

PROVERSE HONG KONG

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Website: <http://www.proversepublishing.com>

AUGUST 2015 NEWSLETTER

You are receiving this Newsletter because you are a subscriber to our E-Newsletter; or because you have expressed interest in Proverse as a publisher of books and/or in entering for the annual international Proverse Prize for unpublished writing.

Once again, this Newsletter comes to all Proverse readers and writers wherever they may be. It comes also with our very best wishes for a delightful summer and autumn in 2015. We are all living in a world with place names which change by the day, by the week, by the month and by the year. Except for the long-term inhabitants, who now remembers The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Rhodesia, East-Germany, West Germany, West Yugoslavia, Leningrad, Burma and Borneo? Yet, “Plus ça change....”

Mention of changing place names has, perhaps, led inevitably to reminiscences about the past. I think, for example, about Francis Thomas, teacher, politician, Minister of Communication and Works (1955-1958) and school principal in Singapore. Adding to his other roles, he was also a prisoner of war. I think, also, of the excitement that prevailed in 1963 when Singapore joined Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah to form the Federation of Malaysia and the disappointment felt by some when Singapore left the Federation in 1965 to go it alone. Despite the pessimism that attended the break with the Federation, Singapore has flourished and is, at present, celebrating with pride its 50th anniversary as an independent country. Despite the assertions made by some recent commentators, Singapore – both before and after independence – was not a so-called “Third World” Country. Given the state it was in after the Japanese Occupation, Britain deserves praise for the successful efforts it made to restore the colony to its pre-war prosperity.

The year 2015 is a sort of anniversary in that seventy years have passed since the first two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. In his memoir, Francis Thomas remembers that he was in hospital as a prisoner of war in Japan when the bombs were dropped: “We heard rumours about it. Our Japanese guards and civilians were issued with sharpened bamboo sticks as tall as themselves, which we understood were for use in case of landing by American forces and a need for face-to-face fighting. ... One day, someone said, ‘For God’s sake come and look at this. It must have been a bloody great bomb.’ I saw an enormous mushroom rising up from beyond the horizon and swallowing up the sky. I said, ‘Don’t be a fool! There couldn’t be a bomb as big as that.’¹ But there was.

Thomas continued: “During our imprisonment, we often talked of the murderous revenge we could take on our Japanese conquerors. Now they were defeated and our time had come. An informal committee was formed which went round to every man to collect a donation – sugar, raisins, chocolate, which was used for a party for Japanese children whose homes had been destroyed.”²

Some revenge!

¹ Francis Thomas, *Memoirs of a Migrant*, Singapore, University Education Press, 1972, pp. 79-80.

² The same, p. 80.



NOTES FOR YOUR DIARY: COMING IN SEPTEMBER!

On Thursday, 24 September, at an event to be held at 7.00pm, at and kindly hosted by the La Puça bookshop, Andorra La Vella, Principality of Andorra, in the Pyrenees, the long-list for the seventh annual international Proverse Prize for unpublished writing will be announced.

As readers will know, the prize includes publication by Proverse Hong Kong and a cash prize which may be shared by at most two entries. Those books which have been winners / joint-winners of the Proverse Prize from 2009-2013 inclusive and already published by Proverse Hong Kong, will be on display. They are:

2009: *Instant Messages* by Laura Solomon
2009: *Mishpacha* by Rebecca Tomasis
2010: *The Misted Mirror* by Gillian Jones
2011: *Article 109* by Peter Gregoire
2011: *The Village in the Mountains* by David Diskin
2012: *A Shimmering Sea* by Sophronia Liu
2012: *Shadows in Deferment* by Birgit Linder
2013: *The Diplomat of Kashgar* by James McCarthy

Some important announcements will be made about changes in the regulations of the Prize, opening it up to more types of entry.

We are very pleased that we will be joined on this occasion by Catalan writer, David Gàlvez

SCHEDULED FUTURE EVENTS

We look forward to our next Hong Kong event, scheduled for Tuesday, 24 November 2015, when we will launch the works that won the Proverse Prize 2014: “The Layers Between”, a collection of essays and poems by Celia Claase, and “The Snow Bridge and Other Stories” by Philip Chatting.

DO JOIN US AT OUR COMING AND SCHEDULED FUTURE EVENTS IF YOU CAN!

EMAIL ADDRESS

We are continuing to send our E-Newsletter from our gmail address. Please do open and read it, just as you have been doing, when it is sent from proverse@netvigator.com.

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Proverse books are available from our Hong Kong-based distributor, The Chinese University Press, Shatin, NT, from their website, [www.chineseupress.com](http://www.chineseupress.com).

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