



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 28 February 2011

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This is the 165th 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. Christchurch, Christchurch

Sometimes, you have to imagine the worst
to prepare: the calm fire drill at school,
or the desperate decisions that come
in the dark: which room, which child?
We fuzz it up with heroics, charades.
No one can picture the worst.

—Marvin Bell

We were just preparing to spread the word about the Canterbury Poetry Autumn readings series when once again the city turned upside down, with far greater violence than last September. Our thoughts are with everyone in Christchurch, in particular our writer and bookworld friends, and our academic colleagues at Canterbury University. It's possible to give support by a variety of means: see the [Red Cross](#) website for details.

2. Here comes everybody

Here in Wellington we're witnessing a much happier event, the influx of 30 writers beginning their year of fiction, poetry and scriptwriting in the Creative Writing MA, plus three dozen writers joining the undergraduate Fiction workshop with Kate Duignan, Creative Non-Fiction with Harry Ricketts, and the much anticipated Advanced Fiction Workshop with David Vann, whose new novel *Caribou Island* has been receiving some [breathless applause](#) in the international review pages. We've welcomed 2011 Writer in Residence Albert Belz, Fulbright poet and researcher [Lesley Wheeler](#) and MA (Page) workshop convenor Bernadette Hall, farewelled 2010 Writer in Residence Jenny Bornholdt, and will soon say au revoir to Chris Price, who leaves for her sojourn in Menton as Mansfield Prize winner shortly. The 14 members of the PhD group will also be in town this week for their first gathering of the year.

3. Liberate Your Words: National Schools Poetry Award Calling for Entries

The search is on for the best and most original poems from New Zealand's young writers. After a year's hiatus, the National Schools Poetry Award is back in 2011—and Year 12 and 13 secondary school students are urged to put their best words forward.

Ten talented writers will win cash and prizes for their poems, as well as a book grant for their school library. In addition, shortlisted writers will attend a masterclass with leading New Zealand poets at the International Institute of Modern Letters, with flights and accommodation at the Bolton Hotel provided for students from outside the Greater Wellington region.

The winner and shortlisted poets will be announced on National Poetry Day, 22 July, and the masterclass runs on 20 August. Judge for the 2011 Award is New Zealand Poet Laureate and recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Literary

Achievement, Cilla McQueen. The entry deadline is 15 June 2011. For full prize information, entry forms, guidelines, and writing tips for the Poetry Award visit www.schoolspoetryaward.co.nz.

The National Schools Poetry Award is organised by the International Institute of Modern Letters with funding from Creative New Zealand, and additional support from the Bolton Hotel, the New Zealand Book Council, New Zealand Society of Authors, *Sport* and *Landfall*, and Unity Books.

4. We wanted to be writers

IIML founders Eric Olsen and Glenn Schaeffer have created a [website](http://wewantedtobewriters.com) that acts as a kind of interactive preamble to their forthcoming book *We Wanted to Be Writers: Life, Love, and Literature at the Iowa Writers' Workshop*. The book is a 'blend of interviews, commentary, advice, gossip, anecdotes, analyses, history, and asides with nearly 30 graduates and teachers who were at the Iowa Writers' Workshop in the mid-70s. Among the talents emerging in those years were young versions of John Irving, Jane Smiley, T.C. Boyle, Allan Gurganus, Sandra Cisneros, Joy Harjo, Jayne Anne Phillips, Michelle Huneven, Marvin Bell, and many more.' Meantime the website contains a range of blog posts and book excerpts designed to help aspiring writers. There's even a post from Glenn Schaeffer on why the MFA is the new MBA <http://wewantedtobewriters.com/2011/02/mfa-is-the-new-mba/>

5. New Zealand Book Month

March is [New Zealand Book Month](http://www.nzsa.org.nz/book-month), and while it may be off to a bad start – with Whitcoulls in voluntary administration and Christchurch in crisis – there should be something book-related going on in a place near you. We're looking forward to two big talks on children's literature. Joy Cowley will explore the twin questions of whether children's books are the equal of those written for adults, and whether those who create them are equal to adult writers, in the NZSA Janet Frame Memorial Lecture, to be delivered in Wellington on The Marae, Te Papa at 6.00 pm on Thursday 3 March.

Just after Book Month finishes, Kate De Goldi delivers the Mahy Lecture, one of her duties as the 2011 winner of the Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal for a distinguished contribution to New Zealand children's literature (Joy Cowley is a former winner). The lecture will be delivered at the Storylines annual [Margaret Mahy Day](http://www.storylines.org.nz/margaret-mahy-day), being held in Auckland on International Children's Book Day, 2 April, at King's School in Remuera. We hear Kate may use her lecture to do some thinking aloud about her Michael King Fellowship project on the extraordinary children's book collector Susan Price.

A full list of Book Month events is [here](#).

6. Modern Lettuce

Kids these days - where's the respect? When Bill Manhire's International Institute of Modern Letters did a Twitter post about the many 'poet laureates' appearing at the Auckland Writers and Readers Festival, Manhire's son Toby quickly interjected, pointing out the correct term was 'poets laureate'. 'Pedant!' responded whoever mans the IIML's Twitter account. Thus challenged, the younger Manhire revealed what is perhaps a family nickname for his father's impressively named school, writing: 'The International Institute for Modern Lettuce must set an example!'

The above para, quite possibly written by Sam Hunt's son, Tom, led the Dominion Post's 23 February Diary.

7. Strange Meetings

Harry Ricketts' group biography of the poets of the Great War, *Strange Meetings*, has already had a lot of favourable attention from UK and New Zealand reviewers. On Wednesday 23 March there'll be a New Zealand launch for the book at Vicbooks (3rd Floor Student Union Building) on Victoria University's Kelburn Campus from 5.30-7.00pm (ph 463 5515 enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz).

8. Great shortlists of our time

It was good to see Anna Mackenzie (who studied with Kate De Goldi at the IIML some time ago) and Leon Davidson among the [NZ Post Children's Book Awards](#) finalists. We were also pleased to spot two MA graduates on the recently announced Best First Book shortlist for the South East Asia and Pacific region of the [Commonwealth Writers' Prize](#). Craig Cliff's story collection *A Man Melting* and Whiti Hereaka's novel *The Graphologist's Apprentice* are in contention, and Patrick Evans and Lloyd Jones will tussle with three other novelists in the Best Book category. Regional winners are announced this Wednesday evening.

In another part of the Commonwealth, Eleanor Catton has made it onto yet another shortlist with *The Rehearsal* – this time it's the [Amazon Canada Best First Novel Award](#), which recognizes the outstanding achievement of a Canadian first-time novelist (Catton was born in Canada). The award has launched the careers of some illustrious novelists, including Michael Ondaatje, Rohinton Mistry and Anne Michaels. We also hear a whisper that Eleanor Catton will be taking up the Ursula Bethell residency at Canterbury University later this year.

9. Great waitlists of our time

It was encouraging that the National Library's '7 Poets in the City' reading, put together by Poet Laureate Cilla McQueen and held at City Gallery Wellington last Thursday, had a waiting list so long that they stopped adding people to the waiting list. Part way through the event a woman feeling faint was helped from the packed auditorium. The previous evening we'd had Glenn Colquhoun in the recording studio reading his poem 'To a woman who fainted recently at a poetry reading' for the planned [Best New Zealand Poems](#) audio update (online in May). Unfortunately Doctor Colquhoun was not in the house to offer personal assistance on this occasion, but the prescription in the final stanza of his poem was followed nonetheless.

10. Auckland Writers and Readers Festival

We hope that the New Zealand Poets Laureate past and present will meet with an equally enthusiastic response to their reading at the upcoming Auckland Writers and Readers Festival. The large contingent of New Zealand writers includes two of our PhD students: Laurence Fearnley and Tina Makereti. On the international front there are the two Davids – Vann and Mitchell – and a host of other literary luminaries. We're curious to find out whether [David Mitchell](#) has modified his charmingly modest approach to writer events as a result of the lesson on humility he received from a certain medievalist at Writers and Readers Week in Wellington a few years ago. Tickets for the [Auckland Writers and Readers Festival](#) (11-15 May) go on sale on 28 March.

11. Close reading

Pay close attention: the musician behind these songs is also a leading New Zealand writer and teacher of creative writing. Not content with proving his prowess as a novelist, short fiction writer, poet, playwright and brilliant writing coach, it seems Damien Wilkins spent 2010 working on an album in his spare time. A sneak preview of three tracks from [The Close Readers](#) is available here, along with some Wilkins biography that you may not be aware of. Find out what happened when he interviewed The Birthday Party in 1982, triggering a lasting Nick Cave allergy. There's also a [Facebook page](#). What next – photography? Architecture? iPhone apps?

12. From first draft to attracting an audience

The New Zealand Writers' Guild is offering an intensive two-day workshop that 'demystifies the basics of screenwriting, audience expectation, rewriting and script development.' The workshops, led by Kathryn Barnett, Steve Barr and Stephen Gannaway, are designed for beginners and intermediate screenwriters looking for a refresher and a way to deepen their working understanding of the screenwriting process. They're on in Wellington (March 5-6), Auckland (March 19-20) and –

subject to current events, presumably – Christchurch (May 21-22) from 9am to 5pm (venues to be confirmed). The workshops cost \$180 for Writers' Guild members, \$220 for non- members. Bookings are essential as space is limited: [email](#).

13. The expanding bookshelf

Sue Orr's new book of stories *From Under the Overcoat* has been getting lots of attention. The most substantial review so far is Clare Macintosh's in the [Sunday Star-Times](#).

Lower Hutt poet Keith Westwater, who attended courses at the IIML in 2003 and 2004, has been picked up for publication by Australian publisher Interactive Publications (IP) as winner of its 2011 'IP Picks' competition. The competition is open annually to writers from Australia and New Zealand. Keith's collection of poems, *Tongues of Ash*, will be published later this year or in early 2012.

And [Dora Malech](#) has a new book of poems.

14. One more step towards the screen

Late news from the Film Commission on funding for projects by MA Script graduates. Each year up to three producers attend the Rotterdam Producer's Lab as part of the Film Commission's partnership with the Cinemart Film Market, which runs from 29th January to 2nd February 2011. Arnette Arapai's producer Karl Zohrab went to Rotterdam to pitch her film script 'I love Ali'. Kelly Kilgour received a Writer Development Loan, and Jeff Hayward & Nick Ward's script 'Cold Storage' received Early Development Funding. Look out for Nick Ward's *Love Birds*, starring the now ubiquitous Rhys Darby, which is scheduled for release in late February. We think we also spotted the name 'Glenn Colquhoun' on a list of writers who will receive training in scriptwriting – we assume this is the same doctor-poet mentioned in item 8 above?

15. Pathways to the sea

The World Wildlife Fund is inviting writers, composers, short film-makers and artists to take part in a creative competition that aims to inspire New Zealanders to protect their oceans. Work that 'reflects on and celebrates New Zealanders' unique connection to our seas' will be eligible, and the main prize is a Pacific Islands wildlife-watching trip for two. On 8 June (World Oceans Day), the winners and shortlisted works will be unveiled in an exhibition at the Auckland Maritime Museum. For complete entry guidelines visit [Ocean:Views](#). The deadline for submissions is 15 April.

16. Trout with JAAM

Online journal *Trout* invites submissions for its 17th issue, 'Home Spaces', which 'will centre around the physical spaces we call home – the house and garden, the whare, the fale, the kainga, the pad, the ranch, chez nous, the street.' *Trout* seeks interpretations from the literal to the liberal, the past or present, the implied to the specific.

Trout considers poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, interviews, and visual art. See [here](#) for submission guidelines. The deadline for submissions is 30 June 2011, and *Trout* 17 will appear online in August 2011. In the meantime, *Trout* co-editor Anne Kennedy is moonlighting as editor for the next issue of *JAAM*. There is no theme for the issue, but submissions are particularly welcomed from the Pacific Islands, Hawai'i and Australia, as well as New Zealand.

17. From the whiteboard

'Contemporary life would keep us too busy for consciousness – poetry is an act of resistance.'

— Marie Howe

18. The 2011 Pikihuia Awards

Huia Publishers and the Maori Literature Trust are calling for Maori writers of novels, short stories and film scripts to submit work to the 2011 Pikihuia Awards. Categories for 2011 include: Best short story written in Maori, Best short story written in English, Best novel extract written in English, and Best short film script written in English, and the winner of each category receives \$2000. There are also Secondary School Award categories. The deadline is 15 April: for full details visit [here](#).

19. The 2010 Takahe competitions

Dunedin poet and fiction writer, Sue Wootton was both winner and one of the runners up in the 2010 Takahe Poetry Competition, judged by James Norcliffe. Congratulations to MA graduate Tusiata Avia (2002) and 2010 MA (Page) workshop member Aleksandra Lane, who were placed second and runner up respectively. Congratulations also to Brigid Barrer (MA 2010), who was placed second in *Takahe's* Cultural Studies essay competition. Tusiata Avia will be the guest poet in *Takahe* 72, and we believe Aleks's poem 'The Economist' (part of her Biggs-Prize-winning MA folio) will also appear in that issue – although we imagine the earthquake may delay the journal's appearance.

20. Putting some *Starch* into New Zealand writing

In the brave old world of hardback print production, Dunedin's Kilmog Press is swimming strenuously against the digital tide and launching a new, hardback literary journal called *Starch*. They're looking for submissions of New Zealand fiction and poetry, but you'll need to be quick: the deadline's tomorrow, 1 March. Visit [the blog](#) for more information. 1 March is also the deadline for the [Commonwealth Short Story Competition](#).

21. All the Cunning Stunts

Poet, fiction writer and IIML graduate Rachel O'Neill, along with Liz Allan, Clare Noonan, and Marnie Slater, is involved in a collaborative Light Box exhibition that runs until 31 March in Courtenay Place Park, Wellington.

All the Cunning Stunts is an image, graphic and text-based exhibition, with a focus on how female same-sex experience is represented through mainstream and alternative media. The artists' blog tracks the [six-month development of the project](#). You can read a review by Mark Amery [here](#).

As a unique, exciting, and alternative queer presence in the cultural heart of the city, All the Cunning Stunts aims to spark new connections between local audiences and those visiting Wellington City during the [Outgames](#).

22. Recent web reading

[No, there are not 100 Eskimo words for 'snow'](#) <http://bit.ly/gpNH1t>

[Moby-Duck](#)

[Isabella Rossellini among the ducks](#)

[Dave Armstrong's schooldays](#)

[Roberto Bolaño's back again](#)

[Roberto Bolaño's son on guitar for Patti Smith](#)

[Edna's revenge](#)

'They've only ever had one book. They never read it. And they meet in the pub' – [the rise of men's book groups](#)

[Literary Glass Ceiling? Why Magazines Aren't Reviewing More Female Writers.](#)

[Keri Hulme on e-books](#)

[Lavinia Greenlaw on Elizabeth Bishop](#)

[Elizabeth Bishop gets her own comic strip](#)

[Fictional poets](#)

[Sue Orr reviewed in the ODT](#)

[Sue Orr comes out *From Under the Overcoat*](#)

[High speed broadband. Clean energy. Smart manufacturing. And Jenny Bornholdt. Aussie PM makes the case for closeness.](#)

[The highly fashionable Pablo Neruda](#)

[Helpful literary chat-up quotes](#)

[David Mitchell \(the poet\) has a website](#)

[*Hue & Cry* has a website](#)

[The Dial-A-Poem Poets, 1972](#)

[Nick Cave on love songs and duende](#)

[A century of artists' manifestos](#)

[James Fenton's poetry manifesto](#)

[The lost art of editing](#)

['Howl the movie ... is in the end far too sane'](#)

[Allen Ginsberg, kidney stones and yoga](#)

[A truly terrible thing to do to any song lyric](#)

[Feeling into fiction - Anne Enright learns from Angela Carter](#)

[Sam Hunt reworked by A.K. Grant](#)

[Lost for words? Call on Doctor Perkins](#)

[David Vann on his \(dream\) life in NZ](#)

[An indispensable guide to ice safety.](#)

[Making sense of the false divide between literature and science](#)

[Check and mate](#)

['I guess you could say that I liked to control the narrative from an early age!' Jennifer Egan interview](#)

[Best rejection letter ever? Especially for Gertrude Stein fans](#)

[This is just to say - Sarah Laing raids the icebox](#)

[Paul Callaghan \(New Zealander of the Year\) has a Scottish moment](#)

[Paul Callaghan's Luminous Moments](#)

[News from the World of Books](#)

[Tahrir Square - cheese sandwiches and poetry](#)

[Fergus Barrowman Booklover](#)

[Magical realism](#) 10:20 AM Feb 6th via TBUZZ

[Eli Kent profile](#)

[At last the true Wikileaks story can be told!](#)

[Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Poetry](#)

['I hardly give a damn what is said about my father ... as long as the name is spelled properly, and the fees are paid'](#)

[Two galleries of poets](#)

[Can a book save your life?](#)

[Those Maths professors!](#) <http://bit.ly/ie3cTU>

[59 things you didn't know about Virginia Woolf](#)

[Janet Frame's sound-activated Christmas Tree](#)

[Pat White reviewed](#)

[Poetry from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#)

23. Great lists of our time

Notable novelty and fad dances (we do one of these every Monday morning):

- Algorithm March
- Batusi
- Bomba
- The Bump
- Bunny Hop
- The Cabbage Patch
- Carioca
- The Carlton Dance
- Cha-Cha Slide
- Chicken Dance
- The Chicken Walk
- ‘Chicken Noodle Soup’
- ‘Crank That (Soulja Boy)’
- Cupid Shuffle
- ‘Do the Bartman’
- Electric Slide
- The Freddy
- The Frug
- The Grizzly Bear
- The Hammer
- Hitch hike
- Hokey Pokey, also known as Hokey-cokey, Okey-cokey
- Hully Gully
- The Humpty Dance
- The Hunch
- Hustle
- Jerk
- Jerkin'
- Jump On It
- The Ketchup Song
- ‘Laffy Taffy’
- Lambada
- Lean wit it, Rock wit it (Snap Dance)
- Letkajenkka (also known as Letkajenka, Letkiss, Letka-Enka)
- Limbo
- The Loco-Motion
- Macarena
- Mashed Potato
- Madison
- The Meatstick
- Monkey
- The Moonwalk
- Muscle
- ‘Peanut Butter Jelly Time’
- Pee-wee Herman dance
- Pony

- The Roger Rabbit
- The Robot
- The Running Man
- Safety Dance
- Shimmy
- Shoulder Lean
- ‘Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)’
- The Smurf
- Stanky Leg
- Suzie Q
- Thizzle Dance
- Thunder Clap
- ‘Time Warp’
- The Twist
- The Urkel
- Voguing
- Watusi
- ‘YMCA’

Found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novelty_and_fad_dances#List_of_novelty_and_fad_dances

* * *

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