

**Poetry**  
**New Zealand**  
Yearbook

**2021**



# Poetry New Zealand Yearbook 2021

Edited by Tracey Slaughter



MASSEY UNIVERSITY PRESS



# Contents

## **EDITORIAL**

Tracey Slaughter  
Competitions

The mouth beneath the mask

## **FEATURED POET**

Aimee-Jane Anderson-O'Connor

All that Glitters

Dissection

Tongue

Cat

Asylum

Fruit

8.

Close Reading

2am

Archive Garden

York Street

Crickets

Writers' Report Card

Chalk

Life Education

Radium

Mantis

Swat

Frost

A Twist Top Full of Airbags

Relics

If the heart is meat made electric

The Veils

An interview with Aimee-Jane Anderson-O'Connor

Select Bibliography

## NEW POEMS

John Allison

Stu Bagby

Rebecca Ball

Tony Beyer

Nikki-Lee Birdsey

Rosemary Blake

Cindy Botha

Iain Britton

Fritz Buijn

Owen Bullock

Ellen Morgan Butler

Paolo Caccioppoli

Chris Cantillon

Brent Cantwell

Marisa Cappetta

Janet Charman

Stephanie Christie

Cadence Chung

Harold Coutts

Jeni Curtis

Brecon Dobbie

Bread

On Reading *The Widow's Lament In Springtime* by William Carlos Williams

Silver bangles

Resolution

Existence

31/3/20

For Kate, Waking

Ditching the Eye

crushingsunberries@daysbay

East of Lonely (Onepoto Bay)

NY

Tableau Vivant

Rag and bone picker

Second Spring

Voyager I, 14th February 1990

Luna sends me a dream of chickens

bra dollars

The House of the Talking Cat

the screech in my head is the roof  
breaking.

Hey Girls

january

i've been burned before

how to knit an excuse

Diaspora Overboard

Leah Dodd	kayla, on a cloudy day
Doc Drumheller	Sister City Haiku
Katea Duff	<i>from</i> Sweet Nicky
David Eggleton	The Umbrella Movement
Rachael Elliott	Backslide
	1977
Johanna Emeney	A Childhood in the Country
Andrea Ewing	What doesn't kill you
Rachel J. Fenton	Re-piling the Shed
	Sylvia is Tired of Resting
	behind the chain-link fence
Nida Fiazi	Too Far Gone
Jan FitzGerald	The vocabulary is rising
Yaning Ma Foreman	Sewing lesson
Alexandra Fraser	Fire-starter
Janis Freegard	Learning Yellow
Maryana Garcia	21st century symphony of a pōtiki
Miriama Gemmell	turf
Michael Giacom	My funny Valentine
Eliana Gray	At the turn of the apocalypse, time
	begins to move backwards
Jordan Hamel	Throw Me Up and Lock Away the Key
	Tinder makes angels of us all (lazy
	volcano)
Marijke Hanegraaf	Transformation
Ruth Hanover	The Intersectionality of Race & Rape
Matthew Harris	PICKUP ONLY
	Including the Irony
Paula Harris	the cleanliness:dirtiness ratio of your
	copy of the <i>Edmonds Cookery Book</i>
	tells all your secrets, and we all know
	this
Rebecca Hawkes	When Nicholas Cage said 'I can eat a
	peach for hours' I really felt that



Edna Heled	In hindsight denying that it was a phase
Janna Heller	was a clear indicator that it was a phase
Zarina Hewlett	Why I am a Hoarder
Liam Hinton	Shattered
	Cleopatra and Hillary
	dog i (the dog reflects itself in other
	dogs)
	dog ii (the dog performs itself in dying
	like a dog)
Chris Holdaway	2 poems
Lily Holloway	bed against the wall
	The road to the hill is closed
Jeffrey Paparoa Holman	Max and Osip
	Blue thunder
Alice Hooton	Children look up
	Memory
Amanda Hunt	1979
Hayden Hyams	Bukowski
Gail Ingram	before and after
Adrienne Jansen	Those old trees barely touch the grass
Lincoln Jaques	Waiting for the Tigers
Eefa Jauhary	Mrs Higgin's Ally Cookies
Pippi Jean	Class of 2020
	11.11 pm
Hebe Kearney	grieving like an ancient greek
Erik Kennedy	Letter to James K. Baxter
Megan Kitching	Walking is Controlled Falling
Leonard Lambert	Maxwell Grove
Isabella Lane	Book IV: The Tragedy of Dido
Gary Langford	Sam
Gabi Lardies	untitled (piss)
Jessica Le Bas	BIG PRINT
Wes Lee	Again
Michele Leggott	Dark Emily

Schaeffer Lemalu	S
	the yacht club wedding
Frances Libeau	making a killing
	theatre
Olivia Macassey	Revisionary
	Manifesto
Sophie MacDonald	Saturday Night
Ria Masae	Sharks Who Wear Horseshoes
Melody May	Darkroom
Lisa McKenzie	Paris is hollow, underneath
Frankie McMillan	Swimming in the year of the pandemic
Robynanne Milford	I that is
Alice Miller	The Man
	Strange Weather
Darcy Monteath	<i>from</i> World War Two
Layal Moore	Moon Child
Josiah Morgan	Formaldehyde (after Joseph McElroy)
Michael Morrissey	Coronavirus
Elizabeth Morton	An invitation to the monogenetic field
	If Vivaldi were under a CTO
Stephen Oliver	Preface to a Forest
Ellis Ophele	Alomancy (Or, I Lick Salt Cubes & Call It
	Praying)
	Soft / Soft / Soft Like a Blinking
	Pedestrian Crossing
	Lay Me Down in the Peatlands
Bob Orr	Tempus Fugit
	Portugal
	Made in Bangladesh
Alistair Paterson	Shutdown
I. K. Paterson	Perpetual Motion
Kiri Piahana-Wong	Before
Mark Pirie	The Lighthouse Keeper

Mark Prisco	liberate us from the tyranny of the useful freedom
Hayden Pyke	Lavoisier never sent dick pics I tried mapping the colonisation of water through an Excel Spreadsheet. It didn't work.
essa may ranapiri Vaughan Rapatahana Gillian Roach	Hineraukatauri & Her Lover he parekura: Ōrākau 1864 The Year Someone Shot Pania in the Head
Jeremy Roberts Phoebe Robertson Jennifer Rockwell Brittany Rose Jack Ross	The Car has a Broken Fan-Belt Sunflowers A Sad Kind of Irony How to Rape a Character in any Genre Terrorist or theorist? A traveller on the road to Emmaus
Dadon Rowell	Anne Sexton teaches me how to pick up boys Medical Background
Lisa Samuels	Synthetic harbour Interference sonnet
Tim Saunders Kerrin P. Sharpe Charlotte Simmonds	Awareness on the road from Mwinilunga Why Smoke in These Antinatalist Times, Why Smoke
Jane Simpson Hugo Sissons Barry Smith Hugh Smith Ruby Solly	Days, weeks after surgery Infinity When Wally Died The Meanest Awards Iron The Violinist
Michael Steven	The Gold Plains The Picture of Doctor Freud

Chris Stewart  
Mere Taito

Jasmine O. M. Taylor  
Catherine Trundle  
Rhegan Tu'akoi  
Iain Twiddy  
Richard von Sturmer  
Janet Wainscott  
Toyah Webb  
Pat White  
Sophia Wilson  
Tim Wilson  
Katie Winny

Iona Winter  
Sebastien Woolf  
Karen Zelas

## ESSAYS

Jeffrey Paparoa Holman

Ruth Russ

## REVIEWS

Michael Steven  
Dadon Rowell  
Hamish Ansley  
Janet Charman  
Elizabeth Morton  
Frances Libeau  
Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod

Dear Christchurch  
Chicken bone  
Three • fifteen  
Slur and friends  
First Mother  
From *Wilt*  
Buzz  
The Impossible  
The Manicure  
From *Sherwood in Three Parts*  
Belief in impermanence  
We have had days  
Fourth Trimester  
Waikaraka Cemetery Song  
Fertile Ground  
Holly  
Floralista  
Rags and illusion  
Drowning

That's the revolution: Our prisons,  
ourselves

Collage biography: Writing a life with  
poetical truth

John Allison  
Jane Arthur  
Nick Ascroft  
Amy Brown / Diane Brown  
Freya Daly Sadgrove  
Lynley Edmeades / Hinemoana Baker  
Gail Ingram

Elisabeth Kumar  
Elizabeth Morton  
Jack Ross  
Elisabeth Kumar  
David Groves  
Brittany Rose  
Dadon Rowell  
Michael Steven  
Melody May  
Nicholas Reid  
John Gallas  
Jordan Hamel  
Marcus Hobson

Elizabeth Kirkby-McLeod  
Wes Lee  
Michele Leggott  
Mary Macpherson  
Vana Manasiadis  
Natalie Morrison  
Elizabeth Morton  
Emma Neale  
Heidi North / Michael Fitzsimons  
Stephen Oliver  
Vaughan Rapatahana  
Michael Steven  
Denys Trussell

## **ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS**

## **ABOUT POETRY NEW ZEALAND**



# Editorial

## The mouth beneath the mask

It has been a locked and frozen year. Through our windows, over our screens, ran scenes of desertion and silence that were hard to recognise. Deprivation entered our homes. Doors closed on us (if we were blessed enough to have them). Some were not safe behind them (so many never were). A kind of sensory famine struck. The absence of touch cut us off from all happening. Streets emptied. Days atrophied. Certainties vanished. Loss dug trenches. We had to sit vigil in the cell of ourselves, at that stillpoint Auden directed every poet to: some of us felt that we did touch 'the bottom of the night'. The only line to follow was deeper in, darker down, to poetry. The page was the only safe place our breath could go.

'Something is always born' of visits to this place, Anaïs Nin has told us. 'Great art was born of great terrors, great loneliness, great inhibitions, instabilities.' Likewise, Rilke wrote that 'all art is the result of one's having been in danger'. A lockdown-search for lines brought me back, too, to Adam Zagajewski's luminous mandate to 'Try to Praise the Mutilated World,' and Brecht's simple four-line brutalised mantra 'Motto': 'In the dark times/Will there also be singing?/Yes, there will be singing/About the dark times.' When the doors closed on us, we knew we had to keep singing — even though some days all our songs could do was send vowel sounds into the dark.

If on these islands we have long been 'singers of loneliness' as Robin Hyde once stated, then this year's loneliness hurt us into harder song. We picked up what instruments we had, and used our language to scratch the walls. From our raw towns, our barred roads, our broke days, our disfigured screens, in our boredom and crisis and disbelief and grief, we did what we could to sing what felt unspeakable, to mark the mouth of poetry which will always survive beneath the mask.



Poetry made different things of the silence that fell inside our lives this year: our homes became the frontline, and no two dispatches from that place will ever strike identical notes. The sounds we made were as personal as our skins, as divergent as our losses, as plural as our yearning. You won't find any simple track back through lockdown in this book: this year forged arterial routes through our language which mapped different landscape for all. From wild dissent to warm contentment, from lines aglow with gratitude to pages parched with need, from hallowing to howl, from grace to fragmentation, the forms that poetry took on our tongues this year were intimate, manifold, intensive, autonomic, moulded by private stress.

But these are not just poems sculpted *in extremis*: rest and pleasure are here, too, and light-footed fun. Mortality gets a kind of tender piss taken out of it: we crack up at the black exaggerations of our angst, clown around with our own wasted desires. We sketch what's left standing with evanescent lyric, our remnants all the more fragile and lit-up. We set afloat disjointed whispers into the strange new hush. There are brushes of joy in foretaste, forecast. We commemorate, measuring before and after. There are murmurs which spill from fear to fullness, there are sprawling exposures and composed recountings. We contemplate our taonga, we show our wounds. We took into that enclosure what was already in us: it made us pay unguarded, tight-bounded attention. That's a condition of art.

So many poems filtered through my living room during my task of selecting pieces for this book, and each were valued as an utterance raised in response to the strange, stricken year we were facing. By the stage that I had to narrow my choices, and narrow again, for the sake of the manuscript, I knew each voice so closely that I felt the cuts. But ultimately there were voices that stunned me, woke me, arrested my outlook and shook it, tunnelled my breastbone and broke its numbness with wonder, laughter, poise, ferocity, chill, defiance, ache, praise, awe. There were pieces that claimed an instant stake in this yearbook with indelible, necessary lines. I could feel when the poet was 'taking aim with the whole body, the whole life', as Jane Hirshfield terms it; when

the fingertips, the ligature, the heart-sounds of the poet had reached print 'as the physical hands of the potter are in the clay'.

At some point in lockdown I unpacked a stack of boxes in my small, quiet home, containing wrapped back-issues of every previous edition of *Poetry New Zealand Yearbook*; they looked like sandbags shored along the sills of my cottage against a rising tide. I believe that poetry acts with that level of alert, with that pressing an urgency. It saves who we are and where we are failing, who we long to be and what we are going through, one vital song at a time. This issue is now part of our first line of defence.

## **Competitions**

### **POETRY NEW ZEALAND POETRY PRIZE**

Elizabeth Morton, 'If Vivaldi were under a CTO', page x

Rebecca Hawkes, 'When Nicholas Cage said 'I can eat a peach for hours' I really felt that', page x

Frances Libeau, 'making a killing', page x

Ellis Ophele, 'Alomancy (Or, I Lick Salt Cubes & Call It Praying)', page x

### **POETRY NEW ZEALAND YEARBOOK STUDENT POETRY COMPETITION**

Pippi Jean, 'Class of 2020', page x, and '11.11 pm', page x

Cadence Chung, 'Hey Girls', page x

Darcy Monteath, 'from World War Two', page x