



## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 20 April 2012

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This is the 180<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](mailto:modernletters@vuw.ac.nz).

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#### 1. Victoria goes to the Olympics

Simon Armitage's [Poetry Parnassus project](#) aims to bring to London in late June a poet from each of the 204 nations competing at the Olympics. Strange to say, at least four of the 'Olympic' poets have strong Victoria University links. Representing New Zealand is IIML director, Bill Manhire, while Kiribati is represented by

[Teresia Teaiwa](#), Senior Lecturer in Pacific Studies at Victoria. Two of Victoria's creative writing graduates, Kapka Kassabova and Tusiata Avia are representing Bulgaria and Samoa respectively. The border crossings don't stop there. Auckland's Selina Tusitala Marsh will represent Tuvalu, while Yang Lian, listed as representing China is, in fact, a New Zealand citizen. Yes, it's a funny old, wonderfully mixed-up world. [Bill will be reading](#) with Seamus Heaney, Wole Soyinka, Kay Ryan and others on Friday 29th June. He will also lead a [poetry workshop](#) at the Southbank Centre, and go on to be poet in residence at the [Ledbury Poetry Festival](#), which follows immediately on from Poetry Parnassus.

## **2. Victoria goes to Leipzig**

The IIML's Damien Wilkins was among the New Zealand writers who attended the Leipzig Book Fair recently – a sort of preamble to the Frankfurt Book Fair this coming October. Project Manager Tanea Heke was recently interviewed on [Radio NZ's Upbeat programme](#) about how things are going in Germany and there is even a [Facebook page with photographs](#). (We are told that one or two of these show Damien playing table football with Alan Duff, but we haven't dared look.) Meantime, Wellingtonians can get a full report on New Zealand's Leipzig experience at the [Temporary Literaturhaus event](#) at Cafe Meow, 6pm on 24th April, when Anne Chamberlain will be encouraging Elizabeth Knox, Jenny Patrick, Damien Wilkins and Fergus Barrowman to reflect on the Leipzig experience. This event has been coordinated by the New Zealand Centre for Literary Translation and the NZ Book Council.

## **3. Write poetry! No, write short stories! No, write for children!**

It might just be time to start thinking about applying for our second-half-year, 200-level courses in Poetry (with James Brown), Short Fiction (with Kate Duignan) and Children's Writing (with Eirlys Hunter). All courses consist of twelve three-hour workshops, and run between mid-July and late October. There's lots more information [here](#), especially if you hunt around and download the individuals pdfs. The application deadline is **28 May** and information about how to apply is [here](#).

## **4. Resonance**

Like many, we were very sad about the recent death of Paul Callaghan. We understand that 9770 connections from 34 countries were made to the [live webcast](#) of his funeral.

We were especially happy to be involved with Paul on the [Are Angels Ok](#) project, which brought together leading New Zealand physicists and writers in a book of the same name and a range of public presentations, both in New Zealand and in the UK. Paul's own, quite personal contribution to the book, ['Luminous Moments'](#), can be downloaded as a pdf.

There's lots of Paul on the web, but we especially liked the NZ Herald's [Twelve Questions with Sir Paul Callaghan](#)

## 5. We're probably the last to tell you, but . . .

[Best New Zealand Poems 2011](#) (ed. Bernadette Hall) is now live online!

The [Tuesday Poets](#) have just celebrated their second birthday

Taika Waititi's next film [Jojo Rabbit](#) is based on a novel by our PhD student [Christine Leunens](#).

## 6. However, we'd like to be the first to tell you about . . .

[this](#)

## 7. The expanding bookshelf

Gigi Fenster's first novel *The Intentions Book* has been getting some great press, including the Sunday Star-Times review which used the happy phrase "an altogether stunning debut". Damien Wilkins launched the book at Unity recently and called it his 'find of the year'. You can read his [launch speech](#), via pdf.

Another first book is Helen Heath's collection of poetry, *Graft*, which will be launched by Harry Ricketts at Unity at 6.00 pm on May 3rd. More [here](#).

Lynn Davidson is also about to launch a new book of poetry, [Common Land](#).

Lynn and Helen are having a joint celebration of their books in Paekakariki. Among other things, they'll read their work, and be in conversation with Dinah Hawken about poetry, writing, family, and loss. Also drinks and music! Saturday May 5, St Peter's Hall, Paekakariki, from 6.30. Free entry.

Emily Perkin's *The Forrests* is getting a dream run in terms of pre-publication buzz. Most notable was the Hay Festival's tip that the novel will win this year's [Man Booker Prize](#). Emily has a fine new [webite](#), where you can get some sense of just how busy she's going to be over the next couple of months.

And Rachael King has a [new book](#), for children, coming in June.

## 8. Hue & Cry and crowdfunding

The fine folk at **Hue & Cry** have sent us an announcement:

### **A MAN RUNS INTO A WOMAN**

is Sarah Jane Barnett's debut poetry collection. It will also be the debut release for Hue & Cry Press.

The poems in Barnett's collection are confronting, funny, and curious. The collection looks at the different ways we tell a person's story. It is a book full of voices: two middle-aged men strike up an unlikely friendship; one couple reconnects after the war, while another couple leave the worst unsaid; a cross-dressing man talks with his daughter. In an unsettling sequence, nine poems explore the gap between the heartfelt last words of Texas death row inmates, and the grim police reports of their crimes. Barnett's poems dig into the sometimes flimsy relationship between story and event, and the way we use language to create our world. This is a book of illness, violence, and love; disconnection, transition and reconciliation.

**A Man Runs into a Woman** is scheduled for release in July, but we need your help to get the book printed. PledgeMe is providing a platform for you to get your hands on some excellent paraphernalia, including a copy of the book, in exchange for us having enough money to get the book printed, bound, and sent out into the wide world. Every little bit will count, so please spread the good word on our behalf.

See the [A Man Runs into a Woman](#) PledgeMe page for more details and to pledge.

## 9. Congratulations

to Johanna Aitchison, who is the new Massey University Visiting Literary Artist. Her 12-week term starts on April 29<sup>th</sup>. Jo will also be reading at the Palmerston North City Library on Friday the 27th of April. Starts with drinks and nibbles at 6.30 and the reading itself begins at 7pm.

And congratulations to [Sam Burt](#) (MA Scriptwriting 2010), who has just been appointed to a temporary position at the Film Commission, assisting with this year's short film funding round.

## 10. Fiction editing mentor programme - call for applications

Applications for the final year in the three-year fiction editing mentor programme are due by **30 May 2012**. Experienced editors who wish to develop their skills in fiction editing can apply to edit a manuscript in publication by an established publisher under mentoring from one of New Zealand's top fiction editors.

In the past two years, the programme has funded mentors Jane Parkin and Anna

Rogers to work with four editors on books published by Random House, Penguin and Huia Publishers.

Editors selected for the programme must have at least four or five years' experience in the book trade, excellent editing skills and a demonstrated aptitude for literary editing.

To apply, provide:

- A letter of application, outlining why you wish to participate and what you can offer.
- A curriculum vitae.
- At least two letters of reference from colleagues and authors you have worked with, commenting on your skills, experience and suitability for this programme.
- A list of some of the books you have been reading recently and a short reflective piece (around 800 words) about a novel or short-story collection that stood out from this list.

Send TWO copies of your application by post **by 30 May 2012** to:

Rachel Lawson  
Editing Mentor Programme  
PO Box 9511, Marion Square  
Wellington 6141

This programme is run by Rachel Lawson and funded by Creative New Zealand.

You can also contact Rachel [by email](#).

## **11. Poems of spirituality: call for submissions**

The Poet's Quest for God: 21st Century Poems of Spirituality  
Edited by Dr. Oliver V. Brennan and Dr. Todd Swift  
For Publication by Eyewear Publishing 2013-14  
Deadline for submission: August 1, 2012

Eyewear Publishing is planning to publish an anthology of new, mostly previously-unpublished poems, written in English, concerned with spiritual issues in this secular age, by persons of any faith, or none. Submissions will be welcomed via email as word documents, containing no more than three poems, and including contact details and a brief 100 word biographical note about the author.

One of the characteristics of our contemporary culture which is generally described as post-modern is the human search for the spiritual. The advent of post-modernity has been accompanied by the dawn of a new spiritual awakening. Many spiritual writers say that desire is our fundamental dis-ease and is always stronger than satisfaction. This desire lies at the centre of our lives, in the deep recesses of the soul. This unquenchable

fire residing in all of us manifests itself at key points in the human life cycle. Spirituality is ultimately what we do about that desire.

As poetry, and poets, have a long, rich, and no doubt complicated tradition of writing to, and about God (one needs only to think of Dante, Milton, Donne and Dickinson) and other issues surrounding faith, belief, and transcendence, the editors believe there should be no shortage of inspiring, inquiring, intriguing and imaginative poems available for readers at this challenging time in human history.

For more information, or to submit, contact Dr Swift [by email](#) or on Facebook.

## **12. A message from *Takahē* Magazine**

*Takahē* Magazine has just released its 75<sup>th</sup> issue, packed with poetry, fiction, art, cultural essays and book reviews. Each issue publishes the works of a guest poet, guest fiction writer and guest artist, as well as a wider selection of poetry, short fiction, essays and reviews. In *Takahē* 75, we also announce our call for submissions for our 2012 *Takahē* Poetry Competition and 2012 *Takahē* Cultural Studies Competition.

The writers, artists and reviewers we publish in the magazine are predominantly New Zealanders, though we do also publish work from overseas. We welcome new subscribers – visit our [website](#) to find out more.

We also welcome submissions from New Zealand poets, short story writers and cultural essayists of all ethnicities and ages. If you haven't submitted poetry, short fiction and/or cultural essays to us before, please consider doing so. Our submission details can be found [here](#).

## **13. A message from Huia Publishers**

Entries are now open for the Te Papa Tupu Writers' Programme 2012: a programme that aims to nurture talented new Māori writers.

The Māori Literature Trust invites you to enter the Te Papa Tupu Writers' Programme for 2012. The best six writers will be offered the opportunity to participate in a six month incubator programme where they will develop their writing into a solid piece of literature with the possibility of having it published.

We are looking for people from all walks of life that have a drive and passion to write. We invite you to submit your work, in Te Reo Māori or English, in the following categories:

- Novel
- Short Story
- Non-fiction
- Children's chapter book
- Children's picture book

Submitted work should be 5,000-50,000 words and may be a finished piece or a working manuscript.

More information about entry and conditions [here](#).

#### **14. Jo Randerson disappears in light**

*What does it take to turn vision into reality?*

Playwright and performer Jo Randerson has been a cult figure in Wellington theatre since she burst onto the scene with her play *Fold* back in 1995. The documentary *Disappear in Light* follows the creation of Randerson's largest scale work yet, a black comedy about death – and about what it means to engage with life. Filmmaker Leonie Reynolds followed Randerson for nine months, and constructed this 73 minute film from over 120 hours of footage.

*Disappear In Light* reveals what it's really like to create a piece of theatre from scratch, to navigate the funding process, and to keep on track and inspired on the long journey to opening night.

Throughout her career Jo Randerson has held on to her belief in the power of integrity, and the possibility of living life without artistic or moral compromise. *Disappear in Light* shows an artist with a unique voice taking the courageous journey from vision to reality.

**Disappear In Light will be playing at the [Documentary Edge Festival](#) in Auckland and [Wellington](#) in April and May 2012.**

#### **15. Isola Bella**

The IIML's Chris Price is the latest of a long list of New Zealand writers to have completed the coveted overseas residency that goes with the Mansfield Prize. On Thursday 17 May Chris will present the inaugural Katherine Mansfield Menton Lecture at City Gallery Wellington. She will read from work written at the Villa Isola Bella - including her book on poet and anatomist Thomas Lovell Beddoes - and talk about her experiences in Menton, France, as the 2011 New Zealand Post Mansfield Prize recipient. Chris promises a mix of poetry, prose, photographs, and even live music: her partner Robbie Duncan will play guitar pieces composed in Menton between 5.15 and 5.30pm, as a scene setter for the lecture, which starts at 5.30. Entry is free, but please note that seating is limited.

## 16. Dear Heart

Jenny Bornholdt, James Brown, Lynn Davidson, Dinah Hawken, Ingrid Horrocks, Anna Jackson, Bill Manhire, Chris Price, Helen Rickerby, Harry Ricketts, Chris Tse – quite a bunch of poets reading at Meow Café, 6pm Wednesday 9 May, to celebrate the publication of *Dear Heart: 150 New Zealand Love Poems*, edited by Paula Green.

## 17. Recent web reading

[Andrew Motion likes Booktrack](#)

[A list of Scottish poets on Twitter](#)

‘I’m always looking for a reason to put a book down and not pick it up again’:  
[Jonathan Franzen airs a pet peeve.](#)

[Frankenstein becomes a Choose Your Own Adventure story](#)

[‘One couplet, of exactly 140 characters, for each week of 2012’](#)

[Gorse is Not People](#): a new book of stories by Janet Frame

[Billy Collins, action poet](#)

[George Eliot's Middlemarch goes Facebook](#)

[Not without interest, this discussion of Copyright Licensing Limited.](#)  
[And see further](#)

[Dinner with Elmore Leonard](#)

[What you can do to be a writer](#)

A tweet we rather enjoyed from [@LouiseM\\_Wallace](#) (Mar 30 entry) -  
‘Just making cookies, thinking: “I’d really like to do the MA again because I’m a lot better at baking now”’

[Kurt Vonnegut story arcs](#)

[Meeting Keri Hulme](#)

[Bill Manhire’s limited edition poem on harakeke paper](#) for Alheimers Canterbury’s Arty Auction in May

[Hinemoana Baker frames the page](#): there’s a new writing exercise over at Modernlettuce!



[10 Wonderful Short Stories to Read For Free Online](#)

[30 great John Ashbery poems](#)

[NZ Haiku Festival](#)

## 18. Great lists of our time

A list of references for the map of the island of Sodor

(discovered by Cath Vidler in *Thomas the Tank Engine, The Complete Collection*, by The Rev. W. Awdry, William Heinemann Ltd, 1996)

1. Here the engines live in their shed.
2. Edward's station. He shunts here.
3. Gordon stuck on this hill.
4. Henry was shut up in this tunnel.
5. Thomas used to arrange coaches here.
6. The trucks pushed James down this hill.
7. James had his accident here.
8. This is Thomas's junction.
9. Here James had hiccoughs!
10. James made the troublesome trucks come here.
11. Thomas left his guard behind here.
12. Here Thomas went fishing.
13. Here Thomas stuck in the snow.
14. Thomas raced Bertie the 'bus along this valley.
15. Henry met an elephant in this tunnel.
16. James spun around on the turntable here.
17. Percy ran away from this station.
18. The 'Flying Kipper' had an accident here.
19. The quarry line, where Thomas met the policeman.
20. James bumped the tar-wagons here.
21. Mrs Kyndley's cottage.
22. Here Gordon fell in a ditch.
23. Here James slipped on leaves.
24. Here Thomas fell down a mine.
25. Here the engines met H.M. The Queen.
26. Here Henry and Gordon met a cow.
27. Bertie the bus chased Edward from here.
28. Here is Trevor the Traction-engine's scrapyard.
29. James ran away from here, and Edward chased him.
30. Duck took charge of the Yard here.
31. Harold Helicopter lives at this airfield.
32. Percy brought the children through floods here.
33. Here Percy fell into the sea.
34. From here, Gordon went to London.
35. Toby ran out of water near here.
36. Here the Fat Controller spoke to the Engines before taking them to England.

37. Here Edward talked to Skarloey.
38. Here Sir Handel slipped through the rails.
39. Here is the Skarloey railway.
40. On this viaduct, Gordon lost his dome.
41. Here Duck ran into the Barber's shop.
42. Thomas's Branch-line runs from KNAPFORD to FFARQUHAR.
43. Edward's Branch-line runs from WELLSWORTH to BENDAM.
44. Engines are made and repaired at CROVAN'S GATE.

\* \* \*

### **Supporting the IIML**

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

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](mailto:bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz), or Diana Meads, Development Manager-Planned Giving, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: [diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz)