

July 2026

Kia ora koutou,

It's been a bit quieter here this past month, I imagine that it has something to do with the weather!

We held our second writing workshop early this month and are now taking bookings for the workshop lead by Elianna Gray on the 19th of August.

If you would like to attend, please email: gray.ec@gmail.com

I have reorganised the New Zealand section, making way for more titles from our talented NZ writers. Some of the older titles have been moved to the mezzanine level, as has the Animal section.

I am out of the country for two months from Friday and will be back at the library in early October. Saskia Leek will be covering over my role here -who I'm sure many of you have already met.

In the meantime have a cosy winter and I look forward to seeing you all when I'm back.

Holly

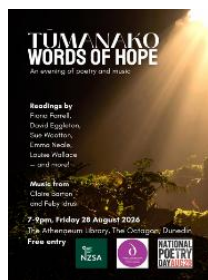
What's Happening

We are excited for The National Poetry Day this year, which will be celebrated here at the Athenaeum.

Friday 28th of August
7pm-9pm

This year will feature poets Fiona Farrell, David Eggleton, Sue Wootton, Emma Neale, Lousie Wallace Victor Billot, Megan Kitching, Susan Wardell, Rakibul Hasan Khan, Claire Beynon and more!

Music from Claire Barton and Feby Idrus.



Book Review

The Shadow of the Object Chloe Aridjis

The novel begins in Mexico City where Flora is visiting her mother and stepfather for summer. One day when waving goodbye to her parents, the elderly family dog, (they concluded) *sees a disembodied hand* and promptly sinks his teeth into it. This incident lands Flora into hospital where she meets Wilhelmina Blau, an older German woman who bedazzles her with stories. Wilhelmina has “one of the largest collections in the world... of pre cinema toys and instruments. You know, optical illusions”.



The second part of the novel is set in London, where Flora lives and works in a jewellery store polishing sliver. She lives on the top floor of a couple's house, which is frequented by spiders and cats. There is an air of the magical about this book. However, this element is never over the top or threatening to become magical realism. More it is gently showing the reader how the simplest things in life can embody a sense of wonder and brilliance, no matter how seemingly bleak.

I felt like the novel lost some of its pace about halfway through and became a little predictable. However, I enjoyed the links that were made between the stories we weave for ourselves verses the shadow of what our experiences might actually be. The author attempts something different with this book. On one level it is about the somewhat magical effect of meeting a stranger and what that meeting can lead to. On another level, it's about the space objects can occupy within our life and how sometimes these objects can cast a shadow on other aspects.

*Long listed for the Booker Prize.