'an

extraordinary piece of writing' in which the author herself, like some of her characters, 'plays with illusion and disguise'. Lynn Jenner gave up writing at the age of twelve, when she 'found out about Literature', and didn't start again until the age of forty-nine. She has worked as a teacher, educational psychologist and counsellor, and is currently employed as a researcher.

## **2. Relationships and redemption pick up scriptwriting prize**

Scriptwriters Hannah McKie and Simon Hall have jointly won the annual David Carson Parker Embassy Trust Prize for their stories about relationships within a Christchurch family home and a Catholic priest's journey to Africa. They received their \$1,000 prizes at a function at the Embassy Theatre last Monday. The annual prize is awarded to the best script for a feature film written during the MA in Creative Writing at the IIML. Scriptwriting Programme Director Ken Duncum says the quality of scripts in the course was so uniformly high that picking a single winner proved too difficult for the judges. 'Jointly awarding the prize to two writers was a more accurate reflection of the strength of the scripts across the class.' The prize was first established by the Embassy Theatre Trust and is now funded by arts philanthropist David Carson Parker.

## **3. Turbine's got talent**

The 2008 issue of online literary journal [\*Turbine\*](#), is now live. From shipwrecked sailors eating albatross and Maori myths re-imagined with contemporary characters to 80s computer games and internet chat about *New Zealand's Got Talent*, *Turbine 08* offers a fresh map of New Zealand life and culture past and present, at home and abroad. Some writers immerse us in foreign landscapes, travelling to Palestine, Spain's Camino trail, Coney Island, Menton and the Himalayas. This year *Turbine* publishes two of its youngest-ever contributors – high school graduates Manon Revuelta, who won the New Zealand Post National Schools Poetry Award in August, and Zarah Butcher-McGunnigle, previously shortlisted for the same award. Many of the other writers in *Turbine 08* have just completed the MA in Creative Writing at the International Institute of Modern Letters. Other highlights include work by newly announced Adam Prize winner Lynn Jenner, and by 2008 Prime Minister's Award winner Elizabeth Smither, as well as US poet and Wallace Stevens Award recipient Michael Palmer reflecting on his visit to New Zealand earlier this year.

Our thanks to all those who made it happen, especially the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre, and hard-working editors Louise Wallace and Francis Cooke.

## **4. Out walks David...**

Well, not quite yet, since he remains Victoria's Writer in Residence until the end of January, but David Geary has ended 2008 on a creative high of a non-literary kind with the birth of his second son, Sampson Wiremu Wilton Geary, who arrived in the

world last week. Congratulations to all concerned. There's an extremely lively and wide-ranging [interview](#) with David Geary in *Turbine 08*.

## 5. ...in walks Paula

Looking forward to 2009, novelist and screen writer Paula Boock will be Writer in Residence at the IIML. Paula Boock has worked as an author, publisher and screenwriter. Her books have been published in Australia, the UK and USA, and the television drama series she has written for have screened in numerous countries. Over the last eight years she has worked on a range of television drama projects, and recently formed Lippy Pictures with Donna Malane to produce their television feature film *Until Proven Innocent* and a 13-part children's time travelling series for TVNZ. She is the author of five successful young adult novels including *Out Walked Mel* and *Dare Truth or Promise* (a New Zealand Post Children's Book of the Year, and a finalist for the USA Lambda Award). During her residency, Paula Boock intends to return to the page with a novel for adults set in Dunedin in 1929-30. This residency is jointly funded by Victoria University of Wellington and Creative New Zealand.

## 6. Wellington sonnets

IIML graduates have proved their poetic mettle by taking first and second places in the Wellington Sonnet Competition. 2006 Adam Prize winner Michele Amas took first place (\$1000) with her poem, 'Wellington Sonnet', and 2007 MA graduate Saradha Koirala won second prize (\$500) with 'Courtenay Place'. Among the ten Highly Commended entries were IIML graduate Cath Vidler (also famous as 'Listlady'), and Trina Saffioti and Kerry Popplewell, both of whom have completed the undergraduate poetry workshop. The winners were announced by New Zealand Post Chief Executive John Allen on 1 December. The competition was sponsored by New Zealand Post and organised by the Wellington Writers Walk Committee of the New Zealand Society of Authors. It attracted 204 entries from all over New Zealand and from Fiji and Australia.

## 7. Dorothy Porter RIP

Melbourne poet Dorothy Porter has died of cancer at the age of 54. Porter, who was best known for her verse novels including *The Monkey's Mask*, *Wild Surmise* and *El Dorado*, visited New Zealand in the 1990s as a guest of the Women's Book Festival. New Zealand writer Anne Kennedy, who has recently produced two verse novels of her own, adapted *The Monkey's Mask* for a film that appeared in 2000. And Porter herself was contributing to trans-Tasman artistic dialogue this year: during her illness, she worked on the lyrics for a forthcoming rock opera, *January*, by Tim Finn, who performed two of the songs at her funeral. The *Sydney Morning Herald's* [obituary](#) notes that her work 'represents both a major contribution to lesbian and women's writing, and beyond that, to humanity.'

## **8. Christmas reading at Unity**

Unity Books Wellington and Victoria University Press have joined forces to present an in-store reading by Barbara Anderson, Jenny Bornholdt, Elizabeth Knox, Bill Manhire, Bridget van der Zijpp and Ian Wedde this Wednesday, 17 December, from 6-7.30 pm. Aside from enjoying the live literary soundbites on offer, the idea is to 'knock off your Christmas present list and get your holiday reading, all with a snack and a drink...'

## **9. Last call for 2008 poems**

22 December is the cut-off date for the receipt of poems to be considered by editor James Brown for *Best New Zealand Poems 08*. If you have published poems that haven't already been sent by your publisher, please mail them to Best New Zealand Poems, International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140.

## **10. Typographers of the world unite**

A major international typography conference [TYPESHED11](#) will take place at Shed 11 on the Wellington waterfront from 11-15 February 2009. A full programme of lectures, workshops, exhibitions and installations 'will create the possibility for social and intellectual exchange with passionate typographers and designers from about the world – Europe, the Americas, Asia, Pacific, Australia and New Zealand.' International guests include Stephen Banham, Donald Beekman, Walter Bohatsch, Experimental Jetset, Masayoshi Kodaira, Indra Kupferschmid, Christian Schwartz and Leonardo Sonnoli.

## **11. From the whiteboard**

'At various times in my life I've bought a little finely ornamented volume with a clasp, and written a couple of days' worth of reflections. And then I come back to it and I think, What an idiot.'

Marilynne Robinson

## **12. Documentary scholarship**

The Documentary New Zealand Trust and the Goethe-Institut have established the DOCNZ Goethe-Institut Scholarship. This will allow a New Zealand documentary film-maker to visit Germany and develop and premiere a documentary film project that will screen at both the DOCNZ International Documentary Film Festival and a major German film festival. The scholarship is aimed at film-makers aged 30 years and over, and applicants are required to submit and realise a project to be pitched to a

jury. The selected recipient will travel to Germany, undertake an intensive German language course and participate in a tailored programme which will include meetings with German officials, industry and festivals. The recipient of the first scholarship will be announced at the DOCNZ Awards on 25 February 2009. Application details are available from [DOCNZ](#) or the [Goethe-Institut](#). For further information contact DOCNZ Goethe-Institut Scholarship, The Documentary NZ Trust (Attn: Alex Lee), PO Box 90943 AMSC, Auckland 1142 (email [alex@docnz.org.nz](mailto:alex@docnz.org.nz)).

### **13. Royal Society of New Zealand Science Book Prize**

The Royal Society of New Zealand has established a popular science book prize; the winner is to be announced at the Auckland Writers and Readers Festival on 15 May 2009. The prize is \$10,000 for the (New Zealand resident) author/s and \$2500 for the publisher. A simple application form will be available on the Society's [website](#) in a couple of weeks. The judges are Professor Jean Fleming, University of Otago; Professor Harry Ricketts, Victoria University of Wellington; and Professor Brian Boyd, University of Auckland. Submissions close on Thursday 5 February 2009, and the shortlist will be announced at the end of March. For further information, contact Glenda Lewis, Royal Society of New Zealand, [glenda.lewis@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:glenda.lewis@royalsociety.org.nz), tel 04 470 5758.

### **14. Bristol Short Story Prize**

The 2009 Bristol Short Story Prize is open to writers outside the UK as well as UK residents. Entries must be previously unpublished, and not longer than 3000 words. There is a £7 entry fee for each story submitted, and twenty stories will be short-listed and published in the 2009 Bristol Short Story Prize Anthology. The winner receives £500 plus £150 Waterstone's gift card, and second and third place getters receive £350 and £200 respectively, plus £100 Waterstone's gift card. The other 17 writers will each receive a cheque for £50. Stories can be submitted on-line via the Prize website or by post: full details are available from the [website](#).

### **15. Kapiti Island Maori writer's residency**

The Tau mai e Kapiti Maori Writer's Residency, funded by Te Waka Toi/Creative New Zealand and hosted by Kaitiaki o Kapiti Trust, offers a grant to a Maori writer to live and work on Kapiti Island for eight weeks. The closing date for applications for the 2009 residency is 27 February; for an application form, contact Minnie Clark, Tau Mai e Kapiti, Maori Writer's Residency 2009, P O Box 28, Otaki 5560, or email [minnie@kapitiislandalive.co.nz](mailto:minnie@kapitiislandalive.co.nz).

## 16. Tutors of academic and professional writing

The School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University (SLALS) offers several writing courses for undergraduate students. Courses include WRIT 101 (an introduction to effective written expression for academic and general purposes); WRIT 202 (effective writing in organisations); and WRIT 203 (writing for the print media). New tutors are sometimes needed for these courses, which involve three hours of classroom time plus around ten hours preparation and assessments per week over the course of a trimester. If you think you might be interested in teaching one or more classes, contact the director of the SLALS writing programme, Derek Wallace, at the following e-mail address: [derek.wallace@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:derek.wallace@vuw.ac.nz). The attachment of a short CV with your note would be helpful.

## 17. Christmas is coming

And since this is our final newsletter for 2008, it's time for us to thank all the international and local writers who contributed their expertise to this year's MA workshops as visiting writers or supervisors, as well as those who performed for Wellington audiences in our Writers on Mondays series, and taught the undergraduate workshops, including:

Johanna Aitchison, Angela Andrews, Sarah Jane Barnett, Fergus Barrowman, Jenny Bornholdt, James Brown, Geoff Cochrane, Jennifer Compton, Kate De Goldi, Cliff Fell, David Geary, Patricia Grace, Briar Grace-Smith, Dinah Hawken, Kerry Hines, Eirlys Hunter, Anna Jackson, Michele Leggott, Mary McCallum, Anne Noble, Geoff Page, Jane Parkin, Susan Pearce, Michael Palmer, Richard Powers, Harry Ricketts, Elizabeth Smither, Graeme Tetley, Heidi Thomson, Brian Turner, Kathryn Walls, Peter Whiteford and Damien Wilkins.

Finally, for those of you still looking for last-minute book gifts, we wrap up the year with a selection of Best Book lists (see Recent Web Reading below), as well as some Christmas curiosities. With a toast of thanks to Listlady, our last 'great list' for the year consists of 19 essential online guides to stave off holiday ennui

## 18. Recent web reading

*Best books 08:*

[New Statesman](#)

[Observer](#)

Guardian [1](#), [2](#) and [3](#)

[Times](#)

New York Times: [Top 10](#) and [100 Notable](#)

[Washington Post](#)

[A list of best book links](#)

[ALA Best Books for Young Adults](#)

[Amazon](#)

***Christmas big and small:***

[World's smallest Advent calendar](#)

[World's biggest Christmas candle](#)

[World's biggest floating Christmas tree](#)

[World's smallest Christmas dinner](#)

[World's most unusual Christmas trees](#)

[Britain's worst Christmas tree](#)

[Snowflake gallery \(for the Northern hemisphere Christmas\)](#)

***General web reading:***

[Believe it or not!](#)

[Russell T Davies interview](#)

[A glossary of poetic terms](#)

[Amy Brown reviewed](#)

[Heat reviewed](#)

[James K Baxter's uncle](#)

[World's largest cowboy boots](#)

[A literary entertainment](#)

[Losing Milton](#)

[Two poems about Hone Tuwhare](#)

[Poetry hoaxes](#)

[Sidebrow: a multi-threaded, collaborative literary experiment](#)

[New-look \(and buy\) VUP website](#)

[100-word stories](#)

[Current slang](#)

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

1. [A Guide to Lichen on Twigs](#)
2. [Online Jukebox Guide](#)
3. [Guide to Snowflakes](#)
4. [Online Guide to Traditional Games](#)
5. [Thames Path Online Guide](#)
6. [Online Guide to Insect Songs](#)
7. [Guide to \(sneaker\) Lacing](#)
8. [A Field Guide to Irish Fairies](#)
9. [Mugwumps Online Guide to Banjo Family Articles](#)
10. [Laundry Guide to Common Care Symbols](#)
11. [Online Guide to the Snakes of Florida](#)
12. [Guide to Furniture Styles](#)
13. [American Kennel Club's Beginner's Guide to Dog Shows](#)
14. [A Beginner's Guide to the Shakespeare Authorship Problem](#)
15. [The Gentleman's Guide to the Calling Card](#)
16. [Field Guide to the Prairie](#)
17. [Guide to Artwhistling](#)
18. [The Guide to Drive-in Movie Theatres](#)
19. [Guide to Small Dogs](#)

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## **Supporting the IIML**

The International Institute of Modern Letters was established at Victoria University in 2001 to promote and foster contemporary imaginative writing.

Our founder, philanthropist Glenn Schaeffer, continues to contribute to IIML activities, including his assistance for an annual fellowship exchange programme with the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

While not everyone is able to match Glenn's level of support, we value all those who have helped us to foster the development of emerging writers. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about continuing your support for the IIML, for example through a gift in your will.

All gifts are managed by the Victoria University Foundation, a registered charitable trust established to raise funds in areas of strategic importance to the University, such as the IIML.

For further information on how you can provide philanthropic support to the IIML, please contact our Director, Bill Manhire, Ph: 04 463 6808, Email: [bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz), or Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: [diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz)