

# To Any Young Man Who Hears My Verses Read In A Lecture Room

When some cheese-headed ladder-climber reads

A poem of mine from the rostrum,

Don't listen. That girl in her jersey and beads,

Second row from the front, has the original nostrum

I blundered through nine hundred parties and ninety-eight pubs

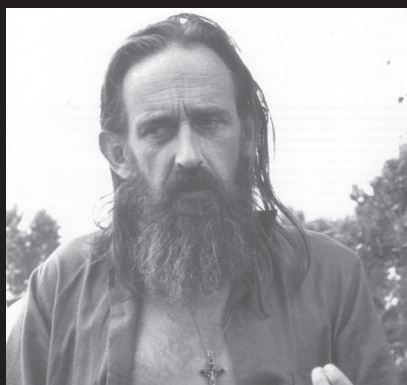
In search of. The words are a totem

Erected long after for scholars and yobs

Who'd make, if they could, a bicycle-seat of my scrotum.

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photo credit: Ans Westra



**James K. Baxter** was one of New Zealand's finest poets and most controversial figures, and was often at odds with a society unable to face its disturbing reflection in his work. As a dramatist, literary critic and social commentator, Baxter often judged New Zealand society harshly, yet always from the perspective of one intimately involved in the social process. Baxter was legendary for his appearance - barefoot and bearded - and for establishing a spiritual commune at Jerusalem, near Wanganui. Baxter died in 1972 and in a rare honour for a Pākehā he received a full Māori tangi, attended by hundreds of people from the many walks of life with which Baxter's intersected.  
(Biography by Paul Millar, from [www.bookcouncil.org.nz](http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz))



poetry@0800phantom.co.nz

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