

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER - 7.4 - OCTOBER, 2007

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

At a recent breakfast at the Tudor, held to raise money to support the Chaplain to the business community of Box Hill, the speaker was Larry Nemer, SVD (Divine Word Missionaries) whose topic was **PROPHETIC DIALOGUE: A New Way of Communicating**. Since we say in our brochure that poets raise a prophetic voice in the community I thought it worth sharing a few of his ideas.

He gave five definitions of the word Prophet:

1. One who listens to the Word of God as it comes to us from outside the christian sources and christian communities
2. One who announces the word of God to the community
3. One who identifies and denounces sinfulness, idolatry, and injustices
4. One who proclaims hope in God's faithfulness
5. One who is in dialogue with others by this action communicates God-in-Communion and promises the Kingdom of God.

I believe that our poetry is indeed prophetic in these ways, even in the last point, in that we are communicating with our readers and with each other. But I found it helpful to look at our work through this lens.

VALE VERA URBAN

It was with sorrow that we read of the death of Vera Urban, a much-loved member of the Wordsmiths, and the first individual poet to be published by Poetica Christi Press. I was deeply honoured by Vera's request to be the publisher of *Scenario*, a beautiful collection of finely crafted poetry of which we still have a few copies, thanks to the generosity of her executors who made a gift of 6 copies to Poetica Christi Press. Cath Barnard Janette Fernando & I were able to represent the Wordsmiths at her funeral service at the Uniting Church in Paring Rd Balwyn where she had worshipped for many years. The service was a joyful celebration of the life of a generous teacher and friend who enriched the lives of all she knew. It was a delight to hear a number of her poems read by the minister and by fellow poets, including Dianne Fahey.

20th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

On a more cheerful note it was a real joy to be able to celebrate our 20 years of meeting as a group at Glenfern (home of the Australian Poetry Centre) on September 7th. The Home of the Boyd family, Glenfern is now under the care of the National Trust. It

is a beautiful old building and the drawing room made a wonderful venue for our event. Frederika Bastecky played the viola to welcome us, setting the scene for an evening of poetry, good food and fellowship among the 50-60 people who attended.

Judith Rodriguez, our special guest for the evening, managed to arrive in spite of having spent the afternoon at the hospital with her daughter. She regaled us with a wonderful variety of poetry, some of which was translation of other's poetry, which to me is one of the highest forms of art. Eighteen Wordsmiths were there to celebrate the evening, share their work and to enjoy our birthday cake inscribed at Janette's direction with the words "20 years of words worth writing!" Six Wordsmiths who have been members for 17 years or more, who used to meet together when the venue was Oakleigh, were made Life Members and were invited to blow out the candles on the cake. All in all, a great evening to remember.



Life Members of the Wordsmiths

*Left to right : Coby Hill, Janette Fernando, Mary Macdonald, Jean Sietzema and Joy Chellew
(Absent : Janny Brouwer)*

While on the subject of birthdays I must record my thanks to all who spent time and effort and prayer to make **my 75th birthday** a joyful and wonderful celebration of fun and the weeks that followed a time of being buoyed up by love and prayer. I was grateful for all the cards and presents, though I had asked for none. (I would also like to say thank you to those who bring biscuits and cakes for the meetings and cheerfully take their turn at washing up and clearing away the mess we make.)

Though many of the Wordsmiths could not stay, some family members joined with those who could for a soup and dessert meal and games devised by Janette,

who had found me a red hat which she decorated with flowers and while wearing this I was presented with the Order of the Red Hat and commanded to read *When I am an Old Woman I shall wear purple...*



Quite a special part of the evening was the presentation of a POETREE –a pot containing a branch which was hung with poems either written or selected by the poets. These were then read to me. I was particularly delighted to notice how enthralled my 11 year old grand daughter was by *The Wind hover* by Gerard Manly Hopkins. I made sure I took it up next time I went to visit and read it to her again.

COMING EVENTS

It's been a delight to have so many attend our monthly Wordsmiths meetings – we have had between 12 and 21 at our meetings this year. The next meeting will not be the usual Saturday get-together, but will be a **Poetry Retreat at Millgrove this year, from November 9-11** Since our first weekend last year was such a success we have decided to make this an annual event (God willing). This year we will be up at Pallotti at Millgrove on the way to Warburton. Our Quiet Day, the Saturday, will be led by Cathy Altmann and our workshop led by Kathryn Hamann. Both of these people are Wordsmiths and we are blessed to have such people in our group. Further on in the Newsletter you will find a response slip to fill in about the weekend. Please get these back to Janette by October 31st as we have only one or two places left.

The next **reading at the Surrey Hills** Neighbourhood House will be on Wednesday, **November 14th and will feature John West** (who launched our book "Earth Works")

Our final **Wordsmiths meeting** for the year will be on **December 8th**. If you'd like to come for lunch together please bring a plate and be there at 1.00pm.

READING AT THE WHITEHORSE FESTIVAL

While I was away in the Grampians, five Wordsmiths – Kathryn Hamann, Joan Ray, Maree Silver, Lucy Bastecky and Janette Fernando read their work at Nunawading Civic Centre on October 7th.

POETICA CHRISTI PRESS

Work is continuing on our two children's books "Stick your neck out" by Leigh Hay and "The Huggle" by JMSD. We are considering making the original prayer poems book into a series of chap-books instead, with a series title *Poems for the Common Prayer-er*. **Some of these will be on the theme of Advent/Christmas and on Lent/Easter, so if you have poems or prayers on these themes you'd like to submit, please send them in to Janette at 42 Hawkins Rd, Montrose, 3765.**

OUR POETRY COMPETITION

This is the biggest and the best yet! So come on all of you. We need your entries for the *Reflections on Melbourne* competition. And you need to get them in NOW. **Oct 31st is the closing date.** Remember that it's not just the city of Melbourne, but also the suburbs and not just places, but the **people and events** that make up Melbourne.

CHRISTMAS PRESENT IDEAS

If you want to support PCP as well as buy a great gift for your friends and relatives, consider buying a book (or two). Use the order form attached, noting the special offer on some of the books : **two for \$15 and 3 for \$20.**

NEWS of MEMBERS

We welcome **Catherine Morelli** and **Keith Wray** (see his poem in Poets' Corner) who have joined us recently. It's also been great to see **Rebecca Maxwell** joining us in person this year.

Please pray for **Mary Macdonald** and **Jean Jeffery** who are finding life difficult at this stage and for **Ashley Harris** who has been diagnosed as having Multiple Sclerosis and is still (months later) waiting for a full assessment of his condition and a lumbar puncture in hospital.

Congratulations to **Janette Fernando** whose Rooku (Australian form of haiku) was chosen and will be appearing in the Moving Galleries Exhibition in Autumn 2008. Also to **Marlene Marburg** for winning the biennial competition run by the Society of Women Writers, Victoria. **Leigh Hay** received an Honourable Mention from the Veterans' Society for a poem of hers. Well done to **Phil Ilton** who was awarded the 2007 Alan Marshall Scholarship and whose pastiche he wrote of Shakespeare was accepted and filmed for the fringe festival.

As for our resident performance poet **Cameron Semmens** we'd like to encourage you all to the launch of his two new publications. The headline might read : **PROLIFIC PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE POET HAS POLY PRODUCT PRESENTATION PARTY**

Cam's Launchpalooza!

*It's a Poly Product Presentation Party!
A Mega Multi Merch Launch!
A Double Trouble Bubble of Festivity!*

Nov 30th 2007 7pm

The Australian Poetry Centre
"Glenfern", 417 Inkerman Rd, East St.Kilda

LAUNCH 1:

The Story of The Star, The Stable and The Saviour –

The Christmas story in nothing but S words.
The best kids' book for Christmas this year I reckon!

LAUNCH 2:

The Theologast –

Profound Wondering on The Sacred,
The Self and The Seemingly Certain
A nifty little desk-top calendar type thing
where you can flick to your favourite thought
and have it on display for all your friends.

PLUS

As well as Cameron performing his heart out:
Chevalet –
the double bass/spoken word duo comprising of Rod
Gear and Cameron Semmens.

A ridiculously entertaining evening it will be!

OTHER COMPETITIONS

Cameron is also putting together a book of
Everyday Prayers in everyday language
for everyday use. He'd like us to submit ours as well:

Prayers to stick on the kitchen cupboard
that stick in your mind
that help you stick closer to God
within the routines of everyday life.

Submission guidelines:

- Keep it short.
- Keep it simple
(as simple as possible but not simpler!).
- Keep it linked to the everyday.
- Keep it open for anyone to understand.

Submit to Cameron at cam@webcameron.com
by December 5th 2007.

A project sponsored by Searching For Oscar.
(Some Examples appear in Poets' Corner.)
Overland Judith Wright Poetry Competition -

Closing Nov 2nd 2007

Only poets who have not yet had a collection of work
commercially published are eligible. Max 3
unpublished poems. \$5 per entry. Major prize \$2000
plus other prizes.

www.overlandexpress.org/poetry_prizehtml

Blackened Billy Verse Competition – Closes Nov.30
Bush poem with an Australian theme. No word limit.
Entry \$5. Entry form from janmorris@northnet.com.au
VIC FAW Awards - Closing 30th Nov 2007 Anne
Elder Award for first book of poetry and John Shaw
Neilson Poetry Award for a poem 14-60 lines or a suite
of poems. blundell@vicnet.net.au and
www.writers.asn.au or FAW PO Box 973, Eltham,
3095

ABR Poetry Prize - Closing 15th Dec
Multiple poetry entries permitted. Prize \$3000.
Guidelines www.australianbookreview.com.au
Tom Collins Poetry Prize - Closing 31st December
FAWWA In memory of Australian author Joseph
Furphy (1843 - 1912). Max 30 line poem with \$5
entry. <http://www.fawwa.org.au> or email
admin@fawwa.org.au or phone 08 9384 4771
Or send a self-address stamped envelope to FAW WA,
PO Box 312, Cottesloe WA 6911

Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Lit Competition - Closing
14th Feb 2008

Poem to 30 lines, bush verse to 52 lines, short story to
3000 words.

www.dahlia.bendigo.net.au or SSAE to Ruth 99
Victoria St, Eaglehawk, Vic 3556

BLUE GIRAFFE 7 - Closing 29th Feb 2008
Up to 5 poems not previously in print journals or ezines
and not under consideration elsewhere. Email
petermacrow@hotmail.com or hard copy & floppy if
possible, SSAE, to 6/16 Osborne Street, Sandy Bay
TAS 7005

Positive Words Magazine is seeking submissions of
poetry, short story and articles. \$2.50 per entry.
Contact Sandra slynn@vic.australis.com.au or 466 Old
Melbourne Rd, Traralgon, Vic 3844 Include SSAE

DIARY OF EVENTS

Tuesday, October 30th : Last day to post your entries
to the PCP Poetry Competition.

Friday November 9th - Sunday, November 11th.

Poetry Retreat, Millgrove (see attached form)

Wednesday, November 14th 2-4pm. Reading at 157
Union Rd, Surrey Hills. Guest: John West. (entry \$5)

Friday, November 30th : Cameron Semmens' Poly
Product Presentation Party. Glenfern, 417 Inkerman
Rd, St. Kilda, 7pm.

Saturday, December 8th: Wordsmiths meeting at 493
Elgar Rd, 2-5pm. If coming for lunch, come at
1pm and please bring a plate.

*Newsletter compiled by Jean Sietzema, Janette
Fernando and Fee Sievers*

POETS' CORNER

Anticipant Wordsmith

Gifts differing
Reticence recedes
As kindness reigns
Warm rain of words
On fertile earth
Hope of poet's berth

© *Keith Wray*

A prayer to say while sweeping

As I find crumbs on the kitchen floor AGAIN!
Lord, I promise to let you help me be thankful
that you have provided OUR daily bread AGAIN!

A prayer for clipping toe nails

Lord, as I clip my toe may You clip my soul.
Cut me free from all that has grown
too long with age
and is in danger of becoming ingrown.
Lord, as I clip my toe, clip my soul.
Amen.

A prayer for when the next-door neighbours are arguing

Dear God,
Protect their hearts from being hurt
and seeking to hurt.
Help them see from a different perspective.
Help them respect the difference.
Help them love the difference
Let their difference be a blessing.
Amen.

© *Cameron Semmens*

WHY NOT?

for Jean Sietzema

When she is an old woman, she shall wear purple
just as she did in her youth (of seventy-five years.)
She'll wear a red hat that doesn't go, doesn't suit her

out of rage at those who prescribe grey,
who would harness her spirit
or dictate order, when she wants to fly.

She'll keep playing tennis, do aerobics and jump
at the chance to read a new poem
whether it's hers or a favourite author's.

Her brain will be scattered
with even more words worth
writing or reading or publishing.

And she will be still...
no, she will still be bold
over all

that burns in her belly
that jostles for justice
that serves her Saviour.

A woman of passion — fruit-full as ever,
planting new seeds
determined to grow.

© *Janette Fernando*

LOVE

It's
Kisses and quiet moments
A look across a crowded room
Buying flowers in a busy market
Feeling lost when you leave too soon

It's
Being able to say you're sorry
Forgiving the past – and letting go
It's loving the person inside
Finding ways to let them know

It's
seeing sunshine when rain is falling
Holding each other in the dark
Being there for one another
Knowing Nothing Can Keep You Apart

© *Sue Donnelly*

*If your membership dues are due, please use
Response slip below to send them in.*

RESPONSE SLIP – send to 42 Hawkins Rd, Montrose, 3765

I have enclosed my yearly membership dues (\$25) as a Wordsmith/Friend of *PCP*.

I cannot afford \$25 but enclose a donation.

I would like to support Poetica Christi Press by buying books (as follows)

DESCRIPTION	Price	Quantity	Total
An Embrace of Morning(Kathryn Hamann)	\$15		
Disarmed	\$15		
Earth Works	\$17.50		
Getting into the spirit * (Mary Macdonald)	\$10		
In Search of Joy (Joy Chellew)	\$13.50		
Life Dance*(Marj Kosky)	\$10		
Listen for the Green (Jennifer Langley-Kemp)	\$14		
Mother Lode	\$10		
My Brother, my sister, my ctry.	\$15		
My Father's Voice (Jean SD)	\$12		
On our reflection*	\$10		
Scenario (Vera Urban)	\$15		
Set Free*	\$10		
Sing to the king (Jean SD)	\$15		
Sing to the King – CD	\$12.50		
Songs of my world (Marie Louise Stephens)	\$8		
Source of Life*	\$10		
The Trapeze artist (Jean SD)	\$7.50		
Two Edged (Janette Fernando)	\$15		
Water of Life*	\$10		
POSTAGE & PACKING (\$2 for 1 book or \$3 for 2 or 3)			
TOTAL			

SPECIAL OFFER : Books marked * are on special : any 2 for \$15 or 3 for \$20

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE : _____ EMAIL: _____

Send to : *Poetica Christi Press, 42 Hawkins Rd, Montrose, 3765* Ph: 03 9736 1941 or 03 9890 5885
Email:poetica@iprimus.com.au or pcp@digisurf.com.au Website:www.poeticachristi.org.au