

From *As the Verb Tenses*  
Otago University Press, 2016  
otago.ac.nz/press/books

In the afternoon, peasant women set up shop  
beside their street-side fish smokers.  
Look, she said, from here you can see  
where the mountain range begins...  
And I wondered: what's the use  
being a tourist in a place like this?  
It's like bathing in clothes,  
kissing a lover through a handkerchief.  
And now we go to eat something, she said,  
with more question than answer in her voice.  
At sunrise, a din of howls filled the valley  
with the canine sound for world.

Lake Baikal

Lynley Edmeades

Poems in Your Pocket 2016

Carry four NZ poets in your pocket to celebrate National Poetry Day 2016.

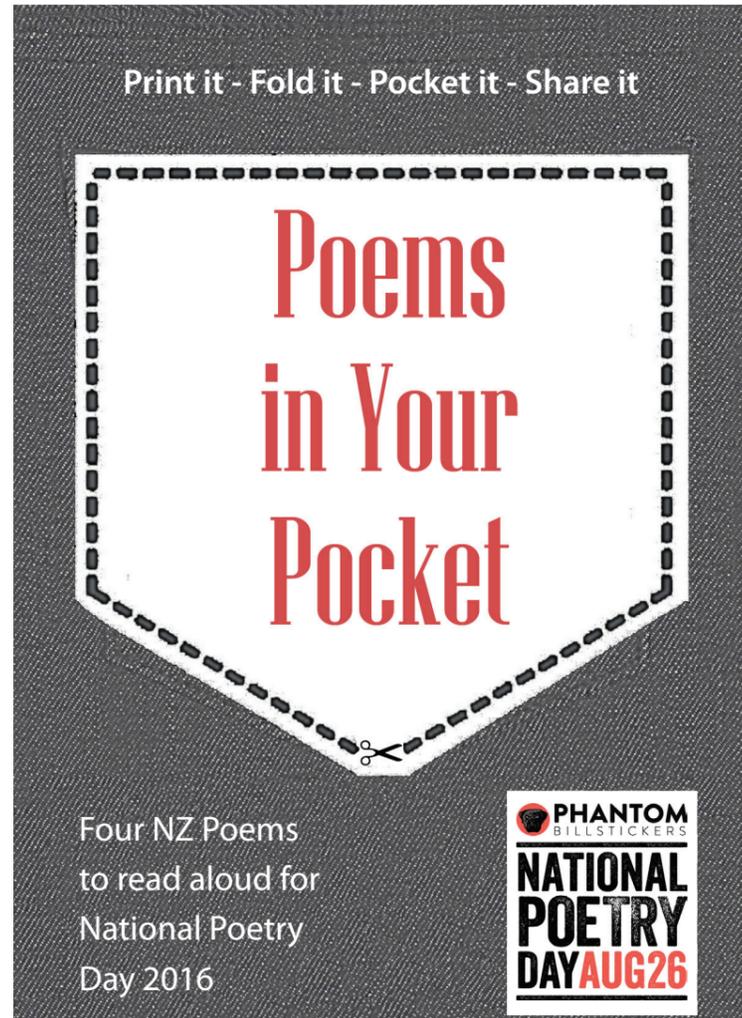
**Tusiata Avia** is an award-winning poet who has published three books of poetry.

**Johanna Aitchison's** second book, *Miss Dust*, was published in 2015 by Seraph Press.

**Simone Kaho** is a NZ poet with Tongan ancestry, part of a new generation of Pasifika voices.

**Lynley Edmeades's** poems have been published in NZ, Australia, the UK, and the USA.

Find the full calendar of events online at [nzbookawards.nz/national-poetry-day](http://nzbookawards.nz/national-poetry-day)



Four NZ Poems  
to read aloud for  
National Poetry  
Day 2016



From *Lucky Punch*  
Forthcoming from Anahera Press, Nov 2016  
anahera.co.nz

It was me who said this is the last time. You had  
already become my black star, hovering across  
the table, my words blowing through the blurry  
ring between us where it all came true. In the  
bar behind you, people were grey, see through.  
I still thought of you then as the first bird in the  
morning. Singing a sweet unrecognisable song,  
making me wonder who is singing. Is this how  
the thrush sounds? The blackbird? Could a  
sparrow sing like this? Lying there, not waking,  
just continuing to be awake. Hearing this joyous  
lilt and thinking about a long wooden post with  
a figure slumped at the bottom. An army salute  
rings out, young men's lips pressed to brass, their  
only imperfection a desire to smile when the song  
is done.

Song

Simone Kaho

Tusiata Avia

House

Ask the god to open the house of your chest  
wide enough that your enemy may enter

ask aitu: lie down with me  
my heart is open as a window

ask aitu: walk with me  
my heart is younger than the sun

pearl shell  
whale tooth  
human hair  
pounamu

ask aitu: shuck off your clothes  
at this edge of ocean and like a diver cut –

here is the place where I will keep you  
here is the place where I will keep you.

From *Fale Aitu | Spirit House*  
Victoria University Press, 2016  
vup.victoria.ac.nz/fale-aitu-spirit-house/

Johanna Aitchison

Jun

one of the coldest things i did in japan was walk across  
the finger boards of the green onion café and sit down  
on a bar stool and speak my lines (including one super-  
polite word which i read from the back of my hand)

one of the most linguistically difficult things i did in japan  
was to memorise how to say in japanese i am so sorry  
to hear about your son jun dying and here is 3000 yen  
for flowers for his grave

one of the saddest things i did in japan was teach to jun's photo  
on his empty desk i asked the students to count the students  
in the class the students said do we count jun.

From *Miss Dust*  
Seraph Press, 2015  
seraphpress.co.nz/miss-dust.html