

The poems in this collection serve as pithy and humorous tasters for themes and relationships present in the book. The poem 'Carnival' sums up Southam's philosophy of people:

In the people garden
growth and decay.
Colours compete.
some strangle
as they reach
for the sun's
short warmth.

While the poems are enjoyable, for me it was the stories that really captured my attention. Here the characters fully explored and realized; the un-emotive language sizzles and the ironic undercurrents emerge. Interesting historically is the story 'Exodus for some' describing J.K. Baxter's early Auckland days, prior to Jerusalem.

All these nuggets of experience and the quiet irony of relationships make us laugh, probably remind us of some old codger we know, and linger long after the book is finished. They are not laments for the 'good old days' rather a reminder that things have moved on. An enjoyable read, the kind to read on a cold Sunday. I recommend it fully.

Heidi North is a Wellington actor and writer. She has just completed the IOWA Poetry workshop at HML, Wellington

☞ Websites ☞

Griffin Poetry Prize shortlist announced

After an unprecedented 441 eligible books were submitted for this prestigious international poetry award, the list has been narrowed down to just seven finalists in the running for the lucrative C\$100,000 prize. For full details, including judges' comments and excerpts from the collections, have a look at the official website: <http://www.griffinpoetryprize.com>

Scriptorium Scribbles: The young writers' resource webzine

This youth-focused site is an offshoot of an American writers' e-zine and provides a wealth of literary info and ideas. With articles, exercises and a great online workshop section, there's plenty to inspire and motivate young poets. The website hasn't been updated in a while, but good advice never gets old and a bright young spark near you might find it just the thing to get them scribbling. <http://www.thescriptorium.net/youth.html>

The Poetry Archive

A collection of English language poets reading from their own work. A brilliant idea and absolutely free to download. You can browse by poet (Allen Curnow's readings are terrific), by themes and poetic forms to find what you're after. Or just listen to something new. <http://www.poetryarchive.org>

☞ Out & About ☞

Picton Poets

At our April meeting of The Picton Poets Julie gave a very interesting report of The New Zealand Readers' and Writers' session she attended when she was in Wellington for the New Zealand International Arts Festival in March. Janet Frame's book of poetry, "The Goose Bath", which was published posthumously, was launched at this session. Janet owned a dish, which had previously been used as a goose bath, to keep her poems in and it was from this dish that some of her poems had been chosen. Julie had a copy of the book with her and at the end of her talk she passed around some of the poems to be read aloud. A lively discussion followed, mainly about the years the Frame family had lived in Picton. They had lived in a house in Waikawa Rd., as is The Cottage in which we hold our meetings. Altogether it was an enjoyable and informative meeting.

Picton Poets will be participating in the Marlborough Arts Festival [May 5 to May 20] and will be reading poetry in The Mariners Mall on Montana Poetry Day.

A busy time lies ahead.

Report by Kay Wutzler

Lower Hutt - Angus Inn Poets Pub The Kaleidoscope

When Mike Eager, our May guest, read his new collection of poems I was reminded of a Kauri kaleidoscope given to me years ago by a friend. The receptacle was uniquely wooden on the outside but lain within was an array of visions that ranged from the awe-inspiring, to the terrifying, to the mesmerising; as was the selection that Mike Eager presented Poets' Pub with last Monday night. We heard about hitchhikers, Leo the footman, The return of the Maori Jesus, a little bit of silly love, nature, domesticity as 'the takeaway bar heats up the oil,' and the occasional poem about sex. A high contrast to our April guest, Eileen Franklin, whose poetry leaned toward the reality of the workplace and the seasonal nature of life as shown in a poem entitled 'Dot's retirement,' which '...came a year early / that's really a perk.' And with excitement intensifying, poets slunk