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11 December 99

Bernard Carpinter
Lit Editor
THE DOMINION

Dear Bernard,
Herewith my piece for the Dom:

My guess is that by Christmas most readaholics will be talking about *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham, \$24.95, published by Fourth Estate. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction 1999 and also the Pen/Faulkner Award, we first came across this book last year when it was shortlisted for the Gay Men's Fiction section of the Lambda Literary Awards. *The Hours* intertwines the lives of three women through the prism of a single day - Virginia Woolf (in the suicidal throes of writing *Mrs Dalloway*), Laura Brown (reading it as a disenchanted '50's Californian wife) and Clarissa Vaughn (prepping up for a party for her friend, a poet, who is dying of AIDS). The writing is completely satisfying in a Woolf-esque way and I give it 16 out of 10. And yes, *Mrs Dalloway* is well worth a re-read.

The second most remarkable book I read this year was a novel by Scottish writer Jackie Kay called *Trumpet*, published by Picador \$24.95. Previously published as a poet, she won the 1998 Guardian Fiction Prize for this first novel. Based on the idea that poetry can be fiction and that the dead are larger than life, she tells the story of Joss Moody, Britain's legendary jazz trumpeter, who married and fostered a son and who upon death was revealed to be a woman.

It's hard to not carry on about *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver, \$29.95 Faber & Faber. Or Roddy Doyle's *A Star Called Henry* published by Jonathan Cape \$49.95. But I must mention *The Sandglass* by Romesh

Gunasekera, Granta \$21.95. Set in postwar Sri Lanka and postmodern London, and featuring 40 years of family schtuck - what more could we want from an author due here in March 2000 for New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week?

THE DOMINION

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Dominion Favourite Books of 1999 Feature

The Dominion is preparing a feature in which a dozen notable New Zealanders talk briefly about their favourite book (s) of 1999.

We would like to ask you to contribute to this feature please. The idea is that you nominate your favourite book of the year (or perhaps two or three books) and say why you liked it (them). This would be written in the first person, and the length would be say 50 to 90 words.

You could send your piece to us by fax (04 474 0220), e-mail to ida.cain@wnl.co.nz, or mail to The Dominion, P O Box 1297, Wellington.

Alternatively, you could call me for a chat and I could edit your comments into a suitable form. The best number to use would be 025 528 744.

Thank you. We hope to hear from you soon.

Bernard

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deadline 1 week.