



HOME & AWAY 2010

A Trans Tasman Poetry Symposium
30-31 March at the University of Auckland
1-2 September in Sydney and the Blue Mountains

Not everyone can get to everything in real time; and then there is poetry. The New Zealand Electronic Poetry Centre (**nzepc**) presents HOME & AWAY 2010, a trans Tasman poetry symposium dedicated to generating work and conversation face to face and in the global/digital neighbourhood. We want to talk about (and produce more) literary connections between Australia, New Zealand and the world of 21st century poetry.

We are planning a two-part symposium in Auckland and Sydney. We will host readings, launches and forum-style talks at the University of Auckland 30-31 March and celebrate the publication of *Steal Away Boy: Selected Poems of David Mitchell* (Auckland UP). During the March event we will also establish a digital bridge and invite poets and others to start from one end with a contribution (text, images, audio or video). Further contributions to the bridge will be uploaded as the symposium convenes in Sydney 1-2 September. In this way we hope to create two-way traffic between points in time and places where people meet.

Let us know if you would like to attend HOME & AWAY 2010 (March or September) and check out how to contribute to the digital bridge. Our resources are as usual slender but in the spirit of past **nzepc** symposiums (3RD BIRTHDAY 2004, FUGACITY 2005 and BLUFF 2006) we will do our best to accommodate expressions of interest.

For an earlier example of **nzepc** activity offshore, see LOVE, WAR & LAST THINGS: A DIGITAL BRIDGE FOR FLORENCE (2008).

Pam Brown, Martin Edmond, Brian Flaherty and Michele Leggott
24 March 2010

HOME & AWAY 2010

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HOME & AWAY 2010 at the University of Auckland

*your two islands seemed fragile and vulnerable. In humor, but also in a curious seriousness,
I wondered if one might not extend oars from either side of each, and row them about in
celebration of some appropriate festival* (Robert Creeley, 1976)

Monday 29 March

7-8 pm Pot luck dinner at Michael King Writers' Centre. Bring a friend and something to eat or drink

8-9 pm Michael Farrell and Jill Jones talk and read from their 2009 anthology *Out of the Box: Contemporary Australian Gay and Lesbian Poets*. Chair: Martin Edmond.

Venue: Michael King Writers' Centre, Mt Victoria, Devonport

Tuesday 30 March

11-12 noon All Together Now / Kia Kotahi Rā. Poets and students from Poetry off the Page and Masters of Creative Writing make collaborative text for the digital bridge

12-1 pm Performances and shared lunch with students

Venue: Pat Hanan Room (Arts 2, Rm 501. Cnr of Symonds St & Grafton Rd)

1.20 pm Welcome / Whakataua

2-3 pm **Session 1** Jill Jones, 'Poetry's latitudes: "scope for thought and action"'; Ann Vickery, 'Beyond a National Paradigm: Travelling Poetics.' Chair: Brian Flaherty

Venue: Pat Hanan Room

Afternoon tea

3.30-4.30 pm **Session 2** Martin Edmond, 'The Fictional Genealogies of David Mitchell'; Nigel Roberts, 'Expanding The List: Dave Mitchell in Wellington, Auckland and Sydney.'

Chair: Peter Simpson

Venue: Pat Hanan Room

4.30-5 pm *David Mitchell Live at the Globe*. Film screening introduced by Genevieve McClean

Venue: Pat Hanan Room

5.30-7 pm Launch of *Steal Away Boy: Selected Poems of David Mitchell* (Auckland UP) and David Mitchell **nzepc** author page
Venue: Gus Fisher Gallery at the Kenneth Myers Centre, 74 Shortland St, CBD

Wednesday 31 March

12.30-1.30 pm Lunch. Senior Common Room, Old Government House. Cnr of Princes St and Waterloo Quadrant.

2-3 pm **Session 3** John Newton, 'You Kiwis are really eccentric, aren't you?'; Ian Wedde, 'the sound of one hand typing.' Chair: Murray Edmond

Afternoon tea

3.30-4.30 pm **Session 4** Cath Kenneally, 'Not revenge: *eaten cold* and its debt to Janet Charman's *cold snack*'; Mark Young, 'Widening the Community: *Otoliths* and how.' Chair: Selina Tusitala Marsh
Venue: Pat Hanan Room

5-5.30 pm Launch of Jill Jones' *Dark Bright Doors* (Wakefield Press) and Mark Young's *Genji Monogatari* (Otoliths)
Venue: Old Government House Lounge

5.30-7 pm LOUNGE #12 at Old Government House. Featuring Serie Barford, Janet Charman, Michael Farrell, Jeffrey Paparoa Holman, Jill Jones, Jan Kemp, Cath Kenneally, Genevieve McClean, John Newton, Vivienne Plumb, Nigel Roberts, Ian Wedde, Mark Young. MC: Michele Leggott

Thursday 1 April

Day: Trip to Waiheke for lunch and a walk on the beach. 11.00 am ferry.

7.30 pm: Genevieve McClean's Projector Project 2: poetry and film collaborations. Te Karanga Gallery, K Road

A Note : Pam Brown sends regards

Pam Brown, one of the organisers of HOME & AWAY 2010, has been prevented by ill health from attending the March symposium. Her presence will be sorely missed, and we hope to see her fit and well in Sydney in September

Information: Michele Leggott m.leggott@auckland.ac.nz
24 March 2010

Jill Jones , Poetry's latitudes: 'scope for thought and action'

It has been almost a truism within Australian and New Zealand literary cultures that the two countries have tended to look south to north, to British/European and US 'centres', rather than to each other. Or they have focused inwardly, worrying over a 'national literature'. In the case of poetry, there's been some migratory exchange across 'the Ditch' and occasional gestures towards a more lateral poetic exchange. I was included in a small trans-Tasman project in the early 1990s through the Christchurch-based Hazard Press series of Australian and New Zealand poetry books. In other words, my first book was published in a city and a nation I had never stepped into at that stage. And, of course, there have been anthologies and features in journals in each country aiming for Antipodean connections.

But is it now time to take the latitude offered by new communication and publishing frameworks (and cheap airfares, while they last) for regular discourse, exchange, collaboration and, yes, argument? In fact, for a de-centredness that also takes in the Pacific rim, and the many island as well as continental nations of the Pacific and neighbouring seas, or further, an engagement with everywheres and anywheres that doesn't depend on old-style centring (or faux globalism). That acknowledges how poetics (indigenous, old world, post-colonial, yet-to-be-categorised) continue to work on each and all in the 21st century, through the various publishing and communication modalities, and intersections of poetics and poetry practices and traditions (let alone the personal contacts that are being generated). I note Mark Young's work through *Otoliths* and John Tranter and Pam Brown's work through *Jacket* as examples.

This raises a number of questions. What don't we know about each other? Does it matter anymore? Did it? What do we make of traditions as part of engagement? Will it become a blur, a re-version, a mash-up? Are the local, the idiomatic, and the temporal, necessary or nostalgic?

Jill Jones teaches in the Creative Writing programme at the University of Adelaide. Her most recent book is *Dark Bright Doors* (Wakefield, 2010) and she co-edited with Michael Farrell the anthology *Out of the Box: Contemporary Australian Gay and Lesbian Poets* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2009).



Ann Vickery, *Beyond a National Paradigm: Travelling Poetics*

The vibrant life of poetry and its criticism persists through journals, blogs and other forums that reach far beyond national boundaries. At the same time, as Pam Brown notes, there has been a kind of 'officialisation' of Australian (and New Zealand) poetry due to a range of factors, including the increasing popularity of writing programs and degrees, the popularity of writing festivals, and the shape of today's publishing industry. In Australia, government funding shapes the way that certain poetry projects now emerge and fashion themselves. I want to look at the Australian Poetry Resources Internet Library (APRIL) and the Australian Poetry Centre (APC) as examples of recent research funding that put pressure on the national as a defining category. How might poetry and its disseminations cross conceptual fences and look at possibilities of companionship and collaboration?

Ann Vickery was a founding editor of the feminist e-journal HOW2 and now teaches at Deakin University in Melbourne. Her most recent book is *Stressing the Modern: Cultural Politics in Australian Women's Poetry* (Salt, 2007) and she co-edited *Manifesting Australian Literary Feminisms: Nexus and Faultlines* (Australian Literary Studies, 2009) with Margaret Henderson.



Martin Edmond, *The Fictional Genealogies of David Mitchell*

If you can't go back for more than a couple of generations, and many of us in the antipodes can't, the temptation to invent your forebears is hard to resist. David Mitchell knew only as far back as his grandparents on his mother's side; and of his father's people he knew nothing at all. Various fantasies stood in for whatever the reality might have been: that they were Jews from Damascus or Dublin; perhaps Russians who came in some undetermined year via Vladivostok and Shanghai to Sydney.

But the Mitchell name is ubiquitous in Australia and another kind of genealogy could be forged out of possible connections to actual people with the same surname—the explorer after whom the cockatoo is called, the scholar who endowed a magnificent library, the world famous opera singer. It isn't likely that David Mitchell really believed that his father was a scion of the family that produced Dame Nellie Melba; or the real life model for a fictional character who appears in a number of Henry Lawson's stories; but he entertained both notions and they remain to entertain us.

Martin Edmond lives in Sydney and publishes literary nonfiction in NZ and Australia. His most recent books are *Zone of the Marvellous: In Search of the Antipodes* (Auckland UP) and *The Supply Party* (East Street), both published in 2009.



Nigel Roberts, Expanding The List: Dave Mitchell in Wellington, Auckland and Sydney

In 1965 I left Wellington, where I'd lived with Dave Mitchell. We moved on the periphery of literary circles that included Jim Baxter, Alistair Campbell and Louis Johnson. I came over to Sydney, settling in Balmain in 1968 where I still live. Five of the poets represented in *Big Smoke: NZ Poems 1960-75* also lived there. It was a very active, trans-Tasman scene; poetry then, as it perhaps isn't now, was a blood sport.

There was the little magazine revolution; *Freed* was paralleled in Sydney by *Free Poetry*, which I edited, & where I published some of Dave's poems ('White room,' 'A small sincere poem for Davnet,' 'Bone' and an untitled experiment not unlike 'the Yes Sheet'). Later there were readings organised and promoted by the Sydney Poets Union, which had been founded in an attempt to bring an end to the poetry wars. Those readings, some of which Dave attended, have a direct relationship with Poetry Live, which he founded in Auckland in 1980.

At some point in the late 1970s, Dave gave me a copy of 'The List,' which Baxter had given him a few days before his death in 1972. I will describe those circumstances, consider issues arising from them and end with an account of Dave now, living in Blair House in Bronte, still writing the occasional poem.

Nigel Roberts lives and writes in Sydney. His most recent publications are *Déjà vu tours* (Hale & Iremonger, 1995) and *Late* (Polar Bear Press, 2007). His Selected Poems will be published in 2011. He is currently assembling a collection of memoirs on the life and work of David Mitchell.



John Newton, ‘You Kiwis are really eccentric, aren’t you?’

A remark addressed to me and two fellow New Zealanders as graduate students in the English Department at Melbourne – and yes, I think in that context we *were* eccentric. Arriving from New Zealand with my five-year degree, I was quite unprepared for the difference of Australian intellectual life, and it was a shock to discover how long it took to learn the local language.

This was a couple of decades ago, but I don’t think very much has changed. We’re together at this symposium in acknowledgement of the fact that our literary cultures still seem largely oblivious of one another. This presentation offers an informal, anecdotal account of the ways in which the difference of the Australian scene has impressed itself on a New Zealand poet and academic, and makes some speculative suggestions about what Kiwi writers might learn from across the Tasman.

John Newton lives and writes in Wellington. He taught at the University of Canterbury until late last year and recently published *The Double Rainbow: James K Baxter, Ngati Hau and the Jerusalem Commune* (Victoria UP, 2009).



Ian Wedde, the sound of one hand typing

In 1978 the ever-generous Nigel Roberts got me on a mini-bus from Sydney to the Montsalvat Poetry Festival at Eltham near Melbourne. There was a buzz around poetry in Australia, in part an international phenomenon but, over there, also the result of cultural policies instigated by the Whitlam ALP administration between 1972-75, which were continued in varying degrees by Hawke and Keating from the mid eighties through the early nineties.

The Australian voices I heard at Montsalvat and over the next few years were socially confident, laconic, at ease with the 'spoken word', and with access to a vein of self-deprecating humour. At the same time, as in the case of Michael Dransfield for example, Australians seemed to welcome high romantic excess. They seemed to have more of these qualities than their Kiwi counterparts who, by comparison, sounded more orotund, literary, vatic and solemn. One memory: at Montsalvat, a reading by an Australian poet took the following form. A Festival assistant brought out a cassette tape-recorder and, having placed it on a table in front of the audience, pressed the on button. There ensued the hesitant sound of someone typing. This went on for some minutes. Then the assistant came out and turned the recording off. The performance concluded with the same person announcing that this had been the sound of a New Zealand poet at work.

I took that one on the chin. Earlier I'd read a long poem, 'Pathway to the Sea', which had never felt longer, and which was greeted with incredulity by the audience. I don't know who the Australian poet was – it might have been John Jenkins, a terrific poet and founding member of the 'Generation of '68', and later a collaborator with Ken Bolton. At any rate, it's the sound of that hesitant typewriter at Montsalvat that I want to return to, and the optimism and hospitality of the scene for which Nigel Roberts was a kind of ex-officio den mother in Balmain, Sydney.

Ian Wedde lives and writes in Wellington. His most recent books are *Bill Culbert: Making Light Work* (art criticism) and *Good Business* (poetry), both published by Auckland UP in 2009.



Cath Kenneally, Not revenge: *eaten cold* and its debt to Janet Charman's *cold snack*

I want to talk about the experience of working closely from a 'prompt' text, in this case *cold snack* by Janet Charman, which won the Montana NZ Poetry Award in 2007. Many kinds of response got into my final collection of response-poems, ranging from instances where I stayed very close to the prompt text (even using homophonous words, sticking to Charman's line-length, spacing and other formal decisions), to those poems in which I used only a brief single read of a Charman poem, putting it aside and working very quickly to compose a response while I still retained that memory.

The project began as a tribute to Charman, whose poems I have admired for many years. I would like to discuss how I tried to avoid simple imitation, going back to drafts and changing my poems after an interval, this time using Charman's text much less and letting the draft poems take me where they wanted to. Now *eaten cold* brings me to Auckland, and there's Janet Charman coming through the door.

Cath Kenneally makes Arts Breakfast each Saturday for Radio Adelaide at the University of Adelaide and is the producer of Writers' Radio, a weekly books and writing programme nationally distributed on the Community Broadcasting Network. Her most recent book is *Jetty Road* (Wakefield, 2009), a novel.



Mark Young, Widening the Community: *Otoliths* and how

My online & print zine *Otoliths* is entering its fifth year, but the reality is that it's been fifty years in the making, almost as long as I've been writing. The first involvement in the world of literary journals was at Victoria University, in 1960. A couple of years later I assumed a year-long stewardship of an existing journal before passing it on; & at the end of the decade, I brought out a single-issue roneoed foolscap magazine called *Love / Juice*.

I would have loved to have done more, but the reality – ironic, since I seemed to be surrounded by poets – was that there was only one other poet around in NZ at the time, Dave Mitchell, who approximated my vision of where poetry should be heading.

Fast forward forty years. I'm living in isolation, there's barely another poet within a 1000 kilometres, but – another irony – I have a feedstock of writers to publish that I dared not even dream about all that time ago.

Mark Young lives and writes in Rockhampton, Queensland. Recent books include *Pelican Dreaming: Poems 1959-2008* (Meritage, 2008), *Lunch Poems* (Soapbox, 2009) and *Genji Monogatari* (*Otoliths* 2010).



All Together Now: A Digital Bridge for Auckland and Sydney

Kia Kotahi Rā: He Arawhata Ipurangi mō Tamaki Makau Rau me Poihākēna

March-September 2010

The NZ Electronic Poetry Centre (**nzepec**) is planning a two-part symposium in Auckland and Sydney. The first part of HOME & AWAY 2010 will feature readings, launches and forum-style talks with trans Tasman colleagues at the University of Auckland 30-31 March. We will also establish a digital bridge and invite poets and others to contribute text, images, audio or video that reflects or extends the symposium's trans Tasman focus. Another round of contributions to the bridge will be uploaded as HOME & AWAY convenes in Sydney 1-2 September. In this way we hope to create two-way traffic between points in time and places where people meet.

Who contributes? Anyone interested in poetry and its conversations can send a submission to the digital bridge. Submissions will be considered by an editorial team and you will be notified when your contribution has been accepted or declined.

What, how and when? Poems and prose (prose no longer than 2000 words please) should be sent to nzepec@auckland.ac.nz as attached files. If you are sending images, audio or video check with us about suitable formats for upload. Submissions should reach us by 15 April for inclusion in the first upload, and by 15 September for the second. You should be the copyright holder of the material you are submitting.

Where is the bridge? The bridge will go live 30 March 2010 at <http://www.nzepec.auckland.ac.nz/features/home&away/>

Michele Leggott and Brian Flaherty, Pam Brown and Martin Edmond, eds.
For NZ Electronic Poetry Centre (**nzepec**)

