



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 17 September 2009

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This is the 146th 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.

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1. A year of writing

Application deadlines are fast approaching for the 2010 MA in Creative Writing at the IIML. Next year the MA in Scriptwriting will be convened by the award-winning scriptwriter David Geary, while Ken Duncum is on research leave. We're delighted to welcome David, who was our 2008 Writer in Residence, back to the Institute – his energy and enthusiasm are legendary.

As usual there will also be two MA (Page) streams accepting a total of 20 writers of poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction. MA applications must be in by 1 November: visit our [website](#) for further information.

2. A summer of writing

This summer our Iowa fiction workshop will focus on stories that span the middle ground between short story and novella: 35 to 70 pages. Workshop members will write and workshop a complete long story – both in its early stage and its entirety – with Adam Krause. The Iowa poetry workshop, taught by Lauren Barrier Gould, will explore a range of techniques to develop and sustain the habits of a writing mind.

Both workshop leaders hold MFAs from the famed Iowa Writers' Workshop, and have taught creative writing at Iowa and elsewhere. Both courses run from 5 January -12 February 2010, with final folios due on 22 February. The application deadline is 9 November: more information is available [here](#).

3. Or a trimester of writing

We're also delighted to welcome back Kate Duignan, who convened of one of the 2008 MA workshops, as convenor of our 2010 Short Fiction workshop, which runs in the first trimester. Applications for the first trimester undergraduate workshops are due on 10 December.

Courses along with workshops in Children's Writing (taught by Eirlys Hunter) and Creative Non-fiction (taught by Harry Ricketts). Applications for the first trimester undergraduate workshops are due on 10 December: information on all our undergraduate courses and how to apply for them is available [here](#).

4. Too many elves

An audience of around 200 people listened to Philippa Boyens in conversation with Ken Duncum about her scriptwriting work with Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh in our Writers on Mondays event of 31 August. After discussing work on the scripts for *The Hobbit*, which will add a further two films to the trio's oeuvre of Tolkien adaptations, Ken Duncum asked Boyens whether there might be plans afoot to write any *more* Tolkein scripts. She laughed and responded, 'Pete did that to Fran as a joke – he said he'd bought the rights to *The Silmarillion*. He got the filthiest look you've ever seen.'

5. The expanding bookshelf (1)

[Paula Morris](#) clearly had a productive time as Sargeson Fellow in Auckland last year. First she edited the 'ex-patriate issue' of *Landfall*, 'Flung', which appeared earlier this year. Now her first young adult novel, *Ruined*, has been published by Point/Scholastic in the United States, to good reviews. Scholastic NZ will be doing a

limited release of hardbacks in December, and then publishing it as a paperback in 2010. And just published this month (and favourably reviewed in the [Listener](#)) is the *Penguin Book of Contemporary New Zealand Short Stories*, which Morris edited. Paula Morris completed her MA in Creative Writing at the IIML in 2001.

6. Writers of the future

The winner of this year's New Zealand Post National Schools Writing Festival Poetry Award is Charlotte Trevella (Rangi Ruru Girls' School). Judge Jenny Bornholdt describes her winning entry, 'To a sister', as 'a sophisticated and very accomplished poem that doesn't put a foot wrong.' Trevella's poetry career was already off to a running start though: she has a string of local and international poetry awards to her credit, and this month sees the publication of her first book, *Because Paradise* ([Steele Roberts](#)). She plans to study medicine at university, but it's her progress as a poet that we'll be watching with interest. Lynn Freeman's interview with Charlotte is available on Radio New Zealand's [website](#).

Lyric Prize winner Sammy Hickson (Middleton Grange School) had her poem adapted into a song by OpShop's Jason Kerrison, who performed it – with Sammy herself accompanying him on vocals and flute – at the Award ceremony in Wellington that was MC'd by Kate De Goldi. New Zealand Post chairman (and former Prime Minister) the Rt Hon Jim Bolger presented the awards, and the current arts minister Chris Finlayson was roped in for an impromptu speech. You can see Jason and Sammy performing their song, 'You Just Can't See It', on [Youtube](#) or download it from [Loop Recordings](#). Photos from the Award ceremony can be viewed [here](#).

The National Schools Writing Festival was again a bit hit with the students and teachers who came to Victoria U from all over the country to learn more about the craft of writing over a weekend of workshops and writer events. 'Even better than last year,' said one keen young writer. We're grateful to major sponsor New Zealand Post for making it all possible, to Loop for managing the music, and to our partners who provided the literary prize package for all shortlisted poets: Booksellers New Zealand, NZ Society of Authors, NZ Book Council, *Sport* and *Landfall*.

7. Going postal

We'd be interested to know whether any New Zealand Post staff take advantage of the offer of discounted tickets for groups of public servants who attend the new play by Lucy O'Brien, IIML Scriptwriting MA graduate and winner of the 2005 Embassy Trust prize that year, as well as the Dominion Post prize. Advance publicity describes her play, *Postal* as 'a biting black comedy about three frustrated postal workers who must face their crushed hopes and ultimately decide between rebellion and acceptance... a comedy for the underpaid, overworked and disenchanting.' *Postal* opens at BATS Theatre on 22 September, and runs until 3 October. Tickets are \$13/18, book@bats.co.nz or tel 802 4175.

8. Fiction makes music

One of the odder recent echoes in the world of local culture is the just-released studio album from Dunedin's The Clean, which bears the name *Mister Pop*. We hope that Lloyd Jones has already been out to buy his copy. More [here](#).

9. New Zealand poet goes Welsh

Carcanet's weekly e-newsletter reports that New Zealand poet John Gallas has won First Prize in the Welsh Poetry Competition for his poem 'the origami lesson'.

"This year's competition received entries from Abu Dhabi, Canada, France, Hong Kong, Israel, Portugal, USA and Australia, as well as across Wales and the UK. John Gallas was born in Wellington, New Zealand in 1950 and studied at Otago and Oxford Universities. He moved to England in 1973 and now lives in Leicestershire, where he works for the Student Support Service, teaching permanently excluded schoolchildren. His collections (all with Carcanet) include *Practical Anarchy*, *Grrrrrr*, *Star City* and, most recently, *The Book with Twelve Tales*. His minor obsessions number Central Asia and Mongolia, camels, cycling, kinds of anarchism, Fellini, Beckett, Cormac McCarthy, Schnittke, tramping, T.E. Lawrence, sitting breathless on the tops of mountains, and writing poetry. His next collection *Forty Lies*, with illustrations by the artist Sarah Kirby, will be published in July 2010." There is an extract from Gallas's prose work "newzealand" in the current issue of *Sport*. Further award details [here](#).

10. The trophy cabinet

Two of last year's MA (Page) students have been successful in the Pikihiua Awards for Maori writers, it was announced last weekend. Tina Makereti (Tuwharetoa, Te Ati Awa, Rangatahi, Moriori) took home the Short Story in English award for 'Skin and Bones', which puts a contemporary twist on a classic Māori legend, and Kelly Joseph's story 'Time Zone' was highly commended in the same category. Short-story judge David Geary said he chose the winning story 'because it was bold and sexy, a crafty combo of mystery and history that made the old new and put a big smile on my dial'. 'Skin and Bones' is part of a collection of stories, *Once Upon a Time in Aotearoa*, that will be published in 2010.

Congratulations are also due to another Victoria University creative writing graduate, Alison Wong, who is the recipient of this year's \$10,000 Janet Frame Fiction Award, and our current Writer in Residence Paula Boock, who with her business partner Donna Malane took away the Qantas Film and Television Award for best drama programme with *Until Proven Innocent* a few weeks ago.

11. From the whiteboard

“I like the fiction writer’s feeling of being able to confront an experience and resolve it as art, however imperfectly and briefly – to give it a form and try to embody it – to hold it and express it in a story’s terms. You have more chance to try it in a novel. A short story is confined to one mood, to which everything in the story pertains. Characters, setting, time, events, are all subject to the mood. And you can try more ephemeral, more fleeting things in a story – you can work more by suggestion – than in a novel. Less is resolved, more is suggested, perhaps.”

— Eudora Welty

12. Hall and Cochrane hit the Kapiti Coast

Poets Geoff Cochrane (winner of the 2009 Janet Frame Poetry Award) and Bernadette Hall join forces to read from their new collections *Pocket Edition* and *The Lustre Jug* on the Kapiti Coast this weekend. We do hope there will be no reprise of the difficulties in finding the venue described in Bernadette Hall’s poem ‘[Lost \(for Geoff Cochrane\)](#)’, published in *Turbine* 08. For the record, the poets will be reading at the Mahara Gallery, Mahara Place, Waikanae, from 2-3 pm this Sunday, 20 September (tel 04 902 6242).

13. Turbine reminder

Original fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction are still being sought for this year’s edition of online journal *Turbine*, to be released in mid-December. The editors are Bill Nelson and Clare Brunette, and the journal will also feature an interview with Victoria University Writer in Residence Paula Boock, as well as the usual glimpse inside the Reading Room of the MA workshop. The submission deadline is 23 October, and submission guidelines are available [here](#).

14. The magazine rack

Blackmail Press: The Rebel Issue was launched in Wellington on Wednesday night. Busy Bill Nelson was also at the helm of this production along with co-editor Sarah Barnett. The issue features poetry and prose by a good number of IIML students past and present, including Pip Adam, Hinemoana Baker, Brenda Ann Burke, Kate Camp, Lynn Davidson, Joan Fleming, Janis Freegard, Mariana Isara, Rachel O’Neill, Pat White and Ashleigh Young. You can read the issue [here](#).

15. Science writing deadline

A reminder that the deadline for the Manhire Creative Science Writing Prize falls this Tuesday, 22 September. The prize is organised by the Royal Society of New Zealand, in partnership with the IIML and the New Zealand Listener. There are two categories: fiction and non-fiction. Winners from each category receive a cash prize of \$2500 and

the winning entries will be printed in the New Zealand Listener. More information [here](#).

16. The expanding bookshelf (2)

Two of the IIML's MA (Script) graduates have published books for children and young adults in recent months. In August 2003 workshop member Fifi Colston launched her third junior fiction novel *Glory* (Scholastic) at the Storylines Family Day. And in July Random House published *The Crossing*, the first in a planned YA trilogy set on a fictional Pacific Island by 2004 MA (Script) workshop member Mandy Hager, who also took Kate De Goldi YA writing course in 2003.

17. We'll meet again

A number of Victoria University creative writing graduates living in Christchurch are forming a group to meet fortnightly for discussion and critique. They are keen to make contact with other IIML graduates in the area. For details of the next meeting please email frankiepara@yahoo.co.nz.

18. Writing opportunities

Published New Zealand writers are invited to apply for the Creative New Zealand Randell Cottage Writers Residency 2010. The residency runs from April to September 2010 with a monthly stipend of \$2,500. Applications close on 6 November, and there is an open day at the Cottage on 27 September – see the [website](#) for more information on both.

Writers who have never had a travel article published are invited to enter the [AA Directions New Travel Writer of the Year Award 2010](#). The winner receives \$1000, and, in addition to the prize money, will go on an all-expenses paid trip to write a story for AA *Directions* magazine, and be paid for their article. The entry deadline is Friday, 12 February 2010.

19. Recent web reading

[Finding out about Ursula Bethell](#)

[I will not read your f---ing script](#)

[Where Are You My Only One: Vanessa Rhodes review](#)

[Next week in Menton](#)

[The Guardian Readers Dan Brown Sneerathon](#)

[Louise Glück interview](#)

[Lorrie Moore interview](#) (log-in required)

[Vincent Ward's website](#) (this site goes live 18 September)

[The New York Moon](#)

[What they're reading in America](#)

[Academic writing](#)

[Plurals](#)

[Rhyming recipes](#)

[Lewis Carroll's The Man in the Moon](#)

[Book-a-minute](#)

[Eleanor Catton interview](#)

[The novel after modernism](#)

[A view of mainstream publishing](#)

[The Weird Book Room](#)

[Blackbox Manifold](#)

[The dullest blog in the world](#)

[Dying villages](#)

[The lost city of Dunedin](#)

[The self-drawn squid](#)

[Happy clouds](#)

[The largest seed in the world](#)

[27-foot-tall chocolate fountain](#)

[Jo Randerson takes tea with the Grim Reaper](#)

Cath Vidler's mathematics corner:

[Romance mathematics](#)

[Sugar mathematics](#)

[Wool mathematics](#)

[Dance mathematics](#)

[Cupcake mathematics](#)

[Moby Dick mathematics](#)

[A Midsummer Night's mathematics](#)

[Joycean mathematics](#)

[Rockin' mathematics](#)

20. Great lists of our time

List of clues to the '[The World's First Crossword](#)':

What bargain hunters enjoy.

A written acknowledgment.

Such and nothing more.

A bird.

Opposed to less.

What this puzzle is.

An animal of prey.

The close of a day.

To elude.

The plural of is.

To cultivate.

A bar of wood or iron.

What artists learn to do.

Fastened.

Found on the seashore.

The fibre of the gomuti palm.

What we all should be.

A day dream.

A talon.

A pigeon.

Part of your head.

A river in Russia.

To govern.

An aromatic plant.

A fist.

To agree with.

Part of a ship.

One.

Exchanging.

To sink in mud.
A boy.

* * *

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 in a range of ways.

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 – for example through scholarships, prizes, and grants. 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, or Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz