



# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

9.3 August, 2009

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

We have reached the exciting stage of actually having a soft covered digital proof copy of the book *Reflecting on Melbourne* in our hot little hands. You can see it if you come on Saturday. It really does have a classy look about it and I personally am thrilled to bits to see my dream of twenty years realised. I took my copy to church this morning and people are really impressed and interested to buy copies. We've also had a great response from many of the poets and artists in the book, who are fast ordering extra copies to give away as gifts to friends and family.



I want to record our thanks to Janette for the long and painstaking work she has put in to see that the book is a credit to our publishing house. And a special thanks to Roger her husband for coping with the stress it has occasioned.

## PAST EVENTS

Our **Wordsmiths meetings** have been well attended and we've enjoyed having different people leading the group. In May Leigh Hay introduced us to the poetry of Beverly Berry, Marlene Marburg shared Robert Frost with us in June and Joan Ray brought along a recording of *Under Milkwood* by Dylan Thomas to share with us in July.

We welcome **Anne Sartori** and **Beth Wunderlich** who have joined our group.

Our **Organ and Poetry concert** at the Augustine centre was well attended and we were able to donate over \$300 to the church. We also sold \$150 worth of books and received at least two orders for the Melbourne book. Roland Cropley delighted us with

his variety of pieces on the organ and we enjoyed one of Chopin's piano pieces in between readings by these Wordsmiths : Kathryn Hamann, Janette Fernando, Leigh Hay, Joan Ray, Ann Sartori and Jean Sietzema-Dickson. There was a good variety of poetry in what was presented and the audience was treated to a splendid supper by courtesy of the Wordsmiths and some of the Augustine congregation.

However, the **Torquay Poetry Festival** was another story. On the weekend of the shortest day Maree Silver, Joan Ray and I took ourselves down to Torquay for their second Festival. Though we had hoped to get off early in the afternoon it was not possible so by the time we arrived it was well and truly dark and Maree and I had quite a tour of the town before we finally located the Torquay Holiday Resort where we stayed in a cabin.

We were variously down on the program for Saturday in the morning or the afternoon. No two programmes seemed to be the same. We went to the school in the morning and enjoyed a story telling presentation by Ceridwyn Gordon. We came back in the afternoon to lead a poetry workshop for which we had no takers. Nor did we for our reading time either so we read to each other and Debbie who was the compere. Afterwards we went to hear Brendan Ryan, whose straightforward poetry we very much enjoyed. But even here in the main meeting place there were very few attendees.

In the evening we went to the dinner and thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment put on by the Torquay theatre group as they gave us short excerpts of love scenes from several plays. I managed to persuade John Adam to let me read a poem from the Melbourne book and thereafter spent my time going from table to table turning pages so those there could see. It elicited some interest and we may get and order or two though nothing was firmed up.

On the Sunday morning we joined the Poetry tour by bus to several scenic locations. On this trip Maree and I were the only people other than the driver and her daughter so we spent our time reading in and to the open air with only one person as audience at one reading. All in all it was an enjoyable weekend but as far as getting our work out there it was almost a dead loss and as we had to

pay for our accommodation and meals we think it is probably not worth pursuing again.

## FUTURE EVENTS

Our August meeting will be on **August 8<sup>th</sup>** and though I'll be away in Brisbane at that time, it will still be at my place with Maree and Janette happy to welcome you. **Sue Donnelly** will be leading the group for us.

For our September meeting on **September 12<sup>th</sup>**, we're excited about having a **Poetry Workshop** led by **Cameron Semmens**, our most experienced performance poet. The October meeting will be on **October 10<sup>th</sup>**, led by **Carolyn Vimpani**. Here's the roster for the next few months:

Month	Leader	Afternoon tea
August	Sue	Anne, Carolyn, Paige
September	Cameron	Cecily, Elaine, Rebecca
October	Carolyn	Maree N, Joan, Beth

The Victorian Writers Centre presents **Getting Your Poetry Out There on Thursday 6 August**, 6:30PM - 8:00PM Join Grant Caldwell (Blue Dog Press) and guest editors from *Five Islands Press* & *Going Down Swinging* who will provide information about their publications and an overview of the submission and selection process, target readership and distribution. Venue: The Salon, 2nd Floor Nicholas building, 37 Swanston St. Melbourne. Cost \$5 VWC members, or \$7. To book, phone 9654 9068.

Don't miss the next **POETRY DAY** at Wellspring on Tuesday, **August 21<sup>st</sup>**, at 10 Y St, Ashburton. 9.45am-3.15pm. with Barbara Rautman. The cost is \$15(members) or \$20. The poems will be by Mary Oliver and they will help us recognise, discover and reflect on the luminous sprawl of gifts in our "ordinary" lives. There will be group discussion of the poems and time for individual reflection/ writing/art. As one who has attended several of these days led by Barbara I can highly recommend it as an experience not to be missed. Phone 9885 0277 to book.

For National Poetry Week, we plan to have a Wordsmiths Poetry Reading at Box Hill Library on **Friday evening, September 4<sup>th</sup>**. Please let us know if you'd like to be one of our readers.

## POETICA CHRISTI PRESS

As mentioned earlier, we now have a proof-copy of the book and we've had many positive comments

about it. We now expect to launch the book in October, to give us time to raise more funds. So far, we have \$21,000 in the bank, mainly from people sponsoring a page, or from pre-orders, but we'd like another \$10,000 before we send the book to press, so that we can be sure we'll cover our costs, especially for printing.

If we are to sell the books through book-shops, we've been advised that \$75 or \$80 would be a reasonable RRP for a book like this, especially if we make it a limited edition. Given that bookshops take 40% of the price of the book, we'd have to charge that amount to cover our cost price. However, since we don't have a distributor (we explored all that, but would only get 31% of the RRP for ourselves!) we wouldn't be depending on a large number of sales from book-shops.

We feel the best way to sell the book would be direct to the public at the launch and at subsequent poetry readings (or Fine Words and Music evenings) and also via our website, through our on line distributor BookPod. We expect to sell the book at \$60 (direct from us) after the launch and for \$48 at the launch. **We are offering our newsletter readers a chance to buy the book at \$45 if you order before mid August;** after that you can still get it for \$48 up to the launch.

Last year's PCP Competition was on the theme of **New Beginnings** and it is hoped that we can get this book out by December. **If you would still like to contribute poems for this anthology, please get them to Janette by email: [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au)**

As for this year's competition, we have decided on the theme **Everyday Splendour**. For more information, see the attached Entry form.

## MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Cameron** and Sonya Semmens on the birth of their son Spencer Harry. He looks like he's either laughing or crying at one of his dad's poignant paternal poems!



Cameron is also to be congratulated on getting into the *Poetry Idol Final*, to be held at the Melbourne Writers Festival at 5.30pm on Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup> at the prestigious BMW Edge Theatre, Federation Square. Tickets are now on sale for the Final and Cameron's friends, family and supporters can book at the Writers Festival (\$18 plus booking fee. [www.mwf.com.au](http://www.mwf.com.au).) Cameron has also had two poems published on Stoop Magazine (online) [www.stoopmag.wordpress.com](http://www.stoopmag.wordpress.com) and his new book *23 Versions of Psalm 23 and Other Christian Resources*, is due out in a couple of months.

Another member, **Rebecca Maxwell**, has had her book "*BLIND and BUSY: Life Stories of People Who Use Braille*" published. To Celebrate the Bicentenary of Louis Braille's birth 49 people who use braille as part of living life fully and independently were interviewed. Congratulations to Rebecca, who is an inspiration to us all when she attends our meetings.

**Sondy Ward** has a new exhibition *-Deliberate -* an exhibition of drawings and prints, from Thurs 20th Aug - Wed 2nd September. Opening Thurs 20th Aug 7pm - 8.30pm, light refreshments provided. Also, meet the artist Sunday 30th Aug. 5pm - 7pm, Devonshire Tea provided [www.chapelonstationgallery.org.au](http://www.chapelonstationgallery.org.au) Chapel on Station Gallery is located in the Chapel area of the Box Hill Baptist Church, on the corner of Station St and Ellingworth Pde, Box Hill.

Please keep **Janette** in your prayers. After breaking her ankle in March, she ended up having a Deep Vein Thrombosis and although that has settled down now, she has been diagnosed with Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a chronic pain ailment in which tissue damage, inflammation and pain have spread from the original fracture to the rest of her foot and also her knee. This means she needs to do physiotherapy and hydrotherapy and has to keep wearing her 'moon-boot' until it heals, which may be anything from several months up to a year or even longer. Also remember **Joy Chellew**, who continues to have back pain and will see a surgeon about it soon.

It was great to have **Sharlee Young** visiting us from China. Please pray for her in her work there.

## COMPETITIONS

**Our own Poetica Christi Press Poetry Competition** is on again. Closing date : October 31<sup>st</sup>. Poems up to 50 lines on the theme *Everyday Splendour*. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$300, 2nd prize \$100, top 25

poems to be published in an anthology. Entries \$5 each or 3 for \$12. (See attached entry form)

**The Mornington Peninsula Prize** Closes September 30<sup>th</sup> Poems to 30 lines, open theme and style. 1st prize \$150. Entry fee \$5 Entry form from [peninsulafaw@bigpond.com](mailto:peninsulafaw@bigpond.com)

**Rolf Boldrewood Literary Awards** Closes September 18<sup>th</sup>. Poetry up to 80 lines with an Australian theme. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$600, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$300, 3<sup>rd</sup> \$150. Entries \$10 [www.mrl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mrl.nsw.gov.au)

**Positive Words** mini-comp. Closes 31<sup>st</sup> August. Poems 10 lines or less, including the word *tiger/s* at least once. Entry fee \$1.10 in stamps. Prize : six month subs to Positive Words magazine. [positivewordsmagazine@live.com.au](mailto:positivewordsmagazine@live.com.au)

**Lord Mayor's Creative Writing Awards.** Closes August 31<sup>st</sup>. A prize of \$1000 for each category : short story, poetry, three hour book (print or e-book) [www.melbournelibraryservice.com.au/whatson.php](http://www.melbournelibraryservice.com.au/whatson.php)

## DIARY OF EVENTS

**Thursday August 6th, 6.30-8pm:** [Getting Your Poetry Out There](#). Panel with *Blue Dog*, Five Islands Press & *Going Down Swinging* at the VWC, The Salon, 2nd Floor Nicholas building, 37 Swanston St. Melbourne. Cost \$5 members, or \$7. To book phone 9654 9068.

**Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>** : meeting of the Wordsmiths at 493 Elgar Rd, Mont Albert Nth, 1.45-5pm.

**Tuesday, August 21<sup>st</sup>** : Wellspring Poetry Day, 9.45am – 3.15pm *The Luminous sprawl of Gifts*, at 10 Y St, Ashburton. Ph: 98850277

**Melbourne Writers Festival** is on **August 21-30<sup>th</sup>** For programme, check [www.mwf.com.au](http://www.mwf.com.au).

**Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup> 7-8.30pm** Opening of Sondy Ward's art exhibition, Chapel on Station Gallery, Box Hill.

**Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 5,30pm- 7pm** : **Final of the Poetry Idol** at the Melbourne Writers Festival. Come along to support Cameron.

**Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>** : Wordsmiths Poetry Reading for National Poetry Week at Box Hill Library. Details to follow.

**Overload Poetry Festival** is on 4-13 September. A full programme is available at the website [www.overloadpoetry.org](http://www.overloadpoetry.org)

**Saturday, September 12th: Poetry Workshop** with Cameron Semmens at the Wordsmiths meeting at 493 Elgar Rd, Mont Albert Nth, 1.45-5pm.

**Saturday, October 10th:** meeting of the Wordsmiths at 493 Elgar Rd, Mont Albert Nth, 1.45-5pm

## POETS' CORNER



### Dawn Sky

Sheer sapphire  
the edges of ice floes  
caught in the slow pause  
of earth turn

but Earth is not held  
by the stasis of longing...  
a soiled streak of yellow  
transmutes into relentless  
colour as blues break apart  
setting sail upon a sky  
plain stitched

with scarcely born pink...  
erupting into hot lava...  
and islands of navy and indigo  
cliffs sealed with copper  
flow in a new law...  
the long journey right  
always right

Source hidden by a single tree  
the first arcing of aureate light...  
a mass of unreflective cloud  
shows itself as supple spine  
curved head a hint of teeth  
while its unrelieved tail of  
absence streams black  
ever back

yet fiercer than eye can bear  
light pierces through  
neither dispelling nor  
altering its form  
but as if it were  
of no account

© Kathryn Hamann

### Ate Red (hatred)

Re: verb-her-ate (reverberate) if you will  
with the song of a ravenous word (a verb)  
that ate him too (verbatim)  
a'swell with anthem (an' them as well)

plus pigged out on poor Laurie (laureate)  
aflame with vicious  
all-consuming la-la-laughter  
until then (ten) when seven ate nine  
— a calculating end

unlike "The Word" (je suis; Jesus)  
who, it is said (it is written) feeds us  
With His Osmotic Love  
Eternally

© *Sondy Ward*

### God of Grace

I pray for the less abled  
The miss-labeled  
The unstabled

For those who think like a child  
For those who struggle  
With reason  
With reality  
With their unruly thoughts  
With their op-shop shorts

Lord extend Your grace  
Let them see Your face  
Through the smoke of their bodies  
And the mirrors of their minds.

Amen

© *Cameron Semmens*

### God of small things

I take the bread  
remembering  
God  
made small  
—a body broken

a scattering of crumbs  
—some  
no bigger than  
a mustard seed

© *Janette Fernando*

**If your membership fees are due, please send them.**

**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'd like to buy a copy of *Stick your neck* out by Leigh Hay. (\$19.95 plus \$2.70 p &h)

I'm available to read at the *National Poetry Week Reading* at Box Hill library (September 4th)

I'd like to submit a poem/s for the **New Beginnings** book.

I would like to support *Poetica Christi Press* by pre-buying  copy/copies of *Reflecting on Melbourne* at the **special price** of \$45, (plus \$8 postage if unable to pick up.)

I would like to support *Poetica Christi Press* by pre-buying  copy/copies of *Reflecting on Melbourne* at the **full price** of \$48, (plus \$8 postage if unable to pick up.)

**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 [poeticachristi@netspace.net.au](mailto:poeticachristi@netspace.net.au) Website:www.poeticachristi.org.au

**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'd like to buy a copy of *Stick your neck* out by Leigh Hay. (\$19.95 plus \$2.70 p &h)

I'm available to read at the *National Poetry Week Reading* at Box Hill library (September 4th)

I'd like to submit a poem/s for the **New Beginnings** book.

I would like to support *Poetica Christi Press* by pre-buying  copy/copies of *Reflecting on Melbourne* at the **special price** of \$42, (plus \$8 postage if unable to pick up.)

I would like to support *Poetica Christi Press* by pre-buying  copy/copies of *Reflecting on Melbourne* at the **full price** of \$48, (plus \$8 postage if unable to pick up.)

**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 [poeticachristi@netspace.net.au](mailto:poeticachristi@netspace.net.au) Website:www.poeticachristi.org.au