

# broadsheet

*new new zealand poetry*

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*Editor: Mark Pirie*

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submissions will be read. The poems  
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All submissions will be returned. Thank you.

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## *Acknowledgements*

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*Michael Farrell*: 'Great Poet Snowdome' is from *I Love Poetry* (Giramondo, 2017).

*John Forbes*: 'Homage to Brian Wilson' and 'Autobiography' first appeared in 'Recent Australian Poetry' selected by Ken Bolton, *JAAM* 10 (1998); reproduced here by permission of the executor.

*Dinah Hawken*: 'Haze' has been published in an Irish poetry magazine, *Cyphers* 81, and 'Leaf' is from a sequence, *page: stone: leaf*, that was a collaboration with John Edgar, published by The Holloway Press in 2013.

## Preface

Ken Bolton, the well known Australian poet and art critic, has had influence on contemporary New Zealand poetry since 1996. That year, through the recommendation of Gregory O'Brien, he was invited along with his partner, the Adelaide poet/broadcaster/novelist Cath Kenneally, to appear as guests at the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts in Wellington. His readings were impressive. My father and I were in the audience then and we were gripped by his early, evocative and painterly inner city poems of the 1970s.

I went away from that reading purchasing his *Selected Poems* (Penguin Books Australia) and collecting his other books via personal correspondence and wrote several early poems mimicking Ken's style, such as *Two Poems - An Impression of the Sea* (ESAW, 2004) first published by Jack Ross in *brief*. Ken was certainly a good guide in my formative years of writing poetry.

Ken Bolton visited again to read at Wellington venues in 2006. A St Peter's Hall, Paekakariki reading included myself, Ken, Cath Kenneally and Dinah Hawken. Michael O'Leary was the MC that day, who had earlier met with Ken in 1996 with Iain Sharp and had published a mini book of Ken Bolton's poetry that year in the ESAW Mini Series.

It's nice to welcome Ken back by featuring him in a New Zealand journal. As with previous issues of *broadsheet*, I have invited and included work by poets that have formed lasting connections with Ken both in Australia and across the Tasman. Ken, also a small press publisher/editor (*Otis Rush* magazine, Little Esther Books and other imprints) has published Gregory O'Brien and other New Zealand poets in Australia and contributed an Australian poetry selection to my former magazine *JAAM*, No. 10 (1998) that included the two poems here by Ken's late friend, John Forbes.

Ken recently retired from the Experimental Art Foundation and bookshop in Adelaide where he worked for many years. His musical interests such as jazz and blues music are reflected in my poem tribute.

Thanks to all those who sent in contributions and supported my idea of a special Ken Bolton issue in recognition of his influence on and goodwill towards New Zealand poetry from abroad.

Mark Pirie  
Wellington, November 2017

**TRAMPS LIKE US**

Reading

Cavafy in the  
new translation  
I think, Isn't this a bit  
flat? & check the  
Mavrogordato versions  
I read when I was  
21, 22—& *liked*—& see now  
how crabbed they are—  
with the word inversions,  
the verb coming in, always,  
at a weird place—  
maybe where the Greek had it?—

On those grounds  
the new seem a lot better,  
& not much less 'poetic'  
(rich, decadent, in love with  
*the idea ...* of 'the gods', the jewels  
Pharoahs, Caesarions  
Ptolemys & the rest—  
the gold, the pagan ease or sensuality)

(rings on their fingers bells on their toes  
mascara, flesh, muscle)

On the other hand, there are only  
one or two I *like*—'The Gods  
Abandon Antony', & a few of the  
erotic 'regrets-&-recaptured-  
memory' things. Only a few of these,  
because in bulk they seem foolish,  
too little to justify poetry.

Maybe the Greek redeems them.

*The three scenarios:* a palace  
or a tavern of late antiquity,  
an alley of 1920s Alexandria;  
& *the re-enactment*, the ficto-documentary  
enlivening—of a foot-note from the past,  
full of the pathos of its marginality,  
its failure, its past-ness—or  
a contemporary instance:  
a more recently past tryst or  
passion of the author's—likewise  
marginal,  
fragile, gone.

There must be things about the  
poems  
stack up against this: their  
casual air & modern,  
throwaway quality—  
“scherzo”—is that it?

*I wish*

*he'd said more.*

I look at Lou Reed—  
the CD cover—

young,  
beautiful

the record I bought when it came out,

& when *I* was young, too—better  
looking than now.

—*Street Hassle*—

Lou—*alas, eheu, etcetera*—has  
just undergone surgery  
(a transplant—liver?)

that will keep him alive—

of necessity  
old, now, too.

“Sigh”?

Do I want to  
revisit those times? I was  
living alone, had just moved  
in, to a dumpy flat in  
Redfern

a little stunned to be  
single again—

then Sal arrived. Before that tho  
I had bought the Lou Reed record

to stay up to date

with-it, hip, ‘modern’

about to turn 29  
about to face  
my first lean patch in poetry,  
which turned out to be  
“not so lean”

anyway

a new phase, ‘iron’  
entering the soul—  
as it has continued  
to have done  
ever since

I must now be



And I knew his name. He was  
very pleased  
that I remembered him. Now,  
fifteen years on, his  
hard fast life. He'd  
have been famous  
if he wasn't part of a team  
in which everybody was.  
They'd been boringly invincible  
for nearly a decade. Billy Smith.  
Centre, I think.

**C O L D**

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

**I CAN HEAR YOUR AARGH FROM HERE**

nowhere permanent  
to stay  
it was cold  
dry too  
the air just dust

my ghost wanted  
to ride  
a classic  
suzuki two fifty  
again

ride down  
the coast  
for sunset  
by the rumbling sea  
at  
maybe, coalcliff

&  
then  
lie on a bed  
full of sleeping dogs  
every one a wrong copy  
of my perfect dog of yore

down the coast  
all that  
ever happened  
on saturday  
was  
big screen beer

&  
at  
the tops  
aerial leaps  
like, hang gliding

\*

at  
the serviced apartments  
bed bugs came in  
from the country

was thinking about  
doing a runner  
planning on  
vanishing  
as quick  
as the shadow  
of a pacific swift

not actually  
chronically homeless  
&  
not reading straight  
though hoping  
for cosy warm  
softly lit  
sleep to dream

\*

kept falling  
for new things  
no real  
signature style  
with  
plenty of time  
to ponder  
the great works  
outdoors  
like, in the shade

\*

spotting  
the idolatory  
of special events  
like, pop & blare  
opera fireworks  
in public gardens

magical gardens  
gardens by the bay  
gardens i've never seen

maybe giardini  
in venice  
then  
when there was  
nothing 'international'  
going on  
like, canaletto  
vittore carpaccio  
tintoretto - il furioso

i can hear  
your aaargh  
from here

all that swanky  
sensual stuff  
some aperol  
& campari  
spritze  
beyond pigeon  
no selfie stick  
no cruise liner  
wrecking the lagoon

\*

it beggars  
belief  
that  
ipad streaming  
was all they did  
beneath the campanile

so  
in the stream then -

in the final episode  
she radioed in  
for urgent backup

but the sirens  
never arrived  
the heroine  
carrying  
a semi automatic weapon  
had to chase  
the crook's car  
on foot  
& she did she caught them  
& recorded  
the dying crook's confession  
on her smart phone

\*

that's how  
it ended

\*

avoiding  
brain rumour  
like, this poem  
is not hers

wasn't listening  
when annoys  
became shits  
but  
i liked the way  
she shaped her squash

then  
she insisted

everyone,  
including ken bolton,  
should just  
leave  
bella roma  
alone

**ALLOTMENT # 108**

the door of the Bloomsbury Room  
swings shut,

St George flags ruffled by  
cold air off Museum Street;

a man with a basset hound  
collects coffee from Ruskin's Café

**ALLOTMENT # 111**

A memory just flashed:

. . . Oxford . . .

. . . a pen knife . . .

. . . amoretto and coffee . . .

Sod the coffee

## ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

bombs fall on whatever flux  
(are those bedsheets mine)?

what does the *Saturday Evening Post*  
have to say about *this*:

a stuffed goat  
on tenterhooks?

this politic is a body that  
plants a flag on a lunar surface,

whose ads are texts for  
the new opera;

erasure makes memory  
greater than the thing itself

## A ROOM, VENICE

a steel beam supports a wood floor,  
grained and splintered, nail-holed,  
edged with concrete, the remains  
of piping;

a clockface  
holds between stars two fish,  
the hands stuck at four forty-two

## **GREAT POET SNOWDOME**

Latte-sipping schoolboys turn  
from the window and I admire their hair  
    any lower'd be too pervy  
The window's an op-shop's on Broadway  
The display includes a Great Poet snowdome  
The boys probably make nothing of it, even  
if they'd had – or will have – the Poet's poems  
on the HSC Acronyms weigh down  
the late twentieth century, snowdomes  
weigh down mantelpieces or snuggle in boxes with Loch  
Ness Monsters The Great Poet  
assumes the mantle of kitsch, like a Jindy-  
worobak It can be worn well  
There's no herb that provides escape from its shell  
It tinkles in the mind like plastic snow  
it's never cold, and never goes I buy  
    the snowdome and take it home  
I change the water I shake it  
like a polaroid picture, and make a little shrine  
with an Ikea lamp and kneel in the rays of  
light coming from the Great Poet snowdome  
I take it to Rome: it's in my pocket when I receive a blessing  
from the Pope I almost want to be groped  
for some furtive hand to feel my Australiana  
familiar, like a roc egg, and imagine them reeling  
away in surprise or dismay to write of 'the thing  
in the pocket' This thieving deviant  
is – in my fantasy – expelled from Italy  
and never knows that I was not an American or German  
and they write of the hard round thing  
all their lives, it is their 'thing' as well as mine, and maybe I  
lose it, or get bored with it, or feel it's sucking my

poetry into its own greatness, directing energy  
back to the Great Poet, somehow  
bad magically, so that the Great Poet begins to come into a new  
era of greatness, where the errors of the past fade  
and they assume a mantle of integrity  
while I, browser of op-shops and  
other archives, admirer of coffee-  
heads and traipses of footpaths become trapped  
in a prison of my own design, of a commodified  
half-full, half-emptiness, the level of which  
can never be changed, but then at a party  
I talk to an artist who has met a similar fate  
and was now making plastic icons and asks me  
to pose for a series of diverse Jesuses  
of Australia I don't even live  
in Sydney: I'm delighted and humbled to model  
for Jesus of Broadway

**HOMAGE TO BRIAN WILSON**

horrible Europe invented pride  
but America gave it to us:

  in my room  
I'll be true to my school  
& my Stingray will dust off

any E-type some rich  
kid's dad bought him.

we don't have much,  
  except honour  
& sport & fun — they own the rest

& if they didn't  
we wouldn't be us. that's what's

wrong with *Apocalypse Now*  
when we waste those guys

with their delicate hats & vases  
& hopeless AA — the music should

be 'Heroin' or 'Brown Eyed Handsome Man'  
or 'My 409', not

'The Rise of the Valkeries'  
whoever those dorks' football team beat,

whatever their cheerleaders  
considered as day-time TV —

& Brian Wilson's music  
knows this,

like trouble beneath  
each vacant, placid song.

## **AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

Kate Ceberano singing 'bedroom eyes'  
or the Pointer Sisters  
playing softly  
with maybe a one bar radiator  
    it's your turn  
to get out of bed  
& light a cigarette off —  
Sydney, July dawn, cold still light  
on Lennox St  
    & much as I hate  
    the idea, a day  
spent moving furniture  
will do as a career,  
    just as I prefer  
the way you look  
hit by the rush of coke mixed with smack  
    'inflamed with lust'  
(your face briefly matching, exactly  
a phrase in a book)  
    & all this more blessed  
    than all happiness  
feral or domestic  
that I've been granted yet.

**HAZE**

Some like to get to the bottom of things,  
right down into the dry valleys and  
with a drill (and a thrill) beneath them.

Some like to live along at eye level  
where things like a child or a leaf  
are touchable and whole

and nobody cares what they are made of  
or where they have come from  
because they are here.

Mystery lives round the edges  
of things and although the mid-wife  
has two hands, the dragonfly two eyes

and there are two incredible hemispheres,  
mystery comes in the odd numbers  
with no intention to be clear.

Look, some see it as select company

or an over-the-top view  
like this one from the fore-deck,  
where sea-light surrounds the island

as fantasy surrounds reality  
and makes a third thing – beauty –  
in the evening, from the sea.

## **LEAF**

Evergreen ivory type  
cuts the fibres  
of the damped flax paper

and light strikes

The letters of the word  
are struck by how light  
light is

as it strikes  
each one at different angles

Leaf-light

**ENDLESS SUMMER**

to the beach to swim in a murky sea, storm-stirred  
seaweed churned to feathery sludge  
softly agreeable underfoot, as far as the sandbank

home to team up with the boys to finally pull down the front verandah ceiling  
dating back before our time: white, soft panels that will sit in the yard  
till they mulch enough with rain to squash small

decades of detritus descend as we rip them from their moorings  
dessicated droppings, pollen bobbles from the plane tree in dusty cascades  
revealing for the first time in eighty years the dark cool of terracotta depths

the spine of the roof dimly visible way up high

an unseen hand hacking at the ivy from outside the garden wall  
must be Steve, who comes through the gate now, arms full of  
sticky ivy fronds to cut up for green waste

more storms tonight, humid heat, dense cloud  
sit on the now cloistered porch sofa, watch the noisy mynahs boss and bully  
wattlebirds I never manage to like, peewees, blackbirds; wishing for wrens and robins

our Bruny yardbirds, redbreast baubles on the wooden fence,  
superb blue fairies, thuggish to females  
drab fluff-bundles destined for drubbing

down on the shoreline those juiced-up dotterils, cartoon fast-walkers  
battery-powered comedians I always accompany, in my head, with Bugs Bunny  
tinky-tonk

still, I like our finches, electric-yellow sideburns flashing in the acacia

tempted, now, to hang some token at the new entryway  
an octagonal mirror to deflect evil, prayer-flag bunting, image of the Virgin  
bird feathers and shells laced into a mobile

only asking for trouble, right?

the house might be mine, but the city's overdue for a quake like the '54  
shakedown. Best just let the new dust settle,  
sit and think or just sit

shotgun broken across the knees

*Gregory O'Brien*

**From 'A SONG BOOK FOR KEN BOLTON'**

*'I never pass by a wooden fetish, a gilded Buddha, a Mexican idol without reflecting: perhaps it is the true God.'* (Charles Baudelaire)

**Rundle St**

Two dollar sunglasses  
Seven dollar shoes  
Six dollar souvenir

the girl you keep in your head or  
the girl you keep in your life

Five dollar cover-charge  
Threepenny opera  
Thirty dollar bike

~

**i.m. John Ashbery**

A bird gone  
missing  
from its feathers

this way  
you went  
from us.

~

mister cool

mystical

~

## **For the Jodhpur Maharajas**

anything with a bell attached

anything with a chapel built upon it

anything which is periodically covered by an ocean

anything dressed as a woman  
that is not a woman

anything with a flock of migrating birds directly above

anything with accompanying musical merriment

anything that finds itself unwittingly adorned with  
peacock feathers

anything with a moustache that is also a fish

anything upon which the ground-plan of a city  
might be based

~

## Parapara

Eleven tui in a bird-catching tree, a transparent  
horse—another thing you'll never see.

~

The smallest dog in the world  
has died in Gisborne, New Zealand.  
It could climb into a teacup.  
It was 8cm tall.  
It broke its leg.  
Its name was Scooter.

~

## Moot and Pixie

*an Elizabethan romance*

Moot and Pixie, amorous  
at Athenree, their names  
inscribed freshly

on trig and gate and upended  
dinghy. Moot, recumbent  
commences his breathless

balladry. And the grasses  
sang, as grasses can,  
'Nearer, my god, to thee.'

~

## **Duration of sorrow**

A woman weeping on  
an escalator

head on the moving  
handrail

~

## **Things worn atop the head, Rapanui**

crown  
topknot  
lid of a plastic container  
cloud  
bowler  
halo  
luck bird  
ancestor  
chicken

~

## **Liquidadora de Libros**

Disorder of the street  
outside

this library in which I am  
well read.

**CARTOUCHE**

you are at your own centre  
    I won't return a text  
        nor comb archaic tomes  
for the thickness of language,  
    the origin of tapestry

keep one foot in the  
    canola reserves

    where you cuff at  
        twizzling moods

uncapped with teeth  
paper oxidised and burnt  
strings on the beard  
are part of the inscriptive hyperbole  
they didn't weave hair into baskets

encircle things to make them folksy  
knotted cotton  
miniature depictions  
    of mechanized processes  
    everywhere the same shape  
        as if we could unravel  
    floor of compacted missteps  
        chiselling a visage  
out of the silt

sing out one time  
  to sell me something  
    I want

cite my hairline  
how it betrays my womanhood  
sheltered by a single A4  
now becomes my past  
denotations that can't  
be make out

## **AS DISCUSSED**

you stick a closed-circuit imposition  
on a wall far from the archives  
and wonder where the reluctant scholars are

each barbed detail  
    each managed risk

the research was juice bars  
& tropes of addiction

no one wanted to be held  
by a chair “under the sign of”  
a soupcon of traction  
waiting for collateral to fall  
crumbling stones as proof

## **SLEEP'N**

a warm night keeps to itself  
and a waterfall is looping  
down some cosmic mountain  
on some conservation poster  
sugared ghosts of our imagined past  
one can sleep soundly  
with a waterfall in a drawer

## **GRABBY**

an opinion isn't a carte blanche  
your endless memoir wit  
did you shaft your appetite  
lovingly, numbingly  
crouched in a high-vis personality  
class-vest / ha ha, plug, plug  
avoid usual default negation  
do come in, please tell me more

**KEN BOLTON VISITS  
THE HUTT VALLEY**

One hilly day and barely alive,  
None could stoppeth us one of three  
As we broke through the foggy dive  
Ken Bolton, Iain Sharp, and me

Having had our fill of literary jive  
For the sake of our lives we flee  
Into the Hutt where mermaids live  
Ken Bolton, Iain Sharp, and me

And up on high, on floodbanks we drive  
Big mighty club in triumph are we  
Seeking thrills on which we thrive  
Ken Bolton, Iain Sharp, and me

Throg Billy grows to hire a man 'pon my words  
Adelaide, Abelard & *Angli Saxones* thorny beards –  
(sometimes we bring our friend, Malcolm.)

**SEEING ART BLAKEY**

*For Ken Bolton*

Art Blakey

although not a friend

stares at me, his name, perhaps

15 rows down in a CD stack

of an op shop.

Funny

how that could remind me of a writer-friend...

Jazz, music

have that ability like sport of forming instant connections  
between people.

The liner notes to be shared, sweetly  
given like a sip of coffee, over lunch in a gallery café, say,  
or

at home while the turntable spins.

The weight

of those old 78s, and the smell of vinyl,  
and the pleasure it *gives*.

That's

how I think of Ken, sometimes, playing his  
records/CDs, recording the nuances of performances,  
unique oddities of players, listening in, or carefully reading,  
making liner notes for friends to enjoy.

**GHOSTS**

it's 11.45  
a Monday  
the walls of the laundromat  
covered in posters  
    & all I want is for you to love me  
like your favourite band who have just announced  
they're breaking up — desperately  
    & with no chance of a reunion tour

the way I order a coffee  
    allowing myself one more  
    tiny indulgence before I return  
    to my throne of otiosity  
    adjacent to the top loaders

I pick up one of these  
ornate brochures  
for the West Terrace Cemetery  
becoming terrifically  
morbid  
suddenly

    & to think  
I may not forever live in the Inner West!  
me! the hero of all these Tarragon Street poems  
what a local treasure I could have been!

walking to Melbourne Street Laundromat  
I consider North Adelaide  
    its heritage buildings  
    its delicate front yards  
taking our dirty laundry past it all

the poet laureate of Melbourne St  
it wouldn't be so bad

drinking at the same pubs  
Ken et. al would have  
thirty years ago           they could put my name on  
    a park bench out the front of The Kentish  
    or The British

    the old stomping ground  
    for the Arts School crowd  
your mum and her trendy friends

it's quieter here now  
less denim / more activewear  
I am wearing my Last Clean Shirt  
—(NO UNDERWEAR)

coffee is better than ever on Melb St  
if that's a measure of it  
tho more expensive

next to the dryers there's  
this cheap automated coffee machine  
that wants my dryer money

the coffee: authentically shit  
but offering prevention against  
meaningful interactions with anyone

poets, publicans, artists, regulars, baristas, ghosts et cetera

the cycle ends  
the dryer lurches  
spits out my clothes

damp recollections  
shrinking histories  
my legacy

**NOVEMBER AGAIN**

electricity

substations (Bolton)

a 'lucozadey' car (Brown)

the first touches of rain –  
fretted  
almost courteous  
spreading the paper out beneath one's wrists  
one could couch it in such terms  
the fumes of sound which permeate  
a ceiling space  
a pulse of water  
the beautiful close pieces of metal  
released  
onto the page (?)  
maybe  
i'll just open that window a bit  
see what the air is like  
crinkle the chocolate  
involve myself in the air  
the dried-out  
once-stowed things  
left out the front of the flats  
'clearing the eye'  
the tree in brief  
and then in detail  
a tree replanted  
in reverse  
particularized

leaves in the earth  
acclimatise  
or die  
is the imperative  
we learn  
to repeat we learn  
no such thing  
the trees remain closed  
viewy, uninsistent  
marvels  
one assents to  
their watery undersea look  
and soon comes to waiting less  
holding fewer  
and moves through the scene more passably  
less emotionlessly  
for from the weather of one comes the  
weather of several  
in most countries  
one's motives said to be scribbled, ephemera  
the wind unseats  
and carries down the street  
this late in spring  
no longer knowing why it does this  
hurling one way and then another  
'pieces of weather'  
the remainders to return  
with coughs bottles nursed  
dangled from hands  
no longer tensed  
in this air  
a car  
materializes  
'something shy  
about the air'  
and the image of oneself  
'however many'

## Notes on Contributors

**KEN BOLTON** is the featured poet in this issue. See preface on p.5.

**JENNY BORNHOLDT**'s *Selected Poems* appeared from Victoria University Press in 2016. A poet and editor, she lives in Wellington.

**PAM BROWN** is an editor, reviewer & author of various chapbooks & pamphlets as well as many books of poetry. A new collection *Click here for what we do* is due from Vagabond Press in 2018. She lives in Sydney.

**LAURIE DUGGAN** moved from Australia to Faversham, Kent, in 2006. His most recent books are *No Particular Place To Go* (Bristol, Shearsman, 2017) and a reissue of his first two books as *East and Under the Weather* (Sydney, Puncher & Wattman, 2014).

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