



## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 27 September 2010

ISSN: 1178-9441

This is the 161<sup>st</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).

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#### 1. A room of one's own — in Wellington, next year

As the deadline is nearly upon us, we thought it might be worth putting out a final call for applications for the Victoria University of Wellington Writer in Residence 2011. Current resident Jenny Bornholdt will be occupying the writing room downstairs at the Institute until the end of January, then the room becomes free for a writer 'of proven merit normally resident in New Zealand or New Zealanders currently resident overseas' with a great literary project to pursue.

Writers in all areas of literary activity, including drama, fiction and poetry, New Zealand art, biography, history, music, society and culture, are eligible to apply. The

appointment will be for twelve months from 1 February 2011 to 31 January 2012, with a salary of NZ\$50,000.

If this sounds like your dream job, you can apply online [here](#) (please quote reference A236-10Z). Applications close this Thursday, 30 September, though, so be in quick.

## **2. *Turbine* needs word power**

Since we're thinking about deadlines, this also seems a good moment to remind both emerging and established writers that the deadline for the 2010 issue of the Institute of Modern Letters' online literary journal, *Turbine* is just under a month away. So it's time to polish up those short stories, poems and creative non-fiction essays that are nearly ready to see the light of day, and send them off to our editors by 22 October – please take a look at the [submission guidelines](#) first though.

## **3. NZFC Talent Awards Programme**

And another deadline. In past years the New Zealand Film Commission has awarded separate Writer and Producer Awards to assist established practitioners with devolved development and overhead support. In 2010 it has one contestable fund of \$250,000. The Awards will be open to applications from established Writers, Producers and Directors too. The maximum amount that can be applied for is \$50,000, but it should be noted that lesser amounts applied for will be looked upon favourably; this is a limited fund and it's the intention of NZFC to spread it widely. Applications must be made via email by 5pm on Friday November 19th 2010. Send your application as a single document to Development Coordinator [Faith Dennis](#). Further key Information, guidelines and coversheet can be found [here](#).

## **4. Liberate your words (1)**

We're pleased to announce that, after a hiatus this year, the National Schools Poetry Award will be back in 2011, with support from Creative New Zealand. The Schools Writing Festival is still on hold for the time being, but Year 12 and 13 secondary students should be keeping their notebooks to hand for those ideas and fragments that might turn into prize-winning poems – and keep on reading contemporary poetry for examples and inspiration. We'll be sending more information to all secondary schools later in the year.

## **5. The expanding bookshelf**

A new book co-authored by former Schools Poetry Award judge Paula Green and the IIML's Creative Non-Fiction workshop convenor Harry Ricketts offers an introduction to contemporary New Zealand poetry which, say the authors, is aimed at

both ‘the poetry fan’ and ‘the fledgling student’. It explores ‘the way “who we are” and “where we are” gives life to a poem, the way particular poetic forms have a vital role to play and the way a poem feeds off different impulses.’ At 624 pages, *99 Ways Into New Zealand Poetry* (Random House) is a weighty tome, but that’s because it’s generously illustrated with (colour) book covers and photographs of the poets, and punctuated by 85 poems that are explored in some depth by Green, Ricketts or the poets themselves. A section on Poetic Forms starts with The Ballad and finishes with The Found Poem and the List Poem; Poetic Contexts offers an overview of the way poetry has developed here during the last 100 years or so, as well as a survey of the current poetic ecology that includes chapters on Art Connections, Performing the Poem and Digital Poetry. The section on Poetic Features and Effects runs all the way from Sound through to Silence, and Poetic Identities examines the varied voices that make up the patchwork of New Zealand poetry today. With so much going on, we suspect we’ll be browsing it for some time to come. Elizabeth Smither has already done so: her verdict is [here](#).

## 6. The poetic Frame

It seems the indexer of *99 Ways into New Zealand Poetry* may have found the hundredth way in. The website *Janet on the Planet: Notes from Janet Frame’s Literary Estate* points out some rather unorthodox listings in the book’s index, noting that ‘several of the index entries point merely to the prosaic word “frame” appearing in the text’. The phrases indexed under ‘Frame, Janet’ apparently include:

working class frame  
a different frame  
a regulated frame  
the poetic frame  
in the frame  
imposing a specific frame  
the need to frame social issues

The [website post](#) on the book concludes: ‘Now I call that “found poetry”...’

## 7. From the whiteboard

I have been teaching poetry (the craft, the literature) for a decade now, and it often turns out that students want to know what poetry is. Not what it is building down there, or who has the most, or which is the greatest, but actually what it consists of. One of the things I think poetry *is*, I say, is a set of strategies. These strategies make art happen in the plastic of language. They deliver ideas that aren’t easily articulated in prose. They help you hurt your reader in just the way he or she is looking for. They complicate our systems of representation so that when we speak our speech is as fucked up as our lived experience deserves.

— Danielle Pafunda (See Recent Web Reading, The State of American Poetry, for more)

## 8. Liberate your words (2)

The excellent marriage of Norman Meehan's music and Bill Manhire's poems on the newly launched CD *Buddhist Rain* ([Rattle Records](#)) got us thinking about the similarities between jazz and poetry. This quote from Stephen Brown's review of *Jazz*, by Gary Giddins and Scott Devereux (*TLS* May 28 2010), made us think of the use of poetic constraint that is so much a part of the writing exercises set in our workshops (see Bill Manhire's *Mutes and Earthquakes* for examples):

'Here is why jazz players love the blues: it is the perfect box to break out of....This reveals the secret of jazz performance: First, construct a box. Second, break out of it. In so doing the musician enacts a moment of liberation. This may be a politically charged term, but surely everybody needs some liberating. '

Those who missed last week's launch of *Buddhist Rain* will have a chance to hear at least some of the music next month, when two further concerts will be happening in Wellington. These will also include material from *Sun Moon Stars Rain*, an album of e.e. cummings poems in Meehan's jazz settings. The first is on Friday 22 October, 6.30 pm at St Andrew's on the Terrace; the second on Tuesday 26 October, 7.30 pm at St Mark's Church, 58 Woburn Rd, Lower Hutt. Tickets \$25 / \$15 Students with ID / \$60 Family / \$7 school students.

Norman Meehan's *Serious Fun*, a biography of veteran New Zealand jazz pianist Mike Nock, will be launched at Victoria University next week, the day before Nock's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday concert at the Ilott Theatre on 1 October.

## 9. A Maori in the Midwest

Jazz also met New Zealand poetry on stage in Pittsburgh earlier this month. Hinemoana Baker, who is currently visiting Iowa as part of the International Writers' Programme, performed alongside American poet Yusef Komunyaaka and Burmese writer Khet Mar in a Jazz Poetry concert with 17 top musicians, led by Oliver Lake. The concert was a fundraiser for the Cities of Asylum project that gives refuge to writers who have been persecuted in their home country. (Glenn Schaeffer was involved in the early days in setting up the project, especially in Las Vegas.) There's more on Hinemoana Baker's adventures in Iowa (and elsewhere) [here](#). And you can read Yusef Komunyaaka's account of the concert [here](#).

## 10. Ka mate

The sixth issue of [Ka Mate Ka Ora: A New Zealand Journal of Poetry and Poetics](#) was launched earlier this month, with a special focus on North American legacies in the southern hemisphere. It includes Murray Edmond's reflections on anthologies after Donald Allen, Virginia Gow on Robert Creeley's New Zealand, Roger Horrocks

on Leigh Davis, Paul Millar on Jacquie Baxter / Sturm, Robert Sullivan on Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, and Ian Wedde asking the question 'Does Poetry Matter?'

KMKO publishes research essays and readings of New Zealand-related material and welcomes contributions from poets, academics, essayists, teachers and students from within New Zealand and overseas. See [here](#) for submission guidelines and further information.

### **11. Randell Cottage reading**

Vincent O'Sullivan, Fiona Kidman, Pat White & others are reading at tonight's (27 September) [AGM of the Friends of Randell Cottage](#) at the Thistle Inn, Mulgrave Street, Thorndon from 7 pm. We are assured AGM business will be brief!

### **12. Writers on Mondays wraps up for 2010**

Today saw the final session of 'Writers on Mondays' burn up the stage at Circa Theatre. We'd like to thank Te Papa for partnering us in the series, Circa for making their theatre available for the two MA Script Workshop performances, and all the writers, performers and chairpeople who appeared in this year's series, including international guests David Vann and Lee Gutkind, and New Zealanders Marian Evans, Lydia Wevers, Peter Whiteford, Fergus Barrowman, Geoff Cochrane, Lynn Davidson, Lynn Jenner, Gregory O'Brien, Marty Smith, Louise Wallace, Tim Upperton, Ashleigh Young, Hinemoana Baker, John Newton, Anna Livesey, Ingrid Horrocks, Craig Cliff, Tina Makereti, Jenny Bornholdt, Harry Ricketts, Paul Thomas, John Saker, Paul Millar, Mark Williams, Norman Meehan, Hannah Griffin, Colin Hemmingsen and the choir, and of course the entire 2010 MA cohort. We'll be back with the 2011 series next July.

### **13. Recent web reading**

[The state of American poetry](#)

[James Franco and Allen Ginsberg read "Howl"](#)

["Antigone Collaboration Fragment" - Anne Carson & Bianca Stone](#)

[Ekleksographia](#)

[Antipodes: A Global Journal of Australian / New Zealand Literature](#)

[Raining Buddhists interviewed](#)

[Bravo, Fiji!](#)

[Laurence Fearnley reviewed](#)

[Quick history of the present tense](#)

[Howie's Hot Five - \*Buddhist Rain\*](#)

[National Punctuation Day](#)

[Accurate science fiction](#)

[A brief history of the ISBN](#)

[Philip Larkin saying hurtful things about NZ](#)

[There ought to be a verb for this](#)

[Book video awards](#)

[Tourist Wellington - tiptoeing through the tombstones](#)

[Dream Songs for the Flame Organ](#)

[Alan Brunton revisited](#)

[Eleanor Catton's Dylan Thomas news](#)

[Eleanor Catton's Rehearsal](#)

[Bill Manhire on music, lightning and the muse](#)

[Branwen Millar's new play](#)

[Zach Savich's second book](#)

[The Trowenna Sea debate starts up again](#)

[Penguin drops Trowenna Sea](#)

[The wrap-up on David Markson's library](#)

[Ten Facts About Books You Won't Read in a Book About Books](#)

[Publisher Christine Cole Catley interviewed](#)

[A draw card for writers to gravitate to Wellington](#)

[Elizabeth Knox goes to Nelson](#)

[Marching orders](#)

[The arts are to Britain what the sun is to Spain" - saving the arts UK-style](#)

[Satan finally wins](#)

[Curtis Sittenfeld \(ex Schaeffer Fellow & IIML summer workshop leader!\) reviews Franzen's Freedom](#)

[The Happy Poet - "an all-organic, mostly vegetarian comedy"](#)

[David Orr on epigraphs](#)

[Philip Pullman wants storytellers "to use the full range of English tenses"](#)

[Antarctic Heat heads to Dunedin](#)

[Download Samuel Beckett](#)

[Tina Makereti reviewed](#)

[Patrick Evans reviewed](#)

[Tom Hunt reviews Sam Hunt](#)

[Horse d'oeuvres - Phar Lap cupcakes & bikkies - scroll down](#)

### **Great lists of our time**

Top 10 Books Written by Librarians (as compiled by AbeBooks [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com)). Other possible contenders include John Braine, Lewis Carroll, Archibald MacLeish, Nancy Pearl, Kit Pearson, Benjamin Franklin, Christopher Okigbo, Marcel Proust, and Ina Coolbrith:

*The Less Deceived*, Philip Larkim  
*The Aleph and Other Stories*, Jorge Luis Borges  
*A Wrinkle in Time*, Madeleine L'Engle  
*Little Big Man*, Thomas Berger  
*Out Stealing Horses*, Per Petterson  
*Star Man's Son*, Alice Mary Norton  
*The Accidental Tourist*, Anne Tyler  
*At Mrs Lippincote's*, Elizabeth Taylor  
*The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot*, Angus Wilson  
*Eagle in the Snow*, Wallace Breem

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### **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](mailto: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](mailto:diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz)