

UNITY BOOKS

AT

**NEW ZEALAND POST
WRITERS AND READERS
WEEK 2008**

festival bookseller



Understatement: Every 'even-year' February, Unity Books goes into a particular kind of frenzy as we gear up for New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week. We get in touch with two people – our inner anarchist and our inner obsessive compulsive. The OCC wins by a nose except at shelving which remains compulsively idiosyncratic. Back stage we hear the buyer's thinly disguised howl "whaddaya mean, OS NDD maybe RUC?" We see incoming freight go over the speed limit with the pricing guns. In the back room, the loaded ping pong table sways menacingly. We wedge sideways between the bicycles and the summer decorations and the dangerously high flanks of books double-piled out from the walls (we're suggesting no floor to see here) to search and rescue the lost banners for our Festival shop at the Embassy Theatre. Management motormouth amplifies and the word cable suddenly means everything. Add the words Gig Box. And the word Quote. We swot Writers and Readers Week books, we debate, we fall in love with the work of authors we had maybe never heard of before November, and henceforth we all rave like the author's old friends (or agent).

Out on the shop floor normal bookerly business continues, but it is normal bookerly business with an edge. Even if it seems we are intent on finding you that quirky biography, we are redefining male and female multi-tasking – creating displays and flirting with the media, all the while right on the brink of that perfect adjective for our newsletter book reviews. See herein, from the heart.

Now finally it is upon us and welcome to all writers and readers! And welcome to our special New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week newsletter highlighting the authors who are having 'an hour with' as well as the two book launches. Naturally we wish we could review the work of all eighty-plus authors and chairpersons on stage across the region. But it was something to do with the above. Thank you to Dymocks who will handle the Downstage events, Paper Plus Books North City at Pataka, Paper Plus Books at The NewDowse, and the selected independent booksellers across NZ (see the map) who give New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week fantastic national profiling. And a huge thank you to the Writers and Readers Week Committee who created a programme that reaps the rewards of the diverse literary talent attending.

UNITY
BOOKS
Auckland

PARADOX
BOOKS
Auckland
CARSON'S
BOOKSHOP
Thames

BOOKS-A-PLenty
Tauranga
WRIGHTS
BOOKSHOP
Cambridge

MCLEODS
BOOKSELLERS
Rotorua
MUIRS
BOOKSHOP
Gisborne

WADSWORTH'S
BOOKCENTRE
New Plymouth
BRUCE MCKENZIE
BOOKSELLERS
Palmerston North

HEDLEYS
BOOKSHOP
Masterton

UNITY
BOOKS
Wellington
Festival
bookseller

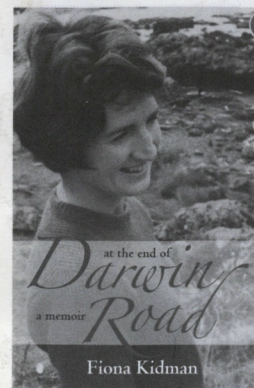
PAGE
&
BLACK
MORE
BOOKSELLERS
Nelson

ARTHUR'S PASS

UNIVERSITY
BOOKSHOP
CANTERBURY
Christchurch

CHAPTERS
& VERSES
Timaru

UNIVERSITY
BOOKSHOP
OTAGO
Dunedin

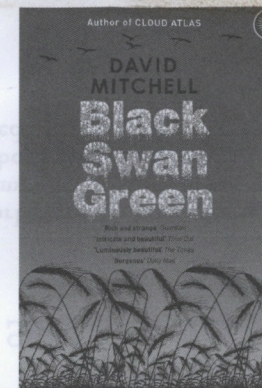


At the End of Darwin Road

FIONA KIDMAN
(Random House) pb \$35

This memoir explores Fiona Kidman's early life, notably in Kerikeri at the end of Darwin Road. From the distance of France where she spent time as a Katherine Mansfield Fellow,

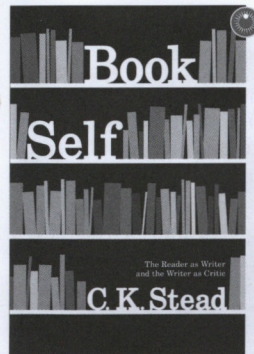
she reflects on early experiences, people and places which shaped her life. Kidman's story intersects with numerous New Zealand characters, which include friends, family and writers, and she describes how each worked their way into her fiction. This is a fascinating portrait of post-war New Zealand and the emerging literary scene of that period.



Black Swan Green

DAVID MITCHELL
(Sceptre) pb \$28

This truly mesmerising internal monologue of a 13 year old provincial English boy growing up in 1982, deftly blends a melancholy wistfulness with the anxiety of social humiliation and an astonishingly sharp sense of witty observation. Not only is Black Swan Green riddled with beautiful turns of phrase, it's also jam-packed with references to 80s popular culture, from Findus meals and The Human League to even, gasp, Men at Work.



Book Self: The Reader as Writer and the Writer as Critic

C K STEAD
(AUP) pb \$40

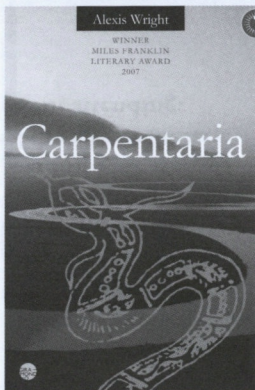
Multi-award-winning C K Stead has been a prolific producer and prolifically contentious literary critic for more than 40 years. In this book we get a wide-angled lens on Stead's observations and experience and his analytical muscle is to the fore. In a perfectly synergistic moment, when we first held the advance proof, the pages opened at his review for A Night at the Majestic by Richard Davenport-Hines.



Bring on the Apocalypse

GEORGE MONBIOT
(Atlantic) pb \$37

While not an inspirational writer in the traditional sense, Monbiot is doing more than most to inspire his fellow citizens to change the way they think about the world. This book covers everything from religion and money to power, war and the environment. He refuses to let anyone off the hook about war, global warming and other injustices of the prevailing world order. Bring on the Apocalypse is an urgent wake-up call we cannot afford to ignore.



Carpentaria

ALEXIS WRIGHT
(Giramondo) pb \$38

Set in the Gulf of Carpentaria, this book centres on an aboriginal community living in Pricklebush on the outskirts of a white-dominated mining town called

Desperance. These names are loaded,

and from them you can imagine the intricate power struggles in that scenario. What we might not have easily imagined is the fabulous array of characters, all utterly convincing. This is a big novel, packed with wisdom.

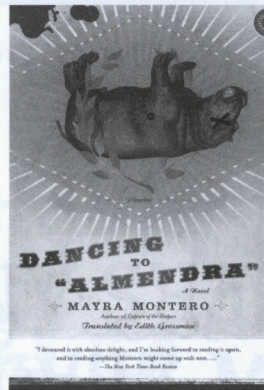


For Everyone Concerned and Other Stories

DAMIEN WILKINS
(VUP) pb \$30

This follow up to *The Fainter* is a collection of 'fables, satires, notes to self and short shorts.'

Occasionally highly comic, especially 'American Microphones' and 'Girls', it's the work of a discerning author with an inquisitive eye for human foible, and a generous sense of self-awareness and humour. His collecting-eye too is equally agile. Each small piece of fiction included hits a clear bell note that hangs far beyond each last sentence.

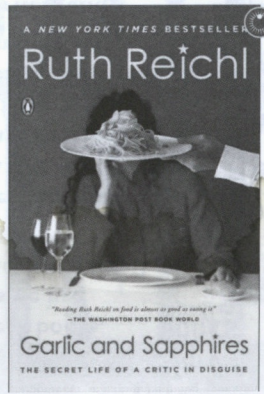


Dancing to Almendra

MAYRA MONTERO
(Picador) hb \$43/pb \$30

Havana, 1957. On the same day that the Mafia capo Umberto Anastasia is assassinated in a barber's chair in New York, a hippopotamus escapes from the zoo and is shot and

killed by its pursuers. Assigned to cover the zoo story, Joaquin Porrata, a young Cuban journalist, finds himself embroiled in the mysterious connections between the hippo's death and the mafioso's in this intoxicating story of murder, mobsters, and - gosh - love.



Garlic & Sapphires: The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise

RUTH REICHL
(Penguin) pb \$31

World-renowned food critic and editor-in-chief of *Gourmet* magazine,

Reichl recounts her experience in the epicurean world as she perfects the fine art of Undercover Gourmet Reconnaissance. *Garlic and Sapphires* is a wonderful character study as well as a sumptuous exploration of all the delicacies and eccentricities of high cuisine in New York. Reichl relates the joy and humour of her rarified world with anecdotes and recipes that will delight and tantalise even those who eat little but porridge.

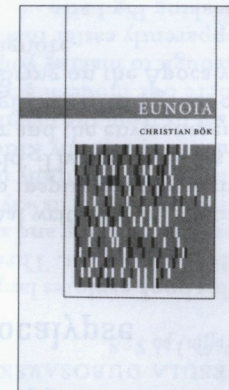


Dead Europe

CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS
(Vintage) pb \$27

The narrative follows the son of a Greek migrant as he returns to the Europe of his father's utopian stories. Instead he finds it a cultural wasteland; suffocating on modernity and

crippled by the weight of its own internecine history. *Dead Europe* contains broad and provocative themes - history, migration, homosexuality, blood-rite, poverty, refuge and anti-Semitism, to name but a few, all darkly challenging the reader. And while not for the faint-hearted, I've rarely read anything of such incandescent brilliance.

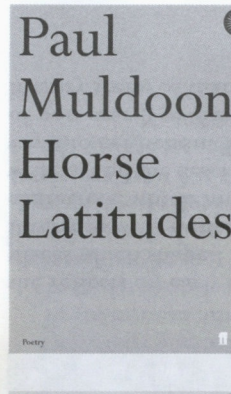


Eunoia

CHRISTIAN BÖK
(Coach House) pb \$35

A madcap craftsman grants fans ballads, paragraphs all A's. Ever the schemer, he peddles perfect sentences, replete when E's emerge. In insipid criticism, I mimic his simplistic gimmick, filling this print. Bök's

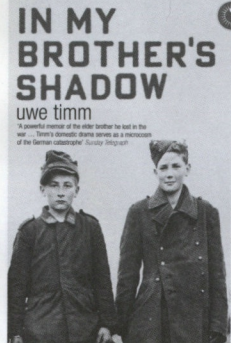
words (row on row of O's) comfort folks who swoon for books. But, um... stump'd.



Horse Latitudes

PAUL MULDOON
(Faber & Faber) hb \$35/pb \$30

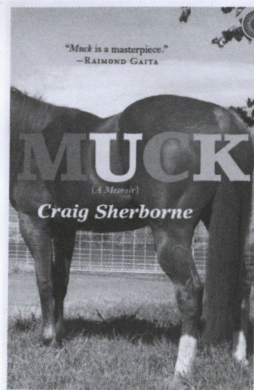
Muldoon started work on this collection of poems when the United States first infiltrated Iraq. The poems focus on battles: Horses and mules suffering in battle, and the battle of cancer victims. The principal organisation presents the 19 named battles intending to hint at a 20th not yet mentioned. Muldoon's method is brilliant and disconcerting. And readers will appreciate the light and playful approach he uses to lead them to intense discomfort.



In My Brother's Shadow

UWE TIMM
(Bloomsbury) pb \$28

Uwe Timm's brother, Karl-Heinz, is killed during WW2; he leaves behind a journal from which Timm draws upon to tell his family's story as they struggle with the loss of both their eldest son and their way of life. Karl-Heinz's death is paralleled with the ending of the pre-1945 German way of life.

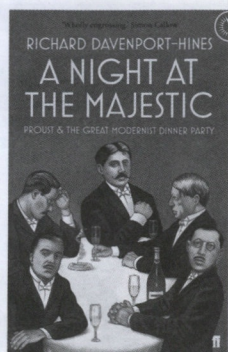


Muck

CRAIG SHERBORNE
(VUP) pb \$30

The comic intensities of Sherborne's family life, told with perfect touch and timing, almost belie the realism and compassion involved recalling his parents (who appear as wonderfully dysfunctional literary

grotesques), their dreams of aristocratic grandeur in rural NZ and the impact this had on his childhood. Sherborne charts how his parents inculcated his young self into their adult pretensions while not being afraid to relate his complicit, tragicomic intention to ascend to those same, warped heights. Wonderful writing combined with a strange car-crash of frail social sensibilities.

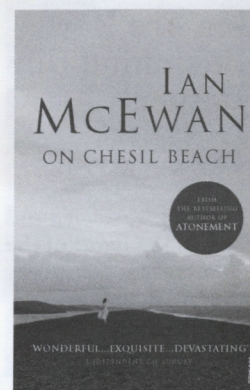


A Night at the Majestic: Proust & the Great Modernist Dinner Party of 1922

RICHARD
DAVENPORT-HINES
(Faber & Faber) pb \$33

Hosted by art-loving nobles Violet and Sydney

Schiff to celebrate the opening of Stravinsky's ballet *Le Renard*, the party at Paris's Majestic Hotel was a veritable who's who of Modernism: Picasso, Proust, Stravinsky, Diaghilev and James Joyce, who had just published *Ulysses*. Transporting the reader back into Modernist Paris with an intense and contagious vigour, Davenport-Hines utilises his strong investigative skills both to heighten the mystery surrounding the event, and to shine a light on it.

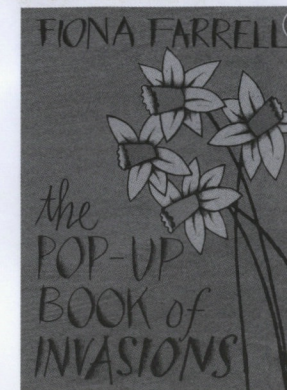


On Chesil Beach

IAN MCEWAN
(Cape) hb \$35
(Vintage) pb \$27

Shortlisted for the 2007 Man Booker, this novel is concentrated and tension-riddled. It focuses on a violinist and a history grad in 1959 on their wedding night at a

hotel on Chesil Beach. The tensions are galvanising and the back-stories build on this until the ultimate – almost fatalistic – outcome. McEwan is often described as the master of the defining moment; and this short and sorry tale, with all its class consciousness and repression, is a pitch perfect snapshot of the closed down times before Chuck Berry, psychedelia and free love.

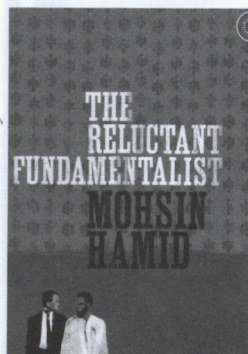


The Pop-Up Book of Invasions

FIONA FARRELL
(AUP) pb \$25

This wonderful new collection draws on the poet's experience in Ireland on the Rathcoola Writer's Residency; vividly evoking the

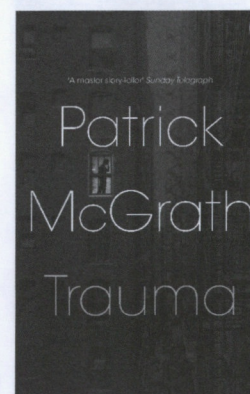
nation's landscape, history and mythology, while also making connections with home. The 'invasions' of the title refer to migrations past and present as Farrell adapts and transforms several ancient Irish texts, rewriting their stories for a contemporary world; the voluminous notes are a fascinating Irish education in themselves.



The Reluctant Fundamentalist

MOSHIN HAMID
(Hamish Hamilton) pb \$35.00

Changez, an upper-class Pakistani, appears to have achieved the immigrants' American Dream, from being crowned the top of his class at Princeton University to his elite lifestyle in New York. However, just when he seems to have achieved entry into the exclusive world of the American elite, the events of September 11 shatter his perfect lifestyle, turning him into an outcast overnight. Hamid has created a deceptively simple tale about the paranoia at the centre of Bush's crumbling America.



Trauma

PATRICK
MCGRATH
(Bloomsbury) pb \$38

This eagerly awaited novel from McGrath returns to familiar ground: psychological vice, oppressive maternal love, and damaged souls with repressed emotional scars. At its core is a New York

City psychiatrist helping to heal others in his professional life, while in his private life he struggles to keep hold of his own happiness. The introduction of a new lover, unfortunately, blurs the line between the two.

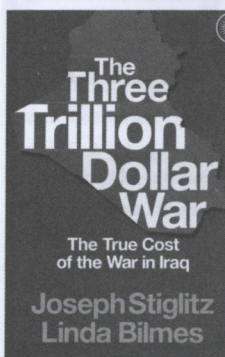


Two Little Boys

DUNCAN SARKIES
(Penguin) pb \$28

This book has got a lot of good bits. It's got bogans and penguins and toasted sandwiches and spotting knives. It's got a dead Norwegian backpacker, a bad friend called Deano and an awesome

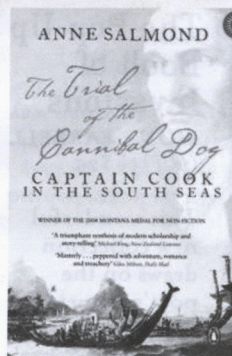
climax. It's got hundreds of hard-ons. It's got sea lions. It's got God. It's got a really cool lighthouse.



The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict

JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ & LINDA J. BILMES
(Allen Lane) pb \$37

The financial cost of the Iraq war has always been more elusive than the human cost but here Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Biles attempt to calculate an estimate. Taking many factors into account, the result is staggering. Given that Bush sees no end to the war, the effects on the global economy will be considerable. It's apparent that the US is not benefiting financially compared to it's involvement in WWII so perhaps the Republicans are hoping to be rewarded by the Rapture.

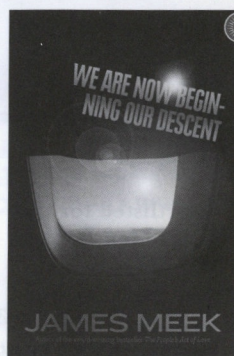


The Trial of the Cannibal Dog

DAME ANNE
SALMOND
(Penguin) pb \$40

In this book by New Zealand scholar Salmond, Cook's voyages take on a peculiar, dreamlike quality. Salmond's claim is that Cook was

far more affected by his exposure to the Polynesian world than historians have thought. This book is fascinating as an incomparable travelogue filled with amazing stories – the sexual paradise of Tahiti, the 'discovery' of Hawaii, Cook's close relations with Maori, and his tragic death on the beach in Hawaii.

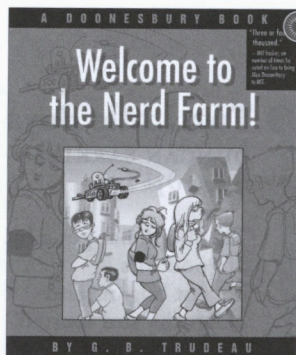


We Are Now Beginning Our Descent

JAMES MEEK
(Canongate) pb \$37

Like the world around him at the dawn of the twenty-first century, journalist Adam Kellas' life is showing distinct signs of cracking apart. In a

journey which goes from the mountains of Afghanistan to the elegant dinner tables of North London, the marshlands of the American South and, ultimately, to the darkest realms of the human imagination, Meek's novel spans continents and cultures. It is a timeless tale of folly and the pursuit of love, set against the incendiary politics of our time.



Welcome to the Nerd Farm! A Doonesbury Book

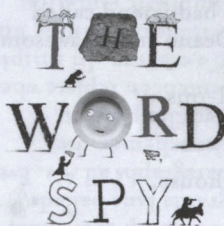
G. B. TRUDEAU
(Andrews McMeel) pb \$33

Trudeau offers another brilliant chronicle of the Doonesbury clan. The collapse of Chase and Mark's marriage, Uncle Duke's turn to the democratic side and Granny D's move from sunny Oklahoma to the urban jungle of downtown Seattle provides the framework for the book, as well as Alex's adventures at MIT (the "nerd farm" of the title). Trudeau proves that after over 35 years of writing, his humour and political acuteness are still sharp enough to appeal to a new generation of fans.

Ursula Dubosarsky

The Word Spy

URSULA DUBOSARSKY
(Puffin) pb \$28



Come and discover the secrets of the English language...
Illustrated by Tobhy Riddle

This book explores language with a fun and educational twist. Through listening to, speaking, reading and spying on words, The Word Spy weaves its way through the English language. Beautifully illustrated by fellow Australian, Tobhy Riddle, The Word Spy takes us from the origins of the alphabet to where our modern acronyms come from, through to making your own Palindromes (apparently easier than it sounds) and speaking Pig Latin.



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