



## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 13 August 2010

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This is the 159<sup>th</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. Story & script guru at the IIML

In our final international masterclass for the year, Christopher Vogler will be working with the 2010 MA (Script) students at the IIML, where his book *The Writer's Journey* is one of the set texts for the course. Vogler is a veteran story consultant for major Hollywood film companies and a respected teacher of filmmakers and writers around

the globe. *The Writer's Journey*, applying the ancient patterns of myth to modern story-telling, has helped to shape the way people in movies, TV, and publishing think about stories and is required reading at many film schools and literature programmes. Vogler has influenced the screenplays of movies from *The Lion King* to *Fight Club* to *The Thin Red Line* and most recently wrote the first installment of *Ravenskull*, a Japanese-style manga or graphic novel.

## **2. Four by four**

It's another busy week for literature in Wellington. Tomorrow (Saturday 14 August) from 4 pm, four Kapiti Coast writers, Hinemoana Baker (*Koiwi Koiwi*), Sylvie Haisman (*This Barren Rock*), Lynn Jenner (*Dear Sweet Harry*) and Tina Makereti (*Once Upon a Time in Aotearoa*) will be celebrating their recently published books of poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction at Valhalla Cafe in Raumati South, from 4pm on Saturday 14 August. There will be readings, book sales and signings, and cake to share with the audience. Beverages and cafe food will be available; entry is free.

## **3. First fictions and second helpings**

On Monday 16 August you can catch the 'First Fictions' of IIML MA (Page) graduates Craig Cliff and Tina Makereti on stage at the Te Papa Marae from 12.15-1.15 pm as part of our Writers on Mondays series. Craig Cliff's *A Man Melting* and Tina Makereti's *Once Upon a Time in Aotearoa* were both launched recently to favourable reviews, and they will read from their work and discuss their different approaches to the short story form with David Geary.

That evening the New Zealand Poetry Society features Lyall Bay writer James McNaughton. McNaughton completed his MA at the IIML in the same year as Michael Laws and his first book, a collection of prose poems called *The Stepmother Tree*, was published in 2001 by Laws' Darius Press, which released in tandem with a rugby biography, *The Norm Hewitt Story*. McNaughton then spent several years teaching in Japan, returning in 2008 to publish a second book, *I Want More Sugar* with Steele Roberts. The meeting starts with an open mic at 7.30pm at the Thistle Inn, 3 Mulgrave St, Wellington. Entry \$5 (\$3 for NZPS members).

## **4. Sparks fly**

Seven more Victoria creative writing graduates - Pip Adam, Airini Beautrais, Tim Corballis, Chloe Lane, Anna Livesey, Bill Nelson, Lucy Orbell – will join poetry workshop convenor James Brown in illuminating City Gallery next week when they premiere new pieces created in response to the works of the eight artists featured in the exhibition *Ready to Roll*. They roll out the new in *The Sparks Fly Upwards* on Wednesday 18 August at 6pm in the Adam Auditorium. Entry is free, and a limited edition publication produced in conjunction with this event will be available for purchase on the night (\$5).

If film is your thing, you might want to check out *Adaptation and Collaboration*, an event starting at 7pm the same night at the Film Archive (84 Taranaki St) in which Philippa Boyens (*Lord of the Rings*, *King Kong*, *The Lovely Bones*) talks with M.C. Linda Niccol (*Second Hand Wedding*) about turning literature into cinema. Places are limited, though, so please register with [steven@nzwritersguild.org.nz](mailto:steven@nzwritersguild.org.nz).

## 5. Writers Read: Witi Ihimaera

On Thursday 19 August at 6pm you can hear Witi Ihimaera read from and discuss his recent work at Massey University in Wellington. The television film adaptation of his 1995 novel *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* will be shown on New Zealand television later this year. His current projects include a short story collection, *Purity of Ice* and, with producer Charlotte Yates, a show which will premiere at the Auckland Arts Festival in 2010. He will be speaking in the Theatre (10A02), Museum Building, Massey University, Buckle Street, Wellington, Entrance D, (access Theatre from East side of Building). There is limited seating, though, so they'd like you to rsvp (acceptances only) to [s.kelleher@massey.ac.nz](mailto:s.kelleher@massey.ac.nz) by today, Friday 13 August. Confirmation of space being available will be by email.

## 6. Summer writing workshops

Every year we offer a special workshop taught by outstanding Creative Writing graduates from the University of Iowa. The Iowa Writers' Workshop is America's oldest and most prestigious creative writing programme, and numbers among its graduates a dozen winners of the Pulitzer Prize. Raymond Carver, John Irving and Flannery O'Connor are among the most distinguished fiction writers to have come through Iowa. Poets include Robert Bly, Jorie Graham, and US poet laureates Rita Dove and Mark Strand. Over the summer of 2010/2011 two graduates of the Iowa Writers' Workshop will convene workshops in prose and poetry at the IIML.

### 1. Prose stream: *Courage and Tenderness*

This short fiction workshop invites you to write in the company of writers who demonstrate courage and tenderness in language, story, and meaning. Along the way, we'll explore the challenges they took on, the mysteries they delved into, and the strength and quality of the feelings they drew from themselves – so that you can advance your own work as a writer. Authors will likely include Alice Munro, Dylan Thomas, Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges, Roberto Bolano, and Anne Michaels.

The convenor of this workshop is Thomas Fox Parry. His fiction deals with love, both awkward and grand, heroism, both big and small, as well as strangeness and awe in the midst of adventure. He has a novel and a collection of interlinked stories in the works. Aside from writing, he has worked as a mover, donut maker, prison tour guide and coat-check boy.

### 2. Poetry stream

According to the poet Robert Creeley, ‘we make with what we have, and in this way anything is worth looking at.’ And according to Louis Zukofsky, ‘poetry is derived obviously from everyday existence (real or ideal).’ Through reading many modern poets and their statements of poetics, we will attempt to figure out where meaning is found – and made – in poetry. Through writing experiments and workshops, we will focus on ways to work within constraints of the poem. All that is required is willingness, and inquisitiveness, and a sense of humour.

The convenor of this workshop is Alan Felsenthal. He was the Associate Editor for Poetry at *The Iowa Review*, and has taught Creative Writing at the University of Iowa. He co-edits a chapbook press known as *The Song Cave*. His work has appeared in *Microfilme Magazine*, *Hannah*, *improbable object*, and *The Iowa Review*.

Both courses run from 6 January -11 February, and involve two 3-hour workshops each week. For full details see our [website](#).

## **7. ‘The long and short of it’**

Unity Books is offering a new short story prize this year with two categories: stories under 1,000 words and stories over 10,000 words. The winner from each category will be published in *Sport* magazine and receive a \$1,000 Unity Books voucher to spend at their leisure. The top six will be also be published in a special, limited edition book to be sold at Unity. The panel of judges includes Elizabeth Knox, Bill Manhire and Emily Perkins. (The judges will not know the identities of the entrants.) Entries open on 1 September 2010 and close on Christmas Eve. The winners, as well as the Long and the Short book, will be launched & announced respectively at the Auckland Writers and Readers Festival in May 2011. Terms and conditions and entry forms can be found at Unity Books' [website](#).

## **8. From the whiteboard**

‘The basic rule given us was simple and heartbreaking. A story to be effective had to convey something from the writer to the reader, and the power of its offering was the measure of its excellence. Outside of that, there were no rules. A story could be about anything and could use any means and any technique at all - so long as it was effective. As a subhead to this rule, it seemed to be necessary for the writer to know what he wanted to say, in short, what he was talking about. As an exercise we were to try reducing the meat of our story to one sentence, for only then could we know it well enough to enlarge it to three- or six- or ten-thousand words.

‘So there went the magic formula, the secret ingredient. With no more than that, we were set on the desolate, lonely path of the writer... Over the years I have written a great many stories and I still don't know how to go about it except to write it and take my chances.’

— John Steinbeck, on studying creative writing at Stanford

## **9. Turbine reminder**

Submissions of poetry, fiction and creative non-fiction are invited for the 2010 edition of *Turbine*, which will be edited by Hannah Newport-Watson and Sylvie Thomson. The submission deadline is 26 October: check our submission guidelines [here](#).

## **10. Brazilian writer's block**

Rom-com with writer's block? A film that may unite the interests and preoccupations of script and page writers will screen in Wellington, Auckland and Queenstown during September as part of the Reel Brazil Film Festival. *Love Stories Last Only 90 Minutes* is a film about a young writer living in bohemian idleness in Rio. He's spent years writing a novel he just can't seem to finish and gets by on handouts from his family and lives a strained relationship with beautiful and successful wife Julia. Everything seems to change, though, when he starts to suspect that Julia is cheating on him with a sensual and flirtatious Argentinean woman. The film will have only two screenings in each city: in Wellington it's at the Paramount on Monday 13 September. See the festival website [www.reelbrazil.co.nz](http://www.reelbrazil.co.nz) for details of all screenings – and there's a trailer on [Youtube](#).

## **11. Fresh shorts**

Fresh Shorts is a new low budget short film scheme run in-house by the NZ Film Commission. It aims to identify the next generation of New Zealand feature filmmakers by nurturing and inspiring up-and-coming talent. Each year Fresh Shorts will support up to eight narrative short films at \$10,000 per film, and up to eight narrative short films at \$30,000 per film. The level of funding will be based on the director's experience. Applications close on Friday 8 October 2010: see the [website](#) for more details about the scheme, including the Fresh Shorts criteria and application information.

## **12. Baysting leaves Apra Board**

Arthur Baysting is leaving the board of Apra after 18 years. Baysting has been a Non-executive Writer Director (New Zealand) since 1992, but he joined APRA in 1979, and is a long-time advocate for local content in New Zealand. He co-wrote the screenplay for Roger Donaldson's *Sleeping Dogs* and co-wrote the 1980 NZ Song of the Year *Tears*; His comedy alter-ego Neville Purvis had his own television show in 1979. He collaborates regularly; notably with Peter Dasant for Justine Clarke's *Songs to Make You Smile* and *I Like to Sing* CDs, and with Bill Lake from the *Windy City Strugglers*. This means the search is on for a new representative for New Zealand Writers on the APRA Board. To learn more about the Board click [here](#). To learn more

about the nomination process for new Board Members & the timeline around it click [here](#).

### 13. Writers' festivals north and south

*He Reo Aroha*, the play written by 2008 MA graduate Miria George and Jamie McCaskill, has its first Auckland season from 25-28 August at the Glen Eden Playhouse Theatre, Waitakere City as part of [Going West](#) Books and Writers Festival 2010. Tickets are available from Ticketmaster 0800 111 999 or from [ticketmaster](#).

The main event of Going West is the books and writers weekend 'Right Word, Right Place, Right Time' from 10-12 September at the Titirangi War Memorial Hall. Guest include Dames Anne Salmond and Joan Metge, Roger Horrocks speaking on artist Len Lye; poet, musician and cult figure Bill Direen (ex Flying Nun); Bee Dawson whose newly published book *A History of Gardening in New Zealand* traces our nation of gardeners; broadcaster, entertainer and writer Max Cryer; biographer Paul Millar and poets Albert Wendt, Helen Sword and Paula Green. VUW Writer in Residence Jenny Bornholdt will be on stage with Fiona Farrell for the launch of a new book, *Words Chosen Carefully*, which brings together interviews with 15 New Zealand authors. There will be sessions paying tribute to poet and short story writer J C Sturm, commentator and writer Paul Reynolds, and one of New Zealand's most distinguished writers, Bill Pearson.

Meanwhile down south ,The Press Christchurch Writers' Festival kicks off on 9 September, and seems to include quite a few writers who've taught or studied at the IIML. Harry Ricketts (seen talking sport with Paul Thomas and John Saker last week in Wellington) debates the proposition that 'it's only a game' with Chris Laidlaw and Pauline O'Regan. Bill Manhire appears in the popular *Five New Zealand Poets* event alongside Diana Bridge, Cilla McQueen, John Dickson and Bernadette Hall. Rachael King appears in an event called *Good Stories*, and Craig Cliff (see item 3 above) is one of the writers *Hot Off the Press*. Alison Wong, currently shortlisted for major literary awards on both sides of the Tasman, qualifies to appear in the International Night since she's now crossed the ditch to live in Australia. For a full programme visit the [website](#).

### 14. Poetic CPR

Programme details are now available for the second part of the [trans-Tasman poetry symposium](#), Home and Away, which aims to achieve a poetic version of the CER (Closer Economic Relations) programme between Australia and New Zealand — CPR, perhaps? The Australian end of the programme runs on 1-2 September at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS).\* Everyone is welcome to attend; there is no registration fee and all sessions are public. The New Zealand contingent includes John Newton, Chris Price, Michele Leggott, Janet Charman and Selina Tusitala Marsh; the Australians are fielding John Tranter, Pam Brown, Jill Jones, Ken Bolton and Cath Kenneally among others.

The organisers are also inviting submissions for the second half of All Together Now: A Digital Bridge for Auckland and Sydney. The first part of the digital bridge is on display [here](#).

Anyone interested in poetry and its conversations can send a submission to the digital bridge. Poems and prose (prose no longer than 2000 words) should be sent to [nzepc@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:nzepc@auckland.ac.nz) as attached files. If you are sending images, audio or video, check about suitable formats for upload. The deadline for submissions is 15 September.

### **15. Advice for poetry readings**

‘Knowing what audiences like, I go in for amusing introductions. It's easy enough to read out a poem, but a good introduction is worth its weight in gold and can carry a poem on its coat-tails for years....Jokes make friends with people. The trouble is there isn't any noise, like that of laughter, associated with the other emotions, so you tend to stick with the funny ones just to make sure you're not alone up there. If it were customary to burst into loud sobs at sad poems, or growls at angry ones, I'd be inclined to drop the jokes forever. ‘

- Hugo Williams

### **16. Writing for children**

The Wellington Children's Book Association is offering a one-day workshop with Fleur Beale on Saturday 4 September, 10am-4pm The cost is \$75 (includes morning & afternoon tea), and course participants may, if they wish, send one short story (of under 1200 words) before 20 August, for Fleur to briefly assess.

The WCBA suggest that the course might help kickstart an entry into this year's Jack Lasenby Award, a competition for short stories for children with a prize of \$500. Entries must be received by 5pm on 8 October. For more information about the course, and entry forms for the award, email the [Wellington Children's Book Association](#).

### **17. Recent web reading**

[Sydney Writers' Festival highlights](#)

[The new wave of book events](#)

[New Zealand Film Commission review](#)

[Lynda Chanwai-Earle interviewed](#)

[Pip Adam reviewed](#)

[Craig Cliff reviewed](#)

[Lynn Jenner interviewed](#)

[John Newton interviewed](#)

[David Markson's library](#)

[Chad Taylor likes London](#)

[Fiction vs non-fiction](#)

[Listening to Lydia Davis](#)

[Lloyd Jones and Bill Manhire go to France](#)

[Alan Duff plus](#)

[Amazing maze](#)

[One helluva number](#)

[Weirdly obsessive viewing](#)

[Eliot Weinberger interviewed](#)  
(you will need to scroll down the page)

[Bill Manhire analysed](#)

[The Great Gatsby reviewed](#)  
[And again](#)

[Kate Morris and Rachel Callinan at Capital E/Downstage](#)

[Some poems Jenny Bornholdt likes](#)

[Art vs laundry](#)

[Poetry maths](#)

[Pat \(Valdimar\) White's blog](#)

[A new & terrifying word: blepharospasm](#)

[Haiku Laureate - the mysteries of geography](#)

[David Vann goes elsewhere](#)

[NZ canine literature at the Edinburgh Festival](#)



[Emily Dickinson at Lolerature](#)

[Where Ken Duncum gets his ideas](#)

[Fine advice for aspiring poets](#)

[Molly Bloom at Lolerature](#)

[Maxine Alterio briefly leaves the World War I frontline to accept a Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award](#)

[Breaking the code - Chelsea Clinton's wedding poem](#)

[The whole package - Ashleigh Young's Afternoon with Jane](#)

[Bill Manhire is guesting at the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival - programme just announced](#)

[Going West is twittering](#)

[Larkin's Toad](#)

[Fay Weldon pursued by a flock of Maori spirits!](#)

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

A sample of subjects covered in Emily Post's Etiquette, 1922 (from the [index](#))

How to eat asparagus

Close of letter to an Archbishop

Handshaking at balls

Big dinners

Bread and butter letters

Bridal veil

Invitation to an "At Home" with dancing

Carrying of bundles

Afternoon teas in honour of celebrities

Etiquette at a circus

Conversation on a steamer

Days at home

How to introduce Ex-President of the United States

Folding a note

"Hello" as a greeting

Icecream as dessert

Motoring

Reading at table

Walking across a ballroom

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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)