

Poetry Notes

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Quarterly Newsletter of PANZA

Inside this Issue

1

Welcome

Christina Fulton by
Rowan Gibbs

7

National Poetry Day poem
by T E L Roberts

Poetic Tributes to Princess
Diana 20 years on

9

Event report: *Winter
Readings 2017*

Poetry by Mary
Maringikura Campbell

10

Selina Tusitala Marsh
appointed NZ Poet
Laureate

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Recently received
donations

About the Poetry Archive

PANZA
1 Woburn Road
Northland
Wellington 6012

Welcome

Hello and welcome to issue 30 of *Poetry Notes*, the newsletter of PANZA, the recently formed Poetry Archive of New Zealand Aotearoa.

Poetry Notes will be published quarterly and will include information about goings on at the Archive, articles on historical New Zealand poets of interest, occasional poems by invited poets and a record of recently received donations to the Archive.

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The newsletter will be available for free download from the Poetry Archive's website:

<http://poetryarchivenz.wordpress.com>

Christina Fulton, 1838-1874

Regular contributor Rowan Gibbs, a researcher, author and bibliographer, contributes original research on the 19th Century New Zealand poet Christina Fulton, whose first book doesn't survive.

On a rainy night in September 1867 the inhabitants of the tiny Otago goldfields settlement of Blue Spur, raising funds for the local school and church, were entertained by literary readings, "An Evening with the Poets", given by George Bailey, editor of the *Tuapeka Press* in nearby Lawrence. "The Readings were given in a masterly

style," reported the *Bruce Herald* (11 Sep.1867 p.5), "and consisted of selections from Milton, Southey, Lord Macaulay, Byron, Hood, Poe, Mrs Fulton, and others," adding: "Mr Bailey offered something like an apology in reading Mrs Fulton with the British Poets; he need not have done so, as the piece which he selected from that lady's writings, 'The Collision at Port Chalmers,' was highly applauded, and is entitled, I think, to 'pass muster' with many productions which we have been accustomed to consider 'sublime.'"¹ At the close of the evening the chairman proposed "three hearty British cheers" for "our excellent friend and neighbor, Mrs Fulton ... the only living author from whose writings we have had such a delightful treat this evening."

Mrs Christina Fulton had settled in Blue Spur with her husband Robert Gammell Fulton in 1862. Born Christina Dods in Edinburgh in 1838 to James Dods and Helen Sinclair, she and the family migrated to Melbourne in 1853 and soon moved to the goldfields of Bendigo. They remained there several years and by the mid 1860s her father, a "victual dealer" in 1841 but a stone mason in 1851 and 1856, had established a successful vineyard at Emu Creek. In 1856, in nearby Strathfieldsaye, Christina, spinster, age 18, married 28-year old farmer Robert Gammell Fulton. Robert, born in Stewiacke, Nova Scotia, son of Ebenezer Fulton, farmer, 1799-1880, and Jane Gammel, 1804-1836, had arrived in Melbourne from Halifax in 1852 heading for the goldfields. Again it was gold that drew Robert to Otago in 1862, and he is on the Waipori

electoral roll of April 1862, occupation miner, and he was a holder of mining rights in Lawrence in 1862-3, though before long he turned to blacksmithing and he and Christina were living in the settlement that had grown at Blue Spur. We get a few glimpses of them, Christina in charge of the local library and writing a prologue for “an entertainment on behalf of the Wetherstones School”, but the whole area was becoming unstable due to the sluicing for gold. In December 1867 a dam above their house threatened to break and “the ground is also cracked through, in front of Mr R.G. Fulton’s house and garden, and from thence to the gully at the back of the blacksmith’s shop”. By June 1868 Blue Spur township, which had already been shifted from the head of Gabriel’s Gully to the top of the ridge, was doomed: “Not long ago a busy little township was situate on the spur near Mr. Fulton’s blacksmith’s shop. There was then a large hotel, a butcher’s shop, two general stores, and a number of private dwellings, but as time rolled on the people saw that all the ground in that vicinity was doomed for sluicing purposes, and a gradual stampede took place, until now the site of the former township is completely deserted ... Mr. R.G. Fulton was obliged to remove his house on account of the numerous cracks and fissures underneath it.”² The writing was on the wall and that winter was bitter: “...very severe this last fortnight ... we are nearly all ‘kilt’ with snow, hail, and frost”, said the *Tuapeka Times* (18 July 1868 p.13), “if this weather continues, doubtless many who are able to go to greener fields and a sunnier sky will emigrate to the Fijis or elsewhere ... I regret to say that we are loosing [*sic*] Mr. and Mrs. Fulton, so long known and deservedly respected at the Blue Spur. Mr. Fulton has ‘sold out;’ and they are about to sail for the Fijis, where I understand they have friends of some standing, and who have held out considerable inducements to emigrate thither”. ‘Fiji fever’ swept over Australia and New Zealand that year and accompanied by a number of other Otago settlers the Fultons sailed on the *Banshee* on September 20th, and established a plantation at Balaga

(Valaga) in Savu Savu Bay on Vanua Levu, together with Christina’s father, mother and brothers.³ An English visitor in 1879 describes meeting the Dods family at Valaga, “father, mother, and sons ... Mr Dods senior, a most charming old gentleman”, admiring their house and playing in a cricket match (H. Stonehewer Cooper, *Coral Lands*, 1880, I p.272, 279). But by then Christina had died, on December 26th 1874, “a victim to the insalubrity of the climate”, said the *Otago Guardian* (26 Feb 1875 p.[2]). A death notice appeared in the *Fiji Times* 13 (& 16) Jan.1875, then in the *Bruce Herald* and *Tuapeka Times* (2 Mar. and 3 Mar.1875), the latter adding a note: “From Mr. Fenton, who has been here on a visit, we had heard that Mrs. Fulton was very ill when he left Fiji, and not expected to recover”. She and Robert had no children. Robert returned to New Zealand in 1877 and took over the lease of the Clifton Hotel in Beaumont. He was bankrupt the following year but married Jane Cranley, née Oxley, widow of John Cranley. In 1880 he rebuilt the Golden Age Hotel in Wetherstones and returned to mining, applying for a lease as Fulton’s Quartz Mining Co. Jane died in 1898 and Robert the following year; both are buried in Lawrence cemetery.⁴ Christina and her poetry had not been forgotten when she left New Zealand for Fiji in 1868: a few years later the Dunedin correspondent of the *Tuapeka Times* (26 Sep.1874 p.3) quoted her when describing the recent fierce weather: “the ocean has been roaring for the past two or three days”, whipped up by strong gales, a “hoarse and hollow-sounding roar” (as Mrs Fulton, of Blue Spur fame puts it in one of her little poems)”. This was a line from her first book of poems, *Original Poetry, by Mrs C. Fulton; to which are added a few Poems by her Father, Mr James Dods*, published in 1867. No verse by her has been found in Australian or New Zealand newspapers prior to this,⁵ and it seems very likely that this was her first venture into print. And it came about only because in late 1866 two wet and weary travellers stopped at her home in Blue Spur. One was the eccentric J.G.S.

Grant and he tells the story in a review of her book in his *Saturday Review*, 25 May 1867 pp.543-4:

The history of this little volume of 131 pages is a romantic episode in literature. About seven months ago we made a tour of Otago, and among other places, we paid a visit to Blue Spur. It was a very wet morning when, in company with Mr. Greig, Tuapeka ‘Press,’ we started from Lawrence, and proceeded, via Wetherstone’s village, along the ranges of the Blue Spur. After inspecting the sluicing operations at the head of Gabriel’s Gully ... we entered a pretty little cottage, and being perfectly saturated with wet, warmed and dried ourselves over against a roaring fire, and partook of an elegant repast, hospitably spread out before us by the polite lady of the cottage. She — having learned our name from the gentlemen accompanying us — brought out from her desk a beautiful album, and modestly requested us to favour her with our opinion of the merits of sundry poems therein elegantly engrossed. On opening the album before the cheerful fire, after having refreshed our languishing frame with the good things of this life, our spirits began to revive, and we forgot that we were in the midst of a waste howling desert, and began to scan the verses of the manuscript. After a pause of meditation, we closed the book, gave it to the lady, and inly exclaiming “Eureka ! Eureka !” like the ancient sage, importuned our fair hostess to hand it over to Mr. Greig for publication. Reluctantly, on the strength of our commendation she assented, and so we, accompanied by Mr. Greig, retraced our steps to Lawrence...

No copy now survives of this first book of hers, which has gone unrecorded, so for its contents we have only quotations in Grant’s and other newspaper reviews, which are reproduced here at length. Grant was high in his praises: “...the very first lines of the book—written as they were after a walk to the ocean beach—are redolent with the music of genius:

I love to watch thee, wild and stormy deep !
Lashing thine angry sides 'gainst yonder
 steep ;
And love, here seated on thy sand-girt shore,
To hear thy hoarse and hollow sounding roar ;
And love, more near, to watch yon curling
 wave
Raising his snowy crest, and, breaking, lave
The clear fine beach, and, murmuring along,
Awaken thoughts, as would a plaintive song.

The thought is grand, albeit one or two
verbal emendations — e.g., “its” for
“his,” before “snowy crest” — may be
made. . .

The following lines from “Impressions
on entering a church yard” are
peculiarly touching:—

Step lightly ! let no careless tread
Sound o'er those ashes of the dead —
 Break on their calm repose.

Let no unmeaning laugh resound
No gay or heedless word be found
To echo o'er this sacred ground —
 Think ! think ! on human woes.

On entering this abode of woe,
Where rich and poor are mingling low
 In the same earth.

A something like a dark'ning pall
Does o'er my spirit seem to fall
And crushing hope, does but appal
 With dread of death.

The very stillness seems to say
Thou'rt now enjoying thy short day ;
But in a little while you may
 Be resting here !

Bring hence no empty dreams of pride
Fleet as the shadows at thy side,
Think on the end that must betide ;
 Think on thy bier !

Life's but a shadow, but a dream,
 The final here.

The following lines, also, addressed “to
the Moon” — we like exceedingly :

Great silvery orb, thy calm and gentle face
Looks down with mourning pity on our race ;
Pity to think we cannot well enjoy
So beautiful a world without alloy !
More beautiful far when in the night
Thou shined'st o'er us thy soft and mellow'd
 light;
So lovely is thine light and so serene
As if good spirits hover'd o'er the scene

Calming and soothing every mortal pain
While scarce a worldly thought do we retain ;
It draws our spirits towards Him in heaven,
In gratitude for all the good life's given,
And causes us to think how very ill
We do repay Him for His goodness still,
And while we're gazing on this placid sight
We think of all His Majesty, His might ;
How soon this scene will change at His
 command
And thunder roll at beckon of His hand.

The punctuation is sometimes defective,
but that is a minor affair, while the
thought throughout is simple as well as
sublime. The book is a casket of such
rich and varied poetic gems as would
not disgrace the genius of a Mrs Grant
of Laggan, or of a Hannah More.”
The Auckland *Daily Southern Cross* (15
June 1867 p.5) also found room for a
long review: “...we find much that
merits commendation. There are several
charming verses and pretty conceits
scattered up and down through the 131
pages of which it consists. For example,
the opening verses, written ‘After a
Walk to the Ocean Beach’ [*as above*] ...
‘Impressions on entering a Churchyard’
are sweetly and reverently expressed
[*above*] ... Mrs. Fulton seems to be a
lover of nature whether in its grandest
or softest aspect. Her appreciation of the
angry play of ocean we have seen. Lines
‘To a Wild Flower,’ in another page of
the book, exhibit her powers of
observation and expression to equal
advantage. But perhaps the best and
most characteristic pieces are those on
the Clutha and Tuapeka.

Sweet Tuapeka, 'mong thy hills
 Oft have I spent a happy hour,
When Nature, in a kindly mood,
 Did o'er the land her favours shower,
When gladdened by the orb of day
 All round me seemed to wear a smile ;
So blue the heavens, so bright the earth,
 So merry chirpt the birds the while.

* * * *
I've sat within my sweet retreat,
 Sat drinking in the lovely scene ;
Those hills so broken, wild, and bare,
 Around me all in richest green ;
The broad leaf with its ample shade,
 Manuka's sweet and fragrant flower,
And many a graceful shrub and fern
 Unite to form my peaceful bower.

They tell me o'er those naked hills
 A noble forest once was spread,
And that those wilds, so silent long,
 Once echoed to the Moa's tread ;—
That vengeful natives, filled with dread
 Of this huge bird, and mad with ire,
Reduced the hills so richly clad,
 To nakedness and waste by fire.

And now, fair land, what is thy doom ?
 Thy wilds are now no longer still ;
The busy tramp of busy men
 Resounds on every vale and hill.
Thy well-kept secret from thee torn,
 Thy hidden riches brought to light
Lure votaries from every clime
 To come and see the goodly sight.

The authoress, with great truthfulness,
in a few happy lines on Dunedin in the
early part of 1863, exclaims —

There's many a beauty glads the eye,
 Thy bonny bay lies smiling by,
And boats, to grace its bosom, ply
 Oft up and down.
But, oh, thou art (and shame ! I cry)
 A dirty town.

We close our quotations from this little
volume with the following lines, taken
at random from a poem of some length,
entitled ‘The Friends’:—

It was a lovely summer hour,
 And the blue ocean, calm and mild,
Slept peaceful 'neath the day-god's power,
 And Nature in her glory smiled.
* * * *
And o'er the blue of that bright sky
 Floated a glory, not a cloud,
So peerless in its beauty ; high,
 And o'er the orb it could not shroud,
It sailed, and shed a halo there
 That made the heavens seem still more
 fair,
And the heart lowly bowed :
For the bright robes that angels wear
Must have the glow that beameth there.

To settlers in New Zealand, the perfect
truthfulness of this poetic picture of the
glory of its translucent atmosphere will
at once appear. Mrs. Fulton requires to
make no apology for publishing this
volume of original poetry, which was
written for her own amusement and
gratification in the solitudes of the
interior uplands of Otago, because they
are certain to minister to the pleasure of
many appreciative readers. The verses
throughout breathe a devotional spirit,

and, we ought to add, are dedicated to the father of the authoress, who appears, by selections from his own writings, to have been embued with no mean share of the poetic spirit.”

And the *Bruce Herald* (10 July 1867 p.6) devoted a whole column to the book: “We have read with much pleasure a small book of Poems, by Mrs Fulton. The printing of the book is very creditable for Lawrence, and the printers seem to have been under that impression themselves, as their names flourish on the outside title-page, whereas the publisher’s name is placed in an obscure corner at the end of the book, which arrangement is hardly just towards the Authoress, for we understand the responsibility of the printing, and the sale of copies rests upon her. Poetry, either in the home country or in the colonies, is seldom a paying speculation ; indeed, if we look at the subject from a monetary point of view, we might say that not one out of a thousand rhymsters make more than sufficient to keep them alive. But while this is the case, we would not depreciate the pursuit of the Poetic Art. We have great faith in the refining tendency which the study of nature and art must have on the mind ; and we believe there is infinite pleasure derivable from the exercise of those powers of reflection and imagination which are brought into play even in the stringing together of a few simple couplets. The small volume of Poems under consideration is made up of a miscellaneous selection of minor poems, some of which show great freedom of expression. In some cases the Authoress catches the inspiration of the moment, and places before the mind some pleasing images. The largest poem of the group is one entitled ‘The Friends,’ the interest in which is well sustained throughout. The story of her life that Helen’s friend recites is true to nature, and very touchingly told, and we cannot do the Authoress better justice than by quoting a few verses from this part of the poem: Helen’s friend waiting for her drunken husband’s return.

The wind moaned sadly one dark eve,
 Round my lonely cottage home,
 The waving trees did interweave
 Their restless limbs, and I alone

Listed their sad and mournful sigh
 That seemed forboding danger nigh,
 Or did some woe bemoan ;
 And anxious listened for the tread
 That told my Edward homeward sped.

But long I listened, watched in vain,
 No living creature came in view,
 And in despite of wind and rain,
 Threw on a cloak, and outward flew,
 On to the road at swiftest speed,
 But from the sheltering forest freed
 So spitefully it blew ;
 Powerless before its wrath I stood,
 And gladly groped within the wood.

Back to my dreary home I crept,
 To weep the weary hours away ;
 I never sat, I never slept,
 But watched the clouds till break of day.
 Dark visions on my mind did throng,
 Presentiments of coming wrong
 Causing this strange delay ;
 For ne’er till this eventful night
 Had Edward stayed for morning light.

* * *
 At length a murmur smote my ear ;
 Hushed and subdued — what could it be ?
 My heart stood still with very fear,
 For well I knew it was not he ;
 Each terror of the night but gone,
 Revived in double darkness grown
 And in intensity ;
 And when a mournful crowd drew near,
 No moan gave I, nor sigh nor tear.

They bore a heavy burden in,
 Close by my side they bore it past ;
 (What feeling chilled my heart within
 That I could let them pass unasked ?)
 They laid it on the sofa near,
 Unwrapped it from its swaddling gear,
 I started up aghast,
 And moaning sank upon the floor,
 I hop’d I ne’er might rise from more.

For in no drunken fit he lay,
 The hands stretched nerveless by his
 side,
 The pallid brow — too truly clad
 Too truly told my love had died ;
 I did not note, and yet I knew,
 They looks of pity on me threw ;
 And tenderly each tried
 To do some deed — breathe some kind
 thought,
 Or say some truth with comfort fraught.

They found him near the dreadful cliff
 O’er which the dang’rous roadway
 wound,
 When morning broke — stretched cold and
 stiff
 Upon a raised and grassy mound,

Safe from the water’s careless play,
 Whose hungry depths so near him lay,
 They there my darling found ;
 No broken bone — no gash to bleed —
 Some inward hurt had done the deed.

Oh how I kissed the pale cold brow,
 And stroked the pretty rippling hair,
 Kissed the cold lips that never now
 The smile so dear to me must wear,
 Pressed the still bosom to my own
 With many an anguished wail and groan ;
 And wailing marvelled how
 The heart could so much misery bear —
 Could live and view him lifeless there.

I could not note how moments fled,
 Kind friends stood by me in my need.
 A day came when they gently led
 My faltering steps with little speed,
 Where the high wall and gate enclose
 The spot where many dead repose,
 From toil and sorrow freed;
 And there, where high the rank weeds wave,
 They made my dear young husband’s grave.

And I stood by and saw him laid
 Deep, deep within the cold dark ground,
 And suffocating sobs betrayed
 My woe to those who bent around :
 And when they heaped within the mound
 That doth my darling’s breast enfold,
 The hollow, boding sound
 Fell like the death knell on my ear
 Of every hope of gladness here.

We would recommend a perusal of this little volume to all who are lovers of verse.”

There was a brief notice in the *North Otago Times* (31 May 1867 p.2): “...We have perused the book with pleasure. There are gems of thought and fancy in almost every page, but in our opinion the chief merit is to be found in the shorter pieces. The authoress is not so successful with poems of any length ; rhythm and poetical fancy alike are not so well sustained.” And she sent a review copy to the *Age* in Melbourne, which acknowledged it (19 June 1867 p.7) as “creditabile alike to author and publisher”.⁶

A second book of verse followed in August 1868,⁷ *Lella: A Poem*, printed by the ‘Evening Star’ Office in Dunedin, prefaced with a fulsome dedication to James Macandrew, Superintendent of Otago, “seated on places high”.

This is one long poem, sub-titled on the half-title leaf 'A Glimpse of the Northern Island Twenty Years Ago'. Unlike her first book this is recorded in the *New Zealand National Bibliography* (2072) and in Percival Serle's 1929 *A Bibliography of Australasian Poetry and Verse*, and copies survive in libraries — Turnbull, University of Canterbury, Hocken, and at the University of Melbourne and National Library of Australia.

There is a curious bibliographical point about the book. A slip is pasted on the front wrapper of all known copies which corrects the author's name, but the slip varies. On the Hocken copy (yellow wrappers) the slip reads "MRS. CHRISTINA FULTON" correcting "MRS. CAROLINE FULTON" underneath, as one would expect, and the slip on the University of Canterbury copy (pink wrappers) is the same. But oddly the slip on the Turnbull copy, which is in yellow wrappers, reads "MRS CAROLINE FULTON"; what is underneath is unfortunately not determinable. There is no doubt that her name was Christina, and the preface is signed "Christina Fulton".

The longest review, in the *North Otago Times* (1 Sept. 1868 p.5), offered some positive criticism: "In this, her second appearance before the public, we think our poetess is less successful than on the first occasion, the work before us bearing traces of hasty compilation, and containing redundancies which a little pruning would greatly improve. Generally speaking the metre is smooth, though there are instances in which the lines are stiff and cramped, and in which they could have been very easily recast with great gain to the rhythm, and without in any way weakening the sense ... Such expressions as '*our boot-shaped isle*' can by no possible effort be made poetical; for, though poetry is born of the soul (sole), it can by no stretch of the imagination be in any way connected with *boots*. Then, such a triplet as —

Well pleased, I viewed the country fair,
And hoped a happy home to share
With my dear wife and mother there;

is made babyish by the last line of utter commonplace... The really poetical lines, which of themselves are smooth, well-turned and musical —

Soft like an angel's blessing stole
A calmness o'er my troubled soul,
And I was softly told to sleep,
And in my slumber taught to weep;

are spoilt by the addition of the following —

To weep sweet tears, which eased my brain
Of its o'erburthened load of pain;

not only because those lines are utterly unnecessary, but in the last contain an expression which is simply unintelligible. What is an *overburthened load*?

We think we have said enough to prove that Mrs Fulton's poem would have more added to her laurels had it been carefully revised before publication, and had it been more carefully corrected while going through the press... Now, having pointed out wherein our fair authoress might make improvement, let us say a word or two about the poem itself. The story is that of a young New Zealand maid, whose name is the title of the poem. She is the daughter and only child of an aged white-haired man, whose especial pride and joy she is. Her mother, one of the darker race, has been long dead when the father and his graceful child are introduced to the reader. The story of the father's life is woven into the poem, in answer to the curious enquiries of the maiden, as also that of a venerable and desolate man, which contains a very Enoch Arden like episode, founded upon the following incident thus told in the 'Story of New Zealand':⁸ — 'Stewart, after residing many years among the Maoris, returned to Scotland to see his forlorn wife, but she — conceiving him to be dead, had long ago wedded another, and now denied his personal identity. Deeply affected with this reception, he returned to New Zealand and took up his abode among the natives, and died at the age of 85, in a destitute state at Poverty Bay.' Our authoress describes the return of the father of her heroine, how he 'reached the longed-for shore at last,'

how he took the road to his old home scanning with longing eye the while

The well-known scenes for many a mile,
The hills where I had romped and played,
The streams along whose banks I strayed.
The wild rose with its sweet perfume
By the roadside hung out its bloom.
Arrived at his own door —
Three children played upon the floor,
A stranger in my wonted chair
Sat as his rightful post were there.

He taps at the door and enters, but sees no glance of pleasure in his wife's face; let the following extract supply the rest:—

I sank upon the nearest seat
And o'er my clammy forehead drew
My hand to wipe the anguish dew.
* * * * *

I scarcely know now all that passed,
So whelming was the stroke at last.
Enquiring o'er my figure ranged;
My own wife's eye — so changed, so
changed —

No soft'ning glimmer o'er it broke
E'en when she dealt the fatal stroke.
My mother nature's debt had paid,
And in the dark church-yard was laid.
THAT was her husband — in that chair,
These were their children playing there.
I heard no more, but staggering fled
Where'er my trembling footsteps led;
Away! away into the night,
Far from her hearing and her sight —
Away! — but bearing my life's blight.

Into the poem is also woven the story of Hongi Heke, which is one of the best efforts of our authoress, the concluding stanza being quite sufficient to show that her lyre can make music of a high order —

And Heke slept death's silent sleep,
His grave the towering mountain steep.
And hoary woods watch o'er him keep,
And bend their dipping bows and weep;
And mournful winds sweep round that grave
And wail a dirge note for the brave.

Then comes a story of Maori hate and Maori love. Lella's father is struck down by the hand of the assassin, and Lella's reason is driven from her throne; and the maiden, brooding over her own melancholy thoughts, plunges into the river, and drowns her sorrows in its crystal flood. But Lella has been loved

long and faithfully by one of her mother's race, Rewi by name, and Rewi rescues her from the water, but life is extinct, and the poem thus describes her resting-place —

And now she by her father's side —
 So late his darling and his pride —
 Rests in that little churchyard green
 Where, unassuming, may be seen
 The marble stone that marks the date
 Of Lella's and her father's fate.
 But there is one drop many a tear
 Upon the unforgetton bier,
 And trains the weeping willows there
 With loving tenderness and care ;
 And when the sun hath sunk to rest
 And, by the gentle moon caressed,
 The wailing woods but softly sigh,
 There often on the air floats by
 A weird, wild music to the ear,
 Its notes so strange, its sounds so drear.

This introduces Rewi's lament, with which the poem closes...

Oh fair young face !
 That wer't alike my sunshine and my star —
 Oh spirit meek !
 What dost thou seek ?
 Whence hast thou winged thine early flight
 afar ?
 Oh spirit fair !
 What moved thee there ?
 My soul to leave in gloom, the earth's fair
 face to mourn...

...we must take our leave of 'Lella,' and in doing so may tell our readers that they will find a good deal in Mrs Fulton's little work that will repay perusal."

The *Otago Witness* (19 Sep.1868 p.13) summarised the plot, concluding: "... Both the plot and metrical structure will remind the reader of Sir Walter Scott's poetical tales. Mrs Fulton breathes the spirit of chivalry into the action of her narrative, and seeks by that means to attract the sympathies of her reader. The effort is not unsuccessful. It is chiefly marred by the rhythmical errors in which the poem abounds, and which a little attention would probably enable the authoress to avoid".

The *Daily Southern Cross* (2 Sep.1868 p.4) gave an Auckland view: "... Such are the simple and touching incidents of this little poem, which is written throughout in tolerably correct metre,

and in many places the descriptions display the true spirit of poetry. The authoress has evidently an ardent admiration for the romantic and chivalrous in the Maori character, and most of the arguments for the Maori are very ably set forth in this little book, especially in the death-bed oration of the chief Heke. Perhaps we Northerners, who know all the terrors and evils of Maori outbreaks, look at these things in rather a different way. 'Distance lends enchantment to the view;' and the Maori insurgents may look more charming in Dunedin than they do in Auckland. But for a poem the romantic view is decidedly the best, and Mrs. Fulton's little work will repay those lovers of poetry who may give it a perusal."

There were brief notes in the *Otago Daily Times* (29 Aug.1868 p.2) and the *Bruce Herald* (26 Aug.1868 p.4), the latter pronouncing: "we can confidently say, that Mrs Fulton need not fear for getting the favorable judgment pronounced by the 'Press,' on her first selection of poems, — reversed". However, the *Tuapeka Times* (19 Sep.1868 p.3), rival of Greig's *Tuapeka Press*, published a withering review, which may have discouraged her from any further publication:⁹

"A first attempt may be dealt kindly with ; but for a second failure, there is neither extenuation nor excuse. We convict the author of Lella of false pretences at the very outset. She calls her effusion a 'Poem,' in spite of its want of a single poetic thought, expression, or aspiration. This tissue of slipshod doggerel and pretentious silliness, is appropriately introduced by a dedication to Mr. Macandrew, which far excels anything of the kind ever printed before... We are almost ashamed to drag such rubbish before the notice of our readers... Before dismissing the work, we wish to give one word of praise. The printing and binding of the little volume are excellent, and reflect great credit on the publisher— the pity is that good workmanship should have been wasted on such arrant trash".

For help with this article I would especially like to thank the Reference staff of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Scott Campbell at Hocken Library, and Rebecca at University of Canterbury.

Rowan Gibbs

Footnotes

¹ Alas, 'The Collision at Port Chalmers' is lost to us. It was probably included in her first book of poems, discussed below, of which no copy survives.

² *Bruce Herald* 11 Dec.1867 p.12; *Tuapeka Times* 27 June 1868 p.2. Blasting then replaced sluicing to break up the solid auriferous cement and soon "the round hill where Mr. Fulton's house stood, one would imagine at a distance to have been disembowelled and sunk into a lower region" (*Tuapeka Times* 20 Feb.1869 p.2); Robert is still on the Bruce and Tuapeka Rolls in 1870-1, long after they left, with a "wood and calico house in Munro's Gully".

³ Her brothers: Archibald Sinclair (1840-1915) migrated to Canada, married there and had eight children; James Peter (1842-1915?) was working in Australia in the 1870s and at one time in New Zealand; John Sinclair (1845-1936; bio and photo in *Cyclopedia of Fiji*, 1907) worked at his father's vineyard in Bendigo then ran a hotel in Otago before settling in Fiji where he married and had a large family who later moved to Australia and New Zealand; Mark Thomas (1853-1920) also married in Fiji and took his family to Australia in 1913. James the father died in Valaga in 1893.

⁴ Buried with them is their son Leopold who died in infancy. A daughter Jessie Oxley Fulton, born in 1881, travelled to Canada in 1901 and trained as a doctor there, in Boston, and at St Giles in London; she died in Los Angeles in 1936.

⁵ The *Bruce Herald* in nearby Milton (Tokomairiro) was especially welcoming to 'Original Poetry', printing local sentimental and political pieces as well as such accomplished writers as Dugald Ferguson, Bracken and Tregear.

⁶ The reviews agree on the attractive printing of the book, and there are other references to fine work by Bailey and Greig of the *Tuapeka Press* — a Testimonial presented to Police Sergeant Thompson on leaving Tuapeka "printed in gold and colored inks upon white satin, and executed by James Greig, of the firm of Bailey and Greig, printers and proprietors of the 'Tuapeka Press'" (*Dunstan Times* 2 Nov.1866 p.2) and an illuminated address to

Governor Grey visiting Tuapeka “from the members of St. George’s Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, beautifully printed on parchment, in gold and colored inks, by Messrs Bailey and Greig” (*Otago Witness* 16 Mar.1867 p.3). Only thirteen issues survive of the paper which ran weekly from 12 May 1866 to 31 Oct.1869.

⁷ Advertisement stating “Just Published” by Dunedin bookseller A.R. Livingstone in *Otago Daily Times* 24 August 1868.

⁸ Arthur S. Thomson, *The Story of New Zealand: Past and Present, Savage and Civilized* (London: John Murray, 1859), Vol.1, p.291; the story of William Stewart, eponym of Stewart Island, is also recounted by Joseph Mackay in his *Historic Poverty Bay* pp.461ff.

⁹ The *Fiji Times* published occasional original poetry but a search from the first issue, 4 Sep.1869, until Christina’s death, shows no contributions by her.

National Poetry Day poem: *The Hills of Home* by T E L Roberts

PANZA celebrates this year’s Phantom Billstickers National Poetry Day, 25 August 2017, with a classic New Zealand poem by T E L (Thomas Edward Lloyd) Roberts b. Sefton 1873; d. 1952.

Roberts was one of leading poets of the *Star* group of Christchurch newspaper poets selected and arranged by PANZA Archivist Mark Pirie as a special issue of *broadsheet*, No. 12, November 2013. T E L Roberts contributed poems to the *Ellesmere Guardian* in Canterbury prior to the *Star* and published the collection *Rimu and Rata* (1920) and two collections of memoirs about his time in Seddon and Motunau. He was a farmer and a well-known rural figure: Waipara County Council 1914-17; Executive Member of the Farmers’ Union; President of the Waikari Valley Sheepowners’ Assn.; and Secretary of the Meat Producers’ Union; he visited Britain and France in 1905.

Roberts wrote the memoir *Motunau*, or *The Hills of Home*, in 1946, same title as his poem below. His prose was reprinted in 1998 and is now considered a definitive history of Hurunui. The evocative poem by Roberts certainly captures in the tradition of landscape painters and Romantic poets, the beauty and locality of the place he lived in and roamed.

Like many early poets of the 1920s period, we are perhaps yet to fully come to terms with their contribution to New Zealand poetry.

T E L Roberts

THE HILLS OF HOME

A blush of rose is on our hills,
The sun is at the set,
The portals of the west are swung,
And many clouds have met
To fare him well and see him through
That shining gateway rolled,
That gateway with its closing bars
Of amethyst and gold.

How often have I watched him there,
In boyhood long ago,
A furnace on the mountain tips,
A fire among the snow.
It was but yester, so it seems,
And many mem’ries come,
As here I stand, grey headed now,
Among the hills of home.

The mako lifted forth her song,
That floated far away,
A vesper for the feathered world,
A requiem for the day.
But never comes her music now,
From all the dales around;
Her note is gone, that strange, wild note,
And once familiar sound.

She passed, and we who loved her then
Would it had not been so,
And long to hear her twilight call
Our children do not know;
But gone’s the home and, too, the
flowers,
And our first loves with these;
Beneath the hills by Skylight Stream
Alone remain the trees.

We planted in our childhood there,
Neglected now and old.
Like battered frame with picture gone—
A story that is told.
We romped around their youthful
forms,
We danced within their ring,
And there we felt the joyous thrill
When love is at the spring.

Still softly flows the stream as then,
The rocks we scaled are there,
Our bathing holes and fishing pools
Are still as then they were;
We paddled here with burnt brown feet,
And here we learned to swim,
And there on rude korari raft
That stretch we dared to skim.

How near to Nature’s heart were we
Who were the first to roam
As children quite unfettered, free,
Among these hills of home.
The spell of childhood grips me now,
The span of years is crost,
The scents of sweet wild flowers come
down,
And all the man is lost.

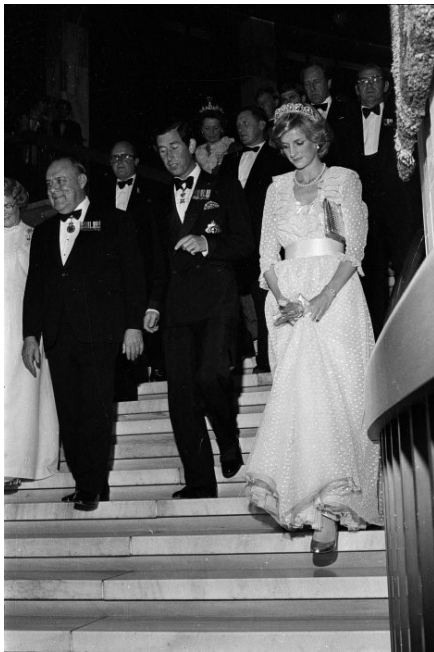
Scargill

(*The Star*, Christchurch, N.Z., 24 April 1926)

Poetic Tributes to Princess Diana 20 years on

The month of August marks the 20th anniversary since the death of Diana Princess of Wales, in a car crash in 1997.

PANZA members Mark Pirie and Dr Michael O’Leary present their previously published poems to Diana in remembrance of her.



Princess Diana, Prince Charles and Robert Muldoon, Wellington, New Zealand. Dominion post (Newspaper): Photographic negatives and prints of the Evening Post and Dominion newspapers. Ref: EP/1983/1446/30-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. records/22505235

Mark Pirie

SKETCH IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

For Diana

If there's one thing here that's
admirable:
It's the parks, the wide-open green
spaces.
People come to jog, take babies for
A walk, soak up the sunshine, the
Turning weather of Spring. Next to me
A woman checks the flowers for new
growth,
As if receiving a seasonal redemption.
It's that Church idea again, you
Can't help but feel the soul exists when
You're in the Gardens, and now just a
few
Steps from Diana's fountain. That baby,
For instance, seems to reach and pull at
the leaves,
As if attaching some new symbolic
meaning.

And just out of eyeshot two lovers rest
on
Each other forming what looks like a
cross,
But, this time, a female figure, saved,
pulled
From her Calvary, making you think
again
Of that shocking Paris wreck.

(From *London Notebook*, ESAW:
Paekakariki, 2005)

Michael O'Leary

FOUR ELIZABETHAN SONNETS

1 – Lady Die

So, the hapless Lady Di is cast into
eternity
By seven horsemen of the apocalyptic
paparazzi
Who, like a blinded, blinkered, ideal-
driven nazi
Carried out the ultimate work of their
fraternity
But beneath their crazed pursuit a
deeper need
Is exposed. For they were like the
harbinger
Of someone to come, the maligned
messenger
Whose news satisfies the masses'
insatiable greed

And beyond the sentiment thus far
expressed
(the ugliness of the world needing
sacrificial beauty)
Lies an even darker hint of something
sinister
An unsanctioned, unlawful love remains
unblessed
After living lives of ostensible honour
and duty
Adulterous Charles and Camilla now
call the Minister

2 – The Common Touch

So, she had the common touch after all
Dying in that most egalitarian way
'Out of it' on the drink or drug of the
day
The car slammed into the road-tunnel
wall

Rich kids, poor kids — all on a
Saturday night
No matter what your wealth or status is
Whether you're drinking D.B. or bubbly
fizz
Behind the wheel you know you're all
right

And the paparazzi devils who follow
our lives
Haunting and taunting our most
personal places
Exposing the Dorianic double nature of
our lives
Determine who gets the chop and who
survives

Within you and without you death is all
the same
But if you're rich you can afford to
apportion blame

3 – The Colonels' Plot

The inner-circular ruling lights
Of the British Defence forces
Were having sleepless nights
Counting legless Royal horses

Their cousins, the arms industry
Nervous at the Princess of Wales'
Quixotic and relentless try
To eradicate land mine sales

Losing money and losing status
Invoking their hymn and scripture
"Recruit the paparazzi to help us
She'll soon be given the picture"

What happened next, now we all know
is history
The unspeakable caught the edible to
cover a mystery

4 – Pomp and Grandeur

The ironic nature of her funeral cannot
be stressed
Too much: as her cortege passed all she
had touched
Each individual's thoughts can only be
guessed
Remembering that spirit who couldn't
be crushed

Locked away for years in a loveless
marriage
Latterly escaping to become Queen of
Hearts
The champion of peace — riding in a
gun carriage
Diana, in a shortened life played many
parts

The hunter was the hunted, the haunting
the haunted
The fair beauty became the dark lady of
this sonnet
All that wealth, health and happiness
was taunted
By the devilish double-edged shadow
which fell on it

That beautiful London day when
millions held their breath
All that pomp and grandeur just hid
another hideous death

(From *Collected Poems 1981-2016*,
HeadworX: Wellington, 2017)

Report: *Winter Readings* 2017



At this year's Winter Readings in
Paekakariki, "Versin' Safari", Earl of
Seacliff Art Workshop published an
anthology of the six readers (with
photography by John Girdlestone), and
awarded its annual poetry prize to Mary
Maringikura Campbell, a surprise
award.

Versin' Safari held at St Peter's Hall on
6 August 2017 was a tribute to the pop
group The Beach Boys and an event

continuing the return of a popular
poetry reading series in the Wellington
region organised by the Poetry Archive
Trust, HeadworX Publishers and ESAW
2003-2008 and 2016.

This year's attendance was up on the
previous year and the participants were
Nelson Wattie (also MC), Marilyn
Duckworth (reading from *The Chiming
Blue: New and Selected Poems* (VUP,
2017)), Paekakariki poets Mercedes
Webb-Pullman and Damian Ruth,
HeadworX editor Mark Pirie (reading
his own and several poems by MaryJane
Thomson from a recent HeadworX
release, *Songs of the City*), and ESAW
publisher Michael O'Leary reading
from his newly released *Collected
Poems 1981-2016* (HeadworX).

Musician Francis Mills, a special guest,
performed songs as a musical break
between the poets.

Writer David McGill, one of this year's
cover artists along with Francis Mills in
the Beach Boys photo shoot, was also
acknowledged through Mark Pirie's
reading of his limerick about the Beach
Boys (a coda to the event).

Poetry by Mary Maringikura Campbell

This issue we feature some poems by
Mary Maringikura Campbell who
appeared at Versin' Safari and received
this year's ESAW Poetry Prize for her
collection *Maringi*.

Mary Maringikura Campbell

TANGAROA

(A complaint from Ra to Tangaroa)

Early this morning
he rolled in his sleep
Ripples blanched my body
Bubbles went up
my nostrils
Washed my face
Left me cold
Shaken
'Tangaroa,' I said,
'you have no manners,
especially
in bed!'

FISH

Fish, there is nothing fishy about you
nothing flawed or perverse
only pink and green tides
yellow moons and sleepless nights

Fish, no one compares to you
I could eat you raw

Fish, how can you measure
the depth, the volume of the ocean
My love for you is immeasurable

Fish, I will never hide from you
deep in the belly of the ocean
under the seaweed
it is murky and my vision is impaired

Fish, I am your paua
you are my rock
my moon
my blackest pearl
and I am stuck on
you.

(Both poems are from the collection
Maringi (c2016))



[The Earl of Seacliff Poetry Prize began
in 2007, when the Earl, PANZA Co-
founder Michael O'Leary, awarded a
prize to an emerging artist's poem on
the Poetrywall at that year's Winter
Readings taking place at the City
Gallery. Evelyn Conlon, a young poet,
won the prize.

Further awards were given to
collections published by the Earl of
Seacliff Art Workshop: *Will Leadbeater*

Winter 2017

2008, *Jill Chan* 2009, *Robin Fry* 2010 and *Barry Southam* in 2011.

When ESAW went into hiatus, apart from a few publications in recent years, the prize also went into hiatus.

Last year saw the reinstatement of the award at Winter Readings 2016: Poetry Gees dedicated to the Bee Gees, with the Otago-based writer Jeanne Bernhardt being awarded the prize.]

Selina Tusitala Marsh appointed NZ Poet Laureate

PANZA would like to congratulate Dr Selina Tusitala Marsh on her recent appointment as New Zealand's Poet Laureate.

Donate to PANZA through PayPal

You can now become a friend of PANZA or donate cash to help us continue our work by going to <http://pukapukabooks.blogspot.com> and accessing the donate button – any donation will be acknowledged.

Recently received donations

PANZA kindly thanks these donators to the archive.

Mark Pirie – 10 titles.

About the Poetry Archive

Poetry rchive of New Zealand Aotearoa (PANZA)

PANZA contains

A unique Archive of NZ published poetry, with around five thousand titles from the 19th century to the present day. The Archive also contains photos and paintings of NZ poets, publisher's catalogues, poetry ephemera, posters, reproductions of book covers and other memorabilia related to NZ poetry and poetry performance.

Wanted

NZ poetry books (old & new)
Other NZ poetry items i.e. critical books on NZ poetry, anthologies of NZ poetry, poetry periodicals and broadsheets, poetry event programmes, posters and/or prints of NZ poets or their poetry books. DONT THROW OUT OLD NZ POETRY! SEND IT TO PANZA

PANZA will offer:

- Copies of NZ poetry books for private research and reading purposes.
 - Historical information for poets, writers, journalists, academics, researchers and independent scholars of NZ poetry.
 - Photocopying for private research purposes.
 - Books on NZ poetry and literary history, and CD-ROMs of NZ poetry and literature.
 - CDs of NZ poets reading their work.
- You can assist the preservation of NZ poetry by becoming one of the Friends of the Poetry Archive of New Zealand Aotearoa (PANZA).
If you'd like to become a friend or business sponsor of PANZA, please contact us.

Contact Details

Poetry Archive of NZ Aotearoa (PANZA)
1 Woburn Road, Northland, Wellington
Dr Niel Wright - Archivist
(04) 475 8042
Dr Michael O'Leary - Archivist

(04) 905 7978

email: pukapuka@paradise.net.nz

Visits welcome by appointment

Current PANZA Members:

Mark Pirie (HeadworX), Roger Steele (Steele Roberts Ltd), Michael O'Leary (Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop) and Niel Wright (Original Books).

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