



## **The Empty Chair at Melbourne Writers Festival**

**The empty chair on stage during various panels represents writers who have been killed, imprisoned, tortured, threatened, attacked or exiled for the peaceful practice of their professions.**

## **Feature: poetry in translation**

**pen** MELBOURNE Quarterly

**Issue 2  
August 2011**

## PEN Melbourne Committee

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Asia and Pacific liaison	berni m janssen
Committee members	Cynthia Troup, Christine McKenzie

## Honorary Members of PEN Melbourne

**Anne Bihan** has lived in New Caledonia since 1993. She was a guest poet/translator representing New Caledonia at the 2008 Franco-anglais Poetry Festival and was subsequently invited to work with bernie janssen, coordinator of the APWN (Australia and Pacific Writers Network).

**Seedy Bojang** is a journalist and writer from The Gambia. After the closure of independent newspapers in The Gambia, Seedy was briefly employed by the government-supported Gambia newspaper. His employment was terminated because he would not write articles supporting the government.

**Wajeha Al Huwaidar** is a writer and women's rights activist from Saudi Arabia. Wajeha has often been a lone voice for women's rights, campaigning for women to be allowed to drive cars and against their treatment as second-class citizens.

**Zhang Jianhong 1958–2010.** The prominent poet, playwright, editor and author died 31 December 2010. Independent Chinese Pen (ICPC) considers Mr Zhang Jianhong (Li Hong) as a victim of contemporary literary inquisition in China and one of the worst cases since China started its policy of 'reform and opening-up' in the late 1970s.

**Lucina Kathmann** is an International Vice-President of PEN and has had a long association with the San Miguel de Allende PEN Centre in Mexico. She helped establish PEN Women Writers Committee. She has travelled through Kurdistan, including into Iraq with Kurdish writers who had been in exile from their homeland.

**Rosa Vasseghi** faced years of repression in Iran and has made a new life in Melbourne. She is the author and illustrator of eight children's books, a painter, an organiser of musical gatherings, and is currently completing an Iranian cookbook. In 2009 she published her book *Where is the justice? Stories from behind closed doors*, which documents the stories of women and girls persecuted in a various countries.

**Irina Khalip** was arrested on 19 December 2010 after she reported on demonstrations connected to the Belarusian presidential election. Severely beaten and held in isolation by the Belarusian State Security (KGB) for one month in Minsk she was then placed under strict house arrest. In May 2011 Khalip was handed a two-year suspended sentence but lost her appeal case in July 2011.

**Natalia Radzina**, Belarusian journalist, was ordered to attend the KGB office in Minsk on 31 March. It is thought that the KGB wanted to bring a formal charge against her for organising 'mass disorder' during a protest against the presidential election result in December 2010. Radzina is thought to be seeking political asylum in a foreign country.

## Newsletter Production

Editor	Christine McKenzie
Assistant Editor	Christina C Ratcliffe
Desktop Publishing	Lynn Smailes, with thanks to Toya Ricci

Submission enquiries: [admin@melbournepen.com.au](mailto:admin@melbournepen.com.au)

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### PEN Melbourne

PO Box 373, Fairfield, VIC 3078  
Phone: 9482 6134 after 7 pm  
[admin@melbournepen.com.au](mailto:admin@melbournepen.com.au)  
[www.melbournepen.com.au](http://www.melbournepen.com.au)

### PEN Melbourne at The Wheeler Centre: Books, Writing, Ideas

176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Messages for PEN Melbourne may be left on 03 9094 7885  
You will be contacted as soon as possible

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# Melbourne Writers Festival

## PEN Melbourne at the Melbourne Writers Festival

### Language and Politics in Indigenous Writing



Kim Scott



Marie Munkara



John Bradley



Arnold Zable

## Kim Scott, Marie Munkara and John Bradley in conversation with Arnold Zable

Indigenous writing is flourishing in Australia, with a growing number of established and emerging voices. This PEN Melbourne event explores the role of new yet ancient ways of seeing, new forms of expression, and the interplay between writing and politics, both overt and subtle, through the lens of Indigenous writing.

**Kim Scott**'s second novel, *Benang*, won the Western Australian Premier's Book Awards 1999, the Miles Franklin Award 2000, and the RAKA Kate Challis Award 2001. Scott was the first Indigenous writer to win the Miles Franklin. His latest novel, *That Deadman Dance* won this year's Miles Franklin Award. It explores the lively fascination felt between the Noongar people, British colonists and American whalers in the early years of the 19th century.

**Marie Munkara** was born on the banks of the Mainoru River in Arnhemland. Her first book *Every Secret Thing* won the 2008 David Unaipon Award and the 2010 NT Book of The Year. She lives in Darwin with her menagerie of cats, dogs and frogs.

**John Bradley** is Acting Director of the Monash Indigenous Centre, and Program Director for the Monash Country Lines Archive at Monash University. John has worked with the Yanyuwa people of the south-west Gulf of Carpentaria for over three decades on issues associated with language preservation, land and sea claims and emotional ties to homelands.

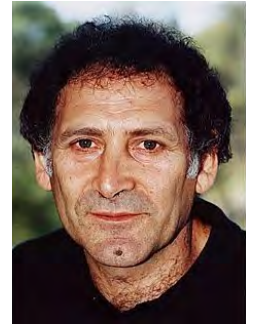
**Arnold Zable** is president of PEN Melbourne, and is a human rights advocate. He is the award-winning author of the memoir *Jewels and Ashes* and the best-seller *Café Scheherazade*. His other books include *The Fig Tree*, *Scraps of Heaven* and *Sea of Many Returns*, and a recent collection of true stories, *Violin Lessons*, which takes the reader on an intimate journey into the lives of people he has met on his travels over the past forty years.

Saturday, 27 August, 5.30–6.30 p.m.  
Bookings essential: [www.mwf.com.au](http://www.mwf.com.au)



# Report

## President's Report



Arnold Zable

Welcome to our Melbourne Writers Festival edition of the PEN Melbourne Quarterly. PEN Melbourne has sponsored panels at the festival since 1994. This year's PEN panel is on the topic, 'Language and politics in Indigenous writing'. It will be held at 5.30 p.m, on Saturday, 27 August and feature the dual Miles Franklin award-winning author, Kim Scott, emerging Darwin-based writer, Marie Munkara, and Indigenous languages specialist John Bradley. It is the second of our 2011 Freespeak series, generously funded by the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL).

Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance* was awarded this year's Miles Franklin among many other awards, including a Commonwealth Writers' Prize. Set in the Albany area in Western Australia, it is a groundbreaking novel. No other book I've read so powerfully and convincingly portrays the subtleties of the Indigenous point of view, and the interplay between black and white at the time of first contact and dispossession.

Indigenous language is a major concern for Scott, both as a writer and as an active proponent of language retrieval. Scott has spoken of his extensive research into the Noongar language, and the way it quickly adapted to the English language of the colonisers. He skilfully weaves the Indigenous language and its adaptations into *That Deadman Dance*.

Kim Scott's previous novel, *Benang*, was the first by an Indigenous writer to receive the Miles Franklin award. As with his latest novel, Scott is daring in his approach. *Benang*'s central character, Harley, literally takes leave of the ground and floats up; he becomes a flying narrator. It is an image that suggests the sharp and rapid deracination of Indigenous people. Here in Victoria, on the other side of the continent, it took just one generation in time, from the 1830s to the 1850s, to dispossess most Indigenous peoples. The land that had for so long sustained them was virtually cut from beneath their feet.

PEN Melbourne is pleased to introduce new audiences to Indigenous writer Marie Munkara. Her debut novel *Every Secret Thing* received the Northern Territory Book of the Year Award in 2010.

Munkara was born on the banks of the Mainoru River in central Arnhem Land. She depicts the mission era as a comic clash between the Bush Mob and the Mission, and approaches burning issues such as cultural depredation, the stolen generations, and sexual abuse with an understanding derived from direct observation and lived experience. The novel has been praised as a robust and audacious critique of white incursion, and as a celebration of the solidarity, joy, and community of Indigenous people in Arnhem Land. Munkara employs satire, humour, and farce with hilarious yet devastating effect.

Monash University-based researcher John Bradley has conducted research on Indigenous ways of knowing their own country, and on Indigenous language maintenance. His research has concentrated

on Indigenous, and more specifically, the Yanyuwa people's ways of knowing country. One of the aims of Bradley's work is to build bridges between the science of the western tradition and Indigenous ways of knowing. Bradley hopes his research will enhance the protection of both biological species and particular sites of significance to Indigenous people. Most recently he has employed animation as a means of retrieving and recording Indigenous languages. The aim is to eventually apply this approach to Indigenous languages Australia wide.

Language was also a major concern at the first event in PEN Melbourne's FreeSpeak series—a cross-cultural poetry and translation salon held on Monday, 25 July 2011. Kris Hemensley's iconic Collected Works Bookshop was an ideal setting for an evening that brought together poets from non-English-speaking backgrounds and their translators. The audience was treated to poetry in Vietnamese, Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and French.

It was inspiring to hear poetry recited in these languages, with their unique rhythms, intonations and musicality, complemented by English translation. A highlight for me was the music that accompanied the poetry of Vietnamese writer Thanh Van Le who has had about one hundred poems set to music. The evening included an audience discussion of the art of translation, the process of collaboration between writer and translator, and the challenges faced by writers from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

As is often the case in events such as this, the conversations before and after the event enabled new friendships to be formed and old ones resumed. At a time when multiculturalism is under attack in some quarters, it reaffirmed the great richness of this ideal. The evening also provided a model for future events.

Congratulations to committee member Elaine Lewis for organising the evening, and to Elaine, Chris McKenzie and Berni Jansen for conceiving, and working so hard on, the FreeSpeak series. This edition of the PEN Melbourne Quarterly includes a supplement featuring the poems in their original language and in English translation.

Both the poetry evening and the forthcoming Melbourne Writers Festival panel on Indigenous writing highlight the work of PEN International's Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee. The committee was established in Stockholm in 1978 to promote the translation of literature from smaller languages into major world languages, including the three official languages of PEN International—English, French and Spanish—and from these languages eventually into many others.

The committee has since expanded its aims to now include the role that literary translation can play in inter-cultural dialogue and exchange. The urgency of this goal is highlighted by the tragic events in Norway and the rising attacks on the ideal of multiculturalism, both here and abroad. More than ever it is an ideal and a reality that requires deeper understanding.

The PEN Melbourne cross-cultural poetry evening was multicultural Melbourne at its best. In recent years PEN Melbourne has worked with, and entered into partnerships with, local communities including the Anatolian, Assyrian, Pontian, Turkish, Greek and Armenian. We hope to expand this work and reach out to writers in Melbourne's Asian, African and Middle Eastern communities.

As previously at the Melbourne Writers Festival, the work of PEN International will also be represented by the 'empty chair project'. The empty chair represents a writer who could not attend, though invited, because they have been persecuted for the peaceful pursuit of their vocation. The chair highlights the aims of PEN International's Writers in Prison project, which since 1961 has worked on behalf of thousands of writers who have been imprisoned, tortured, threatened, attacked or exiled for the peaceful practice of their professions.

This year the empty chair will be featured in selected sessions and directly linked to the cases of specific writers who are currently under threat. PEN Melbourne is one of 140 centres in more than 100 countries that advocate on behalf of persecuted writers by lobbying governments, writing letters of support, and by researching and publicising cases. At any one time there are up to 1000 writers on the case list in countries that range from right- to left-wing dictatorships, one-party states, theocracies, and even self-proclaimed democratic states.

The current president of PEN International, Canadian writer John Ralston Saul, has written that

*'International PEN was created out of the scars of World War I to bring societies back together through their literature. Constant violence against writers quickly forced us to realize that free speech and literature are one and the same thing. PEN is the foremost and oldest freedom of expression organisation in the world, and since 1960 the Writers in Prison Committee has set the standard around the world for defending not just the rights of writers, but the free speech of everyone.'*

Every December, members of PEN Melbourne come together for an annual card-writing session. In December 2010, 215 cards were sent to imprisoned writers in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Vietnam, Spain, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Cameroon, Burundi, Egypt, and China to let them know they were not alone and that we would continue to advocate on their behalf.

Toni Jordan has for the past five years guided the Writers in Prison work, responding to rapid-action alerts, writing letters, organising support among our members, and following new cases.

PEN Melbourne continues to be represented in international forums. Judith Rodriguez will represent us at this year's PEN International congress in Belgrade, and Judy Buckrich will visit the recently formed PEN Cambodia later this year. Coincidentally, the work of the Translation and Linguistics Committee will be discussed in the Belgrade conference in the form of the proposed Girona Manifesto which we include in this edition of the Quarterly.

As John Ralston Saul points out, the manifesto addresses concerns about the pressures on languages with a smaller population base, and the difficulty their speakers have in making themselves heard in the world. He points out that many languages are in danger, and many are actually disappearing. The loss of one's language, and through that loss much of one's culture, can be seen as the ultimate removal of freedom of expression.

Elaine Lewis is our honorary treasurer; Christine McKenzie and her team produce the Quarterly with flair and imagination; and Berni Janssen continues to liaise with PEN centres and writers throughout the Pacific and Asia, by courtesy of her Asia Pacific writers' network.

PEN Melbourne's future activities include an evening with Iranian-born human rights activist and refugee advocate Maryam Namazie, to be held at the Wheeler Centre on 23 August. The third event in our 2011 FreeSpeak series will be an evening focusing on freedom of speech. This will be held in November in Ballarat, the home of the Eureka rebellion.

We plan to increase our services to members by informing them of opportunities and grants, and inviting members to share news about their writing, book launches, notices of new plays, and PEN-related news. All writers, journalists, and supporters of writing and freedom of expression are welcome to join us and become members.

Arnold Zable  
August 2011

# Special Report

## Why the silence about Hungary?

The most terrible attack on freedom of speech since the end of the cold war is under way in Hungary, but I had to go to the English version of the German paper Der Spiegel to find out about it. Last week, when Hungary handed the rotating European Union Presidency to Poland, the Hungarian Prime Minister, nationalist conservative Viktor Orbán, took the opportunity to extend laws affecting the media that had been enacted in December 2010. Orbán, who is well known for his anti-European Union views, has often raged against the EU.

His praise for the Chinese system during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's recent visit to Hungary is a clear indication of the direction his government is taking. In the run-up to the visit, Hungarian authorities rushed to outlaw anti-China demonstrations.

The main thrust of the new media laws has been a massive dismissal of people in state-run media organisations. The scale of these lay-offs is unprecedented; in the next few months nearly a third of 3400 employees will be jobless. Already 550 editors, reporters and technicians have been fired, including the entire corps of parliamentary correspondents at public television broadcaster MTV. Many were prominent and award-winning journalists whose coverage of domestic and foreign policies enjoyed a reputation for high quality and balanced perspective.

Opposition politicians are describing the move as a 'systematic political purge' of the state-run media. 'The government is firing anyone who doesn't work in line with its directives,' says the chairman of the Hungarian Socialist Party, Attila Mesterházy.

For almost a year, Orbán has been radically reshaping Hungary's media.

- In 2010, the NMHH, a powerful media authority, was set up with a board exclusively drawn from the governing Fidesz party. The body enjoys far-reaching powers and the ability to sanction both public and private media sources.
- In November, nearly all public radio and television employees, as well as those of the state-run news service, MTI, were brought together into one massive organisation known as the Media Service Support and Broadcasting Fund (MTVA). Though the organisation's stated mission is to provide content for public programming, the real reason for the change was to allow a huge number of lay-offs.
- In December, the Hungarian Parliament passed the new media law whose provisions threaten the independence of the work of journalists in both public and private media. The government amended a few sections of the law in February following harsh criticism from the European Commission, but a series of vague clauses still allows control over journalists, especially those in public media. For example, journalists are required to provide balanced reporting while helping to 'strengthen national identity'.
- Last week, the parliament added more provisions to the media law, some of which make it easier to revoke the licence of a private radio or television broadcaster.

I was living in Budapest in 1989 when the Hungarian government's courageous actions led to the end of the cold war. It is hard to believe that just 22 years later things have taken such an appalling turn.

There have been many demonstrations and attempts to stop the new laws but with the government's two-thirds majority in parliament it has been impossible to do anything. Many older Hungarians fear a return to the policies based on terror that were in place during World War II and

during the long period of the cold war between 1948 and 1989. And many who voted for Fidesz regret that they did so. Among the echoes of the fascist era of the 1930s and 1940s is the intense anti-Semitic and anti-Roma hysteria that members of the governing right-wing parties have tried to stir up in the population in an effort to find a scapegoat for Hungary's economic hardships.

Things are bound to get worse before they get better. But at the least one would hope that the local press would report these events for no other reason than to support their colleagues. Sadly this does not seem to be the case.

Judith Buckrich  
July 2011

# Feature

## Translation and linguistic rights

### The Girona Manifesto

From the President,  
PEN International July 2011

Dear friends,

Some two weeks ago all PEN Centres received a message from the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee telling you about The Girona Manifesto. I am following up in order to let you know how important I personally believe this initiative to be.

Exactly 15 years ago the same Committee led a coalition of civil society and international organizations in the production of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights. This large and complex document was approved by PEN's annual Assembly of Delegates and has gone on to play an important role in specialist circles around the world. What has been missing is a short, clear Manifesto laying out the Declaration's essential arguments in a way that can be made use of by everyone.

The Girona Manifesto is precisely that. On one page containing ten points and written in a language which is both literary and practical, this Manifesto creates a tool we can all use. The manifesto is attached to this email for you all to read.

Of course, our Assembly in Belgrade will be asked to approve it. But I thought it important to lay out the context in which this Manifesto can be read.

We are all concerned about pressures being put on languages with a smaller population base. We are concerned about the lack of translation from these languages and the difficulty they have making themselves heard in the world. Many languages are in danger. Many are actually disappearing. The loss of one's language, and through that loss much of one's culture, can be seen as the ultimate removal of freedom of expression.

The Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee began working on this Manifesto in our three official languages after its 2010 meeting.

At its 2011 meeting, in which both Hori Takeaki and myself took part, everyone present spent much of their time debating this short text in three languages. The result was The Girona Manifesto, which was unanimously adopted.

This Manifesto could give us a clear public document with which to defend and advance languages with smaller populations, as well, as endangered languages.

I encourage all of you to read it, to translate it into your own languages before Belgrade, and to think about how we could best use it to advance the multiplicity of languages and cultures that PEN International represents.

John Ralston Saul

## Translation and linguistic rights The Girona Manifesto on Linguistic Rights

### **PEN International brings together the writers of the world.**

Fifteen years ago, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights was first made public in Barcelona by PEN International's Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee.

Today, that same Committee, gathered together in Girona, declares a Manifesto of the Universal Declaration's ten central principles.

1. Linguistic diversity is a world heritage that must be valued and protected.
2. Respect for all languages and cultures is fundamental to the process of constructing and maintaining dialogue and peace in the world.
3. All individuals learn to speak in the heart of a community that gives them life, language, culture and identity.
4. Different languages and different ways of speaking are not only means of communication; they are also the milieu in which humans grow and cultures are built.
5. Every linguistic community has the right for its language to be used as an official language in its territory.
6. School instruction must contribute to the prestige of the language spoken by the linguistic community of the territory.
7. It is desirable for citizens to have a general knowledge of various languages, because it favours empathy and intellectual openness, and contributes to a deeper knowledge of one's own tongue.
8. The translation of texts, especially the great works of various cultures, represents a very important element in the necessary process of greater understanding and respect among human beings.
9. The media is a privileged loudspeaker for making linguistic diversity work and for competently and rigorously increasing its prestige.
10. The right to use and protect one's own language must be recognized by the United Nations as one of the fundamental human rights.

Committee of Translation and Linguistic Rights of PEN International

Girona, 13th of May 2011



# Feature

## Translation and linguistic rights

### Translation

*Yet why not say what happened? Robert Lowell*

Two days into Spring and the Wajeha video arrives.  
A slim woman in a head scarf, black binds her eyes,  
a black stripe covers her mouth. She paints on an easel

in a pleasant, well-lit room — and something slowly grows.  
She is painting a portrait of herself: a sky blue veil,  
a youthful face, blinded by black, a black stripe replaces

her mouth. She cannot sing; her brush strokes cannot release  
her mind. All she sees is that she cannot speak. And then  
the words: *there is no life without freedom of expression.*

Susan Fealy

Wajeha-al-Huwaider is a Saudi Arabian journalist banned from  
writing by her government.

This poem was first published in Arena Magazine, July 2010

### On translation

Doestoevsky, Heraclitus, Dante, Virgil, Homer, Cervantes, Kafka, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Hölderlin, and scores of other poets and writers who have marked me forever—I, an American, whose only foreign language is French—have all been revealed to me, read by me, digested by me, in translation. Translators are the shadow heroes of literature, the often forgotten instruments that make it possible for different cultures to talk to one another, who have enabled us to understand that we all, from every part of the world, live in one world.

I would like to offer a salute and a declaration of thanks to all these men and women, these translators, who toil so selflessly to keep literature alive for everyone.

Paul Auster from his foreword to *To be translated or not to be*  
PEN / IRL report on the international situation of literary translation, 2007

## Cross-cultural poetry and translation salon

The work of the PEN International Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee primarily focuses on issues of translation and linguistic rights and their effect on readers and writers across the globe, including at a most basic level, access to literature. Concurrently it places great emphasis on the role that literary translation can play in enabling intercultural exchange.

PEN Melbourne committee member Elaine Lewis gave voice to this endeavour when she conceived of and produced an evening of poetry in translation recently. PEN Melbourne members, supporters and poetry devotees gathered at Collected Works Bookshop to listen to poets and their translators reading and singing in the multitude of voices and languages that are now familiar to Melbourne.

We heard poems and songs in Arabic, Turkish, French, Spanish, Catalan, Vietnamese and English, followed by brief talks by the poets around particularities of their work, their language and the task of translation. We were entranced by the beautiful voice of Son Doan singing the poetry of Thanh Van Le accompanied by Ginny Lewis on keyboard, and by poet and musician Gabriela Haddad singing the song she composed for this FreeSpeak evening. Matt Hetherington, Marie Succar, Dominique Hecq, Elaine Lewis and Judith Buckrich presented the poems in their English, Arabic and French versions.

The following pages include many of the poems read and performed in English and their original languages.

*A PEN Melbourne Project supported by CAL*



# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Marie Succar

### **Hamza**

They killed you, at the point of speech  
In the country to be called Shaam  
Children tore up the roots of silence  
Sang with the angels the slogans of freedom,  
Hamza, rage of Honour  
Dazzling aroma  
The dawn of the scarcity of free souls  
Extending like dignified trees,  
Wind screams rights  
Reflecting through his spirit the pain of freedom,  
Shining high and radiant  
To become  
An enigma in the sky ...

### **Marie Succar**

Translated by the poet and **Elaine Lewis**

Hamza Al-Khatib is a child who was detained by Syrian security forces during a demonstration calling for freedom and democracy; his mutilated body was handed over to his family on the 25 May 2011.

# Feature

## Poetry in translation

حمزه\*

قتلوك عند فوهة الكلام

في بلاد على اهبة الشام

، طفل ،

اقتلع الصمت من جذوره

وشدا مع الملائكة هتافات الحرية ،

حمزه غضبة الشرف

، ضوع الشذا ،

فجرٌ وشح ساحة الأحرار

متطاولاً كشجر الكرامة ،

ريحٌ صفّر بالحق

معبراً بروحه عن وجع الحرية ،

فتوهجت عالياً وارتسمت

معه

انجما في السماء ...

-حمزه\* الخطيب هو الطفل الذي اعتقلته أجهزة الامن السورية خلال تظاهرة تدعو للحرية والديموقراطية وسلمته جثة مشوهة الى أهله في 25- 5-2011

Marie Succar

# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Matt Hetherington and Hidayet Ceylan

### **It's hidden within you**

You are the physician, you are the patient  
You are the apprentice, you are the craftsman  
You are the silent one, you are the voice  
All human beings are hidden within you

You are the captain, you are the rudder  
You are the ocean, you are the port  
You are the pearl, you are the diver  
The universe is hidden within you

You are the wave coming up from the deep  
You are the proof of humanity  
You are the light, you are the shadow  
Every era is hidden within you

Hidayet, you will long be spoken of  
Sooner or later you'll be six feet under  
You are the traveller, you are the path  
The Bible and The Qur'an are hidden within you

### **Hidayet Ceylan**

March 2006  
Melbourne – Australia  
Translation: **Hidayet Ceylan– Matt Hetherington**

**Sende saklı**

Hekim sensin hasta sensin  
Çırac sensin usta sensin  
Susan sensin ses de sensin  
Herbir insan sende saklı

Kaptan sensin dümen sensin  
Derya sensin liman sensin  
Gevher sensin dalan sensin  
Bütün evren sende saklı

Dipten gelen dalga sensin  
İnsanlığa belge sensin  
Işık sensin gölge sensin  
Bütün devran sende saklı

Hidayet'im dilde sensin  
Evvel ahir salda sensin  
Yolcu sensin yol da sensin  
İncil Kur'an sende saklı

**Hidayet Ceylan**

Mart 2006  
Melburn - Avustralya

# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng [Thường Quán]

### The fifth moon

Ash cooling

a war horse

grudgingly raises his front

leg

Gate of labyrinth

still masks

covert glances

menacing looks

tattooed

Crossing streams

I look into the dark water

old homes and villages

Collecting a word – ‘tà’ –

buried in the lost canon

ask am I surrounded

by friends or foes

Only the calm in a pale blue page

Ah! a dense world of spirits and ghosts

Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng [Thường Quán]

Translated by the poet

- tà -
1. descending
  2. dark (force)

### **rằm tháng năm**

Lửa tàn  
ngựa chiến  
khẽnh chân

Mê cung  
nạ mắt  
lợm lằm  
thịt xâm

Quá giang  
tăm tích  
phá đằm

Chữ tà  
thư tịch  
có lằm  
thích thân ?

Thản thanh thư

A! một khối quỷ thần

Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng [Thường Quán]

15.6.2011

# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Dominique Hecq

At risk of sinking  
bled to white  
ordered to move on  
our words suspended

go my tongue go  
embrace the uniqueness of other  
places  
open your being to the stranger

totem-pole of The Word  
*I* is this Other to address  
to write a limitless gesture  
life set free through words.

(a collaborative translation)

### **I have seen, I have seen**

bloodless tongues  
colourless words  
denuded verbs  
lifeless books

books piled high  
verbs hollowed out  
words watered down  
tongues dying out

but a child rises up  
on his palm he has written  
freedom  
a thousand birds will bathe there

**Anne Bihan**

June 2011

Translated by **Elaine Lewis**

Anne Bihan is an honorary member of PEN Melbourne  
Pictured above: Dominique Hecq reads Anne Bihan's poems in French

Sous peine de sombrer  
saignés à blanc  
ordre de circuler  
à nos mots en souffrance

va ma langue, va  
éteindre les ailleurs  
singuliers  
ouvre tes corps à l'étranger

poteau-mitan du Verbe  
Je est cet Autre à prononcer  
écrire un geste sans papiers  
la vie libérée sur parole.

**J'ai vu, j'ai vu**

des langues exsangues  
des mots falots  
des verbes imberbes  
des livres sans vibes

les livres s'empilaient  
les verbes s'évidaient  
les mots s'édulcoraient  
les langues agonisaient

mais un enfant s'est mis debout  
sur sa paume il a tracé  
liberté  
mille oiseaux vont s'y baigner.

Anne Bihan

juin 2011

Anne Bihan is an honorary member of PEN Melbourne

# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Gabriela Haddad

### **Freedom Riders**

Though they are beaten and spat on  
no-one can tell them they are wrong.  
They know where they've come from;  
they know where they've been;  
they know that this end is where they'll begin.  
They speak free

Though they are knocked down to their knees  
from ground level, still they speak what they please.  
They'll tell you their story;  
they'll tell it with might  
whether covered in dust or blinded by light.  
They speak free,  
free, as they fought to be

**Gabriela Haddad**

# Feature

## Poetry in translation

رواد الحرية

على الرغم من أنهم يهانون،

للضرب والشتم يتعرضون،

لا يمكن أن تقول

انهم مخطئون !

يعرفون من اين اتوا

أين كانوا

والى اين هم ذاهبون !

يعرفون ان من هذه النهاية

ستكون لهم البداية

بحرية ينادون

ولو على ركبهم يزحفون،

قصصهم يخبرون

بالعتم او بالضوء

بحرية يخبرون

حرية من اجلها يموتون ...

Gabriela Haddad  
Translated by Marie Succar

# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Judith Buckrich and Ruth Sancho Huerga

### **Morning Bird**

Perched on a punishment cell's bar  
a morning swallow trills.

Beaten and tortured  
he has lost consciousness,  
but now he is a bird,  
singing.

His beak is a quill that writes in all languages,  
His feathers are pages for all flocks' speech,  
His song is the anthem that awakes the world  
His claws, the holders of freedom's prayer .

And the bird flies away,  
the poet stands up,  
and the gate of a jail  
is opened.

**Ruth Sancho Huerga**

**Ocell de la matinada**

Sostinguda sobre el barrot d'una celda de càstig  
una golondrina de la matinada canta.

Golpejat i torturat  
ha perdut la consciència,  
però ara és un ocell  
cantant.

El seu pic és la pluma que escribeix en totes les llengües  
les seves plumes són pàgines pel discurs de totes les bandades,  
el seu cant és l'himne que desperta al món,  
les seves garres, el sosté d'aquesta presa de la llibertat humana .

I l'au s'allunya volant,  
però el poeta s'aixeca,  
i la porta d'una càrrecel  
s'obre.

**Ruth Sancho Huerga**

Translated into Catalan by the poet

**Pájaro de la mañana**

Apoyada sobre el barroto de una celda de castigo  
una golondrina de la mañana canta.

Golpeado y torturado,  
ha perdido la consciencia,  
pero ahora es un pájaro  
cantando.

Su pico es la pluma que escribe en todas las lenguas,  
sus plumas son páginas para el discurso de todas las bandadas,  
su canto es el himno que despierta al mundo,  
sus garras, el sostén de esta presa de la libertad humana.

Y el ave se aleja volando,  
pero el poeta se pone en pie,  
y la puerta de una cárcel,  
se abre.

**Ruth Sancho Huerga**

Translated into Spanish by the poet

# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Suzanne Maraea Packer

### Acceptance

Will we truly, ever understand life's purposes and lessons  
Does a bird in flight carry the answers  
Are we supposed to be heroic amidst creation  
Could the flowing waters cease to cleanse  
Could we be humbled under a cloud of doubt  
Can the elegance of a flower tell us all  
How will we ever know our family if we're empty of passion  
Shall we dance, amongst the wind-scattered blossoms  
Why do we love unconditionally, yet live in perplexity  
Should mankind's circular journey teach him only of achievement  
Where, will we walk life's roads, together again  
Who, but the lapping ocean waves, has the answer to the rhythm of life

Suzanne Maraea Packer

قبول

هل حقا سنعرف يوما امور الحياة؟

هل من طائر يحمل اجوبة؟

هل من الفترض ان نكون ابطلا بين كافة المخلوقات؟

هل تستطيع المياه المتدفقة التوقف عن التطهير؟

هل يمكن ان نتواضع تحت سحابة من الشك؟

هل يمكن ان تكمن الاجابة في اناقة زهرة؟

هل وهل؟

كيف يمكننا ان نحب عائلتنا ان كنا لا نملك العاطفة؟

ومع ذلك نحب دون قيد او شرط

علينا ان نتعلم اننا رحلة بشرية و

يجب علينا الرقص بين ازهار الرياح المبعثرة

وانه سوف تسير بنا طرق الحياة

معا من جديد ...

هكذا نجيب على امواج المحيط

ونلف على ايقاع الحياة .

Suzanne Maraea Packer

translated by Marie Succar

# Feature

## Poetry in translation



Than Van Le



Than Van Le, Elaine Lewis and singer Son Doan

### Speech of Freedom

The notes of Beethoven's music  
need space  
perhaps silence  
to fly freely  
as a thornbird needs a dream  
to push it far away  
to nowhere  
to sow its songs  
even though its wings  
may suffer fatal wounds  
it doesn't matter  
because it passionately responds to the calling of its heart  
the thirst for freedom

my poem was written down  
in response to the darkness of night  
the Speech of Freedom

Thanh Van Le  
Lê Nguyên Tịnh ( pen-name)

Translated by the author  
Edited by Hoàng Ngọc-Tuấn and Elaine Lewis  
Music composed by Duy Cuong (English version), Son Doan (Vietnamese version)

**Diễn ngôn của tự do**

Những nốt nhạc của Beethoven  
cần một không gian  
có thể là sự thinh lặng  
để bay lượn  
như thornbird cần một giấc mơ  
để đẩy nó bay xa  
tới miền vô xứ  
gieo tiếng hát  
dù đôi cánh của nó  
có thể mang những vết thương trí mạng  
nhưng có hề gì  
vì nó đã đáp trả tiếng gọi của trái tim  
lòng khao khát tự do

như bài thơ của tôi được viết xuống  
để đáp trả lại bóng đêm  
Diễn Ngôn của Tự Do

Lê Nguyên Tịnh ( pen-name)  
Thanh Van Le

# Feature

## Poetry in translation

### Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng (Thường Quán) captures Vietnamese poetry in the space of two minutes

Of course it is an impossible task. I will try my best, hopefully to give you a glimpse, a brief note, an invitation—perhaps.

What is ‘poetry’ in Vietnamese?

‘*Thơ*’

What is ‘dreaming’ in Vietnamese?

‘*Mơ*’

*Thơ, Mơ.* What is ‘*ơ*’ then?

*A cry of joy. An expression of the surprise.*

For a long time, Vietnam has been a country known for its wars and conflicts. Over the past thousand years or so the Vietnamese seemed to have been continuously bogged down in a long, arduous struggle, never having been able to get out of an all-consuming fire, a monster named ‘*chiến tranh*’, that is, war. For their own survival and for independence, cultural independence included, they fought, fighting and dreaming, dreaming and making poems, on the battle fields, in prisons, often when facing defeats, often when they had almost lost everyone around, lost everything in store. In the recent independence war, it seemed to me, all the fighters of all political persuasions fought their wars writing poetry in their heads, or as they loved to state, ‘with new verses ringing in their hearts’. The leading fighters loved to be considered as having—before any other titles—the best and foremost title: ‘poet’. Ho Chi Minh was one such fighter. But there were other leading Nationalist fighters as well. Why is it so? Because of the power of the word? Because of the noble romantic perception of the poems—especially in their tapping into the common affections and yearnings of the whole nation? Perhaps. I would rather leave it open.

A landscape of vernaculars, raw and refined, often utterly romantic not unlike Byron and Shelley, has been standing there as the real, palpable terrain for people of all backgrounds, working towards a culture of blending patriotism with Taoism, Buddhism and the love of the villages. This was led by the more talented fighters and poets, it seemed. Poems have become one with the fate of a people: love, dreams, the moving on against all odds, often against invading armies that were tenfold stronger than the people. Moving hearts and minds with poetry, to win the war and earn the peace, with swords and fine words. Until, as is so often the case, surprise! When everything seemed to be lost, they had the final victory.

“*O!*” Sweet and Lyrical and unashamedly Romantic.

This is my personal, *biased* version of Vietnamese poetry on offer.

Nguyễn Tiên Hoàng (Thường Quán)

## Poetry in translation

## A brief introduction to Spanish contemporary poetry

The tradition of Spanish poetry covers many different types of poetry, style and theme. Poets from 1950 onwards recovered some of this tradition and also developed new ways of writing poetry.

Regarding social poetry, which was developed during the Civil War by the famous poet Miguel Hernández, it is necessary to mention Marcos Ana. The son of a peasant family and a Communist, he fought with the liberals and was imprisoned at the age of 18, suffering torture and long periods of isolation. He was released after 23 years. His book *Tell me what a tree looks like*, written in jail, is a compilation of his poems and a claim for human rights, freedom and justice. He is one of the most important Spanish poets of the 20th century.

From the same period is the group known as *Los Novísimos* ('the recent'). It included poets such as Ana María Moix, Pere Gimferrer, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Leopoldo María Panero, Vicente Molina Foix, etc, whose use of language was cultured, elitist and refined, and whose subjects were taken from culture, literature, art, cinema and even from the comic.

Other poets, such as Antonio Colinas, represent a group called *Los Venecianos* ('The Venetians'), who still wrote about social issues but were not as elitist as *Los Novísimos*. Also, Antonio Cisneros (a disciple of Vicente Aleixandre and María Zambrano) recovers in his poetry the mysticism, spirituality and philosophical essence that characterised most of the Spanish poetry written in the 'golden' 16th century by San Juan de la Cruz and Santa Teresa de Jesus, of Spain, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in 17th-century Mexico.

Another kind of poetry, 'the poetry of experience' was developed by a group of poets more interested in poems about issues of daily life, experiences, feelings and more realistic themes, all written in simple and less elaborate language. One of the most representative of these poets was Angel Gonzalez.

From 2000 onwards, Spanish poetry has been enriched by a wide and heterogeneous group of poets who write on themes related to society, humanity, the individual, tradition and avant-garde etc, such as the works by Ben Clark, Elena Mendel and Alberto Santamaría.

Finally, it is important to mention other kinds of poetry that have emerged from the modern visual, digital and technological era. Among poets who use computer software, performance, music, visuals etc as part of their work and who mix different arts and media to create them are digital poets Eugenio Tisselli, Ricard Domènech, Miriam Reyes, visual poet Ruth Sancho Huerga, and slam poetry poets, much more influenced by rap and hip-hop music, Marçal Font Espí, Irene La Sen and Anna-Lisa Marí.

Ruth Sancho Huerga

# Feature

## Poetry in translation

### Cross-cultural poetry and translation salon

#### A letter in response to the salon

Dear Elaine

I was inspired by the atmosphere of last night's poetry salon and from this The voice of poetry was born. Congratulations on the great success last night. It was your time and hard work. My wife and I enjoyed it very much. I look forward to a similar event in the near future.

Thank you.  
Best regards

Thanh

#### **The voice of poetry**

The pigeon has returned to the tower  
of Flinders station  
where it sows its dreams  
every night  
for next morning's flying journeys  
even though gloomy winter  
hangs over the sky of Melbourne  
tonight  
a star is falling  
the darkness will be torn away

a tram is quarrelling with  
fog  
as if it couldn't tell  
all the labouring efforts of the streets  
that are puzzled at the thought  
of how to merge its every journey  
with the streets as one

the light poles are taciturn  
bending over their shadows  
carrying the heavy sky

O my beloved, tonight your sleep  
will be disturbed  
as I am going to read aloud my poem  
with the language of darkness  
the heart beats  
of a prisoner

Lê Nguyễn Tịnh

## Asia and Pacific Writers Network: Beyond Borders



PEN Melbourne members Judith Rodriguez, Elaine Lewis with Isagani Cruz, Philippines PEN

## To Go Beyond Our Own Boundaries

## 'We Need to Sit Together and Talk'

berni m janssen with Cynthia Troup

*2011 marks the tenth year of the Asia and Pacific Writers Network (A&PWN), a landmark initiative undertaken by PEN Melbourne. In this second of three reflections, convenor berni m janssen discusses the inaugural meeting of the A&PWN in Melbourne in November 2005, and describes the larger event of which the meeting was part: a four-day program of readings, conversations and discussions held at Melbourne's Trades Hall and Sidney Myer Asia Centre, under the rubric Beyond Borders—Creative Strategies for Global Harmony.*

Since November 2005, the name, the themes, and the issues raised by *Beyond Borders* have resonated across the world. Members of the PEN Melbourne Committee and those Australian and international colleagues from the emergent 'Asia Pacific regional network' who helped to initiate *Beyond Borders* would love to claim such resonance as a direct impact—but they know that the *Zeitgeist*, a 'flap of a butterfly wing', and the fact that the issues continue to be as topical as ever are all much more likely reasons.

Over four days, stories, papers, information, knowledge and writing were shared with memorable openness and honesty. Any of the more than 200 people who attended some part of the program would affirm that they had been touched, perhaps even transformed in a small way, by the energy, generosity and dialogue; by the ideas as much as the writing. No doubt each attendee's positive experience has contributed to growing awareness over the longer term. This said, like countless meetings and conferences, *Beyond Borders* embraced and seeded so many wonderful ideas that not all our best-laid plans have found ultimate form. How can passion translate into endurance, when lives and priorities are always in flux?

Thinking back to the exhilaration generated by *Beyond Borders*, I perceive that these days there is a much vaster wealth of writing from the Asia and Pacific regions available to interested readers, in a wide variety of formats. Writers from there are more regularly featured at festivals around the world; the Internet has flourished with literary websites that feature their work. Indeed, the Internet makes it possible to share one another's writing unmediated by the economic imperatives of publishers.

The desire to be able to access the writing of our geographic neighbours (in the broadest sense) was one of the driving forces for the establishment of A&PWN and its inaugural meeting, and this is occurring in the present. The A&PWN website ([www.apwn.net](http://www.apwn.net)), founded in 2005 and hosted by PEN Melbourne, has made important contributions to this development. A new generation of writers and editors has harnessed a fast-growing technology to visibly diminish one of those 'borders', bringing uniquely creative momentum to the world's shapeshifting.

# Feature



Cai Yong Mei and Yu Jei and others

The *Beyond Borders* public program on 6 and 7 November presented more than 26 writers of Asia and Pacific background or interest. The readings and forums were uniformly intense, heightened on the first day by unseasonal heat, and on the following day—quite typically for Melbourne—deluge. While the audience for the public program was not large, the intimacy of the gatherings encouraged plenty of interaction and more in-depth engagement. Some very vibrant cross-floor discussions occurred. The events were audio recorded and these were then produced as segments for SBS Radio's English-language news program, *World View*. Many of the participating writers were also interviewed for Australian radio, which extended the audience for the writers, writing and the issues.

The three days of the A&PWN inaugural meeting and round-table sessions took place from 7–9 November, involving 45 invited participants. Respect was evident in the keen listening, supportive statements, questioning and discussion, not that the writers presented homogenised viewpoints; rather, as observed by Nakamura Kazue, from Japan, 'The very contradictions, misunderstandings, different standpoints among us may give the most honest and useful strategies; we need to sit together and talk'.

Here, freedom of speech was not just an ideal but an actuality lived by writers, many of whom know too well the perils of speaking out. And who could ever forget the celebratory dinner on Tuesday evening, 8 November at the Trades Hall? Borders were crossed and re-crossed without a moment's hesitation, thought, surveillance or customs. A Mongolian hero song, a Mango poem, a speech or two, more songs, and such palpable excitement in being where we were with each other.

On the first day of the round table, overseas guests and those representing different PEN centres each offered an outline of literary activity and the current and historical situation for freedom of speech in their respective countries. Together these overviews were a revelation to most of us. They included descriptions of persecution and of myriad ways in which writers have dealt with censorship.

Journalists in the Philippines were second only to Iraq at that time as most likely to be assassinated. Tran Vu concluded his perspective on the situation in Vietnam by saying, '... as long as there is a will in all writers still believing in this precious right [to freedom of expression], any dictatorship, including the Vietnamese one today, will have to yield and let writers and its people exercise the right so cherished in all democratic societies, even if it is used to criticise the people in power'. Another Vietnamese poet, Phung Quan, wrote: 'Papers and pen yanked away, I'll write with knife on rocks.'

We learned in detail that for people in countries such as Vietnam and China the Internet represented an additional means of censorship, surveillance and, ultimately, imprisonment—even as it connected and exposed these countries to the wider world. We heard immensely disturbing revelations about the American Internet corporation Yahoo's providing information to the Chinese government, leading to the imprisonment of the Chinese journalist, writer and poet Shi Tao in November 2004.

Many of the writers later spoke to me about the power of first-person accounts, both hearing and speaking about the oppression, censorship, and persecution of writers who have exercised their essential right to freedom of speech. They spoke of how the nuance of voice and body gave an extra



Goenanwan Mohamad, Dorothea Rosa Herliany and her friend

dimension—the human, the personal, the powerful—to their own way of knowing. Australian writer Paddy O Reilly also affirmed afterwards, ‘The A&PWN *Beyond Borders* meeting was remarkable for its spirit of cooperation and respect. The courage of writers working under extremely difficult conditions was inspirational and borders did seem to melt away.’

Throughout the beginnings of the A&PWN, from researching the feasibility of a formal network for writers in Asia and the Pacific regions, to realising the idea of a regional conference and first meeting, the matter of ‘how to communicate’ was identified as problematic. What languages would be used, what kinds and tools of translation realistically would, or could be offered? In programming *Beyond Borders* we had asked widely for input regarding topics and themes for dialogue; what the program should cover. The issue of how to share writing emerged clearly as one of high priority. How do we talk to each other? From practical points of view, how might we read and respond to one another’s writing?

During and after the round-table sessions a variety of discussions were devoted to linguistic diversity and linguistic rights, the obstacles to upholding these, and models and strategies through which to enact respect for them. The copious languages of Asia and the Pacific regions and their translation continue to be a fundamental challenge. While some technological tools are available that can assist, there are still questions of class, gender, racism, economic imperatives, cultural colonisation, national borders, fear—and how all these intersect within an individual, a community or state. Are we able to de-colonise our minds to want to enquire, to read, to ask questions that will take us out of the safety of what we know and are comfortable with? Indeed, to go beyond our own boundaries?

The Virtual Translation Centre was one of the brilliant proposals arising from *Beyond Borders*. In an address titled ‘Beyond Borders—Language and Translation’, Isagani Cruz, from Philippines PEN, put forward the idea of a translation centre through which to begin identifying translations and translators, and to translate. This proposal became a formal resolution that the meeting endorsed:

That an APWN Translation Centre be established, to identify, list, promote, and disseminate translations of literary works from any and all of the languages in the region into Chinese, English, Japanese, and Indonesian/Malay; to set aside a section of the APWN website for the virtual publication of such translations; to work closely with other organisations devoted to translations; and to do any and all appropriate actions in order to ensure that writers in the region are able to read each other . . .

As mentioned in my first reflection (*see* PEN Melbourne *Quarterly* April 2011, p. 25), it was with this resolution in mind that the A&PWN website was developed as a multilingual, multi-scripted site. However, we have been unable to sustain sufficient energy, or locate the other resources to extend this aspect of the website into a more substantial structure. Nonetheless, the dynamic questions and discussions about linguistic diversity and translation, and the notion of a translation centre, were formative for many *Beyond Borders* participants.

Jane Camens, founder of the Asia Pacific New Writing Program—now the Asia Pacific Writing Partnership (APWP)—stated, ‘I have become acutely conscious of the need for quality

## Feature



Karpal Singh posing a question at the Beyond Borders public program

translations and will include this in all future strategies'. This awareness is certainly seen in the work of the APWP, a not-for-profit, international collaboration dedicated to new writing from and about Asia and the Pacific, which involves universities, literary organisations and individuals (*see* <<http://apwriters.org>>). Naturally, as evidenced by this edition of our *Quarterly*, translation also continues to play a part of great consequence in the work of PEN Melbourne.

*Beyond Borders* was a meeting place for writers from diverse cultures where knowledge, information and ideas were shared, and commitment and vision were consolidated. It could take place so memorably because of myriad kinds of support received from all the participants, workers and volunteers; from Asialink, the Victorian Writers' Centre, Toyota Foundation, Japan Foundation, Myer Foundation, Arts Victoria, City of Melbourne and National Arts Council, Singapore. Six years on, the *Beyond Borders* spirit remains vibrant. Furthermore, informed by that spirit, now-numerous people and organisations are focused on similarly inclusive visions for writing's role in global harmony.

*Beyond Borders—Creative Strategies for Global Harmony, November 2005*

Photographs by **Gunther Wilhelm**



Karpal Singh, Cai Yong Mei and Dorothea Rosa Herliany at Trades Hall



Quang Vu Tran (IAC) Vietnamese Writers Abroad PEN Centre (USA) and Nakamura Kazue at the Sidney Myer Asia Centre



With microphone, Zhao Zing, Yuan Hong Bing, Alvin Pang, Karpal Singh and Jane Camens



Zohl de Ishtar and Alexis Wright

# PEN International

## PEN International applauds unanimous UN accord ending push to make blasphemy a crime

London, UK, 31 March 2011

The President of PEN International, John Ralston Saul, has praised the UN Human Rights Council for its recent unanimous vote that ended a 13-year campaign by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to make blasphemy a crime.

On the right of all individuals to practise religion, Saul said, 'Freedom of expression may cause discomfort, but it is the ultimate protection for people of any faith.'

Since 1997, a coalition of countries led by the 57-nation OIC has put forward resolutions on 'combating religious defamation' that contained language demanding that states ban blasphemy and other religious denigration. PEN and other human rights organisations have lobbied against the proposals, warning that they would significantly erode crucial international and national protections for freedom of expression.

In September 2010, PEN International hosted an influential discussion at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, citing numerous cases where governments have used religious defamation laws to jail writers and suppress unpopular opinions. In live testimony and in videotaped statements, writers and free-expression advocates from around the world spoke about the potential harm of imposing legal restrictions on expression considered offensive or defamatory to religions. They argued that such restrictions not only would do little to foster mutual understanding and respect, but also could be used to stifle creative freedom and suppress minority views and religions.

On 24 March 2011, instead of reintroducing the religious defamation resolution at the current Human Rights Council session, the OIC presented a new resolution that focuses on ending religious discrimination. This resolution removes all reference to protecting religions and shifts the emphasis to protecting individual believers, something PEN has long argued is the correct approach both in principle and in law.

'This unanimous resolution affirms that all nations can come together to agree upon language and a framework for protecting all forms of freedom of expression,' Saul said. 'The writers of PEN have expressed their belief most passionately that rights are inherent in individuals, not institutions such as organised religions.'

He quoted Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka's words from last September, ' "*Since you have so many religions in the world, and there is only one humanity, that one humanity and the fundamental claims of humanity have to take precedence.*" '

### Vale Fabienne Bayet-Charlton

The Adelaide writing community has lost someone special: Fabienne Bayet-Charlton died in tragic circumstances on Mother's Day 2011.

Fabienne taught creative writing at Flinders University and was involved in Wilto Yerlo at the University of Adelaide. She lived in the Adelaide hills among her beloved animals, flowers, vegetables, friends and family. She was in the Fire Brigade and belonged to her local writers' group. Her book *Watershed* was included in the People's Choice Award in 2007 and she was short-listed for the 2006 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards Prize for Indigenous Writing. Her previous work, *Finding Ullagundahi Island*— part fiction, part memoir — was highly commended in the 2000 David Unaipon Award.

Fabienne gave a lot. A member of Adelaide PEN, she was a guest speaker at the inaugural Day of the Imprisoned Writer in 2006 where her sensitive writing about mother and child brought many in the audience to tears. Her children, she said, were everything.

Fabienne's work was unfinished. She was too young to die.

Thank you, Fabienne, for touching us with your grace.

Lindy Warrell

# Biographies

## FreeSpeak: Cross cultural poetry and translation salon

**Anne Bihan** has lived in New Caledonia since 1993. She was a guest poet/translator representing New Caledonia at the 2008 Franco-anglais Poetry Festival in Melbourne and was subsequently invited to work with Berni Janssen, coordinator of the APWN (Asia and Pacific Writers Network). Her poetry has been widely published and her work also includes a short novel and many plays and theatre shows performed in Brittany and New Caledonia.

**Hidayet Ceylan** was born in Turkey and came to Australia in 1997 when he began writing poetry. He is inspired by Sufi philosophy and the great Sufi poets. Hidayet's poetry follows the rules of traditional Turkish poetry. His poems have been published in various magazines and anthologies in Melbourne and overseas and are translated into English by Matt Hetherington. Hidayet also translates Matt's poems into Turkish.

**Gabriela Haddad** is a songwriter and poet, the youngest of four daughters to Australian immigrants of Syrian descent. Along with music, her love of writing began at the early age of 11 and continues to grow as she finds inspiration in everyday life. Having studied psychology and music, she now enjoys working with children and young adults, performing, and is currently working on publishing her first book of original poetry.

**Matt Hetherington** describes himself as a writer, musician, lover, father, humble self-promoter, sky-digger, DJ, connoisseur of fine scents and dog-biscuits, old-school soccer nut, and poverty-stricken aristocrat. His most recent poetry collection is *I Think We Have*, and he is on the board of the Australian Haiku Society.

Vietnamese poet **Thanh Van Le** (B Ec., Dip Ed., Australia) writes under the pen-name **Le Nguyen Tinh**. His publications include the poetry collection *Qué Huong (Laurel's Scent)*; about 100 of his poems have been set to music. He was President of the Vietnamese Community in Victoria from 1997 to 1999 and is currently President of Vietnamese Ethnic Schools in Victoria.

**Nguyen Tien Hoang (Thuong Quan)** arrived in Australia from Vietnam in 1974 under a Colombo Plan scholarship. His poems and essays have appeared in various literary journals in Vietnam, Australia (*Meanjin, The Age, HEAT*), the U.S. and Europe, including a published collection, *Beyond Sleep* (1990) and *Watermark* (2006). He has given poetry readings at La Mama theatre, Carlton, and the Melbourne Poetry Festival. He is currently on the editorial panel of a literary e-magazine, <damau.org>.

**Suzanne Marea Packer** was born and raised in New Zealand. Most of her adult life has been associated with Middle Eastern people. She taught English and resided in war-torn Lebanon for eight years. A book of poetry dedicated to that era has been published with three others in the pipeline. The tasks of teacher-trainer, advertising and marketing consultant and writer have consumed her days, yet her favourite role is as a mother and grandmother.

**Ruth Sancho Huerga** (Castellon de la Plana, Spain) studied English Philology at the University of Barcelona. She is a poet, playwright, actress and theatre and film director, and has worked on the stage for more than 20 years in many countries. Ruth has recently finished her visual poetry collection *The Shadows of the Words*. Website: <www.ruthsancho.com>.

**Marie Succar** was born in Beharre, North Lebanon. She has a Ph. D. in Political and Administrative sciences (Lebanese University), a master's degree in Political and Economical studies (Lebanese University) and a degree in Psychology (Elain University). An activist in many social organizations, her research in the above fields is ongoing and she writes for academic magazines.

### Danish mayor hails freedom writers



Seedy Bojang

Promoting the works of ICORN writers in Denmark, the city of Frederiksberg recently launched the translated version of *Devil's Lover*, authored by honorary PEN Melbourne member Seedy Bojang.

ICORN, the International Cities of Refuge Network, is an association of cities and regions around the world dedicated to the value of freedom of expression. It offers persecuted writers a safe haven where they can live and work without fear of being censored or silenced. Seedy is one of three guest writers in Denmark.

The occasion, which was graced by the mayor of the city of Frederiksberg, Jørgen Glenthøj, also saw presentations punctuated by readings and plays by two other guest writers, Tendai Tagarira from Aarhus, and Noufel Bouzeboudja from Fanø.

The moderator of the event, literary critic Klaus Rothstein, introduced the three writers and spoke of the history of ICORN.

Mayor Glenthøj said freedom of expression was one of the most fundamental rights in a democratic state, which he noted could be used to challenge a system in one's homeland. He then assured the guest writers of his continuous support and wished them a pleasant stay in Denmark.

Addressing writer Seedy Bojang, Mayor Glenthøj said: 'Seedy, you are tonight's guest of honour. Especially to you I would like to say that we are very happy that we chose each other and that we have the pleasure of offering you a safe haven for two years. I hope and believe that we will benefit from each other's company. You have already contributed with your monthly articles to *Lokalavisen* and tonight we will hear some of your work read aloud in Danish.'

He went on to thank the Danish PEN and ICORN for the benefits the municipality derived from the network, citing the background cases of the three guest writers currently being hosted in the three cities of Denmark.

Actress Signe Egholm Olsen read from the translated text of *Devil's Lover*, and talked about the plight of the book's protagonist, Saffie, who had ended up cheating on men to eke out a living because of the stigma associated with her trouble as an epileptic patient in an African society.

Janus Kodal delved into the nitty-gritty of writing when away from one's homeland. He said most of the best books had been penned by writers in exile.

After presentations from Tendai Tagarira and Noufel Bouzeboudja, the program ended with a powerful and moving performance by Uzbek journalist and author Dina Yafasova. The event was held in the Betty Nansen Theatre, named after its Danish director and actress, Betty Anna Maria Müller, 1873–1945.

**Seedy Bojang**

## Special Report

### PEN Mexico Centre Prize Ceremony

On 8 April the PEN Mexico Centre had its prize ceremony. We were very happy to have representatives from both the San Miguel and Guadalajara centres present as well as important people in Mexico's intellectual community such as Elena Poniatowska, Marta Lamas, Maya Goded and Daniel Giménez Cacho, among others. One of the prizes was given to Mexico's newspaper El Diario de Juárez, which has lost three journalists and is published in what, many would argue, is the most dangerous city in the world. Here are excerpts from the speech I delivered on that evening:

*With what is going on in Mexico today, this censorship by bullet, it is impossible not to talk about the guns that are killing journalists. In the past few weeks, we have learned about a huge cache of weapons that were even allowed to purposefully cross the border into the hands of criminals. It seems to me that there might be a new way to talk about these weapons and violence or, new questions to ask. So, tonight I ask: Who owns the gun factories? How are they doing on the stock market? Who are the people who have shares in these companies? Congressmen? Senators? Governors? During the Bush election, for example, the Center for Responsive Politics listed the nation's top three weapons contractors among the major donors of that election cycle.*

*These guns are sold to Mexico's criminals, police and to the army. Profits on all sides! Who are the people making personal fortunes on Mexican blood? They are, literally, making a killing.*

*This year one of the prizes is being given to the Diaro de Juárez. I would like to take a moment to explain that the decision to give the prize to the paper as a whole was to honour the complex decisions and direction that Osvaldo Rodríguez Borunda, the President and Director General of the paper, must take every day. The prize also recognizes the brave journalists, many of whom are women with young children, who risk their lives on a daily basis to bring us the news. By giving this prize to the paper, we also honour those who have been killed.*

The PEN Mexico 2011 prizes were given to: El Diario de Juárez, Braulio Peralta, Gloria Gervitz, Hugh Thomas (Lord Thomas of Swynnerton) and Ediciones El Milagro, Seña y Verbo (Theatre of the Deaf). Her Excellency Judith Macgregor, Ambassador of Great Britain in Mexico, received Lord Thomas's prize on his behalf.

**Jennifer Clement**



## Membership Application

- I agree with the PEN charter
- I wish to become a PEN member / an associate\* member

MEMBERSHIP OF PEN IS OPEN TO ALL QUALIFIED WRITERS, EDITORS AND TRANSLATORS WHO SUBSCRIBE TO THE AIMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEN CHARTER WITHOUT REGARD TO NATIONALITY, LANGUAGE, RACE, COLOUR OR RELIGION.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**I enclose a cheque (no cash please) for:**

- Annual Membership fee (waged) \$75
- Annual Membership fee (unwaged) \$40
- Optional donation for:

Writers in Prison \$.....

Women Writers Committee \$.....

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\*Associate members need not be published writers.



## PEN International Charter

The PEN Charter is based on resolutions passed at its International Congresses.

PEN affirms that:

1. Literature knows no frontiers and must remain common currency among people in spite of political or international upheavals.
2. In all circumstances, and particularly in time of war, works of art, the patrimony of humanity at large, should be left untouched by national or political passion.
3. Members of PEN should at all times use what influence they have in favour of good understanding and mutual respect between nations; they pledge themselves to do their utmost to dispel race, class and national hatreds, and to champion the ideal of one humanity living in peace in one world.
4. PEN stands for the principle of unhampered transmission of thought within each nation and between all nations, and members pledge themselves to oppose any form of suppression of freedom of expression in the country and community to which they belong, as well as throughout the world wherever this is possible. PEN declares for a free press and opposes arbitrary censorship in time of peace. It believes that the necessary advance of the world towards a more highly organised political and economic order renders a free criticism of governments, administrations and institutions imperative. And since freedom implies voluntary restraint, members pledge themselves to oppose such evils of a free press as mendacious publication, deliberate falsehood and distortion of facts for political and personal ends