

The Edinburgh Makar 2005 - 2008 - Valerie Gillies

City of Edinburgh Council

2 June 2005

Purpose of report

- 1 To invite the Council to approve the appointment of Valerie Gillies as the Edinburgh Makar for 2005-08.

Main report

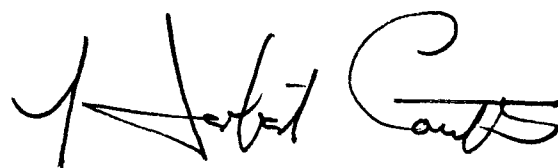
- 2 The post of Edinburgh Makar is a civic appointment made by the City Council. The writer is selected and nominated by representatives of the Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish PEN, The Saltire Society, the City of Literature organisation, The Writers' Museum, and the City Libraries. Eligible writers are required to be resident in, or have a strong connection with, the City of Edinburgh.
- 3 The Makar is required to:
 - write one poem each year on Edinburgh and/or aspects of life in the City
 - assist in the promotion of poetry throughout Edinburgh, in partnership with The Writers' Museum, City Libraries, Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish PEN, The Saltire Society and other literary organisations
 - select a weekly poem for publication on the Council's Intranet.
- 4 S/he has a postal address and access to office space at The Writers' Museum, and to administrative, design and marketing services within the Museums and Arts Division of the Culture and Leisure Department.
- 5 The writer nominated to succeed Stewart Conn as the Edinburgh Makar is Valerie Gillies, a highly respected poet who has had a close connection with the city since childhood. She is widely published and is an inspirational teacher of creative writing in schools, colleges and hospitals. She was recently awarded a Scottish Arts Council Creative Scotland award.

Financial Implications

- 6 The Edinburgh Makar is appointed in acknowledgement of his/her achievements in poetry. An honorarium of £1000 per year for three years is awarded.

Recommendations

- 7 It is recommended that the City Council approves the appointment of Valerie Gillies as the Edinburgh Makar, 2005-08.



Herbert Coutts
Director of Culture and Leisure

25:5:05

Appendices	Biography of Valerie Gillies and copy of her current CV.
Contact/tel	Elaine Greig, 0131 529 4064
Wards affected	City-wide
Background Papers	Report to the Executive of the Council, 28 August 2001 Report to the Full Council, 30 May 2002

Valerie Gillies: Biographical Details

Valerie Gillies, poet and teacher, was reared in Southern Scotland, and educated in Edinburgh and Mysore, India. She has written eight solo collections of poetry and contributed to many anthologies. Her most recent books are *Men and Beasts* (Luath 2000) and *The Lightning Tree* (Polygon 2002). Valerie has received a Creative Scotland Award 2005.

She has worked as a literary arts practitioner in hospitals with Artlink in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and leads workshops in schools for the Scottish Poetry Library.

Currently teaching creative writing at the university of Edinburgh, she is also editor of the first-ever Poetry Map of Scotland, which maps locations and living poets electronically, on www.spl.org.uk, the Scottish Poetry Library website.

Valerie Gillies

Curriculum Vitae 2004

FORMAL EDUCATION

- 1974 University of Edinburgh (Mlitt)
- 1972 Moray House College of Education (Secondary Schools Teaching Diploma)
- 1971 University of Mysore, South India (Commonwealth Scholarship)
- 1970 University of Edinburgh (MA Hons)

PUBLICATIONS: Collections of Poetry

- 2002 *The Lightning Tree*, Polygon
- 2000 *Men and Beasts*, with photographer Rebecca Marr, Luath Press
- 1998 *St Kilda Waulking Song*, artist's book with Will Maclean, Morning Star
- 1995 *The Ringing Rock*, Scottish Cultural Press
- 1992 *Poeti della Scozia Contemporanea*, Supernova, Venezia [translation]
- 1990 *The Jordanstone Folio*, with 12 artists, Tay Press
- 1990 *The Chanter's Tune*, Canongate
- 1989 *Tweed Journey*, Canongate
- 1987 *Leopardi: A Scottish Quair*, Edinburgh University Press [translation]
- 1984 *Bed of Stone*, Canongate
- 1977 *Each Bright Eye*, Canongate
- 1975 *Poetry Introduction 3*, Faber
- 1971 *Trio*, New Rivers Press, New York

Contributions to Anthologies, selected:

- 2005 (forthcoming) *A Book of Rivers*, Platform Press
- 2002 *Scottish Literature in the Twentieth Century*, Scottish Cultural Press
- 2000 *Love for Love and Atoms of Delight*, pocketbooks
- 2000 *The Jewel Box CD*, Scottish Poetry Library
- 1998 *Homage to the Carmina Gadelica*, Morning Star
- 1992 *The Faber Book of Twentieth Century*, Scottish Poetry

EXHIBITIONS (cross-media work with visual artists)

- 2001 *Galloway Forest Park*, text in bronze, with sculptor Jake Harvey
- 2001 *Coldstream*, text on bronze handrail, with sculptor Denys Mitchell
- 2001 *Ballad of Leaderfoot*, text on stone seats, letter-carver Gary Fay
- 2000 *Men and Beasts* exhibition with Rebecca Marr, art.tm gallery, Inverness
- 1999 *Scotland to the World to Scotland*, National Museums of Scotland
- 1998 *Pax Romana*, City Art Centre, Edinburgh Festival exhibition
- 1998 *Tweed's Well*, panel text on site, with sculptor Fly Freeman, Scottish Borders
- 1998 *Poems by Prescription*, Artlink Hospital Galleries, Edinburgh and Lothians
- 1996 *A Night of Islands*, with Will Maclean, Contemporary British Art in Print, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, and Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven
- 1993 *River Spirits*, touring Dundee, Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh
- 1990 *Tweed Journey*, with Shelley Klein and Savourna Stevenson, Scottish Borders

POETRY IN PERFORMANCE

Galway International Festival of Literature, Ireland; Beaumaris Arts Festival, Wales; Orkney Folk Festival; Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival; Northlands Festival; Moray Festival; Borders Festival; Edinburgh Zoo.

Recent performances, selected

- 2004 Biggar Poetry Festival
- 2003 *Farm Poetry* commission for 'Grassroots' BBC Radio Scotland
- 2002 Commission for Trimontium Trust, Melrose
- 2002 Edinburgh Book Festival
- 2001 Renga platform *hokku* (master) poet, Scottish Poetry Library and Edinburgh Book Festival
- 2000 Land of Creativity, Borders Poetry Festival
- 1999 Scottish and Italian Poetry Festival, Istituto Italiano
- 1999 Poetry on Tour, the Northlands Festival (Scottish Nordic Festival)
- 1997 Script for film by Jan Svankmajer, with John Hegley, Edinburgh Book Festival
- 1997 Limerick Workshop, in performance with Garrison Keillor, Edinburgh Book Festival
- 1998 *Singing the Storm*, Savourna Stevenson and June Tabor, (Cooking Vinyl CD 102)

RESIDENCIES

- 1995 – 1998 The University of Edinburgh
- 1992 – 1994 East Lothian and Midlothian District Libraries
- 1988 – 1990 Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, and Dundee District Libraries

Arts in Healthcare

- 2004 Developing a *Writing for Wellbeing* course at Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre, Edinburgh
- 2003 – 2004 *Healing and the Literary Arts* residential leadership training seminars, Lapidus
- 1994 – 2002 Senior Hospital Arts Worker with Artlink, Edinburgh and Lothians

Arts in Education

- 2004 Editor, first electronic Poetry map of Scotland for SPL website
- 2003 ongoing Creative Writing Fellow, Dept Eng Lit. University of Edinburgh
- 2001 'Poetry and Photography' course for teenagers in Scottish Poetry Library
- 2000 Poetry film, with D fi foe Animation and North Berwick primary school, for *Poetry International 2000* at the South Bank Centre.
- 1988 – 1999 Writing workshops in schools, museums, libraries and art galleries
- 1978 – 1988 Writer in Schools throughout Scotland

Scriptwriting

- 1990 – 1993 Scriptwriter for BBC Schools Radio and Television (Caledonians and Romans, BBC2)

AWARDS

- 2003 Honoured by Sri Chinmoy, Peace mediation of the United Nations
- 2002 onwards, Poet Laureate for life to Trimontium Trust, Scottish Borders
- Eric Gregory Award for Poetry
- Three Scottish Arts Council Book Awards
- 2005 Creative Scotland Award

WORK IN PROGRESS

- New and Selected Poems*, forthcoming 2007
- The Spring Teller*, forthcoming 2006