

Dunedin Athenaeum & Mechanics' Institute

Newsletter

July 2025

Kia ora koutou,

In the next few newsletters, we'll take the opportunity for each of our committee to say 'hello' to you, our members, and introduce ourselves.

My name is Shef Rogers. I joined the Athenaeum Committee in April 2024 and became Treasurer soon afterward. I work to ensure that our finances remain sound and all of our bills are paid on time.

I emigrated to NZ in 1991 with my wife Sandra, to teach English literature and book history at the University of Otago. I retired last year, enabling me to devote time to the Athenaeum and to serve as Trustee for the Dunedin Public Libraries Heritage Foundation.

I also co-founded the University's Centre for the Book and remain a co-director for that Centre, which hosts events that explore the power of print in the world.

Shef Rogers

What's Happening

Coming up in August we have two exciting events happening here in the library.

Layers of Identity

Thursday 21st August
4.30pm-5.30pm

Come and Join OAR FM here in the library as they celebrate the next cohort of Layers of Identity, a creative writing and podcast project for Dunedin youth exploring their whakapapa, identity, and belonging.

Contributors will share their poems and personal essays about their connections to Ōtepoti Dunedin and beyond.

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#### The National Poetry Day

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August**  
5pm till 8pm.

**5pm** Youth Poetry reading and awards

**5.45** drinks and nibbles, poetry and music with Simon Eastwood, bass, & Motoko Kikkawa, violin

Readings from Brenda Finlayson, Claire Beynon, Emma Neale, Holly Fletcher, Jackson, John Gibb, Michelle Elvy, Richard Reeve, Robert Sullivan, Sam Montgomerie, Sandie Forsyth & Nicola Thorstensen.

There will be a raffle to win a bundle of books worth \$150.  
\$5 per ticket



#### Book Review

**The Vegetarian**  
**Han Kang**

Han Kang's novel *The Vegetarian* won the International Booker Prize in 2016. She is the first Asian woman and Korean to be a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, receiving this in 2024.



The story is based around Yeong-hye, a young married woman who one day decides to stop eating meat. Her husband is appalled that she is 'doing this to him', after all he married her based on the fact she was 'completely unremarkable'.

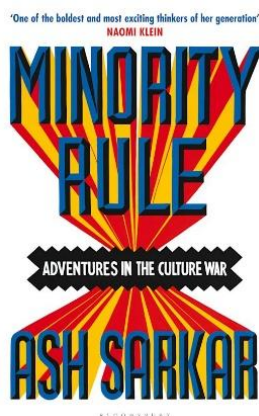
After getting Yeong-hye's family involved, things start to go downhill.

The story is divided into three parts. The first section is told through the perspective of Yeong-hye's husband and tells us how he copes with this new version of his wife. The second part is narrated from the brother-in-law, an unsuccessful artist, who has become obsessed with Yeong-hye. The third part is told through the Yeong-hye's sister, as she attempts to navigate her new reality.

As the plot moves forward things become increasingly fraught and rather disturbing. *The Vegetarian* is a tale about the aggressions aimed at those who step outside of the social norms.

The tension is so well crafted that I found I was holding my breath at times. The haunting imagery and intense reactions of those in Yeong-hye's life is something that will linger with the reader.

*Minority Rule* – Ash Sarkar



*Flesh* - David Szalay

*The Unlikely Doctor* -Timoti  
Te Moke

*The Bookshop Detectives:*  
*Tea & Cake & Death* -

Lousie and Gareth Ward

**Books Uncovered**

Listen in every second Saturday at  
12pm on 105.4 FM

To hear librarians Holly and Bella  
discuss what they have been reading.

You can listen back to previous  
shows here:

<https://oar.org.nz/shows/books-uncovered/>

**New Books at the Library**

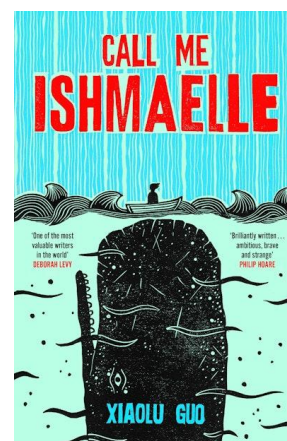
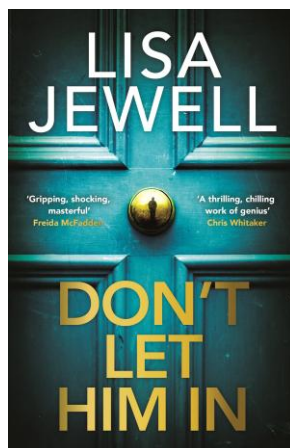
*Call Me Ishmaelle* - Xiaolu Guo

*Summer Island* – Kristin Hannah

*Enter Ghost* – Isabella Hammad

*Don't Let Him In* - Lisa Jewell

*Endling* – Maria Reva



Happy Reading!