



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 2 November 2005

This is the 77th 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. \$65,000 Prize in Modern Letters shortlist announced

The world's richest prize for an emerging writer announced its shortlist yesterday. The 34 entries submitted for the \$65,000 Prize in Modern Letters are now six. The shortlisted writers are:

Tusiata Avia	Wild Dogs under My Skirt (2004)
William Brandt	Alpha Male (1999); The Book of the Film of the Story of My Life (2002)
Kate Camp	Unfamiliar Legends of the Stars (1998); Realia (2001)
Jo Randerson	The Spit Children (2000); The Keys to Hell (2004)
Carl Shuker	The Method Actors (2005)
Louise Wareham	Since You Ask (2004)

Three writers – Tusiata Avia, Carl Shuker, and Louise Wareham – have made the shortlist on the basis of one published book only, and half of the shortlisted writers have already been published outside New Zealand: the novels by Louise Wareham and Carl Shuker both come from small American literary publishers, while William Brandt's *The Book of the Film of the Story of My Life* has been published in the UK

and the USA as well as in New Zealand. The finalists' books now go forward to be read by a panel of American jurors. 'The jurors are going to have to work quite hard,' says Bill Manhire. 'There are six authors here, and they are very, very different from one another. One of the really healthy things about the shortlist, and about contemporary New Zealand writing in general, is the range of things being attempted.' The winner will be announced at a special session of Writers and Readers Week at the International Festival of the Arts in March 2006. Read the full press release at

http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/news_article.asp?ArticleID=1042149465

2. A sporting chance for new writers

Another event designed to support the writers of the future is on the literary calendar this month. An evening of readings and conversation with Emily Perkins, Glenn Colquhoun, Jenny Bornholdt and Elizabeth Knox celebrates the appearance of *Great Sporting Moments: The Best of Sport Magazine 1988-2004* (edited by Damien Wilkins). But the event also serves as a fundraising benefit to support creative writers at the International Institute of Modern Letters. Money raised up to \$NZ1 million by the end of 2005 will be matched dollar for dollar in United States dollars by Glenn Schaeffer, and these funds will be used to provide scholarships for some of the most gifted writers studying at the IIML. The fundraiser takes place on Wednesday 23 November, 7pm, at Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus, 23 Lambton Quay, Wellington. Tickets (\$30, including wine and canapés) are available from Vicbooks, Rutherford House, email pipitea@vicbooks.co.nz, tel (04) 463 5511.

For a sneak preview of both Damien Wilkins' introduction to *Great Sporting Moments* and the forthcoming issue of *Sport*, go to

<http://sportmagazine.org/sport33/index.htm>

3. MA writers line up, Iowa applications still open

In addition to the Prize in Modern Letters announcement, two other big deadlines for emerging writers passed yesterday. This year's MA (Page) students handed in the results of their year's work - twenty manuscripts, with a combined total of who-knows-how-many thousand words. Each manuscript will now be evaluated by three separate readers. Yesterday was also the final day for applications to next year's MA in Creative Writing programme, and we can announce that a combined total of 130 writers have applied for the thirty places available in the three workshops taught by Ken Duncum (Script), Damien Wilkins and Bill Manhire (Page).

The option of a more condensed opportunity to work on either fiction or poetry is still open in the form of two summer courses convened by graduates of the famed Iowa Writers' Workshop. Course dates for the fiction workshop are 5 December – 10 February, and the poetry workshop runs from 4 January – 17 February. The application deadline for both Iowa Workshops is 11 November. For application forms and further information, phone (04) 463 6854 or go to <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/creative-writing/undergraduate.aspx>

4. Knox explains Eliot's but(t)

A recent interview with Elizabeth Knox on literary website LeafSalon has generated some curious footnotes. At one point the interviewer inserts an aside about a 7th form encounter with a puzzling line from T. S. Eliot's 'Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' ('But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!'). In the comments section, Knox can't resist supplying her interpretation of the line, which rests on the theory that the first word should in fact end with a double consonant. Eliot scholarship may never be the same again. The full interview and comments are at http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/archives/000795elizabeth_knox_interview.html#more

5. From the whiteboard

'What tends to make for engaging writing is the implicit rather than the explicit, the suggested rather than the spelt out, *Victoria's Secret* rather than *Hustler*. And this is because good writing tends to be about showing rather than telling, indirectness rather than directness, ambiguity and possibility rather than the bare facts.' (James Brown)

6. Bone people revisited

Looking back at literary history, a seminar hosted by the Stout Research Centre this Saturday (5 November) revisits one of New Zealand's most talked about twentieth-century novels. Keri Hulme's *the bone people* was published 21 years ago, and the seminar marks the twentieth anniversary of the novel winning the Booker Prize. Speakers will discuss how the novel has been understood in the past and how it might be read in the twenty-first century. The provisional programme indicates that participants include Jan Cronin, Judith Dale, Aorewa McLeod, Tahu Potiki, Stephen Ihaka and Alice Te Punga Somerville, and the day concludes with a conversation between Keri Hulme and Keri Kaa. The venue is room 632, sixth floor, Murphy Building, Victoria University of Wellington, Kelburn campus. You can register online

at www.vuw.ac.nz/stout-centre or fax 04-463 5439; enquiries to Frances.Phillips@vuw.ac.nz.

7. A Huia from Hulme

Back to the future of New Zealand writing: in our October newsletter we noted that IIML MA (Scriptwriting) graduate Whiti Hereaka had won the Best Short Film Script category in the E tuhi! Get Writing! Awards 2005. We somehow failed to spot another winning entry, though. Eru Hart, who has just completed Dinah Hawken's Writing the Landscape workshop, won the Huia Publishers Short Story Award for best short story in English with his story 'Who Bore the Force'. The judge for this award was none other than Keri Hulme. Our belated congratulations to Eru.

8. The expanding screen

The Insiders Guide to Happiness, which emerged from a project developed by Peter Cox as part of his MA (Script) at the IIML in 2003, was one of the surprise hits of the small screen last year. Next week the prequel to *Happiness* begins its season. *The Insiders Guide To Love* (TV2, Nov 7, 9.30pm) explores the lives of a group of seven previously unconnected people. Each are implicated in a bizarre incident, the outcome of which forces them to examine and explore the loves in their own lives. For more on the new series, see

<http://www.thebigidea.co.nz/article.php?sid=3007&mode=thread&order=0>

9. Recent web reading

Another Top 100

http://www.time.com/time/2005/100books/the_complete_list.html

Poetry and tyrants

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,6903,1598581,00.html>

Feuding with Franzen

<http://www.harpers.org/WhyExperimentalFiction.html>

http://www.thevalve.org/go/valve/article/aggressively_masturbatory_fiction_or_two_authors_enter_only_ben_marcus_may_1/

<http://www.slate.com/id/2128405/nav/tap2/>

Bair vs. Jung

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/10/17/business/jung.php>

Paradise lost

<http://film.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,12589,1600726,00.html>

A creative writing workshop

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,12084,1601996,00.html>

Margaret Atwood's LongPen

<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/critique.cfm?id=2162732005>

NaNoWriMo

http://www.boston.com/ae/books/articles/2005/11/01/30_day_guarantee/

10. Great lists of our time

Latin graffiti from Pompeii:

"Suspirium puellarum Celadus thraex."

Celadus the Thracier makes the girls moan!

(C.I.L. IV, 4397; in the barracks of the gladiators)

"Puteolanis felicia, omnibus Nucerinis felicia et unicum Pompeianis Petecusanis."

Happiness to the people of Pozzuoli! Prosperity to all from Nuceria!

The meathook for the Pompeians and those of Pithecusa!

"Luci Istacidi, at quem non ceno, barbarus ille mihi est."

Someone at whose table I do not dine, Lucius Istacidus, is a barbarian to me.

"Arphocras hic cum Drauca bene futuit denario."

Here Harpocras has had a good fuck with Drauca for a denarius.

(C.I.L. IV, 2193; in the brothel)

"Lucius pinxit."

Lucius painted this.

"Virgula Tertio suo: indecens es."

Virgula to her Tertius: you are one horny lad!

"Lucrum gaudium."

Profit is happiness!

"Miximus in lecto. Fateor, peccavimus, hospes.

Si dices: Quare? Nulla fuit matella."

We have pissed in our beds. Host, I admit that we shouldn't have done this.

If you ask: Why? There was no potty.

"Oppi, emboliari, fur, furuncule."

Oppius, clown, thief, petty crook!

"Marci Iuni insula sum."

I am the flat of Marcus Iunius.

"Cacator cave malum, aut si contempseris, habeas Iovem iratum."

Watch it, you that shits in this place! May you have Jove's anger if you ignore this.

"Pituita me tenet."

I've caught a cold.

"Myrtis bene felas."

Myrtis, you do great blow jobs.

"Pecunia non olet."

Money doesn't stink

http://www.orbilat.com/Languages/Latin_Vulgar/Texts/Pompeii_Graffiti.html