



## Newsletter – 21 April 2006

This is the 85th 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. Second trimester writing workshops

A reminder that applications for our second trimester workshops in Poetry, Children's Writing and Creative Non-fiction close on 1 June. This year we are pleased to welcome Eirlys Hunter as convenor of the children's writing workshop. She is the author of six books for children (including the *Finn's Quest* trilogy) and one adult novel. The Poetry workshop is convened by Chris Price, and Creative Non-Fiction by Harry Ricketts. Application forms are available at the IIML, or online at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/modernletters/>

### 2. Word travellers

Recent IIML writing graduates - and staff - are a well-travelled bunch, judging by their clean sweep of the new writer section in the recent Cathay Pacific Travel Media Awards. 2005 MA graduates Vana Manasiadis and Penny Walker both finished in the final three for the AA Directions Magazine Award for New Travel Writer of the Year – but they were pipped at the post by a dark horse, none other than our administrator Clare Moleta, who won the prize for an article on her trip to Laos. 2000 MA (Page) graduate Gerry Evans also featured on the shortlist in another category, the TravMedia & NZ Life & Leisure Magazine Award for Best Magazine Travel Story, with his *Listener* article ‘Down Mexico Way’. All four stories can be read online at [http://www.travelcommunicators.co.nz/index.php?page=26\\_Writing%20Awards](http://www.travelcommunicators.co.nz/index.php?page=26_Writing%20Awards)

### **3. Beautiful strangers**

The news is out: the writers who will travel to France in November to participate in the Belles Etrangères literary festival are: Jenny Bornholdt, Geoff Cush, Alan Duff, Sia Figiel, James George, Dylan Horrocks, Elizabeth Knox, Owen Marshall, Vincent O’Sullivan, Chad Taylor and Albert Wendt. Fiona Kidman, current Mansfield Fellow in Menton, will also take part. The 12 writers were selected by a committee convened by the Centre National du Livre, and will tour the country in pairs or groups, meeting readers in bookshops, libraries, high schools and cultural centres in various cities. Previously unpublished works by the writers will be translated into French and published in an anthology, and a special issue of the literary magazine *Europe* will be devoted to New Zealand literature.

### **4. Menton beckons**

Writers who missed out on selection as *belles étrangères* have another chance to get to *la belle France*. Applications to the 2006 Meridian Energy Katherine Mansfield Fellowship, available to published New Zealand writers, close on 14 July. The fellowship supports a writer to work at the Villa Isola Bella in Menton, France for a period of six months or more. Applicants should complete the official application form, along with a covering letter, a literary CV and a written proposal of the work to be undertaken in Menton. Guidelines and the application form are at <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/resources/forms-guidelines/katherine-mansfield-06.pdf>

### **5. The expanding bookshelf (1)**

Dinah Hawken’s new book, *One Shapely Thing*, was launched last night at the IIML. It mixes poetry with journals written in the month immediately after 9/11, and in early 2002 as the US response took shape. The publishers (Victoria University Press) note that ‘The result is to demonstrate much more clearly how her poetry is drawn from her life in both a public and global sense, and to draw together in fascinating new

ways her characteristic themes of personal responsibility and social justice, and of living in and with Nature.’ Dinah Hawken is taking a break from teaching the Writing the Landscape course at the IIML this year to spend several months in Geneva, where some of the journals in *One Shapely Thing* were written.

## **6. Phantoms of the opera**

An item about the Te Mata Estate Literary Festival in our last newsletter prompted well-known book trade figure Graham Beattie to send the following piece of advice to participating guests:

‘Way back in the sixties & seventies I lived in Napier during which time I owned a bookshop in that fair city before moving to Auckland to join Penguin Books. It was well recognised by many that the Hawke’s Bay Opera House in Hastings was haunted. One imagines with all the restoration work that has been going on there in recent times the ghost or ghosts will have become somewhat distressed so my advice to you and other poets is to avoid being in that superb House alone.’

Further information on the Festival, which takes place on 6 May, can be found at: <http://www.creativehastings.org.nz/editable/events.php>.

## **7. The sixties in context**

In the wake of recent appearances by those other (living) ghosts of the sixties, the Rolling Stones, leading New Zealand literary figures will be looking back at that decade this autumn at the Auckland City Art Gallery. *In Context* is a series of talks organised by literary website leafsalon.co.nz and inspired by the Gallery's exhibition *Art and the 60s from Tate Britain*. *In Context* will run on four Saturdays throughout May and early June. Sessions include C K Stead with Murray Edmond (6 May); Mark Young with an introduction by Barry Lett (13 May); Riemke Ensing with Kevin Ireland ((27 May), and Vanya Lowry with Frances Edmond (3 June). All sessions start at 1pm in the Main Gallery. Admission is free.

## **8. How to reach a larger audience?**

Inspired by the success of NZ Music Month, Booksellers NZ is planning the inaugural NZ Book Month for September 2006. A feature of the month is the publication of a Gift Book, an anthology of new NZ writing. Booksellers NZ describes The Gift Book as ‘an initiative to support and promote New Zealand writers’ and ‘the centrepiece of New Zealand Book Month’. 50,000 copies of the book will be distributed free to schools and libraries, and available through retailers at \$5 a copy. Work to appear in the book will be selected in a competition - the Gift Book Award - offering six \$5000 cash prizes and inclusion in the anthology. The competition is open to new and established writers, and excerpts from soon-to-be-published books are eligible. The

initiative has provoked considerable debate over at Leaf Salon (see the 4 April posting and subsequent comments at <http://www.leafsalon.co.nz/index.php>). The closing date for entries is 5 May 2006. For more information on eligibility and entry conditions, visit: [http://www.booksellers.co.nz/bk\\_bkmonth.htm](http://www.booksellers.co.nz/bk_bkmonth.htm).

## **9. How to reach an even larger audience?**

48HOURS is a very different kind of competition, one that requires filmmakers to create an entire short film from scratch in less than two days. The genre - splatter, romance, religious, coming of age, action, crime, monster, fairytale or even the dreaded musical – is only divulged at the start of the competition. Peter Jackson is the ‘wildcard’ judge and has also ‘dreamed up a secret genre to mess with the entrants’ minds.’ Last year nearly 300 teams competed, and the winners reportedly ‘used all their prize money and winning profile to shoot a TV pilot and now have a TV show in development with a network.’ The organisers claim an audience of ‘hundreds of thousands’. This year the event takes place in five cities but also allows for people to compete from anywhere in New Zealand. Shoot Weekend is on May 26-28. Fast filmmakers should register their team by 14 May at the 48HOURS Website <http://www.48hours.co.nz/>.

A new festival of short films from New Zealand and Australia is also looking for entries. The first annual Show Me Shorts Film Festival will take place over the weekend of November 24-26. Visit <http://www.showmeshorts.co.nz> to find out how to enter – the deadline is 31 July.

## **10. Documentary festival**

The documentary film festival is now calling for entries. Visit <http://www.docnzfestival.com/> if you have a film to enter. The dates for this year are 7-17 September in Auckland, 25 September to 4 October in Wellington, 12-15 October in Christchurch and 26-29 October in Dunedin.

## **11. Collecting Capote**

With the film *Capote* currently screening, we found ourselves wondering just how valuable early editions of *In Cold Blood* might now be. US\$6,500 for a signed first edition as it happens. But this is nothing alongside an even earlier Capote publication: the writer's birth certificate. Here is the description from ABE Books:

‘Truman Capote's original Birth Certificate.

Book Description: New Orleans: Parish of New Orleans, 1924., 1924. First Edition. Truman Capote's original Birth Certificate - issued in the parish of New Orleans & registered the 3rd day of October, 1924 & showing the birth of Truman Streckfus

Persons, September 30th, 1924. A unique document. A bit tattered but still quite bright & clean. In 1928, when Truman was 4, the Certificate was given by Capote's mother, Lillie Mae Faulk Persons [soon to be Capote] to her sister, Lucille Faulk Ingram for safekeeping. Lillie Mae was off to New York to make a new life leaving Truman to the care & nurturing of his Monroeville relatives. Outside of the cousins Truman lived with as a child, Lucille Faulk Ingram & her daughter, Cecilia, were his closest kin. As a fledgling writer looking for solitude, it was in the comfort of Lucille Ingram's home that Truman began to write his first novel.'

The price? A mere US\$35,000.00.

## 12. The expanding bookshelf (2)

The Antarctic literature shelf gained another novel earlier this month with the release of Laurence Fearnley's fifth book, *Degrees of Separation* (Penguin), set in and around Scott Base. Fearnley visited the white continent as part of the Artists to Antarctica scheme in January 2004. She graduated from Victoria with an MA in Creative Writing in 1997.

## 13. From the whiteboard

'Finding the right form for your story is simply to realise the most *natural* way of telling the story. The test of whether or not a writer has divined the natural shape of his story is just this: After reading it, can you imagine it differently, or does it silence your imagination and seem to you absolute and final? As an orange is final. As an orange is something nature has made just right.'

(Truman Capote)

## 14. Auckland wit comes to Wellington

Wellingtonians unable to visit Auckland for 'Witsunday', the Auckland Writers and Readers Festival's one-day (plus one separate evening) literary outing may be pleased to learn that four of the ten international guests are also travelling to the capital during May. Popular philosopher Alain de Botton will discuss *The Architecture of Happiness* (23 May), Frances Mayes travels over the course of *A Year in the World* (9 May) Audrey Niffenegger will talk about *The Time Traveller's Wife* (30 May) and award-winning British writer Hari Kunzru explores a wired world in his novel *Transmission* (22 May). Further Wellington event details are on the New Zealand Book Council website (<http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz>). Aucklanders and others can find the full 'Witsunday' programme (which also includes Sherman Alexie, John Banville, Victoria Finlay, Tim Harford, Uzodinma Iweala, Christopher Kremmer and Edmund White) online at <http://www.writersfestival.co.nz/>.

## **15. Recent web reading**

Colquhoun, Hass, Fisk, theatre reviews and more

<http://www.lumiere.net.nz/reader/arts.php>

Nick Twemlow interviews Bill Manhire

[http://www.pw.org/mag/dq\\_manhire.htm](http://www.pw.org/mag/dq_manhire.htm)

Griffin Poetry Prize shortlist

<http://www.canada.com/topics/entertainment/story.html?id=a11885d9-190d-4d5c-ae7d-2ebf9d29e13b&k=69390>

More on Ian Hamilton Finlay

[http://www.opendemocracy.net/ecology-landscape/finlay\\_3422.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/ecology-landscape/finlay_3422.jsp)

Getting attention in the UK

<http://youwriteon.com/>

Where the bloody hell are you?

<http://ad-rag.com/129108.php>

Potter's publisher

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/harrypotter/story/0,,1750664,00.html>

Online Beckett exhibition

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/beckett/>

Fibonacci poetry

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/04/17/style/fibo.php>

Muriel Spark

[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/16/world/16spark.html?\\_r=2&ex=1145332800&en=f827fcf344d9fbd8&ei=5087%0A&oref=slogin&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/16/world/16spark.html?_r=2&ex=1145332800&en=f827fcf344d9fbd8&ei=5087%0A&oref=slogin&oref=slogin)

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

How to talk to a crow (27 crow vocalisations):

Assembly Call (1)

Simple Scolding Call (1)

Modified Scolding Call (1)

Alert or Warning Call (1)

Dispersal or Alarm Call (1)  
Distress Call (1)  
Pre-mortality or Death Call (1)  
Defensive Threat Calls (1)  
Frustration Notes (1)  
Immature Hunger and Feeding Call (1)  
Adult Food Call (1)  
Announcement Call (1)  
Contact Call (1)  
Duet Notes (1)  
Courtship Vocalizations (1)  
Juvenile Notes (1)  
Contentment Notes (1)  
Rattling Notes (1)  
Wow-Wow Notes (1)  
Carr-Carr Notes (1)  
Whisper Notes (1)  
Coo Notes (1)  
Organ Notes (1)  
Woo-ah Notes (1)  
C.b. pascuus Screams (1)  
Ordinary Cawing (1)  
Mimicry (1)

<http://www.crows.net/calls.html>

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