

broadsheet

new new zealand poetry

Issue No. 1,
May 2008

Editor: Mark Pirie

**THE NIGHT PRESS
WELLINGTON**

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the individual contributors.

Published by The Night Press

Cover photo: Victor O'Leary and Michael O'Leary

broadsheet is published
twice a year
in May and November

Subscriptions to:

The Editor
97/43 Mulgrave Street
Thorndon
Wellington 6011
Aotearoa / New Zealand

Cost per year
\$12.00 for 2 issues.

ISSN 1178-7805 (Print)
ISSN 1178-7813 (Online)

Victor O'Leary's unpublished poem
reproduced with kind permission
of his literary executors.

Please Note: At this stage no
submissions will be read. The poems
included are solicited by the editor.
All submissions will be returned. Thank you.

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Preface

Welcome to the first issue of *broadsheet: new new zealand poetry*. This periodical came about by happen chance when in July last year I started publishing broadsheets for sale at Winter Readings in Wellington through my Night Press imprint (an imprint I had used previously for several hand-made books).

This very traditional idea was unpopular with contemporary booksellers, however, who found it difficult to stock and sell single broadsheets. This year I came up with the idea to assemble the broadsheets into a printed (and on-line PDF) periodical similar to Robert Thompson's *Image* (1958-61) and featuring new New Zealand poetry to be published twice a year. The idea of printing the poems as single broadsheets will be discontinued but I have retained their format as the title of the periodical.

This first issue contains the poems that were solicited from the poets last year and printed as limited edition broadsheets as well as a few more pieces that have been solicited since. There are well-known names here like Alistair Te Ariki Campbell, Meg Campbell, Tony Beyer and Stephen Oliver as well as newer poets Gemma Claire and Evelyn Conlon (winner of the Earl of Seacliff Poetry Prize at *Poetrywall: Winter Readings 2007*).

This issue also features an international guest, Michael Duffett. Duffett (an actor/writer) visited New Zealand in the late 1970s where he met poets Denis Glover, K O Arvidson and Vincent O'Sullivan. I am pleased to re-establish his connection with New Zealand. Duffett also once played a part in the TV series *Magnum PI*. The practice of including an international guest will be continued in future issues.

It is to be noted that since I printed the 10 original broadsheets last year, two poets have died. It is with sadness I note the passing of Meg Campbell and Victor O'Leary (to whom the broadsheet by Michael O'Leary was dedicated and which included the cover photo used for this issue). I'd like to dedicate the first issue of *broadsheet* to the memory of Meg and Victor.

Mark Pirie
Wellington, 30 March 2008

Jeanne Bernhardt

1/
does air not tell you anything?
stagger, turn, and fall
from trying
words to do with darkness
a long line back
took fear into darkness
fitted wind, tide
arms to water
pale and stumbling
without shelter, out of kindness
to collect
is this what you want
should I open walls
a flower from hope?

broken as I am
I cannot

.....

2/

they are skeletons
beneath their red stone
those crazy holes for eyes
a well for lost
no blame
the wise man passes
lets the wild dog enter
from my chest
a wave entered
one hundred enhancements
these thoughts
altering happiness
something fierce & tight & violent
attached
– it smiles

welcome Winter
there, in the glare
for nothing else
I have given

.....

ODE

a fine morning
back in Auckland
parts of it are better
parts of it are worse

a very large dog
tied up outside a superette
adopts the face of the day
and passes it on

forlorn but persevering
men in fluoro vests and ear muffs
cut up the road
pausing only to smoke

everyone's touchingly concerned
that I notice
and remark upon
the weather

the city fathers are childless
or children themselves
in the days of the death of oil
they build roads

MOTHER LODE

Margaret Grace Beyer *née* Lovell 1918-1970

at ninety

 you've worn out your skin
so even the slightest touch will bruise you

no comfort though to be told
as you die too young
that you are being spared the half hour wait
seated among your contemporaries
in the doctor's surgery
after the flu injection
thumbing used gossip in magazines

9 April 2008

your ninetieth birthday and ninetieth anniversary
of Ludendorff's second offensive in the West

it's true that in the family
those children born in wartime
did not last as long as their siblings

so many resemblances
among people you never saw
my daughter and first granddaughter
have your way with their hands

this summer we grew hollyhocks
for the first time since your garden at home
nearly forty years ago
dark heads against the wall in the shallow light

you were already
what you would have gone on to become

pencil shavings

moth wings

I have seldom mentioned you
in my poems
because you are part of their making and should know

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell

INTACTA

She has come to grief, who was proud
And walked in her nineteenth year
Before a fall. Now she is waters,
Rainbows long from her limbs

Like exquisite children. O she is sadder
Than weeping mirrors or falling stars;
And there's more than stone in her grief,
And something of stone in her grace.

To be loved by her was an act
Of Heaven, as the rains fall
Or the winds fell. She was perhaps
All women who yearn for children,

But whose dreams don't long survive
Their flowering. And she was gracious
As a pearl on fingers of cool sound,
And like a tree she made a Christ of skies

When she stirred. My forehead listens
Like a womb for her; heart, hands float out
From stone to be near her who has
Gone, O beyond the shadow of a doubt.

TO MY MUSE

For Meg

I wrote this poem for you –
I wish it were better.
I have tried to please you –
But it doesn't matter.

I have always loved you,
I always will.
Love can be such a joy,
Such a sudden chill.

I have strayed sometimes,
I have confessed it.
How could I know your love,
If I didn't test it?

This is my last poem.
It's out there on the beach
For eternity to come by
And lift it out of reach.

AS FAR AS IT GOES (2000)

For Lisa

We loved the old song, *'Should I
forget you, then may my heart
remind me how much I loved you...'*
I would rather love Jane as she was,
that distant girl, tall and slim
with copper-coloured hair
and eyes that looked beyond us
to a totally sensitised world,
often full of suffering. What can I
do but pity her? Neither she
nor I could leave her fantasies
behind in childhood. We fought
for the right to stay child-like,
innocent and genderless.
Let no-one speak ill of her.
She is my sister, mother
to my nieces. I have
an education of sorts
and a great extended childhood
to thank her for,
my sister who is dying.
I see my sister as a young girl,
she's with me now. I have
all things to thank her for.
Let no-one speak ill of her.

THREE MINUTES SILENCE

“Silent protests against child abuse a success – organisers”
– www.stuff.co.nz, 8 August 2007

It epitomised dumb tokenism:
mute crowds, with placards bearing truisms,
like “Our kids are precious.” Another peeve:
these stupid gestures make people believe
in some cheesy, national togetherness.
Might I ask, where was the neighbourliness
when Nia was strangled and tumble-dried?
Don’t tell me no one heard her as she cried.

It’s easy to care after the event,
but at the time, no one tried to prevent
the torture. We call it a national shame;
a vigil won’t stop it happening again.

After all, how does three minutes silence
stop intergenerational violence?

AT THE NEW ZEALAND POLICE MUSEUM

I thought they'd only show their slant on crime;
it's a police museum, after all.

Then, I saw a small photo on the wall
of "Stanley Graham in happier times" .

Paranoid Stan who, with his loopy wife,
fiercely guarded his collection of guns;
psycho Stan who picked off cops one-by-one –
so much death resulting from one sad life.

The little photo was of normal Stan,
the hard-working farmer with two young kids,
squinting, not knowing he'd do what he did –
the killer when he was still just a man.

They showed compassion unexpectedly,
by presenting human complexity.

ANOTHER WINTER (2005)

My mother waits for me on the weather news,
Measuring my happiness by the likelihood of showers,
She hides as far inside as she can get,
To find warmth.

My mother haunts me with her living ghost,
There are strings of her voice under mine when I sing.
She sounds so small on my answering machine
Like a child looking for her mother.

My eyes are losing her colour as I get older,
Becoming my own eyes, but
I've seen her stare back at me with dark eyes from the mirror
I look like her when my eyes are not smiling.

My mother is a black hole
With no floor to lie on and no walls to lean against.
There isn't any echo
And I can't fill it with everything I have.

If only my mother could know
That to me the most precious thing
Is the memory of her fingers, her thin, tissue skin
And that I always think of her, thinking of me.

FOR YANA (2001)

Once, we walked around my garden,
It was cold along the hibiscus fence.
Under the water-heavy kowhai
She wore a cotton dress,
Was pale in her Slavic skin,
And moved as if still,
Like a series of photographs.

I felt for her narrow shoulders
And thin voice
But she told me the cold is good for you
And being seven, I believed her.

Now I know that it isn't good for her
Or me,
Or any of us,
She thought she deserved that cold,
She didn't –
She deserves a warmer room than I do.

DARK MATTER

What dark hand, matter but non-atomic,
Holds the universe together?
On what oceans of airless substance
Rides this ball on which we gather?

Oxygen past a speeding window
Gives the life to the air we breathe.
To what hidden holy handmaid
Do we owe a sustaining tithe?

We have not seen nor felt nor touched you,
Mysterious pervasive matter
But we live our days in comfort
And our debt to you is utter.

ENCOUNTER

In the citrus grove beside the river
He came to me through the door that is
No door, a flimsy skeleton dividing
Oranges and lemons and put up by me
A dozen years ago when I, entering
What I then thought of as my philosophical
Seventies, thought to separate the sweet
From sour. This young man was twenty-seven
And when he told me that, framed in the doorway,
My mind went back to that year of my own.
It may have been a few years short of Dante's
Midway but I was lost and unraveled.
He was similarly so. I poured him tea.
He sat. The effort to unbend his limbs
From the upright, tensed and vertical
Was palpable agony. My own limbs,
Arthritic but relaxed, ached in sympathy.
His story was no different from others
At that poised and perilous stage of the journey.
I pointed to the oranges, added lemon
To his tea and mentioned that the river
Always settled down once winds had calmed.
He thanked me, drank his tea and left,
Maybe a little less bewildered than before.

ORAGE

The day is calm and bright.
It took place in darkness –
all this destruction

that wild night
when wind turned water
into knives

turned on itself
hacking its gardens
prising loose the kelp

with its nestling
mussel shells
and scurrying crabs –

scouring its bed clean
heaping all those riches
onto land

to die in the sun
all that intertwined
intricate life

nourished within it –
a cold feast now
for seabirds.

TIME TRAVEL

“I don’t dwell in the past,” he said
while she looked at the world
through the wrong end of a telescope.

Was it that encounter, at eighteen,
with Charlemagne perhaps,
or the enchanted forests
where a million flowers grew
where a lady met with a unicorn
and *Childe Roland to the dark tower came*?*

Does becoming an orphan
compel us to look back to childhood
and beyond to our migrating ancestors –
the lands they loved and left?

Unable, in the end, to be reminded
of a time when we were happy –
of a time when we suffered
we return to the slippery present

then, like those ancestors,
resume the journey hopefully
into the unmapped future.

*Note: *Edgar, Act 3, Scene 4, King Lear*, Shakespeare.

**THE BURQA ARRIVES IN
HIROSHIMA**

In front of the Citadel of Hiroshima,
Alone, stands the Buraq –
With no prophet to mount him.

He harbours dreams that have now perished.
Under his feet the river flows,
Impetuous, pulsating with madness.

So many have passed before him,
Lamenting their grief,
Their heads unraised,
Ignoring the dust
That creates layers on his wings.

Even the birds that make nests
In his hair
No longer tempt tourists for snapshots.
The signpost, bold under his hooves,
Has surrendered to graffiti,
And the quickness of termites.
His legs, by which he raced for so long,
Bring to mind fasts and decay.

This Buraq, meanwhile,
Waiting for those who will inhume him, far away,
Forgot to dream of a prophet
Who could mount him.

Author's Note: In the centre of Hiroshima, opposite its castle, is a statue of a winged horse that reminds me of the Buraq, the winged horse that Prophet Mohammed rode from Mecca to Jerusalem on his way to ascending to Paradise.

INSIDE THE CITADEL OF HIROSHIMA

Celebrating the Hanami,
I contemplate
The chamber of the Great Samurai
And brush aside the dust of distant centuries.
The samurais fill the halls of the Citadel, and its chambers.

Here, the rustling of swords penetrates history
And the slits inside the walls, and
The echoes of their victories hang in the corridors.
Their shields, with handles of silver,
Are mirrors for past glories;
Their casques are containers of heroism;
Their looks are tales that shatter the hearts of books.
Behind every door, a whispering
That reminds you of the past.
On the plush seats
Traces of kisses and tears,
The sound of past memories
That spread over the rice paddies
Like a breeze through sakura trees
Extending with eternity and
Meditating – it is the majesty of the Great Samurai.
And surrounding the Citadel are its waters.
They are no longer a defence against enemies;
They are kingdoms, secrets too,
And beasts to eradicate, and
Spangling every waiting corner
Are hints from the Prince.

This Citadel that witnessed many a war
And many plagues
That you get confused at times
When you stumble over horses' hooves
The battles forgot
And the spectres that moan with those who were killed.

How many arrows shot have
You stepped on, unknowing, and
How much rest have you taken between shades of leaves
On which Fall has piled up,
While you watch the Great Samurai
Inside his glass chamber
Weary of the pitiful looks of visitors
Who point to the dampness of this place.

*Poems translated from the Arabic by Dr Abdulmonem Nasser
Edited by Mark Pirie*

Michael O'Leary

SONNET FOR VICTOR O'LEARY

I was aware over the years of your existence
Even though we didn't meet until recent days
In family allusions and from that peculiar distance
Of the poetic world, which we entered as strays

Our faces together, smiling, happy, familiar
From a photograph we both look out at the world
As if we had known each other in some similar
Fictitious, yet very real parallel place unfurled

I wear the bone pendant that you gave to me
A koha of aroha, a recognition of our ancient
Irish, Maori connections from the land and sea
Ride easy in your waka where you are now sent

When it comes time for you to breathe your last breath
Remember, you are the victor, not death, not death

Victor O'Leary

BRIEFLY WE LIVE

The room is suddenly flung against a star,
and I, dazzled with unaccustomed peace,
hold you even closer, marvelling
at this miracle of our souls' release.

Pressing again my mouth to your moist lips,
mother breasts to my infant love,
I tremble at the undulation of your river body.

From this struggling chrysalis of our nakedness
we emerge as gods glorified in each other.

Darling, only thus, briefly, we live.

May 1951

M A R O O N E D

Groups of gulls at intervals
heading to the mountain, and the sea
the other side of it;

to a stretch of blue-grey water in a
gully reservoir, or a refuse tip.

Dead tree-spars folding through –
a grey quilt over its flanks.

The ‘organ pipes’ (dolerite columns)
hang from the summit
as though baleen in the mouth of a whale.

I have looked on the mountain
for six days now and yet cannot move it.

As we are inhabited by our (owned)
imagination too greater weight upon the word

reduces that world to rubble
strewn beneath the sun’s revolution,
or caught in the moon’s titanium glare.

Cascade Road / South Hobart. January 7, 2006

SWAGMAN'S SONG

Concerning the author, John Pule, and a glass door

A beer and a yarn with an old mate
Is friendship's most basic law,
You might arrive early, or might arrive late,
But watch out for Bob Orr's glass door.

Whiskey's a thing I avoid like the plague,
It lays me out flat on the floor,
You might get lucky, or you might get laid,
But watch out for Bob Orr's glass door.

Poets and artists are a rummy breed,
They take money from rich or poor,
Stick to soup kitchens, enjoy the free feed,
And watch out for Bob Orr's glass door.

July 3, 2007

BUSHED

For Stephen Oliver

1.

Te Kuiti – near bush country
is all I know.

Remember the Baxter poem
'Bushed' – in it, he told

of a place, where 'tree spiders
build / their houses to the east', where

'sun can enter gossamer tunnels' –
with grass 'bent over by southerly winds'.

2.

Your phone call made me think
of it – the idea of you

bushed somewhere, without a compass, solitary,
writing. The poems coming to you,

and read to me over the phone,
the words, finding their way out, a slow excavation

in the tunnels of Te Kuiti,
the light filtering your gold-like words.

Wellington 2007

FOR MEG CAMPBELL

(1937–2007)

The photo on the back of your last book remains haunting to me. You by the door welcoming, the way you would greet me and my friends when we drove out to see you and Alistair in Pukerua Bay. I came to know you late and helped edit your book *Resistance*, insisting with Michael that your sketch of the hills above Whenua Tapu be the cover. I was proud of my work on it – a lovely, elegant format that was suited to your honest, loving poems for family and friends. There were darker moments and moods, but you always remained consistent in your praise of me. A true friend, I shall miss you.

NIGHT DANCERS

I
Child,
my grandmother often said
don't leave your shoes at the foot of the bed
demons and bad dreams
will dance on your eyelids

II
Hush,
someone is calling your name
Hush,
they will not know
you are here
Hush,
a shadow is passing
Hush,
dreams carry secrets
morning denies

**SUNFLOWER FOR MY
BROTHER'S GRAVE**

For Earl

It seems unlived
that time has stopped for you
no water to drink
like a flower bent over
just at dirt level
a colourless dream
becoming bone

Notes on Contributors

JEANNE BERNHARDT is a Dunedin writer. Her books include *the snow poems/your self of lost ground* and *baby is this wonderland?*

TONY BEYER's selected poems, *Dream Boat*, was published in December 2007 by HeadworX.

ALISTAIR TE ARIKI CAMPBELL, one of New Zealand's finest poets, lives in Pukerua Bay, Wellington. His new book *Just Poetry* was published in 2007 by HeadworX.

MEG CAMPBELL, a well-known New Zealand poet, died in November last year. Her last collection of poems, *Poems Adrift*, is available from the publisher Te Kotare Press, 4B Rawhiti Road, Pukerua Bay, Wellington.

GEMMA CLAIRE lives in Auckland. Her first book, *Uncivil Servant*, was published in the ESAW Mini Series in 2007.

EVELYN CONLON lives in Christchurch. She was awarded the inaugural Earl of Seacliff Poetry Prize in 2007.

MICHAEL DUFFETT is Senior Tutor and Professor of Humanities at Humphreys College in Stockton, CA, USA. His most well-known book is *Forever Avenue* described as 'short stories in verse'.

ROBIN FRY is a Wellington poet. Three collections of her poetry have been published since 2002.

BASIM FURAT is an Iraqi New Zealander living in Hiroshima, Japan. He has had published two collections of his poetry translations in English and three books of his poetry in Arabic.

MICHAEL O'LEARY is a Paekakariki writer and publisher. His new books *Paneta Street* (poetry) and *Magic Alex's Revenge* (fiction) will be published in 2008.

VICTOR O'LEARY died in Dunedin in January. He published the collection *The Sensual Anchor* (1957, republished, ESAW, 2007).

STEPHEN OLIVER lives in Te Kuiti. His new poetry book, *Harmonic*, was published by IP Press, Australia, in 2008.

MARK PIRIE is a Wellington writer and publisher and the editor of *broadsheet*.

L E SCOTT is an African American jazz poet/writer. His latest collection is *Speaking in Tongues* (HeadworX, 2007).