

9 Poems by 9 Poets

on New Zealand Poetry Day 2018

Therese Lloyd
Harry Ricketts
Bill Manhire
Sam Duckor-Jones
Helen Heath
Erik Kennedy
Kerrin P. Sharpe
Tayi Tibble
Jenny Bornholdt

All of these poets have books published by VUP this year

Happy Poetry Day!

Open Lady

I was pleased to arrive home to a package
 that I'd worried the man upstairs
would have stolen
 that I'd see him
in a few days
 wearing the hat that I'd ordered
and that I wouldn't have the courage to shout
 'Hey!'
I live in the woulds and this is my problem
 I've been here for a month
and have only just watered the plants
 it's not like me, ask anyone
There is a closed-in part of me
 that thinks laughter sounds like sewing machines
I want to raise my ear to the ceiling
 hear the words those strangers speak
why are they sewing?
 what's so funny?

THERESE LLOYD

from *The Facts* (VUP, 2018)

Tanka for Bashō

(for Geoff)

Gaunt, glasses, held-in,
beanie tight as a skullcap,
dangled microphone.
Blood is trickling ever so
slowly across your knuckles.

HARRY RICKETTS

from [*Winter Eyes*](#) (VUP, 2018)

The Ladder

Too short to reach the roof,
too short to threaten important windows,

the ladder lies on its side
behind the house, out of sight.

The ladder lies in the grass,
a different grain in each of its rungs

(and wings on each rung
so where can you place your feet?).

And, as you can see, it is rotten.
Nevertheless, it longs to be lifted.

BILL MANHIRE

from *Lifted* (VUP, 2005 / VUP Classics, 2018)

Greg and the bird

circa 2018

The large electric that is you
is like the help that is you and
the mouth and the associated
kiss. The source is kind, simply
loved. Turning, my bird, turning
to view a scratched course. I'm
the darkness – blink me in, fork me
against the wall. See my hands
rubbing furiously through the grass.
I couldn't make the connections in
my throat, pull my body rope. Forget
my brain, my desire. She cries at old
glass devices like gutter memories.
Your tears whisper, blooming inside,
a terminal power of digitised proportions.
The stuttering world breaks the tangle
of my body, damp tapping, rhythmic to
a point – into skin, a trace of dust
soft behind that and the name of a patient.

HELEN HEATH

from *Are Friends Electric?* (VUP, 2018)

This poem was created by feeding the contents of this poetry collection
into Gregory Kan's text randomiser tool: glassleaves.herokuapp.com

Love Poem with Seagull

I wish I'd seen it from your side of the table
when the horrid gull attacked my fish and chips,
the springy baton of haddock in my hand
a signal for the post-saurian psycho
to swoop at my talonless fingers as they moved towards my mouth
in their classically dithering mammalian way,
because if I'd had the privilege to see
the stress-warped, flexuous face behind
my bat-like ultrasonic shrieks of shock
as I fought off the bird unsuccessfully
then I'd have some idea of what it means
for you to love me, the sort of person who manages
to always look like this or feel like this
regardless of how much easier being normal is.

ERIK KENNEDY

from *[There's No Place Like the Internet in Springtime](#)* (VUP, 2018)

louder

elephants paint their faces
to restore themselves

adding tusks where poachers
stole their ivory

these artists use soft sable
brushes made in the Congo

and paint their parents
bathing in rivers

crossing Ugandan borders
or even birthing
when hunters arrive

and if you can imagine
thousands of elephants
all in outdoor studios

painting themselves and their tribe
as whole elephants

even as guns are raised
and calves stumble
into scopes even as

trunks and heads are mutilated
their painting continues
louder than bullets

KERRIN P. SHARPE

from *Louder* (VUP, 2018)

Sensitivity

248 years
since Captain Cook
landed

14 years
since *Whale Rider* was
released

Keisha Castle-Hughes
is speared through the heart
by a white man with a ship

in the television series
Game of Thrones
season 7 episode 3
52 minutes and 22 seconds in.

TAYI TIBBLE

from [*Pōūkahangatus*](#) (VUP, 2018)

Cold

It's freezing
out there – minus
one. Pies stacked
in the warmer.
Toaster cord bound
in red tape
like a chilli.

JENNY BORNHOLDT

Editor, *Short Poems of New Zealand* (VUP, forthcoming 2018)