



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 16 November 2010

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This is the 163rd 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. David Vann wins Prix Médicis – and teaches at the IIML

Congratulations to our soon-to-be-colleague, David Vann, who has won the 2010 Prix Médicis étranger, one of the two major French prizes for best foreign novel with *Legend of a Suicide* (under its alternative title of *Sukkwan Island*). Previous winners in the 40-year history of the Prix Médicis étranger include Philip Roth, Paul Auster, Thomas Pynchon and, last year, Dave Eggers. This is the eighth prize for *Legend of a Suicide*, and the book has also appeared on twenty-five ‘best books of the year’ lists, is being translated into nine languages, is an international bestseller, was selected by Lorrie Moore for The New Yorker Book Club, and is being made into a film by Chris Meloni. Vann has a new novel, *Caribou Island*, coming out in January 2011.

There is still time to apply for David Vann’s Advanced Short Fiction workshop, offered as a Level 3 paper (CREW 351) at the IIML in the first trimester of 2011. His course description states: ‘A short story is a compressed, cohesive, and paranoid world. In this course, we will analyse the rules of that paranoia and also consider departures and surprises.’ See our [website](#) for further details: the application deadline is 10 December.

2. Fact or fiction: you decide

Writers who don’t yet feel ready for an advanced fiction workshop might consider applying for our Short Fiction Workshop (CREW 254) with Kate Duignan, also offered in the first trimester, an ideal place to start an exploration of the craft of the short story. If you think creative non-fiction might be more your métier, bear in mind that Harry Ricketts’ Creative Non-Fiction Workshop (CREW 257) will also be taught in the first trimester next year. The term creative non-fiction refers to any kind of nonfiction writing that uses the techniques of narrative fiction. In practice, this tends to mean the memoir, the personal essay, the biographical sketch, travel writing, and other kinds of prose life writing. The deadline for both courses is 10 December. For further information, and how to apply, visit the undergraduate courses page of our [website](#).

3. The expanding bookshelf (1)

Harry Ricketts’ group biography of the War Poets, *Strange Meetings*, has just been released in the UK, and has already attracted favourable reviews from the former poet laureate [Andrew Motion](#) and from [Tom Paulin](#). Harry must surely be in need of a cup of tea and a lie down by this stage of the year: *Strange Meetings* follows [The Awa Book of New Zealand Sports Writing](#) and [99 Ways into New Zealand Poetry](#) (co-written with Paula Green) on his list of publications for 2010. You can read his recent column on the War Poets [here](#).

4. Playwright in residence

Acclaimed playwright Albert Belz will be the 2011 Creative New Zealand / Victoria University Writer in Residence. His most recent stage play, *Raising the Titanics*, is a theatrical homage to Billy T James, Prince Tui Teka and the Maori showbands of the 50s and 60s that charmed audiences and reviewers during its development season this year, and will tour New Zealand during 2011. As well as actors, it features a live band including well-known musicians Tama Waipara and Francis Kora.

Albert Belz's play about Jack the Ripper, *Yours Truly*, won awards for Best Overall Production, Most Original New Play and Best New New Zealand Play at the 2006 Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards, in a production directed by Victoria University senior lecturer in Theatre David O'Donnell. In the same year Mr Belz won the Bruce Mason Award for Best Up-And-Coming Playwright. His other plays include *Te Awarua*, *Awhi Tapu*, *Whero's New Net* and *Te Karakia*, and his television scripting and storylining credits include *Pulp Comedy*, *Shortland Street* and *Mataku*. In 2011 plans to work on a play about the first war in heaven, complete the second draft of a novel, and write a trio of short plays for children.

5. Script winners

Two of our recent writers in residence have done well in the SWANZ awards announced last week. The award for Best Feature Film Script went to *The Strength of Water*, which Briar Grace-Smith completed during her 2003 residency. And 2009 resident Paula Boock was co-writer, with Donna Malane, of the Best Television Drama Script, 'Bloodlines', which centred on the real-life story of the wife-poisoning psychiatrist Dr Colin Bouwer.

6. Bruce Mason shortlist

Among the four playwrights shortlisted for this year's \$10,000 Bruce Mason Playwriting Award are current MA (Script) student Eli Kent and 2005 workshop member Lynda Chanwai-Earle. The other two shortlisted writers are Arthur Meek and Thomas Sainsbury, and all four playwrights have been nominated in previous years. Nominations and the award winner are decided through voting by a panel made up of leading directors and script advisors throughout New Zealand and Playmarket staff. Previous winners include Toa Fraser, Hone Kouka, Jo Randerson, and Pip Hall. The winner will be announced at Downstage Theatre on 3 December. This year Eli's Young & Hungry commission *Thinning* was performed in both the Wellington and Auckland seasons, and Lynda Chanwai-Earle's company Ice Floe Productions toured festivals with her award-winning play *Heat*. Lynda is currently working on a commission with The Court Theatre.

7. Short fiction winners

Gemma Bowker-Wright took our Short Fiction workshop in 2004, when it was taught by William Brandt. At the end of October she was announced as the winner of the Supreme Award in the *Sunday Star-Times* Short Story Competition with her story 'The Red Queen Hypothesis', her second entry into the competition after taking out the runner-up spot in the Secondary School category in 2002. The story won the author \$5000, publication of her story in the *Sunday Star-Times* and \$500 worth of books from Random House as well as an additional \$750 for winning the People's Choice Award. You can read it [here](#).

Last week Wes Lee took out the \$10,000 BNZ Katherine [Mansfield Literary Prize](#) for her short story 'Furniture', which judge Lloyd Jones described as 'sophisticated in its construction, persuasive in its telling...in a class of its own.' Craig Cliff (MA Page 2006), whose short-story collection *A Man Melting* appeared from Random House earlier this year, was among the runners-up.

The Novice category award, judged by Emma Neale, went to Chloe Searle, an Oamaru curator, for her story 'Babysitting'. Among the runners-up were Sylvie Thomson (MA Page 2010), Sarah Bainbridge (MA 2007) and Susannah Poole (MA Page 2005). Seventeen-year-old Karamu High School student Brittany Rorrison's 'Thirteen Toadstools' won the Young Writer award, judged by Emily Perkins. Judges reports and winning stories are available on the [BNZ website](#).

8. Creative science winners

Also announced last week were the winners of the Royal Society of New Zealand Manhire Prize for Creative Science Writing. Isobel Gabites of Otaki has won the Fiction category for 'Heaven in the Mind', a coming-of-age story. The winner of the Non-Fiction category is Alice Miller from Wellington for her essay 'Dark energy beyond the reception rooms', structured around a story of an old classmate and exploring topics as diverse as psychological experiments, the literature of Leo Tolstoy and cognitive neuroscience. Both winners will receive \$2,500 and their entries will be published in the *New Zealand Listener* in January.

Alice Miller has an MA from the International Institute of Modern Letters, and an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she was a Glenn Schaeffer Fellow. Isobel Gabites began her science degree in 1976 and was also invited to join Bill Manhire's Creative Writing course as one of the first intakes. All the shortlisted entries can be read on the [Royal Society's website](#).

9. Laura Kroetsch crosses the ditch

The [Adelaide Festival announced](#) on Friday that it has appointed Wellington's own Laura Kroetsch as the new Executive Producer of Adelaide Writers' Week, which will become an annual event from 2012. We wish Laura extremely well in this new phase of her literary career, which has included stints on the board of the New Zealand Post (formerly Montana) Book Awards and BNZ Literary Awards, positions with Booksellers New Zealand and the New Zealand Book Council, and not least the job she is leaving behind as manager of Writers and Readers Week for the New

Zealand International Arts Festival. We look forward to closer trans-Tasman literary relations as a result of the move – and wonder who might replace Laura at the Festival...

10. *Best New Zealand Poems 2010*

This is our penultimate reminder to poets and publishers that we are still interested in receiving all poems published by New Zealand writers during 2010 to consider for this year's edition of *Best New Zealand Poems*. If you've published a book this year and are unsure whether your publisher has submitted it, please check with them. Poems published anywhere in the world are eligible, so if you've published poems in international journals we might not see, please feel free to send us a photocopy of the relevant pages, along with a copy of the journal's title page or full publication details (issue number/ publication date, ISSN etc.). Unpublished work is not eligible for consideration.

The editor of *Best New Zealand Poems 2010* is Chris Price. Submissions may be sent to: *Best NZ Poems* (Editor), International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140. The cut-off date for receipt of published work is 20 December.

11. Caselberg Prize

The inaugural Caselberg Trust International Poetry Prize for 2011 will be judged by Bernadette Hall. There's a first prize of \$500, a second prize \$250, and the prize-winners will be published in the May 2011 issue of *Landfall*. Entries (accompanied by a fee of \$5 for one poem or \$10 for up to three poems) must be sent to 'Caselberg Poetry Prize, PO Box 71, Portobello, Dunedin 9048, NZ', by 31 January 2011. Full conditions of entry are on the [Caselberg Trust website](#).

John and Anna Caselberg were friends of Colin McCahon, who used John Caselberg's poetry as the subject for several paintings, including the extraordinary 16-panel work '[The Wake](#)', which reproduces an elegy for the poet's dog, a Great Dane named Thor.

12. Poetry mash

The Great NZ Mix & Mash Competition invites writers and poets to write a poem remixed from words and images chosen by New Zealand Poet Laureate Cilla McQueen. The winner will take home a MinoHD Flip video camera and a selection of New Zealand poetry books. You also go in to win the Creative Commons award for the supreme NZ remix, awarded to the most outstanding remix entry that includes Creative Commons licensed material. The supreme prize is a Macbook Pro. The competition, organised by DigitalNZ, NZ On Screen, Creative Commons NZ, Open New Zealand, data.govt.nz, Creative Freedom and the National Library, aims to encourage New Zealanders to use, and be inspired by, existing free digital content and

data in their own creative work. For information on categories, how to enter and competition criteria visit [here](#). Entries close on 30 November.

13. The expanding bookshelf (2)

Pat White's book of essays *How the Land Lies: On Longing and Belonging* was launched at Unity Books on 4 November. The book was written during Pat's 2009 MA year at the IIML, and since then he has had two writing residencies (in the Robert Lord and Randell Cottages). *How the Land Lies* is much concerned with how human beings find a home in this world, so it seems only appropriate that Pat arrived home in Gladstone shortly before the launch, and that the book was also launched at Hedley's Bookshop in the Wairarapa on 5 November.

14. Samoa on the big screen

At the end of last month production commenced on *The Orator*, a tale of honour, courage, love and redemption that won Tauti Tusi Tamasese the IIML's 2007 David Carson-Parker Embassy Prize for best script. Directed by its author, *The Orator (O Le Tulafale)* will be a first inasmuch as it will be entirely shot in Samoa, in the Samoan language, with a Samoan cast and story. *The Orator* has been financed by the New Zealand Film Commission, and is produced by Catherine Fitzgerald. It is Tusi Tamasese's debut feature, and also the first script by an IIML graduate to hit the big screen.

Tusi Tamasese has also written and directed the Samoan language short film *Va Tapuia (Sacred Spaces)*, which screened at this year's New Zealand International Film Festival. It will next screen at the ImagineNative International Film Festival in Toronto, and the Hawaii International Film Festival.

15. Writing the Pacific

In May 2011 the University of the South Pacific plans to launch its publishing arm, the USP Press. The goal of the Press is to publish high quality research and writing on issues related to the Pacific Islands, or the islands commonly known as Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, and the University has announced an international competition to kickstart the USP list. Fiction, Poetry, and Drama or Screenplay manuscripts will be considered for the USP Press Literature Prize (US\$3000). The USP Press Nonfiction Prize (\$3000) will be awarded to the overall winner from the following categories: History, Auto/Biography; Sciences; Social Sciences/Humanities; and Best Children's Book. Winners in the individual categories will receive US\$1000, except for the children's book winner, who will receive US\$2000. Each submission must be in hard copy (no online submissions), and clearly indicate the category in which it is to be considered. The competition is open to all nationalities and closes on 15 February 2011.

Submissions should be addressed to: The Chair, Board of the USP Press, Professor Vilsoni Hereniko, Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, Private Mail Bag, Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji. For enquiries, write to: hereniko_v@usp.ac.fj.

16. From the whiteboard

‘How sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged in self defence to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity, and riot in things attainable that it may not have leisure to go mad after things that are not.’

— John Keats

17. The expanding bookshelf (3)

‘Nothing happens and nothing happens, and then everything happens,’ wrote Fay Weldon. That seems to be true for the Wellington poetry scene this coming weekend. First up, Vivienne Plumb is back from Australia to launch her new book *Crumple* (Seraph Press) at 3.30 pm, Saturday 20 November in the Aro Valley Community Centre, 48 Aro Street. *Crumple* will also be launched in Vivienne’s other New Zealand home, Auckland, at 6 pm, Wednesday 24 November in The Women’s Bookshop, 105 Ponsonby Road. All welcome.

18. Lyrical Sunday

The next day, Sunday 21 November, Lynn Jenner (MA Page 2008) will perform with the *Klezmer Rebs* as part of their 4-7pm gig at the Ruby Lounge, 14 Bond St. After the band’s first set, there will be a special 20-minute duet in which poems from Lynn Jenner’s book *Dear Sweet Harry* – featuring ‘Harry Houdini, the world’s greatest ever escapologist, and Mata Hari, a woman who did not so much dance as slowly and gracefully take off her clothes’ – will mix it up with the Rebs’ lively Eastern European/klezmer/world music. We’re assured that ‘The musical accompaniment is pushy, poignant, sweet and sad and hopeful, just like Houdini and Mata Hari, and it travels around the world just as they did.’ Tickets \$10 at the door.

Meanwhile, across town at the Ballroom Café (cnr Riddiford St and Adelaide Road, Newtown) from 4-6 pm, the guest poet will be Saradha Koirala (MA Page 2007), reading new work and poems from her 2009 collection *Wit of the Staircase*. The musical support set will be provided by Mary and Josie Campbell, daughters of the late Alistair Te Ariki Campbell.

19. Eating her words

2010 MA workshop member Mercedes Webb-Pullman's poem 'I miss you' was the winner of the Eat Your Words Wellington café poetry competition. Her prize was a voucher for \$100 at Cobar Restaurant in Days Bay, with ferry tickets between Days Bay and Wellington, and the poem was published in the *Dominion Post's* Thursday poem series last week. The competition culminated in a celebration dinner at Café Kaizen, Pataka Museum in Porirua, with readings from the winners and comments from the judge, Victoria University Writer in Residence Jenny Bornholdt. But that wasn't the end of the feasting: another reading will take place at the Seatoun Bar and Café on 20 November. We hope the organisers will manage to bring back this competition in 2011: judging by the starving looks on the faces of our students on folio hand-in day, a good feed in exchange for a poem will continue to be a very welcome prize.

Mercedes' work also appears in the latest *4th Floor* (see item 22 below), and she has six poems in the latest *Danse Macabre*.

20. The expanding bookshelf (4)

MA 2009 workshop member Emile Hofstede is one of 12 artists who ventured to Farewell Spit last year for an Artist's Residency supported by the Department of Conservation. This week an exhibition of works inspired by the artists' time on the Spit is on at Motupipi Hall, Abel Tasman Drive, and last Friday Emile launched her chapbook *This Elysian Shore* with a poetry reading at the exhibition opening. Her exhibit includes four abstract mosaics illustrating one of the poems along with an installation piece of that poem. The exhibition closes on 21 November.

21. The expanding family

As well as thirty substantial MA folios, three other major projects arrived in the immediate IIML family this year. MA Page workshop member Rose Collins' little girl Isobel arrived about five or six weeks before her folio. April Phillips' (MA Script) daughter Celine April Thompson made her entrance on Sunday 24 October, not quite a week after April had managed an early folio hand-in. And of course there's our regular Friday visitor, the bouncy bonny blue-eyed Franka, born to Clare Moleta and Leon Davidson back in April.

22. From the *4th Floor*

The 2010 edition of Whitireia's *4th Floor* literary journal has just appeared, with quite a few familiar names on its contents list. There's new work from Tusiata Avia, Michele Amas, Kate Camp, Kay Corns, Mary-Jane Duffy, Helen Heath, Mandy Hager, Lynn Jenner, Vivienne Plumb, Tina Regtien, Jo Thorpe, and Mercedes Webb-

Pullman (see item 19 above), all of whom have passed through courses at the IIML as well as Whitireia. Fourth Floor is edited by Hinemoana Baker, and showcases up-and-coming writers alongside the work of well-known New Zealand literary talent.

23. Hue and Cry 5

The editors of *Hue & Cry* are soliciting submissions for their fifth issue – there's no theme, but they'd like to see your work by Christmas. Send by [email](#).

24. International Radio Playwriting Competition

The British Council and the BBC World are calling for entries in the International Radio Playwriting Competition 2011. Applicants are invited to write a 60-minute original radio play. The competition is open to any writer who is not normally a resident of the UK, and although the play must be written in English, it may be translated by a third party. The competition has two main prizes: one for the best play written in English as a first language; and one for the best play written in English as a second language. MA (Script) graduate Philip Braithwaite was winner of the 2001 (English) prize.

The two prize winners will each receive £2500 and a trip to London to see their plays being recorded and to attend an awards ceremony. Runner-up prizes of digital or short wave radios will be awarded to the best play from each of the following areas: The Americas; Europe; Africa and the Middle East; South Asia; Russia and the Caucasus; Asia and Pacific. Applications close on 31 March 2011. To find out more and download an application form, [click here](#).

25. In the pipeline

The 2011 Script Pipeline Screenwriting and TV Competitions are accepting entries for feature film and TV scripts – all genres, styles, and lengths accepted. This is an international competition and non-U.S. writers are welcome. \$20,000 in cash goes to the finalists/winners, and finalist loglines/scripts are sent to over 200 companies. There's a 31 December deadline and an entry fee of \$40, but all new SP Writers Database members get a free entry. For a complete list of prizes and more info, visit the [Script Pipeline website](#).

26. Recent web reading

[Breaking the line: eBooks and poetry](#)

[New poems by Dora Malech](#)

[Diana Bridge wins the Lauris Edmond Poetry Award](#)

[Damien Wilkins, Laurence Fearnley and other NZers on the IMPAC longlist](#)

[Political poetry UK-style](#)

[A brutal and even uncomfortable integrity – Lloyd Jones reviewed](#)
And [here](#).

[A great year for stories \(and the IIML\)](#)

[2100 International Hippocrates Prize for Poetry & Medicine](#)

[A surreal fiction competition](#) (see events 21 October)

[Bill Manhire reads Edwin Morgan...](#)

...[and reads with Anne Carson at the South Bank](#)

[Fake poets in translation](#)

[Circumstances Under Which I Would Enjoy Whale Watching.](#)

[Shortlist Press – short stories on line](#)

[Don Paterson's music](#)

['Bill Manhire is less hirsute but still very effective'](#)

[Eleanor Catton interviewed](#)

[Whiti Hereaka reviewed](#)

[Rick Gekoski goes to Mozambique](#)

[The Mountain Library reviews Laurence Fearnley](#)

[Poetry in the classroom](#)

[Publishing the bone people - Marian Evans](#)

[A publisher's view of academics and their writing](#)

[Air New Zealand's mid-air stumble](#)

[A flip-book e-version of the Poetry Trust's 2010 Poetry Paper](#)

[The Poetry Channel \(Aldeburgh Poetry Festival audio\)](#)

27. Great lists of our time

A list of closed pubs in Shropshire (for many more pubs, see [The Lost Pubs Project](#))

Fox & Duck
Three Horseshoes
Fox
Queens Arms
Boot
Flag
Swan
Lion Inn
Old Rodney
Golden Lion
Kynnersley Arms
Red Lion
Smithfield Inn
Tontine Inn
Swan
Fox & Hounds
Castle Inn
Crow
Exchange
Harlescott
Monk Moor
Old Bush Inn
Shropshire Lad
Station Hotel
String of Horses
Unicorn Hotel
Wheatsheaf
Barley Mow
Bell and Bails
Black Horse
Charlton Arms
Champion Jockey
Dun Cow
Fighting Cocks
Fox & Hounds
Greyhound Inn
Kings Arms
Pear Tree Bridge Inn
Pigeon Box
Robin Hood
Swan
Talbot
Unicorn
Albion

White Horse Hotel
Cross Keys
Three Horseshoes
Kynaston Arms
White Horse

* * *

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