



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 12 December 2001

This is the 13th 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. Adam Prize Awarded

This year's Adam Foundation Prize in Creative Writing has been awarded to Paula Morris for her novel *Queen of Beauty*.

The prize, which is offered annually, was presented by Denis Adam, of the Adam Foundation, yesterday evening. Previous winners – all fiction writers – are Catherine Chidgey, William Brandt, and Tim Corballis.

Paula Morris (Ngati Wai) is a New Zealander who has been living in New York for several years; she returned in February to join the IIML's MA workshop. Her short story, "Bright", will be broadcast on the Kim Hill Show, National Radio, Wednesday December 18, at 10.20 a.m.

2. Turbine update

Turbine has just added an interview with Charlotte Randall, this year's writer in residence: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/turbine/rablev.html>

And Turbine is planning an intermediate update of its first-issue material for early April 2002. All submissions received before March 1, 2002, will be considered. More information here: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/turbine/moreinfo.html#Contact>

3. Writer in Residence (part 1)

Charlotte Randall completed her 80,000-word third novel, *Within the Kiss*, during her residency at Glenn Schaeffer House, and we are delighted to report that it will be published by Penguin towards the middle of 2002. Charlotte already has her next two books in mind: see the interview with Jennifer Levasseur and Kevin Rabalais which is now available on Turbine (see above for link).

4. Writer in Residence (part 2)

Victoria University's 2002 Writer in Residence is Chris Orsman, who has just been appointed from what is said to have been a very, very strong field. Chris is a poet of considerable distinction. His two major collections are *Ornamental Gorse*, which won the 1995 NZSA award for Best First Book of Poetry, and *South*, a retelling of Scott's doomed attempt on the South Pole, which was published in New Zealand by VUP and in the UK by Faber and Faber, the world's leading poetry house. Chris is also the founder of one of New Zealand's liveliest small poetry publishers, Pemmican Press.

Chris Orsman has worked as an ambulance officer and more recently as a government limousine driver. He takes up his residency in Glenn Schaeffer House on February 1, 2002, where he will have the use of an office described by Charlotte Randall as "quiet, spacious and beautiful". Chris plans to set aside some "open" office hours each week, so that interested students can drop by and discuss poetry.

5. Ken and Kim

Kim Hill be talking to Ken Duncum, the newly appointed Michael Hirschfeld Director of Scriptwriting, this Friday morning (14 December) just after the 11.00 a.m. news bulletin. Selections have now been made for the 2002 scriptwriting stream of the MA in Creative Writing; the inaugural workshop begins meeting on February 26, 2002.

6. Poetry Workshop

We are delighted to announce that Stephanie de Montalk will convene our poetry workshop in the first trimester of 2002. Greg O'Brien will as usual teach the summer poetry workshop, but he then accompanies his wife Jenny Bornholdt to Menton during her tenure as the 2002 Katherine Mansfield Fellow.

Stephanie de Montalk holds an MA in Creative Writing with Distinction, and has already been involved with the IIML's poetry workshop as a visiting poet and folio assessor. Her first book of poems, *Animals Indoors*, won the best first book award at this year's Montana New Zealand Book Awards. *Unquiet World*, her memoir/biography of her eccentric cousin, the poet and printer Geoffrey de Montalk, has just been published by Victoria University Press. Michael King called it in a recent Dominion review "a book of outstanding interest and merit . . . It has to be a favourite for the newly introduced category of biography in next year's Montana Awards."

7. Some Holiday Web Reading

Two interesting interviews with leading poetry editors can be found as follows: Alice Quinn poetry editor at *The New Yorker* is here:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/atcsmonitor/specials/poetry/p-nytrans.html>

while Peter Davison poetry editor at *The Atlantic Monthly* is here:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/atcsmonitor/specials/poetry/p-interview.html>

British novelist Margaret Drabble has written recently in the *Guardian* about the International Parliament of Writers, an organisation with which the IIML has close links. The IPW's current and immediate past presidents – Russell Banks and Wole Soyinka - are both on the IIML's international advisory board, while Sierra Leonean writer Syl Cheney-Coker has spent much of this year in Las Vegas as part of the IPW's City of Asylum programme.

Margaret Drabble's article can be found here:

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/politicsphilosophyandsociety/story/0,6000,615139,00.html>

8. Spiny Babbler

Wanted: short stories from students in Australian and New Zealand Creative Writing courses for publication in a Nepalese anthology.

2000 word maximum

Maximum of two submissions per student.

Manuscripts to be typed in 10- or 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font, double spaced, on A-4 paper, well proofread, etc. Submissions not conforming to those requirements will not be considered.

Enclose a self-addressed but not stamped business envelope-for correspondence with those whose work has been accepted. Manuscripts will not be returned. (So be sure to keep a copy.)

Deadline: 30 April 2002.

Payment: two complimentary copies of the issue. Writers will retain their copyright and hence be free afterwards to submit the work elsewhere.

Writers whose work is accepted will then be asked to submit the piece on disk in PC format.

Submissions to Brian Dibble, Communication and Cultural Studies, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth 6845.

Spiny Babbler, founded in 1991, is a Nepalese organisation with several emphases. Educationally, it works to use the arts to improve the conditions of school and college students in Nepal. Its youth program has 60 volunteers who use creative processes to improve the lives of young people in shelter houses and hospitals. It has a multinational focus which has resulted in various Spiny Babbler publications, like Patricia Oxley, ed. *Poems of the United Kingdom*, and cultural tourism programs to Nepal that introduce visitors to Nepalese art, music, drama and literature. It runs art and literature festivals (9 programs in 2001), and it supports creators in networking, disseminating information, and sharing their work.

* A Spiny Babbler is a bird considered extinct for 106 years until rediscovered in Nepal where it is now endemic.

9. Old Year/New Year

The Victoria co-centre of the International Institute of Modern Letters will be closed over the holiday period from 5.00 pm on 21 December, but we are back from Monday 7 January. This newsletter will be back in early February. Thank you very much for your support during our first year, and especial thanks to all those who have been associated with us as students, teachers, and visiting writers, as publishers or bookworld and broadcasting specialists: we have had a busy and astonishing time, much of which is recorded in earlier newsletters.

Particular best wishes to Ian Finch, a Fulbrighter who has been closely associated with the IIML during 2001. He has given us a lot, and he has also been wonderful company. Some time in the new year you will be able to read *Capital*, his poetic streetmap of downtown Wellington, on the IIML web site. And – still with peripatetic Americans in mind – all the best to Jennifer Levasseur and Kevin Rabalais, who are returning to New Orleans.

Among the things we look forward to early in the New Year are the launch of *Best New Zealand Poems*, the online anthology which is being edited by Iain Sharp, and the announcement of the \$60,000 Prize in Modern Letters on March 16 as part of Writers and Readers Week. The Prize in Modern Letters is just one aspect of the broad-ranging literary activism of the IIML's founding patron, Glenn Schaeffer. Both Glenn and Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, who is also Director of Literary Arts for the IIML, will be in town to make the presentation.

That's all folks!