

Earl of Seacliff Christmas Surprise 2006

Featuring new works by:

Michael O’Leary (Godfather, Editor in Chief)

Brian E. Turner (Technical Editor)

Mark Pirie (Friend of the Family)

Niel Wright (Friend of the Family)



**Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop
Paekakariki
2006**

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Michael O’Leary, Brian E Turner, Mark Pirie,
Niel Wright

The cover shows a work entitled 'What a scream' from the Earl of Seacliff's exhibition 'A Helen Clark Retrospective' held in 2002 at One Eye Gallery, Paekakariki. The Earl is seen holding an original Edward Munch painting signed by Helen Clark. The photograph appears courtesy of the Dominion newspaper.

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Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop
PO Box 42
Paekakariki
Aotearoa, New Zealand
E-mail: pukapuka@paradise.net.nz
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*You may be a boy and you may be a girl
You may be bald or you may have a curl
You may dance a jig, waltz, or do a twirl
But wherever you are in the world
Its Christmas Surprise from the Earl*

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Michael O'Leary

Irony and Impressionism in the Twenty-first Century (for Harvey and Carmen)

The full facial moko, designed to provoke
Fear and loathing in ordinary folk
Really covered up the sorrow and hurt
That you carried inside from your birth

The big, muscled body, tats and patch
Told a tale to the world, don't scratch
Beneath the surface of this Mongrel
This impression that all is not well

When a person's wairua is lonely, sad
They often join a Mob that is bad
Not the Monet Mob of soft images
But the one that outwardly enrages

After all these years to see you on a dialysis machine
Your moko now shows aroha, your eyes are serene

Dunedin, 2006

1

Flying south across the blue, blue sky
Blue is an indeterminate colour, a question why?
I have got the blues could invoke a black mood
But blue can also command respect, a crude
Call to arms toward which people gladly go to die

The coastline seen from the window
Angles and projects in on my past
All those days spent gathering pine cones
For the coal range, talking deep into

Bright firelight night ... how could our
Lives look so small
The plane banks south, and
Out of the blue comes Aramoana too!

2

A book launch and a birthday party too
The reasons I have come this far. Strangely

Disturbingly connected, the dark, dark past
Of lust and terror, the history of humanity

Is the history of all our lives – or as
Auden said in 1939 just before the end

And the clouds of war rolled in
Only compassion, aroha, can save us

And that too is fraught with unexpected
Bonds so tight that we may be severed

Or strangled by our attempts to love
To communicate our insides out

A book launch and a birthday party too
Have their own under-currents and connections

.

Seacliff Amoré

(for Lesley)

Over and over and over
The road the railway crossings go
Up and down hills and valleys
The road goes past Warrington
St. Barnabas, Omimi, Ireland's
Farm and all. The anthropologist
Digs it too, his house shakes
Along with his laughter as he
Puts on or smokes another
Pot of tea for you and me
In an orange flavoured flying
Bomb the girl and the earl
Arrive at the entrance of dream
Reality entrancement at the
Hidden by cabbage tree car
Across the line we walk
Where once I lifted heave-ho
Rails and sleepers at the one
After 339, point full to the Brimm
Where Murray's ashes lie
And Angelique is called
O'Connell's farm, the olde
Sod! Pictures of lilly of the valley
Hang well painted by R.S-M.
Next to the cuppa – up RRRrrroad

The memories flowed
As we talked and the girl
Nearly ended up in the cactus
But went down to the village instead
Crossing that line yet again
'Such a perfect day', LR say
'I thought I was someone else
Someone good . . .'

At the Shrynk

There was a young man from Limerick
Who spoke with a lilt that was glimmerick
He said quick, come in
My name is O'Flynn
If you're slow, you I shall psychoanerlick

Brian E Turner

Pickled Eels Feat

Eating pickled eels feat may be very hard thing to do. I am sitting here at my table of white marble, floating in space between Venus and Mars. My plate is empty but my cup runneth over. The waiter arrives with a message. "Pickled eels feat off today." The waiter is a penguin. I clutch my knife and fork and sigh. A conger eel wriggles past with a huge smile on it's face. It is fourteen feet long. Soon the sun goes down and the moon comes up. Long shadows fill the hallway. I recall the entry in the Guinness Book of Records which describes the feat of a Hottentot, on the banks of the Congo, who ate thirteen pickled eels feat in a single sitting. Clearly I have come to the wrong restaurant.

The Sentence of Odysseus

He went to Troy, broiled in blood and dust, and after a crafty victory was, for pride, consigned by sea-god Poseiden to a ten year journey, wandering the salt wash, the god-roiled sea blooming with the bodies of drowned sailors, suffering the anger of one-eyed Cyclops, the beguilements of selfish goddesses, the crushing rocks and the maelstrom, until he finally learnt humility, understood that his voyage was nothing more than one insignificant man's traffic from island to island, and so arrived home to carnage and thereafter, an uneventful conclusion.

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I Was a Soldier

I jumped into the hole to escape from the battle and he was there. He in his blue uniform, I in my green. He looked at me with pain in his eyes and uttered a word in my language.

-Leg.

His leg had been hit near the ankle. Broken bone stretching skin. No blood, just blue bruising. I took a field dressing from my kit and managed as well as I could. If the doctor did not get to him the gangrene would.

We sat there in silence.

-Cigarette?

He took a pack from his pocket, gave me one. Blue cigarettes. We both lit up, sat there in silence smoking.

-Wife.

He took a crumpled photograph, handed it to me. She was a stern dark woman with a child in a pinafore. I showed him my photograph of Mitzi, blonde hair in the sun. He smiled, pressed the photo to his heart, gave it back.

We sat in silence.

The noise of battle abated. The all clear sounded. I picked up my rifle, shot him through the heart.

He was the enemy.

Three short pomes

1

No thoughts
just
 blue sky
 surf
 sand
islands in the sea

2

The dog
 digs a hole
in the sand
 barking
he finds
 the meaning
 of life

3

This river-time
 dissolves
rock and clay

My transient thought
 older
than the hills
and will remain
 after

Mark Pirie

Tangi: A Letter To Richard Burns

*Who'll braid peonies into our brook
One for each soul Death took - Richard Burns*

Winter draws to a close, and the first rays of spring
remind me that Persephone is trapped still,

and on the surface our prayers are
for the Maori Queen, as she is laid to rest

at the foot of her maunga.
Today it would seem

like there is now a time of drought
so eloquently put in your book.

We too are in need of a *Dodola** but instead to dance
her way, in leaves, through our Winter

leavening the cold, the dark that momentarily settles
allowing Persephone to shed her tears, the people to grieve.

Shopping

For Grandma

To pass the time of mourning, I went shopping for three days.
Grandad often said you were particular on

Just the right thing to wear. Before you went out
You would check the whole family, the colour

Of socks, the tie, the shirt, and if you were happy, then
Only then, they could go. And so, as I entered the doors

To every shop, I was offered item after item, each coming with
Advice similar to yours. Yet perhaps it was also the distraction

Of distracting myself from grief that was behind why I was there.
I didn't feel like calling anyone or seeing anybody.

By myself, I was, surrounded by clothes, trying
On different shirts, shoes, polos, shorts

And buying the odd thing that stayed with me,
Was pleasing to the eye. Perhaps it was that, then, the shirt,

The shoes, 'pleasing to the eye', unlike what I had just seen
That was helping me to overcome my grief.

January 2006

Short Ode to the Wellington Wind

For Carlee

The wind that shakes my umbrella
ripples my view and those I see
daily. Lambton Quay to Molesworth Street,
the wind is taking us all in its stride.

Even on days when umbrellas are left strewn
in the street or placed forcibly in a bin
I know the wind is not meaning us any
harm. You will see the wind

altering many things: not least the
expressions on people's faces that
constantly adjust in its presence.
This is the Wellington way, to be

set upon by the wind, that force of nature,
force of our lives, and day by day
these signs remain, somehow peacefully,
and it knows, understands us, this wind.

Photographs

For Aunt Margaret

*"in the search for truth, beauty is
not a destination but a signpost..."*

- David Howard

1.

Looking at her face, eyes
startled by the camera,
how it's caught her, almost
like a child. Sitting
straight, hat covering her hair.
She was my Great Great
Grandmother. A present for
Xmas (December, 2001) -
one of two. Another
memory from the past.

2.

In the second, a couple
sits round a small table. His
face seems nervous, unsettled.

He wears a suit, seems thin,
ungainly. His wife sits opposite
her face elegant, that certain glint.
of beauty, how it lights her eyes,
the frame around them.

3.

So, what happened in their lives?
a casual observer might ask.

Who were they?;

this much we'll never know,
the text remains untold, the sub-
text untold. Even a poet,
like myself, cannot write
their story. *Is*

this beauty, perhaps? at just
that - *what is left unsaid...*

Niel Wright

FATE'S ALTERNATE

This recent war my brother waged ;
Wedged him between the deep and a hard rock.
Me gave a beneficial lift ;
Left so long in the discard, thereby fortune.
My brother still must I reproach :
Rich otherwise so much to put at hazard.
That ancient folly of our family
Formerly and since he lately took up.
True to his nature, fool in essence
Sense he forsakes : to undergo a crusade.
In circumstances he misjudges ;
Charges in everybody's champion at arms.
Even the charmed ; are found : to lack
Luck in the end ; to endless folly fated.
So folly myself benefits,
Fate's alternate as conjoint seven years once.
So we began ; ancestral itch
Each rubbed alternately ; as feuding brothers.
Comes there a time; when we are quit ?
Quite complementary brothers in full measure ;
When I may have my time as master ;
Most or even all brought to a conclusion.

CYPRUS 131 BC

Defeated ; warring with my wives ;
I was exiled beyond bleak waves ;
Became for three years at such price
Resident ruler of Cyprus :
That garden isle ; to which repair
Sybarites of sand bound empire.
But from that setback I divined ;
A restoration I would find ;
That would a hundred years extend
The time ; our dynasty was to stand.

TULIP TIME

In my concluding thirty six
Years ; you and I never had sex ;
Though each year tulips came to bloom
Profusely. Let us share the blame.
Why credit take for abstinence ?
We might have forgone for the nonce
On every day in all those years ;
Since time and place were mine and yours.
So after thirteen thousand days
With life also the ardour dies.

REMONSTRANCE sonnet

No otherwise could I derive answers
Than from your acts and your contrivances :
Simply on grounds of policy
Your consort in the powers of state
The imperial jointress to instate.
Who such a woman comes to wive ;
All claims of bed and board let waive.
Takes a hard heart and a poll icy:
To ask affection of a mother ;
Whose offspring you were quick : to murder ;
A child slain in the mother's arms ;
A grown son ; who fell foul of harms.
The mother you may wed ; divorce.
The daughter you may take by force.

JERJES II

A father sends his son abroad
Through plague by perilous desert road ;
Not just at risk of death, with life
Preserved at odds beyond belief ;
To Egypt where the steamships channel
A waterway richer than Nile ;
Then to an ancient land where merge
With beauty luck : its mirror image :
After a while yet further still
Through mid ocean storm gate to steal ;
So strong a motive comes by chancing
Life limb and love against mischance ;
As builds a castle red as rock ;
Equal whatever havoc seasons wreck.



Front cover

Earl of Seacliff

Christmas Surprise 2006

In the tradition of the Beatles, who put out a special Christmas record for their fans, we offer to you, our friends and clients, this small token for your enjoyment.



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Back Cover