



A young person's guide to the Wellington Writers Walk

Wellington waterfront treasure hunt

The challenge

Along the Wellington waterfront there are sculptures with words on them. The words are from poems and novels by New Zealand writers who lived, or still live, in Wellington. Your first challenge is to find the sculptures! Then, if you want to, you can fill in the missing bits of information in your booklet.

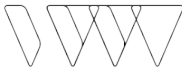
If there are any sculptures you can't spot, come back another time and look for them.



Look at the map on the next page and start your search.

- There are 24 sculptures altogether on the Walk
- There are four different designs, so they won't all look the same
- Choose which sculptures you want to look for
- Take turns reading the words on the sculptures aloud
- Choose which questions you want to answer
- You can find more information about the writers and sculptures on the Wellington Writers Walk website, wellingtonwriterswalk.co.nz

The map



The writers

The list of writers below is in approximate geographic order of the 24 sculptures along the waterfront. Tick them off as you find them.

☐ Elizabeth Knox

☐ Sam Hunt

☐ Eileen Duggan

☐ Bruce Mason

☐ Denis Glover

☐ Alistair Te Ariki Campbell

☐ Michael King

☐ Ben Ngaia

☐ Louis Johnson

☐ Robin Hyde

☐ Lauris Edmond

☐ James K Baxter

☐ Vincent O'Sullivan

☐ Katherine Mansfield

☐ Pat Lawlor

☐ Joy Cowley

☐ Maurice Gee

☐ James McNeish

☐ Patricia Grace

☐ Marilyn Duckworth

☐ Jack Lasenby

☐ Fiona Kidman

☐ Bill Manhire

☐ Barbara Anderson



Elizabeth Knox

Novelist, essayist (1959—)

“ The evening light concentrated, till the city and the topped-up trembling horizon beyond Pencarrow Head would begin to look like a seaport in someone’s lost paradise. ”

From ‘Provenance’ in *The Love School*, Victoria University Press, 2008

Where to find it

On the steps between Shed 13 and Michel Tuffery’s giant kina sculpture at Kumutoto Wharf.

This quotation talks about **the evening**. What time of day is it right now?

The author pretends the city looks like something else (*a seaport in someone’s lost paradise*). Look around and use your imagination. Can you see anything that would begin to look like something else?

Eileen Duggan

Poet (1894—1972)

“ My quiet morning hill
Stands like an altar drawn
Whereon hushed hands shall lay
The shining pyx of dawn.

With penitence and stir,
And drowsy flurry by,
The wind, a shamefaced serving-boy,
Comes running up the sky. ”

From 'The Acolyte' in *Selected Poems: Eileen Duggan*, ed. Peter Whiteford, Victoria University Press, 1994

Where to find it

Queens Wharf, near the East by West Ferries; down a flight of steps or view from the top.

There are some hard words in this poem. Circle any words you don't know the meaning of and look them up, now or later.

The poem compares the wind to a boy who has slept in and is running late. What or who else could you compare the wind to?

The wind _____
Comes running up the sky

Denis Glover

Typographer, publisher, boxer, sailor, satirist, poet (1912—1980)

“ *The harbour is an ironing board;
Flat iron tugs dash smoothing toward
Any shirt of a ship, any pillowslip
Of a freighter they decree
Must be ironed flat as washing from the sea.* ”

From ‘Wellington Harbour is a Laundry’ in *Come High Water*, Dunmore Press, 1977

Where to find it

Near Frank Kitts Park and the Wahine Memorial. Look over concrete seating to the rocks below.

Denis Glover wrote a series of poems comparing Wellington harbour to different things. In this poem, he compares the harbour to an ironing board. What do you think he meant? What did he compare the tugs and the ships to?

What does the harbour look like today? Circle the words that apply:

flat	bumpy	calm	choppy	gleaming	angry	
wild	frothy	dirty	glassy	stormy	blue	grey
green	sparkling	cold	still	rough	mirror-like	

Add some descriptive words of your own to your list.

Michael King

Writer, historian, biographer (1945—2004)

“ I baited my line, watched it sink, and waited with
exquisite anticipation for the pecking of mullet,
the sucking of trevally, or - best of all - the sudden
pull of kahawai or kingfish ”

From *Being Pakeha Now*, Penguin Books, 1999

Where to find it

On top of the wooden benches at western end of the two bridges over Whairepo Lagoon entrance.

Circle the names of the fish in the quotation above.

People sometimes go fishing around this spot. Can you see anyone fishing today?

Draw a fish, or draw someone fishing.

Louis Johnson

Poet, editor (1924—1988)

“ From Brooklyn hill, ours is a doll-size city

A formal structure of handpicked squares and bricks

Apprehensible as a child's construction

Signifying community ”

From 'Last View of Wellington' in *Fires and Patterns*, The Jacaranda Press, 1975

Where to find it

On wooden bench overlooking Whairepo Lagoon, between bridge and the steps next to the albatross sculpture.

Choose one of the buildings you can see from here and draw it using squares and brick shapes.

Lauris Edmond

Poet, writer (1924—2000)

“ It's true you can't live here by chance,
you have to do and be, not simply watch
or even describe. This is the city of action,
the world headquarters of the verb – ”

From 'The Active Voice' in *Scenes from a Small City*, Daphne Brasell Associates Press, 1994

Where to find it

On the wall at the harbour end of the City to Sea Bridge.

This famous poem describes Wellington as *the city of action and the world headquarters of the verb*.

What do you think the poet meant by that?

What other words or ideas would fit into those lines about Wellington (or about your home, if you come from somewhere else):

This is the city of _____

The world headquarters of _____

Vincent O’Sullivan

Poet, novelist, playwright, editor, scholar (1937—2024)

“ Then it’s Wellington we’re coming to!

It’s time, she says, it’s time surely

for us to change lanes, change tongues,

they speak so differently down here. ”

From ‘Driving South with Lucy to the Big Blue Hills’ in *Seeing You Asked*, Victoria University Press, 1998

Where to find it

On the wall overlooking Whairepo Lagoon, opposite the rowing club.

What time is it right now? _____

Tell the people you’re with:

It’s time to _____

Pat Lawlor

Journalist, novelist, poet, historian (1893—1979)

“ And now, as I grow in years,
I feel at times like an old
violin played on by a master
hand. You, dear city, are
the maestro drawing the bow
over the sensibilities of my
mind, echoing the music
of my days. ”

From *Old Wellington Days*, Whitcombe & Tombs, 1959

Where to find it

Sheltered in an alcove under the steps leading up to the City to Sea Bridge.

Pat Lawlor wrote books about his memories of Wellington from when he was a child.

What is one of your earliest memories?

Maurice Gee

Novelist, children's writer (1931—2025)

“ Then out of the tunnel and
Wellington burst like a bomb.
It opened like a flower, was
lit up like a room, explained
itself exactly, became the
capital. ”

From *Going West*, Faber and Faber, 1992

Where to find it

On the lagoon side of The Boatshed, or view it from the bridge over Whairepo Lagoon entrance.

This quotation describes Wellington as a city of hills and tunnels. What tunnels have you been through? (In the city or further afield.)

Choose one of those tunnels and write a few lines or draw a picture about what you see when you come out of it

Patricia Grace

Novelist (1937—)

“ I love this city, the hills, the harbour, the
wind that blasts through it. I love
the life and pulse and activity, and the
warm decrepitude ... there's always an edge
here that one must walk which is sharp
and precarious, requiring vigilance ”

From *Cousins*, Penguin Books, 1992

Where to find it

Between bridge and Kupe sculpture, next to The Boatshed; down steps, or view it from the top.

What can you see around you when you stand and look at this sculpture?

What can you hear and smell?

Write your own piece about Wellington using the same pattern:

I love _____

I love _____

There's always _____

Jack Lasenby

Novelist, hunter, children's writer, spinner of yarns (1931 – 2019)

“ I want to live among people who believe in truth and freedom...

I want to discuss ideas... I want books...”

From *The Conjuror*, Oxford University Press, 1992

Where to find it

Set vertically on one end of the tall wooden pou outside the Wharewaka. The poles are taken down if there's an event on, but you might be able to find it lying horizontally nearby.

This quotation is fixed onto a wooden pole. Why does its (vertical) location suit the words?

Can you explain in your own words what the writer wants? Why do you think these things are so important to him?

What are some important things that you want now or in the future?

I want _____

I want _____

I want _____

Bill Manhire

Poet, short story writer, teacher (1946—)

“ I live at the edge

of the universe,

like everybody else. ”

From 'Milky Way Bar' in *Milky Way Bar*, Victoria University Press, 1991

Where to find it

By foot bridge near the Hikitia; slightly below ground level – no guard rails.

Titles are important! They can give a clue to what a poem or piece of writing is about. What does the title 'Milky Way Bar' make you think of?

What might it mean to live at the edge of the universe?

How many words are in this quotation? _____

How many lines? _____

How many syllables _____

Write a poem with the same number of lines or words or syllables, starting

I live _____

Sam Hunt

Poet, raconteur (1946—)

“ Tall buildings no bigger than blocks on the floor,
Wellington afloat on the harbour haze ...
You think of how most men spend their days
In offices as cramped as elevators ”

From 'Letter to Jerusalem 2' in *Collected Poems 1963 – 1980*, Penguin Books, 1980

Where to find it

Set onto a plinth above the water at the diving platform.

Sam Hunt is described as a *raconteur*. What do you think that is? Do you know anyone who could also be called a *raconteur*?

Count how many tall buildings you can see from here.

Bruce Mason

Playwright, actor, critic, fiction writer (1921 – 1982)

“ I ask that not only my city,
but all, give themselves
to the essence of our cult
– the ritual assembly of an
interested coterie in a space
where magic can be made
and miracles occur. ”

From *Theatre in 1981: Omens and Portents*, unpublished ms, Bruce Mason papers, JC Beaglehole Room, Victoria University of Wellington

Where to find it

Set into the ground beside Circa Theatre, facing the harbour.

Bruce Mason wrote plays and he describes a theatre as *a space where magic can be made and miracles occur*.

What is the name of the theatre behind this sculpture?

Alistair Te Ariki Campbell

Poet (1925–2009)

“ Blue rain from a clear sky.
Our world a cube of sunlight –
but to the south
the violet admonition
of thunder. ”

From 'Blue Rain' in *The Dark Lord of Savaiki: Collected Poems*, Hazard Press, 2003

Where to find it

Go down steps to walkway over the water, between Circa Theatre and the harbour, or view it from above.

What is the longest word in this quotation? _____

What do you guess it means from the words around it?

What other things can you think of that are violet?

Point to where *south* is from this sculpture.

Ben Ngaia

Educator, writer (1977—)

He Karakia mō Puanga mā Matariki

“ Tuia i runga, tuia i raro

Tuia te here tangata i a Nukuārangi

Ki a Puanga Kai Rau, ki a Matariki Ahunga Nui

Tō mata tini me pā ki roto, tō mata tini me pā ki waho

Kia horahia te kura, he kura nui, he kura roa

He kura takatū mai i a rongotaketake

Ka rongo te pō, ka rongo te ao

Ka rongo i te ahi kā roa i tūārangi te whakaeke nei

Ka whakaeke te haukai kia tina

Ka whakaeke te haukai kia toka

Ka whakaeke te haukai kia uru ora

Whiti, whano, tau mai te mouri

Haumi e! Hui e! Tāiki e! ”

‘He Karakia mō Puanga mā Matariki’ by Ben Ngaia (Te Āti Awa) was gifted to Wellington Writers Walk by Te Wharewaka o Pōneke

Where to find it

Set into the planted area between Te Papa and the waterfront promenade, with a view of the harbour and towards Matariki as it rises.

Read the karakia aloud.

Can you find the stars on the sculpture? These represent the stars of Matariki. How many stars can you count on the sculpture?

Robin Hyde

Poet, novelist, journalist, traveller (1906—1939)

“ Yet I think, having used my words as the kings used gold,
Ere we came by the rustling jest of the paper kings,
I who am overbold will be steadily bold,
In the counted tale of things. ”

From ‘Words’ in *Young Knowledge: The Poems of Robin Hyde*, ed. Michele Leggott, Auckland University Press, 2003

Where to find it

At one end of curved wooden seating on Te Papa Promenade, facing the harbour.

Robin Hyde was this writer’s pen name (a name she used for her books). Her real name was Iris Wilkinson.

What would you choose for a pen name?

James K. Baxter

Poet, playwright, postman, philosopher (1926—1972)

“ I saw the Maori Jesus
walking on Wellington Harbour.
He wore blue dungarees.
His beard and hair were long.
His breath smelt of mussels and paraoa.
When he smiled it looked like the dawn. ”

From ‘The Maori Jesus’ in *Collected Poems of James K Baxter*, Oxford University Press, 2003

Where to find it

Look over the fence into the pool beside Te Papa.

What does the *Māori Jesus* look like in the poem? What does his smile look like?

Where is the *Māori Jesus* walking in the poem? Why do you think the sculpture is placed where it is?

Katherine Mansfield

Writer, journalist, essayist, poet (1888—1923)

“ Their heads bent, their
legs just touching, they
stride like one eager
person through the town,
down the asphalt zigzag
where the fennel grows
wild ... the wind is so
strong that they have
to fight their way
through it, rocking like
two old drunkards. ”

From ‘The Wind Blows’ in *Bliss and Other Stories*, Penguin Books, 2001

Where to find it

Beside Te Papa, past Solace in the Wind (the “leaning man”) sculpture, facing the harbour.

How does the wind affect the way the people in the poem are walking?

What does the wind feel like today? Circle the words that apply:

gentle blustery rough cold whistling warm gusty
freezing kind soft stormy light calm howling wild

Add some descriptive words of your own to your list.

Joy Cowley

Novelist, children's writer (1936—)

“ Light dances on hills and office windows
and shakes its skirts over the harbour
in a wild fandango that attracts
the pale moths of yachts in droves. ”

From the poem 'After the Southerly' in *Writing from the Heart*, Storylines, 2010

Where to find it

Set into the ground beside the marina, behind Te Papa; look over the fence or walk down steps or ramp.

What does the writer say the light is doing?

Write your own four-line poem about what the light looks like over the harbour right now.

James McNeish

Novelist, playwright, biographer (1931 – 2016)

“ A ruffian wind is bliss, a blind man's
comfort station. When I get tired of walking
around it, I can always lean against it. ”

From *The Crime of Huey Dunstan*, Random House, 2010

Where to find it

Set into the decking at the far end of the bridge over Waitangi Stream.

This writer talks about the *ruffian wind*.

Can you think of another sculpture that mentions the wind?

Marilyn Duckworth

Novelist (1935—)

“ Then with the coming of darkness the
bay opened up beneath us, like a shell splashed
with beads of light. ”

From *A Barbarous Tongue*, Hutchinson, 1963

Where to find it

Past bridge over Waitangi Stream, on the side of three benches overlooking the marina.

This sculpture overlooks the marina.

How many boats can you count?

Do any of the boats have names (they might be written on the side of the boat)?
Write down any names of boats you can see.

If you had to name a boat, what would you call it?

Fiona Kidman

Novelist, short story writer, poet, teacher (1940—)

“ This town of ours kind of flattened
across the creases
of an imaginary map
a touch of parchment surrealism here
no wonder the lights
are wavering
all over the place
tonight
not a straight town at all. ”

From ‘Speaking with my Grandmothers’ in *Writing Wellington*, ed. Roger Robinson, Victoria University Press, 1999

Where to find it

On the sand at Freyberg Beach.

This poem refers to early maps of Wellington that weren't accurate because they were drawn up on the other side of the world.

Draw a map of the area around you. (Or if you prefer, draw a map of something else - your street, your suburb, your school, your town.)

Barbara Anderson

Novelist, short story writer (1926—2013)

“ Everything about it was
good. The tugging wind
rapped and cornered by
buildings, steep short
cuts bordered by Garden
Escapes, precipitous gullies
where throttling green
creepers blanketed the
trees beneath. ”

From 'The Girls' in *I Think We Should Go into the Jungle*, Victoria University Press, 1989

Where to find it

In small grassy park near Carlton Gore Rd, at Point Jerningham end of Oriental Parade.

This writer talks about *throttling green creepers* that blanket *the trees beneath*.

Can you think of another sculpture that mentions plants growing wild?

Ka rawe! Congratulations!

You've just taken part in the Wellington Writers Walk treasure hunt.



How many sculptures did you find? _____

Which sculpture was your favourite? _____

What did you like most about it (the words, the shape, where it is, or something else)?

We'd love to hear about your treasure hunt on the Walk! To get in touch with Wellington Writers Walk, email us at info.wellingtonwriterswalk@gmail.com. You can find more information about the Walk on our website, wellingtonwriterswalk.co.nz.