



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF

## MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 17 December 2004

This is the 64th 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](mailto:modernletters@vuw.ac.nz).

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#### 1. Adam Prize winner creates a buzz

Wellington poet Emily Dobson has won this year's prestigious Adam Prize for Creating Writing for her collection of poems about beekeepers and rural life, *A Box of Bees*. The \$1,000 award is made annually to the best folio presented by a student in Victoria University's Creative Writing MA, and was presented by Denis Adam on Thursday 16 December at the Adam Art Gallery. Emily Dobson grew up in rural Hawke's Bay where her family work as commercial apiarists. Her great-grandfather and grandfather established the firm of Arataki Honey, and she drew heavily on her knowledge and family history in writing the poems.

Senior Lecturer Damien Wilkins says *A Box of Bees* is a stunning collection. "On one level there are the deeply appealing facts about bees, and on another level Emily offers a wonderfully suggestive account of family and personal life. Her work is sunny, lyrical and beautifully controlled." Previous Adam Prize winners include Catherine Chidgey, William Brandt and Cliff Fell.

## **2. Embassy Trust Prize winner takes a reality check**

Art and life shook hands on at the Embassy Theatre on Monday night when the 2004 Embassy Trust Prize was presented to Marian Evans by one of the characters in her winning film script. *Mothersongs/Chansons Maternelles* tells the story of a group of women who opposed the 1981 Springbok Tour, and are later divided over an environmental issue. The script is bilingual, with part set in New Zealand and part in France. Wellington's Deputy Mayor Alick Shaw, who was a prominent anti-Tour protester in Wellington and appears in this role in the script, presented the \$1,000 prize. He remarked that he would feel more than a little nervous about sitting in the audience for the film once it was made.

The Embassy Trust Prize goes to the top script produced in Victoria University's Scriptwriting MA course, taught by Ken Duncum, and was judged by prominent playwright and television scriptwriter Gary Henderson. Marian Evans says that "It's a film that tries to ask who 'we' is and notions of 'we' change when there is civil unrest." Ms Evans is also a Research Assistant with Victoria's Gender and Women's Studies Programme, and her film *Sister Galvan*, about the former Director of the Dowse Gallery, Galvan MacNamara, was shown at last year's Wellington Film Festival.

## **3. Turbine 04 online**

The 2004 issue of *Turbine* (<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/turbine>) has just been launched. While it includes work by both graduates and current students, *Turbine* 04 also ranges well beyond the walls of the IIML, with contributions coming from Kaitaia and Dunedin, Paris and Philadelphia. There are memoirs from Abby Letteri and Brigid Lowry, poems from Stephanie de Montalk, Elizabeth Smither and Andrew Johnston, fiction from Rachael King and Tracy Farr and much more. Iowa Writers' Workshop graduates Earle McCartney and Megan Johnson, who are teaching fiction and poetry here over the summer, contribute samples of their work. For a sneak preview of the fiction and poetry that's been produced by Damien Wilkins's MA workshop this year, look for the work by Nic Gorman, Pip Robertson, Marty Smith and Tim Holloway-Jones, as well as Adam Prize recipient Emily Dobson. *Turbine* 04 also ventures inside 'The Batcave' in an in-depth interview with poet James Brown, and offers a glimpse into the mind of the emerging writer at work via excerpts from reading journals, in which Schaeffer award winner Tracey Hill reveals a mischievous streak, and Rebecca Lovell-Smith deliberates over a pen name (Hygiene Latrina, perhaps?). We're extremely grateful to the staff of the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre for all their work getting the journal online.

## **4. Books of the year lists**

For those buying books as Christmas presents, a few of the New Zealand lists are available online:

[http://www.listener.co.nz/default\\_3068.sm](http://www.listener.co.nz/default_3068.sm)

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/sundaystartimes/0,2106,3118184a6619,00.html>

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c\\_id=134&ObjectID=9002748](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?c_id=134&ObjectID=9002748)

An international master list of books, films, DVDs etc is here:

<http://www.listener.co.nz/default,3068.sm>

And an international meta-list of the year's fiction picks is here:

[http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/archive/2004\\_12\\_14\\_archive.asp#110300280995034701](http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/archive/2004_12_14_archive.asp#110300280995034701)

We of course recommend the following recent titles by staff and students of the IIML:

Tusiata Avia, *Wild Dogs Under My Skirt*

Hinemoana Baker, *Matuhi/Needle*

Kate De Goldi, *Clubs: A Lolly Leopold Story*

Ken Duncum, *Cherish*

Josh Greenberg, *A Man Who Eats the Heart*

Bill Manhire, *The Wide White Page: Writers Imagine Antarctica*

Julian Novitz, *My Real Life (and other stories)*

And special mention must go to another Victoria creative writing graduate, Jenny Patrick, whose novels *The Denniston Rose* and *Heart of Coal* occupy second and third place on the 2004 Best of the Bestsellers list recently released by Booksellers New Zealand.

The last publication for the year, hot off the press and being handbound at this very moment, is *Domestica*, a limited edition, handbound anthology of poems by members of our 2004 poetry workshop: Jennifer Bloomfield, Ruth Brassington, Amy Brown, Thomas Fitzsimons, Helen Heath, Ann-Marie Keating, Daniel Musgrove, Thomasin Sleigh, Rose Sneyd, Tammy Thompson, Meg Waghorn and Anita Weber, plus a contribution from workshop convenor Chris Price. Produced by Wai-te-ata Press and featuring a cover handprinted by John Brebner, *Domestica* will soon be available from the Victoria University Book Centre or Unity Books.

## 5. It's a jungle out there

After featuring in the Dominion Post on 2 December, the saga of the suppression of *Tarzan Presley* hit the pages of the *Guardian* this week.

The first print run has escaped pulping, but Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc has obliged Victoria University Press to refrain from reprinting Nigel Cox's extraordinary novel within New Zealand unless the name Tarzan is removed, and to refrain from selling it overseas in any form. *Tarzan Presley* has appeared on several book of the year lists in recent weeks, but it now seems destined to become a collector's item as well, making it a doubly attractive Christmas present.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/editor/story/0,,1371356,00.html>

## 6. Writers walking

We hear that last Saturday's episode of Billy Connolly's World Tour of New Zealand, screening on BBC1 in the UK, found the Scottish adventurer walking on the Wellington waterfront and reciting – with vast admiration – some of the texts at various stations of the Writers' Walk. Among those that caught his eye were extracts

from work by James K Baxter, Maurice Gee, and Bill Manhire. 'I love Wellington,' he said. Every time I come here it's different. I don't know another city which has grown so fast.' Then he mounted his motorbike and rode off towards New Plymouth.

The Writers' Walk is getting more and more attention. A recent article on Wellington in the San Francisco Chronicle paused to mention Lauris Edmond's lines about Wellington as 'the city of action, the world headquarters of the verb.'

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/11/14/TRG619POQ01.DTL>

Meantime, in that postmodern world where arts feeds on art feeds on art, Graeme Borthwick's exhibition 'The Wellington Writers Walk' is on show at Photospace, 37 Courtenay Place, Wellington, until 22 January.

See also:

<http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/tourism/destinations/wellingtonwriterswalk.html>

## **7. Erebus voices**

We have had several enquiries about the availability of Bill Manhire's 'Erebus Voices', the poem read by Sir Edmund Hillary at the recent Scott Base commemoration service. It is posted on the news page of the New Zealand Poetry Society's web site

<http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/news.html>

while a PDF of the Order of Service, including 'Erebus Voices', can be downloaded here:

<http://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz/downloads/information/ErebusOrderOfService.pdf>

## **8. Great bodies of work (1)**

The digitisation of world literature is gathering speed. Google has just announced that it is working with the libraries of Harvard, Stanford, the University of Michigan, and the University of Oxford as well as The New York Public Library to digitally scan books from their collections so that users worldwide can search them in Google.

And of particular interest to writers is the Paris Review's 'DNA of Literature' project, through which it plans to make all its famous Writers at Work interviews available online for free by July 2005. Already online are 1950s interviews with luminaries such as Truman Capote, William Faulkner, T. S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway, and when complete the archive will include over 300 interviews.

<http://www.parisreview.org/literature.php>

## **9. Great bodies of work (2)**

Closer to home, another major online work-in-progress is the *Collected Poems* of Kendrick Smithyman (1922-95), one of New Zealand's most prolific poets. Edited and with notes by Margaret Edgcumbe and Peter Simpson, the *Collected Poems* were assembled by Smithyman himself before his death, and the site therefore offers an 'authorised version'. When complete it will include over 1500 poems, 548 of which have never previously been published, but even this does not represent the complete Smithyman *oeuvre*, since according to the introduction, 'There are many other poems,

possibly numbering several hundreds, some previously published others not, which Smithyman decided not to preserve.' Even so Peter Simpson believes this could be some kind of a record, at least in the Southern Hemisphere.

#### **10. Summer writing workshops (Hawke's Bay)**

Te Ha is offering writing workshops with Maori writers James George and Hinemoana Baker as a component of the week-long Toi Maori Festival being held in Hastings from 10 to 15 January 2005. James George and Hinemoana Baker will lead workshops for writers in Creative Writing and Performing Your Work - poetry and song. The workshops cost \$10.00 per person and will be held at the Hastings Central Library on Friday 14 January at 1 pm. To register for the workshops, please contact: Naomi Singer, Toi Maori Aotearoa, email [naomi@maoriart.org.nz](mailto:naomi@maoriart.org.nz) or phone 04 801 7914. For further information on the Toi Maori Festival please contact: Toi Maori Aotearoa [www.maoriart.org.nz](http://www.maoriart.org.nz)

#### **11. Summer writing workshops (Wellington)**

Victoria University's Continuing Education department is offering a Summer Writing School from 22-25 January. Participants can choose to work on Fiction with Chris Else, Poetry with James Brown, Scriptwriting for Stage and Screen with Lorae Parry or Writing for Children with Kate De Goldi. Each group will work and learn separately but end the day together with talks and readings from the tutors. Small groups and a focus on the practical will give participants maximum opportunity to further develop writing skills and keep creativity flowing.

The workshops run from 9am-5pm, 22 to 25 January 2005 at Rutherford House in Lambton Quay, and the fee is \$395 (\$355). A detailed brochure and enrolment details are available from Andrea Cochrane, Victoria Continuing Education, phone 04 463 6560, e-mail [Andrea.Cochrane@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Andrea.Cochrane@vuw.ac.nz)

#### **12. Berlin calling**

Creative New Zealand is inviting applications for the 2005 Creative New Zealand Berlin Writers' Residency, which offers a New Zealand writer the opportunity to live and write in Berlin for a period of between eight months and one year. The biennial residency includes the rental costs of an apartment in the centre of Berlin, a stipend of NZ\$3000 a month and a return airfare from New Zealand to Germany. The selected writer will work on an approved project and must be able to undertake the residency for a negotiable period between August 2005 and July 2006. The residency is open to established New Zealand writers who have been resident in New Zealand for at least three years prior to making the application. Applications close at 5pm on Friday 11 February 2005, and guidelines can be downloaded from the resources section of Creative New Zealand's website (<http://www.creativenz.govt.nz>) or by contacting Rosemary Wildblood (Tel: 04-498 0741 Email: [rosemaryw@creativenz.govt.nz](mailto:rosemaryw@creativenz.govt.nz)) or Danielle Tolson (Tel: 04-473 0184 Email: [daniellet@creativenz.govt.nz](mailto:daniellet@creativenz.govt.nz)).

### 13. Spiny Babbler

This annual anthology of writing by current students in Australasian tertiary writing programmes is calling for submissions. Students currently enrolled in 'post-secondary' writing programmes are invited to submit fiction, creative non-fiction and sections from novels (up to 4000 words). Poetry will not be considered. Manuscripts (hard copy only) should be sent to Spiny Babbler, Dr Phillip Edmonds, English Department, School of Humanities, University of Adelaide, SA 3005, Australia.

### 14. Potatoes afloat

Growing Potatoes - A Play in a Pool will be performed IN Freyberg Pool during the Fringe NZ festival next year - 25 Feb to 1 March. Writer Janie Walker and director Katrina Chandra (H2O Productions) are looking for actors, non-actors, old people, young people, dancers, synchronized swimmers, production crew (stage manager, publicity assistants, front of house manager) – anyone who wants to be involved. Audition day is 9 January, venue and time tbc. Email your interest to [growingpotatoes@hotmail.com](mailto:growingpotatoes@hotmail.com).

### 15. Recent web reading

Sport Online

<http://sportmagazine.org/sport32/>

Best Scottish Poems

Following in the footsteps of *Best New Zealand Poems*, the Scottish Poetry Library has just launched an annual online anthology of *Best Scottish Poems*  
[http://www.spl.org.uk/best-poems\\_2004/](http://www.spl.org.uk/best-poems_2004/)

The Poet as Pop Star

<http://www.dailypennsylvanian.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2004/11/30/41ac2b8568dc9>

A Secret Staircase

<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/news/story.jsp?story=589577>

A Quiz

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,6903,1361074,00.html>

A Literary Elephant

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/17640>

A Sad Moment for Young Lovers

<http://dsc.discovery.com/news/briefs/20041213/juliet.html>

See also <http://www.listener.co.nz/default,2002.sm>

Scientific hair

<http://www.improb.com/projects/hair/hair-club-top.html>

Rimbaud's birthday

[http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=1542&ncid=1542&e=7&u=/afp/20041212/en\\_afp/afplifestyleethiopia\\_041212210316](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=1542&ncid=1542&e=7&u=/afp/20041212/en_afp/afplifestyleethiopia_041212210316)

Academic plagiarism

<http://chronicle.com/free/v51/i17/17a00802.htm>

Dave Eggers on Monty Python

<http://www.newyorker.com/critics/atlarge>

## **16. Great lists of our time**

Top 50 Oxymorons:

50. Act naturally
49. Found missing
48. Resident alien
47. Advanced BASIC
46. Genuine imitation
45. Airline food
44. Good grief
43. Same difference
42. Almost exactly
41. Government organization
40. Sanitary landfill
39. Alone together
38. Legally drunk
37. Silent scream
36. British fashion
35. Living dead
34. Small crowd
33. Business ethics
32. Soft rock
31. Butt head
30. Military intelligence
29. Software documentation
28. New York culture
27. Extinct life
26. Sweet sorrow
25. Childproof
24. "Now, then..."
23. Synthetic natural gas
22. Christian scientists
21. Passive aggression
20. Taped live
19. Clearly misunderstood
18. Peace force
17. New classic
16. Temporary tax increase
15. French bravery
14. Plastic glasses

13. Terribly pleased
12. Computer security
11. Political science
10. Tight slacks
9. Definite maybe
8. Pretty ugly
7. Twelve-ounce pound cake
6. Diet ice cream
5. Rap music
4. Working vacation
3. Exact estimate
2. Religious tolerance

And the NUMBER ONE top OXY-Moron

1. Microsoft Works