



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 4 June 2010

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This is the 157th 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.

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1. We started a trend!

In our general twittering excitement, we got especially excited about the #lesserbooks twitter trend – the invention of titles like *Dr Perhaps*, *Tale of One City*, *Captain*

Corelli's Ukulele. In fact, we got so excited we asked if twitterers could devise suggestions for well-known NZ books, and started with a couple of suggestions of our own: *Drizzle*, by Kirsty Gunn, and *Somebody Quite Likes Us All*, by Damien Wilkins.

Given New Zealanders' expertise in self-deprecation, it's probably no surprise that we turned out to be pretty good at the lesserbooks game. The trend, as they say, trended. Some of our favourites from a great list of titles:

Came a Mild Tuesday
Beta Male
A Good Keen Flan
Owls Do Fly
Once Were Worriers
100 Traditional Piles
Tarzan Pitney
An Anglepoise at My Table
The Cartilage People

Go [here](#) and search on lesserbooksnz

And you can follow us [here](#).

2. Last call...

Aspiring poets and creative non-fiction writers, childrens' writers, and those who want to 'write the landscape' take note: the application deadline for our second trimester writing workshops is tomorrow! It's not too late, but you'll need to get your skates on: full information on all courses is available [here](#), and as long as applications are with us by first thing Tuesday morning they'll be considered.

3. The expanding bookshelf (1)

Kipling biographer, English lecturer, review journal editor, poet, anthologist, and IIML creative non-fiction workshop leader Harry Ricketts is having a very busy year. Yesterday he chaired a standing-room-only event with creative nonfiction guru Lee Gutkind at City Gallery. Next week, on Wednesday 9 June, his latest production — *The Awa Book of New Zealand Sports Writing* — will be launched by Steve Braunias at Unity Books in Wellington. Contributors include journalists, sports reporters, novelists, playwrights, poets – and the sportspeople themselves, from Martin Crowe to Melissa Moon. We look forward to hearing Harry Ricketts discuss the art of sports writing with Paul Thomas and John Saker as part of our [Writers on Mondays](#) series in August. We understand that two further books — a group biography of World War I poets, and a book on New Zealand poetry, co-written with Paula Green – are currently in production.

4. From the whiteboard

Grow your tree of falsehood from a small grain of truth. Do not follow those who lie in contempt of reality. Let your lie be even more logical than the truth itself, so the weary travelers may find repose.

— Czeslaw Milosz

5. Words and music

On Sunday 13 June harpist Helen Webby, soprano Lisette Wesseling and trombonist Peter Maunder will play a concert that includes settings of poems by Kapiti poets Dinah Hawken and Mary Cresswell. It's on at 2.30 pm in the Paekakariki Memorial Hall (\$20 adults, \$5 children); mulled wine will be served.

6. All together now

The NZ Electronic Poetry Centre (nzepec) has completed phase one of its multimedia anthology [All Together Now: A Digital Bridge for Auckland and Sydney](#). It includes contributions by poets from New Zealand, Australia and the digital neighbourhood, [a collaborative digital poem & video Archipelago](#), audio talks from nzepec's Home & Away 2010: A Trans Tasman Poetry Symposium at the University of Auckland, 30-31 March, and a photo gallery from the symposium.

7. The expanding bookshelf (2)

Sylvie Haisman's first book, *This Barren Rock: a true tale of shipwreck and survival* will be launched at Unity on Wednesday 16 June at 6 pm. The book, which began life in the 2008 MA workshop at the IIML, tells the story of Sylvie's great-great-grandmother Fanny Wordsworth, who was shipwrecked with her three-year-old son on a sub-Antarctic island in 1875. You can hear Sylvie talk with Kim Hill tomorrow morning at 11 am on National Radio. For more information visit the [HarperCollins](#) website.

Sylvie has been awarded the University of Melbourne's [2010 Asialink Literature Residency](#) which will allow her to spend four months in Shimla, India, starting this August. Her hosts, the Australian Studies Centre at Himachal Pradesh University have asked if she can bring some New Zealand literature, which is not represented in their library. If you have New Zealand books to donate, contact [Sylvie](#).

8. The expanding bookshelf (3)

Tina Makereti will also launch a book in June, becoming the second of our current PhD students (after Pip Adam) to publish a short-story collection this year. Last year Tina won the Best Short Story category in the 2009 Pikihuia Awards, and the Royal Society of New Zealand Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing. *Once Upon a Time in Aotearoa* (Huia) ‘explores a world where mythological characters and stories become part of everyday life. Old and new worlds co-exist, cultures mingle and magic happens.’ It will be launched on Thursday 17 June, 6-7.30 pm at Shed 11, 45/55 Customhouse Quay, Wellington. All are welcome.

9. Teen fiction (1)

Congratulations to Mandy Hager, whose novel *Blood of the Lamb: The Crossing* won the Young Adult Fiction category of the New Zealand Post Children’s Book Awards, announced on 20 May. Mandy has an MA in Scriptwriting from Victoria University. She adds this award to an Esther Glen Medal for her 2007 novel, *Smashed*.

10. The intricate art of Eli Kent

2010 MA (Script) student Eli Kent is all over the place at the moment. His award-winning play *The Intricate Art Of Actually Caring* booked out before it opened at BATS on 1 June. It will run as part of the STAMP programme at The Edge in Auckland from 14-19 June, and as part of the Fuel theatre festival in Hamilton in early July, as well as going to Nelson later in the year. His new play *Thinning* will be staged in the Young and Hungry festival at BATS (9-24 July) and The Basement in Auckland. On top of all that theatrical activity, he also has a poem in the latest issue of *Landfall* (219: On Music), edited by Bill Direen.

11. Teen fiction (2)

Storylines Trust and HarperCollins Publishers New Zealand have announced a new annual award — the Storylines Tessa Duder Award for unpublished writers of fiction for young adults. Entries for the inaugural award close on 31 October, with winners to be announced at the Storylines annual Margaret Mahy Day and International Children’s Book Day on 2 April 2011. The winner will receive \$1500, and the possibility of a publishing contract with HarperCollins. Full details and criteria for entry will soon be listed on the [Storylines Tessa Duder Award](#).

12. Popular science

Are you a scientist wanting to learn to write in a style that is interesting, engaging and accessible – or a fiction or non-fiction writer who is interested in writing about science? Victoria's Community Continuing Education programme is presenting a course (in partnership with the Royal Society of New Zealand) that aims to provide a stimulating introduction to the art of science writing. The course is taught by Dave Armstrong, winner of the fiction category of the 2008 Royal Society of New Zealand Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing. Dave has worked as a writer at Te Papa for a number of science-based exhibitions as well as the children's TV science show *Q*. He is also the author of numerous award-winning plays and television comedy scripts. The course runs on three consecutive Saturdays starting 12 June: for full details visit the [Continuing Education](#) website.

13. Writing art

SCAPE 2010 Christchurch Biennial of art in public space is providing scholarships for two emerging writers interested in contemporary art writing to participate in a one-day writing workshop alongside other established, early career contemporary art writers. The workshop will provide an opportunity for each participant to develop his/her writing practice, and gain further insight into the field of contemporary art writing. The workshop will be facilitated by Vanessa Joan Mueller, Director of the Dusseldorf Kunstverein and well-known curator of many contemporary art events and exhibitions, on Thursday 23 September 2010. Scholarship recipients will be expected to attend all events associated with the opening weekend of SCAPE, 24-26 September. Scholarships will cover workshop-related costs and the cost of travel and accommodation where recipients live outside of Christchurch.

Writers are asked to submit two published (relevant) pieces of writing, of no more than 2000 words, together with a CV and covering letter of no more than 100 words, outlining what they hope to gain from participating in the workshop. Closing date: 5pm 9 July 2010. Applications should be sent to:

Caraline Douglas, Critical Writing Workshop Co-ordinator
SCAPE 2010 Christchurch Biennial
C/- Art & Industry Biennial Trust
PO Box 763, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand
or send by [email](#).

14. Your work here?

SWAMP is an online journal that publishes the work of postgraduate creative writers from Honours students through to PhD candidates. It's run by Creative Writing postgraduates at the University of Newcastle, and writers from Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, India, Canada and the United States of America have appeared in previous issues. Submissions for the seventh issue close on Friday June 11, 2010, so the time to submit is now. The theme is 'Time and Memory' — and while

the theme is compulsory, interpretations can be elastic. Submission guidelines, past issues and general information about SWAMP and its editors can be found [here](#).

15. NZFC First Writers Initiative 2010

The New Zealand Film Commission is calling for applications from screenwriters to participate in its annual First Writers Initiative. This is designed to identify new screenwriting talent and to give new writers an opportunity to workshop a script with development experts. The deadline for applications is 5pm Friday 18 June: see the [Film Commission's website](#) for more information.

16. Film Distribution Strategies 2.0

Later this month SPADA will present independent film distribution expert Thomas Mai talking about how to promote, fund and distribute independent films. He will discuss old versus new marketing systems, the way in which to best utilise crowd funding, revenue streams stemming from digital distribution and how to combine what has worked in the past with up and coming methods in order to fund productions. He appears in Auckland (Wednesday 16 June) and Wellington (Thursday 17 June). Contact [Sandy](#) to book a place (concession \$50, non-concession \$80).

17. Recent web reading

[We're all poets now](#)

[Lee Gutkind talks to Ramona Koval](#)

[Paula Morris trapped in lift with elderly Irish writer](#)

[More author interviews at BookTVNZ](#)

[Great train songs](#)

[Leonard Cohen's childhood home for sale](#)

[Leonard Cohen sings the Chiquita Banana Song](#)

[David Foster Wallace's undergraduate thesis](#)

[Kate Camp reviewed](#)

[Vana Manasiadis reviewed](#)

[Icelandic Poetry](#)

[The Listener's Colm Tóibín profile](#)

[Christopher Hitchens on the dark side of Dickens](#)

[Gavin Ewart's "Two Semantic Limericks"](#)

[Why the MFA is the New MBA: Glenn Schaeffer takes up his pen](#)

[Neil Gaiman's hypothetical title](#)

[Profile of Eleanor Catton](#)

[W H Oliver's poetry online](#)

[Two Twitter sites we like a lot](#)

[And here.](#)

[Sport](#)

[Don't bother with the book review, but do read the comments](#)

[Good to see a student newspaper still reviewing books](#)

[Patrick Evans, the glamour years](#)

[Peter Jackson needs this woman](#)

[Regal tweets](#)

[Librarians Do Gaga](#)

[Britain's shortest cycle lane](#)

[Bicycle beard](#)

[Fifty book covers](#)

[From Jersey to Jersey: Maya Hammarsal \(MA 2010\)](#)

[The musical life of Rhydian Thomas \(MA 2010\)](#)

[The musical life of Chris Price](#)

[The musical life of magpies](#)

18. Cath Vidler's Yodelling Corner:

[Sisterly yodelling](#)

[Brotherly yodelling](#)

[Feathered yodelling](#)

[Emergency yodelling](#)

[Classic yodelling](#)

[Double yodelling](#)

[America's got talented yodelling](#)

[Operatic yodelling](#)

[Pickle yodelling](#)

[Keyboard yodelling](#)

19. Great lists of our time

A list of recent tweets

Weeta-weeta-weeteo (@hoodedwarbler)

kwa-wee! (@pacificloon)

More, more, more cheezies, please! (@sparroww-c)

pi-weerj or pee-eee! (@say'sphoebe)

Queedle, queedle, queedle (@bluejay)

Are you awake? Me too (@owlg-h)

Beer (@nighthawk)

Ee-o-lay (@woodthrush)

Chup-chup TZEeeee! (@seasidesparrow)

Whit, whit (@swainsonsthrush)

Drink-your-teeeee (@easterntowhee)

hurry, worry, blurry, flurry (burry) (@scarlettanager)

Pink! (@sparroww-c)

Who cooks for you, who cooks for you'all? (@barredowl)

ker-laa, ker-laa (@whoopingcrane)

Meeoow (@graycatbird)

Conk-a-reeeeeeeee! (@blackbirdr-w)

I'm-I'm-I'm-so-sweet (@magnoliawarbler)

purty-purty-purty...(@cardinalnorth)

Bubble, bubble, zee (@cowbirdb-h)

quack quack quack...(@mallard)

where are you? (@red-eyedvireo)

Here I am (@red-eyedvireo)

fweet-fweet-fweet (@woodthrush)

Here I am, over here, see me, where are you? (@red-eyedvireo)

Here, here, here (@tuftedtitmouse)

Churr! Kyong, Churr! Kyerng!! ksss-ksss-ks-ks-ksss. (@birdofparadise)

Hip, hip, hip hurrah boys, spring is here! (@songsparrow)

(phonetics/mnemonics found [here](#), and [here](#), and [here](#).)

* * *

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