



**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS**

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 4 April 2007

This is the 105th 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

1. Pacific wind blows through Best New Zealand Poems 06	1
2. Learning from the masters	2
3. Calling emerging writers	2
4. Calling young poets and their teachers	2
5. Women's feature film making in New Zealand: the deferment of hope?	3
6. From the whiteboard	3
7. Show your shorts	3
8. International Children's Book Day	3
9. Anna Smaill in London	4
10. The expanding bookshelf	4
11. The expanding orchestra	4
12. Alice Miller in Iowa	4
13. Moonlighting	5
14. A job that brings books and people together	5
15. Recent web reading	5
16. World Poetry Day – a backdate	6
17. Great lists of our time	7

1. Pacific wind blows through Best New Zealand Poems 06

The salt tang of the Pacific Ocean is a pervasive presence in this year's Best New Zealand Poems (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/bestnzpoems>), the annual online survey of the liveliest and best poetry published by New Zealand writers in the preceding year, which is launched today the Institute of Modern Letters at Victoria University. The work in Best New Zealand Poems 06 has been selected by poets Anne Kennedy and Robert Sullivan, both of whom currently teach at the University of Hawai'i.

From the Cook Strait gales and Manawatu floods of David Eggleton's 'The Weather Bomb' and the 'dark snout' of Kapiti Island in Hinemoana Baker's 'One' to Serie Barford's siapo-makers of Samoa and Karlo Mila's Tonga in mourning, Best New Zealand Poems 06 is awash in the ocean where the islands swim together. Powerful

poems on illness, mortality and ancestors come from C K Stead, Michele Leggott, Jenny Bornholdt, Alistair Te Ariki Campbell and Andrew Johnston. And for the first time the anthology features digital poetry from Richard von Sturmer and Brian Flaherty.

Each writer has supplied a note on their poem that illuminates the circumstances of its composition, making Best New Zealand Poems a superb entry point for readers unfamiliar with the work of particular writers, and a treasure chest of information for students of New Zealand literature.

Best New Zealand Poems 06 is published with the support of Creative New Zealand, and hosted by the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre at Victoria University.

2. Learning from the masters

MA students at the Institute of Modern Letters will have the opportunity to take part in masterclasses with a number of high-powered international writers during 2007. US novelist Richard Ford and essayist Eliot Weinberger were popular guests at New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week in recent years, and they return to Wellington to offer masterclasses in fiction and the essay at the Institute this May. During June the MA (Script) students will have the benefit of a full two-week workshop with LA script-writing guru Linda Vorhees. And in July UK poet Lavinia Greenlaw (also a guest at Writers and Readers Week some years ago) returns to give a poetry masterclass. Ford, Weinberger and Greenlaw will also give public readings while in Wellington: details to be announced in our next newsletter.

3. Calling emerging writers

A reminder that applications for our second trimester workshops in Poetry and Children's Writing close on 1 June. Eirlys Hunter, author of six books for children (including the Finn's Quest trilogy) and one adult novel, is convenor of the children's writing workshop. The poetry workshop is convened by Chris Price, author of Montana Best First Book of Poetry award-winner *Husk* and the genre-defying *Brief Lives*. And poet Dinah Hawken, author of six books (including *Oh there you are tui!* *New and selected poems*) teaches the Writing the Landscape workshop. Workshops commence in the week beginning 9 July - further information and application forms are available at the IML, 16-Waiteata Road, Kelburn, or online at www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters.

4. Calling young poets and their teachers

The official entry form for the New Zealand Post National Schools Poetry Award will be mailed to schools this week, so English teachers should keep an eye out for it in their pigeonholes, or ask their HOD. As school holidays start on Friday, we've decided to extend our entry deadline to 28 May to ensure that students have enough time to produce their best work. A poster for display in classrooms and libraries will

follow later this month. The entry form for the 2007 Award, which is run by the Institute of Modern Letters, can also be downloaded from www.nzpost.co.nz/poetryawards/

5. Women's feature film making in New Zealand: the deferment of hope?

This Thursday, 5 April, 2005 Hirschfeld Scriptwriting Prize winner Marian Evans presents a seminar on how gender may still affect opportunities for women filmmakers in New Zealand. She will use an 'autoethnographic' approach to follow the development of her own film scripts. Marian Evans is currently a PhD student in Management and Gender & Women's Studies at Victoria University. She notes, 'I plan to keep it very simple with lots of space for questions and comments (I still have so many questions myself!) and it would be nice to have some writers there.' The seminar takes place from 12 noon – 1 pm in the downstairs seminar room at the Gender & Women's Studies department, 94 Fairlie Terrace.

6. From the whiteboard

...dramatic structure consists of the creation and deferment of hope... The reversals, the surprises, and the ultimate conclusion of the hero's quest... in direct proportion to the plausibility of the opponent forces.

- David Mamet, *Bambi vs Godzilla*; On the nature, purpose, and practice of the movie business, supplied by Marian Evans

7. Show your shorts

The Jameson Show Me Shorts Film Festival is now calling for entries. The award categories include Best Overall Film, Best Technical Contribution, Best Student Film and a Special Jury Prize. Visit www.showmeshorts.co.nz for how to enter yours. The 2007 films will be played in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. And don't forget that entries for the Smack Bang play writing competition for one-act plays, PlayRight07, close on 14 April. For more information email info@smackbang.co.nz or visit www.myspace.com/smackbang.

8. International Children's Book Day

The Storylines Trust celebrated International Children's Book Day (2 April) by distributing a poster by Maori artist Zak Waipara on the theme Stories ring the World, and a message to the world's children about the importance of stories and reading, written especially by Margaret Mahy. The poster has gone to 70 countries and around New Zealand. Special events to celebrate the day were organised nationwide, and a new anthology, *Out of the Deep: stories from New Zealand and the Pacific*, edited by Tessa Duder and Lorraine Orman, was launched on 31 March. For details on how to

obtain the poster visit www.storylines.org.nz. See our 'World Poetry Day backdate' (item 17, below) for a different approach to a literary day.

9. Anna Smaill in London

Congratulations to poet Anna Smaill, who has been awarded a Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarship to study at University College London. Her thesis is provisionally titled 'Acts of Resistance: Self and Impersonality in Contemporary Poetry', and is being supervised by poet and academic Mark Ford. Anna was a member of the 2001 MA workshop at Victoria. A collection of poems based on her MA folio, *The Violinist in Spring*, was published by VUP in 2005 and was named one of the Listener's books of the year. See <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/vup/authorinfo/asmaill.htm>

10. The expanding bookshelf

Like Anna Smaill, Paula Morris is a graduate of the class of 2001 now living overseas. Paula may live and work in New Orleans, but she's keeping her New Zealand connections alive and well. Her third novel, *Trendy But Casual*, is published by Penguin this week, and Penguin are also re-issuing *Queen of Beauty* (winner of the Adam Prize for 2001) with a new cover in time for her appearances at the Auckland Writers and Readers festival in late May. She has sold a young adult novel set in contemporary post-Katrina New Orleans to Scholastic in the US. And in her spare time, Paula Morris is editing the Penguin Book of Contemporary NZ Short Stories.

11. The expanding orchestra

Bill Manhire and composer Eve de Castro-Robinson have written a piece for children's choir and orchestra. *These Arms to Hold You* is a line from the lullaby that forms part of the larger text along with a collage of quotations from Plunket Books. The work, commissioned by the New Zealand Plunket Society, celebrates 100 years of Plunket and will be performed by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra in Auckland, Hamilton, Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington in June. The piece is also included in the NZSO *Made in New Zealand* concert to be held at 6.30pm on Friday 25 May at the Wellington Town Hall. Details: http://www.nzso.co.nz/the_concerts/subscription_tours/subscription_tour_3#serie2

12. Alice Miller in Iowa

2005 Schaeffer Fellow Alice Miller has decided to return to Iowa in August to finish off her MFA. 'The time to write, the classes and the people here have all been really wonderful,' she reports. 'It's been a fantastic experience.' She has been offered a job teaching an undergraduate creative writing class there to help pay the bills.

13. Moonlighting

Congratulations to the Institute's administrator, Clare Moleta, who for the second year running has won a prize in the Cathay Pacific Travel Media Awards. Last year it was the AA Directions New Travel Writer Award; this year it's the Interislander Award for the Best Article About a Journey. The article, 'The Light is Different on the East Cape', appeared in the Herald in July 2006. Gigi Fenster, who completed the MA (Page) in 2006, was a runner-up in this year's New Travel Writer award.

14. A job that brings books and people together

After 10 years with the New Zealand Book Council, Chief Executive Karen Ross will resign at the end of April. During Karen's time, the Book Council has increased its staff from two to 10 members, expanded its Meet the Author and Writers in Schools programmes, and established the International Writers' Programme, WordSpace video conferencing, and 'the sky is the limit when you read' touring writer programmes. The very useful website (www.bookcouncil.org.nz) and the Literary Pin-ups poster series have also been introduced. Potential candidates for the role of new Chief Executive for the Book Council, which has the motto 'Bringing books and people together', can phone Jennifer Calvert of Sheffield on 04 471 5835 for further information on the position, or visit www.sheffield.co.nz.

15. Recent web reading

The difficult first book

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/generalfiction/story/0,,2042135,00.html>

Literary bars

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17856911/>

Raymond Carver on short stories (pdf file)

<http://www.theshortstory.org.uk/downloads/Essay-Carver-3.pdf>

Bernadette Hall review

<http://www.lumiere.net.nz/reader/item/873>

Shafts of Strife

<http://homepage.mac.com/hotelfred/strife/>

SMS poetry

<http://www.centrifugalforces.co.uk/onesixty/>

Wodehouse quote generator

<http://www.drones.com/pgw.cgi>

Closing Borders

<http://insidehighered.com/views/2007/03/28/mclemee>

Ka mate ka ora

<http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/kmko/index.asp>

Writer lectures

<http://www.matrix.msu.edu/cls/index>

Losing the letter 'e'

<http://denniscooper-theweaklings.blogspot.com/2007/03/three-authors-anagrammed-versions-of.html>

16. World Poetry Day – a backdate

World Poetry Day came and went on 21 March without much noticeable fanfare in New Zealand (see our last newsletter). However, we did receive a charming message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, to mark the day. We pass on his remarks belatedly:

Poetry is as varied and fluctuating as the present. It is not graven in stone, but is where relationships with the world and with meaning, culture and language are constantly created and re-created.

Each year, World Poetry Day, together with many poetry events, fairs and festivals, affords an opportunity for dialogue and reflection that may help to bring poetry in from the cold.

The particularity of poetry that must be recognized is that it does not convey clear words that can be instantly grasped, but constructs new, unprecedented forms of language that owe nothing to common codes.

Poetry, because it offers a multitude of ways and actual forms of writing, is therefore an area of research and experience that enables the human condition to be reviewed in its entirety. This ultimate reappraisal of the use of language makes for a universal critical reflection on words, genres and categories, the whole range of that which is at all translatable. In doing so it designs the contours of possible forms of dialogue among cultures, histories and memories.

Ensuring the promotion and safeguarding of these forms of exchange and transfer - such could be the focus of this world day which, placed at the service of our creative diversity, can I hope nurture and renew the ability of each and everyone of us to understand the cultural plurality of the world.

UNESCO, hand in hand with poets and poetry readers, makes common cause today with all those who detect inventiveness in language and propose new art forms, venturing to chart new genealogies that may construct anew the interconnections, challenges and vocabularies that underpin our modernity.

17. Great lists of our time

Wisden's index of unusual cricketing occurrences, from Richard Charkin's blog - <http://charkinblog.macmillan.com/>

Batsman given out in Test while congratulating century-maker
Batsman gives himself out lbw in Lords final
Brothers open for opposing sides in one-day international
Century scored entirely in boundaries
Collies on county stand-by for goose attack.
Commentator showered with glass for second time in same seat
Counties play extra time as tie-breaker
County asks to bowl only at one end
County batsman threatens team-mate with bat
County captain dismissed twice in three balls
County captain penalised for wearing glove
Crowd admitted free to one-day international to save on print costs
Dad dashes for debutant's kit
Father gives son out lbw in one-day international
Fielder in Roses Match wears trilby
Figures of 1-1-6-0 in county one-day match
First-class captain banned for four years for assaulting umpire
Gunman spotted in Test match crowd
Media sit-in stops Test
One-day international played with mango tree inside boundary
Player makes his debut two matches after his shirt
Spectators get commentary from bowls match
Team bowls 66 wides in international match
Test selector unaware of his selection
Three teams try to take the field for first-class match
Umpire goes missing during one-day international
Water bombs stop play

