

The March Writer's Life



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East Cape is a wild place - but beautiful and inspiring. Great for writing!!



Hello everyone and welcome to the 'new look' Writer's Life for March 2010!

Yes, it's autumn down here in the Southern Hemisphere. Soon be time for heat pumps, fires in the old black stove and plenty of cat fights as Betsy and Little Boy scrap it out for prime position on the couch.

It's been a good summer here - lots of lovely swims at our local beach, a few kayak trips and a wonderful journey to the East Cape. Talk about inspiration! Wow.

The East Cape - wild and beautiful

Earlier this month I was invited by Script to Screen to attend a hui on the marae at Hicks Bay, East Cape, a most enriching experience. The hui touched upon aspects of Maori culture and the history of East Cape tribe Ngati Porou to see how we could use these traditions to help determine and fulfill the strategic visions of Script to Screen over the coming years.

I took an extra day or two to explore the East Cape, the first place in the world to see the sun of each new day.

And while we were there, some of us were treated to the premier showing of NZ Film maker Taika Waititi's latest film *Boy* on the marae at Waihau Bay where the film was shot. *Boy* is taking the box office by storm here and is a delightful story - don't miss it when it comes your way.

[Read more on my website about the trip!](#)



Encore is a wonderful after breast cancer exercise programme. For more information, visit the YWCA website.



Encore 'Takes a Bow' at Maygrove Village

My colleague Sharon and I are taking a YWCA Encore programme at Orewa's Maygrove Retirement Village through March/April.

And what is Encore? It is a gentle exercise programme for women who have experienced surgery for breast cancer. The eight-week course consists of floor and pool-based exercises to help restore mobility and flexibility that can be lost post-surgery and improve the work of our lymphatic system. Lymphoedema (swelling of the limbs when lymph nodes have been removed during breast cancer surgery) can be a problem for some women post surgery and the gentle exercises help prevent the condition and alleviate discomfort for those diagnosed with lymphoedema.

This is our third programme at Maygrove and the ongoing support of manager Jeanne and the residents has been wonderful. We always receive a warm welcome there. To read more about our current programme, [visit my Breast Cancer web page.](#)

The Book About Mom

Mom has settled in really well at the private facility. I visited her yesterday and when I arrived she was resting in bed because she'd had a hard afternoon at bingo. "I won two chocolate bars," she said and the caregivers say she's becoming quite the ace at the game. She also told me she'd made some nice friends and I notice that she now sits more often in the dining room, visiting and drinking tea with a group of other ladies.

One of Mom's most heartfelt wishes was to have kiwifruit margaritas so I asked the Charge Nurse if she was allowed some booze. "Of course!" the Nurse replied so this coming weekend we'll be organising a margarita party with music, booze and some dancing.

[Visit my Journal page to read more about Mom and progress with my latest book.](#)

On the work front ...

Off to a busy start this year with work for [Sweet Louise](#) and [Breast Cancer Support](#). Both organisations have expansion in their sights so there's plenty to do, updating websites and supporting strategic goals.

I've just received word from my contact at [Pink magazine](#) that she's on the look-out for breast cancer related stories for the



spring/summer issue. As we head into Autumn, that seems like such a long way away

I contribute to Pink every year because it is a great way to publicise breast cancer organisations, progress on issues and of course tell the stories of those who have experienced a breast cancer diagnosis.

This year I've again been asked to cover [The Writer's Room](#) events for Script to Screen. Every month, STS hosts this free event for those interested in writing for film and television. All are welcome to attend, no matter where they are with their writing. It's a real buzzy, fun and entertaining hour where professional screenwriters, producers and directors participate in a panel discussion on a 'hot topic'. This month it's all about creative partnerships, working together to write a screenplay.

In February I wrote about ['Bombing at the Box Office'](#) and more of my work can be seen on The Writer's Room [discussion library](#).

Little Boy's Journal

And of course, last but not least,, here is Little Boy's Journal entry for March. He's sitting here at my elbow, biting and scratching his fleas, keen to share his latest news with you.

Little Boy joins Facebook

A price of fame is pressure to join Facebook. Can't help it that my murder mysteries are getting out there, people want more of me now. I'll share fleas, stories but I won't share my dinner.

Kept getting these messages into my email letterbox - 'So and so would like to be your friend' - and you know, writing is lonely and *I want friends*. Besides, stuck up here in this place with menapawsel (that means old and moody lady) Betsy-cat and this mad writer control-freak jane is enough to drive a handsome man bananas.

So I give in to the pressure of all the invitations, join Facebook, set up page. OK. Then I get all these 'So and so would like you to *confirm* them as a friend.' Aaargh meeeoow cannot handle, no way. Too much, too many friends all at once. They write on my wall, want me to write on theirs. Too much stress and mad writer-jane get madder with time I spend on her computer, writing on walls, adding photos, telling my Friends of my adventures. So had to abandon Facebook.

Little Boy not ready for price of fame yet but watch this space, read this Journal. My time is coming, bigger and better than ever. I sit on



my wooden pole in the garden, contemplate the world, trees, birds, ponder next move.

And last but not least - 'book of the month'!

Oscar and the Lady in Pink by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt (Atlantic Books, 2002)

Here's a little gem of a book. I've read it about four times now because when I visit the library, it's often perched on the top shelf and I can't walk by without picking it up and taking it home.

Oscar is ten, in hospital and no one - not his parents or his doctor - can tell him what he already knows. He is dying. He confides in Granny Rose, a 'lady in pink' visitor who suggests that he play a game and pretend that each of the following twelve days is a decade in his life. One day is equivalent to ten years and each evening Oscar writes a letter to God and tells Him of his adventures during that decade.

This is a short book but a funny, sensitive, poignant piece of writing that I love. As Oscar says:

"I tried to explain to my parents that life was a strange present. At first we overestimate it, this present: we think we've been given eternal life. Afterwards we underestimate it, we think it's rubbish' too short, we're almost prepared to chuck it away. In the end we realise it wasn't a present, just a loan. So then we try to deserve it. And I'm a hundred so I know what I'm talking about. The older we get the more likely we are to appreciate life. We have to refine our tastes, become artists. Any old fool can enjoy life at ten or twenty, but when you get to a hundred, when you can no longer move, you have to put your brains to work."

(pp 84-85, Oscar and the Lady in Pink, Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt)



And that's it for this issue.

Thank you for dropping in - see you next month!

