



WRITERSWORLD Newsletter - Issue No. 84

Why shut poets out of the Man Booker Prize?

By: Anthony Haynes

Supposedly, poetry is in crisis (like farming, it always is) and in need of greater "support" (i.e. subsidies). "These are bleak times to be a new poet. At the major presses, the accountants are in charge and poetry is virtually banned . . . The few presses left are underfunded and understaffed." These words were spoken by the poet and academic David Morley in 2002. The same feeling persists today. But there were no good grounds for lament then, and neither are there any now.

Bloodaxe, Carcanet and Enitharmon collectively publish at the rate of three to four dozen titles a quarter. This year's offer includes new work by Seamus Heaney (Faber), Les Murray (Carcanet) and Geoffrey Hill (Penguin). There is also plenty of imaginative republishing, such as Faber's Poet to Poet series. Even if you read only poetry--and only new titles at that--you could hardly claim a lack of sustenance. A person who is tired of poetry titles published in 2006 must be tired of life.

This is a platinum age for poetry. A quarter of a century ago, narrative poetry seemed merely a quaint form of Victorian antique. The contributions since then of writers including Heaney, Murray, Derek Walcott, and Bernardine Evaristo have restored the form to greater vitality than in any previous eras, bar those of Richard II and Elizabeth I. Similarly, few eras can match our own for its wealth of translation--from languages as diverse as Anglo-Saxon (Heaney), Ancient Greek (Christopher Logue) and Urdu (Rukhsana Ahmad). And writers such as Patience Agbabi have produced in performance the most resonant oral poetry since the decline of the ballad.

Why then the welfare state mentality? Let the Arts Council, which regards reading as a creative act in its own right, switch all of its poetry subsidy from the producer to the reader--not least by replenishing public library collections and further supporting charities such as the Reading Agency.

There is one other constructive measure that would cost the taxpayer nothing. When in 2000, Douglas Dunn wrote a long narrative poem he chose a subject that has also inspired novelists, namely the defeat in 1905 of the Russian fleet by the Japanese. Yet *The Donkey's Ears* was ineligible for the Booker Prize because it was a poem rather than a novel. Why should authors be penalised for pressing their return buttons? Opening up the Man Booker to writers such as Heaney and Walcott would have a healthily bracing effect on their prose counterparts.

Anthony Haynes is a partner of The Professional and Higher Partnership.....**THE END**

FREE BLACKBERRY 8700

WRITERSWORLD have combined with the Interchange Group Plc to bring you the phenomenal offer of a free Blackberry 8700 Wireless Handheld™, the most amazing electronic communication device ever invented, which makes it easy to stay connected while on the go. You get uncompromising email, browsing and voice performance in one thin, stylish, lightweight handheld with a full QWERTY keyboard. Sadly this offer can only apply to United Kingdom residents. ([Please click here to contact our chosen Blackberry retailer](#))



WORDS TO THE WISE

Whether you use **WRITERSWORLD** or any other print-on-demand company insist that when your book is published you have a direct account with the printer. This will cost you nothing and you will end up with 100% of the royalties and the ability to purchase copies of your books at cost. Yes, with **WRITERSWORLD**, you get 100% of the royalties on sales of your book! You will get exactly the same distribution rights as the print-on-demand publisher and a monthly e-mail letting you know what your sales are. With respect, do not leave your book in the hands of any print-on-demand book publisher and be dependent on the publisher to know what your sales and royalties are and allow them to profit from the sales of your book. Also insist that your book's ISBN number is issued to you and your book's imprint page reflects you as being the publisher.

SUBSCRIPTIONS & LEGAL NOTICE

Subscriptions to the **WRITERSWORLD** Newsletter are free and please distribute it freely.

WRITERSWORLD - The leading book publisher in self-publishing, print on demand books and book reprints in the United Kingdom that also issues the books ISBN number in the author's name, pays the author 100% of the royalties and supplies the author with copies of their books at print cost.

www.writersworld.co.uk

www.writersworld.co.uk
We can publish your book.