

Port of Call: An International Poetry Series

This exciting series of high-profile international writers comes to the University of Liverpool in the spring. Contact Dr Sandeep Parmar, Department of English, University of Liverpool, for further information: sandeep.parmar@liv.ac.uk

Poets' biographies



Alvin Pang (b. 1972, Singapore) is a poet, writer, editor, anthologist, and translator. His poetry has been translated into over fifteen languages, and he has appeared in major festivals and anthologies worldwide. A Fellow of the University of Iowa's International Writing Program (2002), his publications include *Testing the Silence* (1997), *City of Rain* (2003), *What Gives Us Our Names* (2011) and *Waiting for the Barbarians* (forthcoming 2012, in Croatian translation). The anthologies he has curated include *No Other City: The Ethos Anthology of Urban Poetry* (2000); *Over There: Poems from Singapore and Australia* (co-edited with John Kinsella, 2008), and *Tumasik: Contemporary Writing from Singapore* (Autumn Hill: USA, 2009). He is a founding director of The Literary Centre – a non-profit initiative promoting interdisciplinary capacity, multilingual communication, and positive social change. His latest collection *When the Barbarians Arrive* has just been published by Arc.



James Byrne was born near London in 1977 and graduated from the MFA program at New York University, where he was on a Stein Scholarship ('Extraordinary International Scholar'). Byrne is the editor of *The Wolf*, an internationally renowned poetry magazine, which he co-founded in 2002. His second collection in the UK, *Blood/Sugar*, was published by Arc Publications in November 2009. In 2008, Byrne won Treci Trg poetry festival prize in Serbia. In 2009 a *Selected Poems: The Vanishing House* was published by Treci Trg (in a bilingual edition) in Belgrade. He is the co-editor of *Voice Recognition: 21 Poets for the 21st Century*, an anthology of poets under 35, published by Bloodaxe in 2009. He has just co-editing *Bones Will Crow: 15 Contemporary Burmese Poets* (Arc Publications, 2012). This will be the first anthology of Burmese poetry ever to be published in the West.

The poet John Kinsella has written: ‘James Byrne is a phenomenon and *Blood/Sugar* is astonishing. Byrne has a razor-sharp wit, an acute intellect and a superb facility with language. The poetry he writes is both culturally and intellectually ‘learned’, but also rhetorically *and* lyrically confident. He is a complete original.’

March 14th: 5-6pm

Singaporean poet Alvin Pang and British poet James Byrne



Valzhyna Mort, born in Minsk, Belarus, made her American debut in 2008 with the poetry collection *Factory of Tears* (Copper Canyon Press), co-translated by the husband-and-wife team of Elizabeth Oehlkers Wright and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Franz Wright. Her second book is *Collected Body* (Copper Canyon Press, 2012). Mort received the Crystal of Vilenica award in Slovenia in 2005 and the Burda Poetry Prize in Germany in 2008. In 2010, she received the Lannan Foundation Literary Fellowship and the Bess Hokin Prize from Poetry magazine. She has been a resident poet at Literarisches Colloquium in Berlin, Germany, and Internationales Haus der Autoren Graz, Austria. Her English translations of Eastern European poets have appeared in *New European Poets* (Graywolf Press, 2008).

There is an urgency and vitality to Mort's poems; the narrative moves within universal themes—lust, loneliness, the strangeness of god and familial love—while many poems question what language is and challenge the authority that delegates who has the right to speak and how. The *New Yorker* writes, "Mort strives to be an envoy for her native country, writing with almost alarming vociferousness about the struggle to establish a clear identity for Belarus and its language." *Library Journal* described Mort's vision as "visceral, wistful, bittersweet, and dark." Mort writes in Belarusian at a time when efforts are being made to re-establish the traditional language, after governmental attempts to absorb it into the Russian language have been relinquished. She reads her poems aloud in both Belarusian and English. She has the distinction of being the youngest person ever to be on the cover of *Poets & Writers* magazine. She is a Visiting Professor at Cornell University.



Ishion Hutchinson was born in Port Antonio, Jamaica and received his MFA in Poetry from New York University. His work has appeared in the *LA Review*, *Callaloo*, *Caribbean Review of Books*, *Poetry International* and the chapbook, *Bryan's Bay*. *Far District*, his first full-length collection, was published in 2010. It won The PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award for Poetry. He is Assistant Professor of English at Cornell University.

March 19th: 5-6pm

Belarussian poet Valzhyna Mort and Jamaican poet Ishion Hutchinson



Marilyn Hacker is the author of twelve books of poems, including *Names* (Norton, 2009), *Essays on Departure* (Carcanet, 2006) and *Desesperanto* (Norton, 2003). Her essay collection *Unauthorized Voices*, was published by the University of Michigan Press in the fall of 2010. Her eleven volumes of translations from the French include Marie Etienne's *King of a Hundred Horsemen* (Farrar Strauss and Giroux, 2008), which received the 2009 American PEN Award for Poetry in Translation, Vénus Khoury-Ghata's *Alphabets of Sand* (Carcanet, 2008) and Hédi Kaddour's *Treason* (Yale University Press, 2010). For her own work, she received the American PEN Voelcker Award for poetry in 2010 and an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She lives in Paris. Her translation of Rachida Madani's poems, *Tales of a Severed Head*, has just been published by Yale University Press.



Rachida Madani was born in Tangiers in 1951; she still lives there. *Contes d'une tête tranchée* was published in 2001 in Morocco by Editions Al-forkane; the French text was published in France in 2005 by Les Editions de le Différence. A volume of her poetry, *Tales of a Severed Head*, has just been published by Yale University Press and translated by Marilyn Hacker.

April 24th: 5-6pm

American poet Marilyn Hacker and Moroccan poet Rachida Madani



Priscila Uppal is a Canadian poet and fiction writer of South Asian descent. Born in Ottawa in 1974, she lives in Toronto. She has a PhD in English Literature and is a professor of Humanities and English at York University in Toronto. Her first UK poetry selection *Successful Tragedies: Poems 1998-2010* (Bloodaxe Books, 2010) draws on six collections of poetry published in Canada: *How to Draw Blood From a Stone* (1998), *Confessions of a Fertility Expert* (1999), *Pretending to Die* (2001), *Live Coverage* (2003), *Holocaust Dream* (with photographs by Daniel Ehrenworth, 2005), *Ontological Necessities* (2006) and *Traumatology* (2009). Her other books include the novels *The Divine Economy of Salvation* (2002) and *To Whom It May Concern* (2009), and the critical study *We Are What We Mourn: The Contemporary English-Canadian Elegy* (2009). She also edited the multilingual *Exile Book of Poetry in Translation: 20 Canadian Poets Take On the World* (2009). Her works have been translated into Croatian, Dutch, Greek, Korean, Latvian, and Italian, and *Ontological Necessities* was shortlisted for the prestigious \$50,000 Griffin Prize for Excellence in Poetry.



Tishani Doshi is an award-winning poet and dancer of Welsh-Gujarati descent. She was born in Madras, India, in 1975. She received her masters in writing from the Johns Hopkins University in America and worked in London in advertising before returning to India in 2001 to work with the choreographer Chandralekha, with whom she performed on many international stages. An avid traveller, she has been trekking in the Ethiopian Bale Mountains, visited Antarctica with a group of high-school students, and documented the largest transvestite gathering in Koovakam. She has written about her travels in newspapers such as the *Guardian*, *International Herald Tribune*, *The Hindu* and the *Financial Times*. She won an Eric Gregory Award for her poetry in 2001. In 2006, she won the All-India Poetry Competition, and her debut collection, *Countries of the Body* (Aark Arts), won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection. Her first novel, *The Pleasure Seekers* (Bloomsbury, 2010), was longlisted for the Orange Prize and shortlisted for the Hindu Fiction Award, and has been translated into several languages. Her second poetry collection, *Everything Begins Elsewhere*, is published by Bloodaxe Books in 2012. Tishani Doshi divides her time between Cheyyur, Tamil Nadu, and elsewhere. She frequently moonlights as a dancer.

May 8th: 5-6pm

Canadian poet Priscila Uppal with read with British-Indian poet Tishani Doshi