



# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

9.4 November, 2009

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

Well, as you all know, we have finally launched *Reflecting on Melbourne!* What an event it was! The organization was carefully masterminded by Janette on whom much praise and thanks has been heaped since.

For those of you who could not attend, we found St Paul's cathedral the most marvellous venue, except for the fact that Janette and I had hoped to stand at the door greeting people. The trouble was there were three doors that had to be open so people came in from all directions and whether we met people or not was a matter of chance. With a crowd of close to 400, the launch by Arnold Zable, was indeed memorable. Philton did a great job as MC for the launch and we actually started right on 2.30pm!



Some of the crowd, including, in the front row: Kevin Brophy, Joan Ackalnd & Chris Wallace-Crabbe

Arnold particularly appreciated the book's references to indigenous people and dedicated the launch to them, especially the late Lisa Bellar, who had three poems in the book. He also said 'The most fitting way I could think of to pay homage to the many poems and images presented in the book was to assemble a collective poem, made of lines culled from many of the works. Perhaps these lines will convey its collective poetic vision, its many voices, and the cumulative power of its many offerings.' This poem appears in Poet's Corner elsewhere in the newsletter. He finished with 'As a collection the poems and photos give us a glimpse of a great cosmopolitan metropolis. At its best, Melbourne is a city of indigenous peoples and immigrants, a new world with an ancient past, a grand symphony with many melodies.'



Arnold Zable

We interspersed music (courtesy of Angela Chandler (piano), Cathy Altmann (violin), Cate Ahrendt (piano) and Stephen Langley (cello) as well as Geoffrey D'Ombra on flute/recorder) with the poetry readings and speeches. We include a copy of the program with this newsletter so that you know how it went and to see the list of poets and artists who contributed.



Angela Chandler and Cathy Altmann

Janette and I were surprised and delighted to each receive a specially commissioned piece of pottery by David Stuchbery, presented by Maree Silver and Leigh Hay on behalf of the committee.

The response has been that it was a very special occasion, which many people will remember as one of the best launches ever.



Maree, Jean and Janette (Photo credits: Leonard O'Brien.)

With *Reflecting on Melbourne* itself we confess that we are thrilled with its final appearance (in hardcover too!) and can report only positive comments about it. Currently we have sold over 600 copies and have nine bookshops stocking it. We are even getting to the stage where we can pay the honorariums to those who were prepared to wait.

Looking back, we can clearly see God's hand on the whole project, even though at times, we had to be patient and just trust that it would all come together. In the last six months in particular, we've seen several instances of Providence and of good things coming from what seemed to be bad.

Janette and I are slowly recovering from all the busyness and all the excitement of the launch but are still busy with getting the book out to bookshops and with publicity, with five radio interviews, including 3RRR and the afternoon programme with Richard Srubbs on 774 and several for the print media, including one for *The Age Good Weekend's* page *The Two of Us*, due to be printed soon, we hope. As well, one of the poets – Peter Hill- kindly set up a website just for the book. You can find it at [www.reflectingonmelbourne.com](http://www.reflectingonmelbourne.com). We are confident all this publicity will lead to more sales, especially with Christmas coming up.

So it is hard now to try to come back to some degree of normality and realise that there are other things happening in our world. I am hoping to do some reading and writing again, but am currently trying to tidy a house which is still littered with boxes of books and parcels awaiting collection by various people.

## NEXT MEETING

Our November meeting will be this Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. As this will be one of the last two meetings at my home I'm happy to lead this one. (As Piet's health declines, we have decided we need a new venue for next year.)

Month	Leader	Afternoon tea
14 <sup>th</sup> November	Jean SD	Maree N, Ann S, Keith
12 <sup>th</sup> December	Kathryn Hamann	Everybody bring a plate for lunch please. Dishes duty : anyone who hasn't done it yet!

As December will be the final meeting for the year I suggest people might like to bring some food to share for lunch. We hope by then to have decided where we will be meeting next year. We have had offers of open homes from several poets, but have decided on meeting at Carolyn Vimpani's place at 8 Woodhouse Gve, Doncaster East. We'll remind you about that at the start of next year.

## POETRY READINGS

We had quite a successful Reading at the Box Hill Library for National Poetry week on September 4<sup>th</sup>. **Aileen Kelly** was the Guest Reader and we had an appreciative audience of about 30. We hope to have our last one for the year at Box Hill Library on Friday, **December 4<sup>th</sup>**, with Guest Reader Anne Carson. **Let us know by Sunday afternoon if you'd like to read some of your poems as well.**

We trust that all of you sent your entries to this year's competition in on time. I find it a lovely topic and always remember a few lines I think from Elizabeth Barrett Browning,  
'As I go solemnly scrubbing a stair  
I am aware of a splendour that ties  
The things of this earth to the things of the skies'  
These next two lines are certainly hers,  
'Earth's crammed with heaven  
And every common bush afire with God.'

## NEW BEGINNINGS

Because of the amount of work involved in *Reflecting on Melbourne*, we've decided to hold over the publication of *New Beginnings* (last year's Poetry Competition theme) until April next year. That means you still have a chance to submit your poems on this theme for the book. Please email them to [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au) or by mail to 42 Hawkins Rd, Montrose, 3765.

## MEMBERS NEWS

Congratulations to **Leigh Hay**, who was awarded a Highly Commended for her poem 'Nell Street Morning' in the 2009 Winter Words Competition, supported by the Yarra Plenty Regional Library. As well, she was awarded an Honourable Mention for her poem 'A Woman After My Own Heart' in the 2009 Veterans Story Writing & Art Competition (SWAC). She also read her book *Stick Your Neck Out* and was interviewed by Peter Goodyear, one of the presenters of The Spoken Word program on 3CR on 5th November.

**Marlene Marburg** had her poem Kindergarten Poet published in *Divan*, issue 7 – an online poetry journal.

**Cameron Semmens, Fee Sievers and Janette Fernando** all had poems published in *Even before you were born* – a Christian Reflection on Pregnancy (Wombat Books)

Cameron is also due to have his latest book launched at One Community Church (6pm on December 6<sup>th</sup>) It is called *23 versions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalms* and the launch includes the music of Sons of Korah. It's not to be missed!

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December the Melbourne launch of **Rebecca Maxwell's** book *Blind and Busy*, about Louis Braille will take place at the Manningham Art Gallery.

**Kathryn Hamann** has been busy, with a couple of poems published in the *EJournal of Theology*, one in *Eureka Street*, and one in *The Mozzie* in September. She's also reprinted the cycle of poems based on the Little Flowers of St Francis. It's called *A Poor Canticle* and has some new poems and some old ones revised.

**Joy Chellev**, one of our original members from 21 years ago, is shifting from Brighton to Barwon Heads. However, she hopes to make it to Wordsmiths as much as possible and our prayers go with her, both for her continuing back problems and as she makes the move in December.

## COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

**The Mozzie** - poetry 'zine. Poetry from 'round Aust. & the globe. Monthly publication.

Submissions to Eds; Ron Heard & Bill Henderson at 28 Baynes St., Highgate Hill Qld 4101

**Blue Giraffe** - Closing dates February and August. Selection is ongoing. Up to 5 poems not previously in print or electronic media and not under offer elsewhere to [petermacrow@hotmail.com](mailto:petermacrow@hotmail.com) or, with SSAE or email contact for reply, to Peter Macrow, 6/16 Osborne Street, Sandy Bay, TAS 7005

**'Notes From the Gean'**, a new on-line journal showcasing haiku, tanka and haibun, has published its first edition. <http://geantree.webs.com/> Go to website for guidelines for submissions of haiku, tanka and haiga. Editorial Team: Lorin Ford: haiku editor [Australia], H. Gene Murtha: tanka editor [USA], Olga (Origa) Hooper: haiga editor [USA] Colin Stewart Jones: Managing Editor and Webmaster [Scotland]

**The IP Picks 2010 Awards for unpublished manuscripts** open on 1 October 2009

Categories for Best Fiction, Best Creative Non-fiction, Best Poetry, Best First Book and – new this year – Best Junior Fiction or Non-Fiction. Now in its ninth year, the Picks Awards are supported solely by IP (Interactive Publications Pty Ltd), Australia's most innovative independent publisher, and are open to citizens/residents of Australia and New Zealand. For complete details and the entry form, please go to <[http://ipoz.biz/IP/IP\\_Picks.htm](http://ipoz.biz/IP/IP_Picks.htm)>.

**Overland Magazine Judith Wright Prize for New & Emerging Poets** - Closing 7th Dec 2009.

In 2009 the prize money is \$3000, with two minor prizes of \$500 each. Poets are eligible if they have not yet had a collection of their work commercially published. A maximum of three unpublished poems is allowed per entry. Two copies of each poem must be submitted. The poet's name must not appear on the manuscript, as all poems will be considered anonymously. The entry is to be accompanied by a \$9.90 (\$5.50 for Overland subscribers) administration fee. The poems will be judged by Overland's poetry editor **Keri Glastonbury**, and the winning poems will be published in the magazine. Submissions will be considered for publication in Overland. The entry form

and guidelines are available at: [www.overland.org.au](http://www.overland.org.au) or 'Overland Judith Wright Poetry Competition', VU-Footscray Park Campus PO Box 14428 MELB VIC 8001

**2009 National FAW Awards** - Closing 30th Nov 2009 Poetry section—John Shaw Neilson Poetry Award + another 20 categories for other genres and also for kids. Go to [www.writers.asn.au](http://www.writers.asn.au) for entry and guidelines or email [awards@writers.asn.au](mailto:awards@writers.asn.au)  
**Call for submissions : Islet** is a new online companion to *Island* magazine's existing print journal, and will publish a free quarterly collection of works by emerging writers and visual artists. *Islet* accepts poetry, fiction, and reviews, with size the only limitation: we are committed to publishing small works. Maximum lengths: poetry -- 25 lines; fiction -- 600 words; reviews -- 400 words. Our pay rates are \$50 per poem and \$75 per prose work (fiction or review). For submissions or more information, contact the editor at [islet.online@utas.edu.au](mailto:islet.online@utas.edu.au) . Until the website is live, full submission guidelines are available here: [http://www.islandmag.com/islet\\_submission.html](http://www.islandmag.com/islet_submission.html)

## NEXT YEAR'S POETRY WEEKEND

As we look forward to a New Year ahead it may be good to plan our **Poetry Weekend** (including a Quiet Day and Poetry Workshop) early in the year again. Those of us who went down to St Andrew's this year found it a rich experience. It may be good to see if we can book up a weekend there again for March. Please let us know if you think you'd like to come.

## DIARY DATES

**Saturday, November 14th:** meeting of the Wordsmiths at 493 Elgar Rd, Mont Albert Nth, 2-5pm.

**Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6.30- 8pm :** Melbourne launch of Rebecca Maxwell's book *Blind and Busy* at Manningham Art Gallery, Civic Offices, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. Please RSVP to Nicola Wong on 9840 4467 or via email at [nicola.wong@manningham.vic.gov.au](mailto:nicola.wong@manningham.vic.gov.au) by Wednesday 25 November 2009.

**Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> :** Poetry Reading at Box Hill Library, 6.30-8pm. Guest Reader: Anne Carson.

**Sunday, December 6th, 6pm:** Launch of Cameron Semmen's new book *23 versions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm*, featuring music by *Sons of Korah*. One Community Church, 184 Surrey Rd, Blackburn. Free entry.

**Saturday, December 12th:** meeting of the Wordsmiths at 493 Elgar Rd, Mont Albert Nth, 1-5pm. Please bring lunch to share.

*If you haven't yet paid your membership fees for this year, please pay them now.*

## POETS' CORNER



*Arnold Zable said at the book launch ' The most fitting way I could think of to pay homage to the many poems and images presented in the book was to assemble a collective poem, made of lines culled from many of the works. Perhaps these lines will convey its collective poetic vision, its many voices, and the cumulative power of its many offerings.'*

Derrimut, Boon urrung headman, of love and ancient knowledge,  
Singing in misty lands where flows the Birrarung  
Cathedral spires honeyed in morning light.  
Oars dipping in the Yarra River  
Melbourne at 4 am, asleep, the bridge her garter  
The clatter and clang of bins, the bark of dogs.  
Treading on dew-white grass  
Concrete buildings soaring where eagles flew  
Flimsy curtains billowing gently inwards  
Two old diggers wearing slouch hats  
An old V8 Kingswood parked on a strip of concrete  
The down at heel, the down at heart  
Silent bats flying homewards  
Possums gorging on slices of apple  
Lovers rendezvousing beneath the clocks at Flinders  
Street Station  
The inarticulate howl of the city at night.  
The lazy gaze of security cameras  
Empty trams groaning beyond the blinds  
Toddlers kicking footballs  
The night Ang Christou's penis fell out of his shorts  
and the way he nonchalantly tucked it back  
Brown snakes slithering into long grass  
Munching autumn leaves brown as toast  
Two blackbirds fighting on a tin roof edge  
Immaculate bowling greens, smooth as polished  
ballroom floors  
The autumn air, soft and sad  
Hot days with northerly winds  
Migrant women, impossibly black on a Melbourne  
tram  
Child refugees in detention centres  
Men looking for life in rubbish bins  
Tight lipped men in bleak suits  
Street lament: 'Can you spare me a dollar.'  
Seagulls squabbling over chips  
Rooms to let in Fitzroy Street  
Blackfella searching for a place of belonging  
Salvo soldiers saving souls  
Hotels with grandmother memories  
Tramlines stretching towards the sea  
Flowers at Weary Dunlop's feet  
Eternal flames spitting in the rain

Great container ships anchored in the bay  
Garlic braids hanging from the ceiling  
Churches with dusty hides like elephants  
Jungular graffiti on brilliant walls  
Workaday people — little heroes without medals  
Six vinyl chairs in a barbershop waiting for customers  
Old men hobbling out to water tomatoes  
Bold magpies on nature strips  
Water birds on spindly legs,  
Funny men in rubber boots  
Summer evenings on suburban verandas  
The haunting grounds of ginger cats  
Young men in summer slowly ambling nowhere  
Chinese families serving hamburgers  
The absence of people we never knew  
Maps of cloud moving east, above our heads,  
Yearning for the thirsty Dandenongs.

*From **Reflecting on Melbourne** edited by Janette  
Fernando and Jean Sietzema-Dickson.*

### SMALL DREAMS

I want to...

walk forward  
free from my yesterdays

be in today  
without a care for tomorrow

walk under rainbows  
that have no end

feel the wind in my hair  
tousled and tangled

watch the sun dance on the water  
the moon slumber in the sea

make autumn leaves dance  
and dance joyously with them

walk without an umbrella  
in the monsoonal rain

walk through snowflakes  
and feel them touch my soul

walk through the fog  
with you beside me

hold our children  
close to our hearts

© Sue Donnelly

**RESPONSE SLIP**

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  copy(ies) of *Reflecting on Melbourne* at the Direct-from-Publisher price (\$60, or \$55 each for 2 or more, or \$50 each for 5 or more, plus \$8 p&h, if unable to pick up from Jean's place or \$12 interstate)

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

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

I'm interested in coming to the Poetry Camp next year (March 13th-14th, the weekend after the long weekend)

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE :** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_

*\* Please make cheques payable to Poetica Christi Press or if you prefer a direct transfer, include your name and what it's for in the transaction details :*

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