

Writer in Residence 2007

Glenn Colquhoun



As Dr. Glenn Colquhoun speaks, the students of Ms Ros Ali's class gaze in wonder and listen with deep interest. It's not that he has movie star looks or an amazingly bright shirt; it's the words he speaks that hold them in awe. These words are of course his own.

Glenn is a well known New Zealand poet, and St Cuthbert's College is lucky enough to have him as a writer in residence. He made the trip up from Waikawa Beach on the Kapiti Coast, where he practices medicine, for a week in May.

During his time here he read to classes, helping students tap into their inner poets and was impressed by their enthusiasm.

"It has been great, it was really well organised and there was a clear plan of what to do. The staff has been really supportive and the girls are really easy to read to," says Glenn.

Born in Papakura in 1964, Glenn has published four books of poetry.

His first book, *The Art of Walking Upright*, won the Montana New Zealand Book Awards' Jessie Mackay Award for Best First Book of Poetry.

His third book, *Playing God*, won the 2003 Montana New Zealand Book Award for Poetry and Readers' Choice. Glenn won the Glenn Schaeffer Prize in Modern Letters in 2004. In 2006, *Playing God* was awarded a New Zealand Booksellers Platinum Award for selling 5000 copies.

After earning a degree in English from the University of Auckland and working as a builder, a cook and in emergency housing, Glenn at the age of 26, decided to become a doctor. It has only been during the last few years that writing has played more of a role in his life. "I guess I always wanted to be a writer, but I just never felt that it was a realistic dream. I thought it was like being an astronaut or a movie star. It wasn't until the last five or six years that I thought I could actually do this," says Glenn.

If you want to be a writer it's as easy as picking up a pen and giving it a go says Glenn. "Just write, that's what you have to do. Lots of people like the idea of being a writer, but it's just a matter of doing it. The more you write the more you will get to where you want to be with your writing. Scribble and keep scribbling until you get there," says Glenn. For someone who has achieved so much, Glenn is remarkably down to earth and laid back. He speaks with a calmness that gives you the impression you have only been listening for a few minutes, when in fact hours have slipped by.

