

Scottish Book Trust New Writers Awards Showcase

☒ Last Thursday The Reporter went to the [Scottish Book Trust](#)'s New Writers Award Showcase, celebrating the work of eight writers awarded money and mentors to support their work during 2010-11.

Since winning the award, four of the eight writers have had books published or will do later in the year, and all state that the support from the SBT has been instrumental in their success.

On arrival at the glamorous venue of SBT headquarters, the first person TER met was [Erika Anderson](#), one of the newest recipients of the award (for the 2011-12 session). "I've had a few short stories published in literary magazines you've probably never heard of," she laughs self-consciously, "but the aim now is to do a novel."

The award certainly helped one of Erika's predecessors, Edinburgh poet [Tracey S. Rosenberg](#), do just that. Her debut novel *The Girl in the Bunker* was a bestseller in Scotland last year and, as well as putting the finishing touches on her SBT-mentored collection of poetry, she has two other novels in the works at the moment. See [her blog](#) for details.

☒

Kenneth Stephen

Tracey's reading was followed by one by poet, journalist and founder of [Heartland PR](#) in Perthshire, [Kenneth Paul Stephen](#). He read in a voice so soft it embarrassed us to take photographs for fear of interrupting his flow, a theme Edinburgh-based writer [Carol Farrelly](#) continued as she read from her novel *This Starling Flock* in dramatic tones as the

audience listened in hushed silence.

Up next, [Thom Laycock](#) claimed, “I was going to read about the first law of thermodynamics but my mentor (Lilias Fraser of the [Scottish Poetry Library](#)) advised me that wherever you go you should try to get people to like you... So I’m going to read some love poems.”

[Maureen McLeod](#) was one of two writers to read in Gaelic, but was thoughtful enough to spend a good deal of time setting the scene for those of us who couldn’t understand her extract.

Her reading, about a trip to India, was very expressive, and as we picked out words we knew like ‘rickshaw’, ‘Ibrox’ and ‘Mickey Mouse’ we wondered how hard it would be to learn...



Maureen NicLeòid

[Stephen Barrett](#) read an extract from his novel centering around a character living with mental illness, whilst Wayne Price – “shortlisted for so many awards it’s now a running joke,” according to Writer Development Manager and compere Catrin Armstrong – explained he had planned to spend his time with the SBT writing stories set in South Wales – but ended up writing poetry instead.

It was all in the reading for [RA Martens](#), who launched into her short story, *The Women from Venus*, without much preamble and soon had the room laughing. Susan Kemp was similarly direct, going straight into a reading from her novel in progress, *The Evolution of Gracie Ford*. Kemp is a bit of a polymath, working as a [ceramicist](#) and co-director of the [Film in Public Space MSc](#) at Edinburgh University when she isn’t writing.

The evening was rounded off by a performance by multilingual poet [Sandy Jones](#). If there is anything sadder than a woman singing a tribute to her dead mother in a Gaelic, we’ve yet to

come across it.



Then it was time to schmooze and the Reporter bowed out gracefully, left with the impression these eight new voices in the Scottish literary scene will be wowing us for some time to come.

For further literary news and interviews from Ali, see her blog, 12books12months.com.