



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

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This is the 141st 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. Unity's big book month

Last Thursday at Unity Books in Wellington Victoria University Press launched Vincent O'Sullivan's collection *Further Convictions Pending*, rounding off an extraordinary decade of poetic output by gathering a selection of work from his last four volumes along with a completely new collection of poems. It's been such a busy time for launches and events at Unity this month that publisher Fergus Barrowman suggested the shop should institute a regular Thursday night drinks session, regardless of whether or not there was a book to be launched – a suggestion which seemed to be greeted with enthusiasm by at least some of the staff.

The busy month of May continues next week with a free reading by the author of the much-praised debut novel *American Rust*, [Philipp Meyer](#) (Wednesday 27 May, 6 pm), and the launch of Mark Derby's *Kiwi Companeros: New Zealand and the Spanish Civil War* (Thursday 28 May, 6 pm), at which the Spanish Ambassador will speak. Unity's busy spell continues into next month with the launch on 3 June of *The Angel's Cut*, Elizabeth Knox's sequel to *The Vintner's Luck*. The book will be launched by Niki Caro, director of the film of *The Vintner's Luck*, which is due for release later this year. The launch of the sequel to the book of the film...

2. One door closes, another door opens?

Meanwhile round the corner, Dymocks Lambton Quay went into liquidation last week — whereas up in Auckland, a new branch has recently opened on Ponsonby Road. Dymocks has closed its Auckland head office and moved the administration of its outlets to Sydney. There is a rumour that the Wellington branch may yet be back in a new location, but whether there's anything in it we cannot say. Harvey McQueen has written thoughtfully about the loss of Dymocks on his [blog](#).

3. The expanding bookshelf (1)

Chris Price's new poetry collection *The Blind Singer* ([Auckland University Press](#)) was launched by poet laureate Michele Leggott at the Gus Fisher Gallery in Auckland on 11 May. It's a book full of music-related work, and the launch included performances of poems with pianist/composer Jonathan Besser and guitarist (and Chris's partner) Robbie Duncan, a literary contribution to New Zealand Music Month. Graham Beattie's account of the event can be read [here](#), and there's an interview with Lynn Freeman about the book on yesterday's [Arts on Sunday](#) programme. Chris will also be talking about music and poetry (other people's) with Bryan Crump on National Radio this Wednesday, 27 May at around 8.40 pm.

4. Music and poetry

More music and poetry can be heard in Wellington on Friday 29 May at 6.30pm as part of the [NZSO's](#) Made in New Zealand concert. Among other works in the programme, there'll be a performance of Douglas Lilburn's classic setting of the Allen Curnow poem *Landfall in Unknown Seas*, as well as *Three Poems of the Sea*, all narrated by Bill Manhire. Book at [Ticketek](#).

5. The expanding bookshelf (2)

Laurence Fearnley's novel *Mother's Day* hit the shelves just in time for the day itself on 10 May, and garnered a good deal of media attention in that weekend's papers, although it doesn't offer the cheerful portrait of motherhood more often expected of media stories on the subject. Having completed her MA in Creative Writing at

Victoria University some years back, Fearnley has just enrolled in a PhD in Creative Writing at the IIML, a three-year programme during which she will complete a novel and a 50,000-word research project. The *New Zealand Herald* asked Fearnley, ‘As a successful, published author, what’s in it for her?’

‘I like the sense of community it offers,’ she responded. ‘I like being by myself and the solitude of writing but it’s really nice to get back into the world. I’ve never belonged to a writing group and it’s 10 years since my masters. I felt very flat after writing Maggie, worn out, tired, I didn’t feel like writing another book. So this is a nice way to get motivated again.’ You can read the full profile [here](#), and another from the Otago Daily Times [here](#). The IIML’s [website](#) will shortly add a page featuring profiles of all its current PhD students and their projects.

6. The writing life starts here

For those not quite ready for a PhD, but who would like to make a start on the writing life, a reminder that the application deadline for the IIML’s second-trimester workshops is coming up on 3 June. This year the poetry workshop is being taught by award-winning Wellington poet [James Brown](#). [Dinah Hawken’s](#) Writing the Landscape workshop offers the opportunity to explore the world around you through poetry and creative non-fiction, and for those interested in writing for children, [Eirlys Hunter’s](#) workshop completes the trio. Further information and applications for all workshops plus an application form can be found [here](#), or call the Institute of Modern Letters on 04 463 6854.

7. From the whiteboard

‘What is a writer? Someone who writes. Planning to write is not writing. Researching is not writing. Talking to people about what you’re doing, none of that is writing. Writing is writing.’

—E L Doctorow

8. Menton or Auckland?

Applications are open for the position of Creative New Zealand Auckland University Writer in Residence at the Michael King Writers’ Centre (July-December 2009), and for the New Zealand Post Mansfield Prize 2010. The Auckland resident will live for the second half of this year at the Michael King Writers’ Centre in Devonport, and applications close on 10 June. Detailed information about the residency, the terms and conditions and information about the centre can be viewed at the [Michael King Writers’ Centre website](#) or contact the administrator on 09 445 8451 or by [email](#).

The Mansfield Prize recipient will of course reside in Menton for six months, and work in the Villa Isola Bella. For the application form and more information on the

selection criteria and application requirements read the [guidelines](#). Applications close at 5pm on Friday 26 June 2009. For further information contact Felicity Birch, Programme Adviser by [email](#) or on (04) 498 0735.

9. Screenwriters alert

The New Zealand Film Commission is looking for fresh and original feature film scripts from writers who have not previously received financial support from the Commission to workshop with development experts in its 1st Writers Initiative. Up to six screenwriters will be selected, and the deadline is 19 June. Further details of the 1st Writers Initiative are [here](#).

Also due on 19 June are entries for the New Zealand Writers' Guild's Final Draft [Short Film Competition](#).

10. Nomination days

Michele Leggott's two-year term as poet laureate concludes at the end of June, when she'll be in Wellington to launch the book written during that term, and a CD of selected poems. You can now have a say in who the next laureate will be. The National Library of New Zealand, which administers the laureateship, has just called for nominations for the position, which will commence on 1 July. The new laureate will be expected to produce a collection of poems, participate in poetry-related activities, and seek to raise national awareness of the value of reading and writing poetry. For further information and a nomination form visit the Library's [website](#) or [email](#). Nominations close on 19 June.

Coming up even sooner (on 5 June) is the closing date for nominations for the Prime Ministers Awards for Literary Achievement in Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry, each worth \$60,000. If there's a particular writer you feel should be richly rewarded for their contribution to New Zealand literature, the nomination form is here. www.creativenz.govt.nz/Portals/0/publications/pm%20awards%20nomination%20flyer.doc

11. Good money for poetry...

...could be yours if you enter the [Landfall Kathleen Grattan Award](#) for an original collection of poems (or long poem) by a New Zealand or Pacific resident. The closing date for applications is 31 July, and the winner will receive \$16,000 and a year's subscription to *Landfall*. The winner of last year's award, Joanna Preston's *The Summer King*, is due for release by Otago University Press on Montana Poetry Day in July.

12. The poet as funeral director

We hear that, thanks to a mischievous and anonymous contribution to Simon Armitage's Wikipedia entry, many people (including a lazy researcher at the *Daily Telegraph* and an embarrassed chairperson at the Cheltenham Festival of Literature) now believe that he once held the post of trainee funeral director. 'If only,' the poet is rumoured to have murmured in response.

13. Your work here?

Swamp is an online publication created by and for postgraduate creative writers and run from the University of Newcastle, Australia. Submissions for the fourth issue close on 5 June, and the theme is 'post'. You should 'feel free to interpret (or productively ignore) this any way you see fit, from post-apocalypse to scratching-post and everything in between.' See [Swamp](#) for the previous three issues, editorial information, and submission guidelines.

Closer to home, *4th Floor 2009* is calling for submissions from current or past Whitireia writing students – their deadline is also 5 June. Send submissions [here](#).

And finally, the gothic funk writers out there (you know who you are!) might like to send some work to arts journal *The Paramanu Pentaquark* (based in Chicago). The first issue, available by CD-ROM and [online](#) was released in February 2009. The editor describes the journal as 'an eclectic collection of music, painting, photography, poetry, and prose that runs a line from the evocative to the visceral.' Visit [here](#) to submit your work.

14. Vic poets

Andy Armitage has just sent word that he's starting up the informal Vic Poets workshop again, with the first meeting on Monday 8 June, 6-8 pm in Murphy's on Cuba Mall (unless there are any other suggestions for a venue). Interested poets can email him [here](#) for further information.

15. Thank you

Many thanks to Elizabeth Alley for her generous donation of books to our MA Library.

16. Recent web reading

[Russian literary greats \(in gingerbread\)](#)

[Dante in cyberspace](#)

Bernard Beckett reviewed [here](#) and [here](#).

[Judith Thurman learns Maori](#)

[The wordshed](#)

[Martin Amis podcasts](#)

[Jim Shepard likes Martin Edmond](#)

[An Eleanor Catton story](#)

[The Burns Banner](#)

[Poetry knitting](#)

[More knitting](#)

Series titles of penny dreadfuls/dime novels contained in [Stanford's Dime Novel and Story Paper Collection](#)

[The writer's life](#)

[Colm Toibin interview](#)

[Andrew Davies interview](#)

[Typenesting](#)

[Best hair of 80's metal bands](#)

[The telegraph pole appreciation society](#)

[Ukulele books](#)

[Sydney](#)

[follows Wellington](#)

[Poets ranked by beard weight](#)

[On creativity and the 9.00 am gin and tonic](#)

[The second issue of THE BOW-WOW SHOP](#)

[A poetry workshop](#)

17. Great lists of our time

A selection of jigs (from [Nottingham Folk Music Database's](#) permuted index for "jigs").

Backstairs Jig
The Leaking Bagpipe
Jan Martindale's Trip to the Bathroom
Bean setting (North Skelton)
Belfast Almanac
Miss Bennet's Jig
The Bent Pin
Biddy the Bowl Wife
Bung your Eye
Little Burnt Potato
Danny MacPhail's Dilemma
Go to the Devil and Shake Yourself
Dancing the Dustman
Flirtation!!!
Manor Gardens
Goat on the Hill arrangement
Grandfather's Pet
Swimming in the Gutter
Haste to the Wedding
The Weaver and his Wife 1
The Weaver and his Wife 2
The Old Horned Sheep or The Humours Of Donnybrook
Northern Hospitality Jig or Seamus Plagiarism
Hot Punch
Icy Jig
Ingalls' Jingle
Irish Washerwoman standard
Irish Washerwoman variation
Life is all Chequered
Island Spider
Rake Maker's Jig
Workshop Jig
Kilty Lads
Cherish the Ladies
Princess Margaret
My Wife's a Wanton Wee Thing
The Naughty 'Noochie
Starry Night for a Ramble
On the Trail of the Lonesome Pine
Pete's Peerie Boat
Pizza and Apple Pies
Pine Cones
Red Cigar
Red Stocking Sam
Orange Rogue
Scrabble on Sunday?
Sir Watkin's Jigg

Smash the Windows
The Family's Pride
The Self
The Spaceman
Tripping Upstairs

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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, or Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz