



# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

## 10.1 February, 2010

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

We'd like to wish you a happy New Year and hope that you are feeling refreshed by the holiday break. I have been very thankful that so far there have been very few really hot days.

As I write we are approaching the anniversary of Black Saturday and most of us will be aware that the pain of that day's devastation is far from over. There was an article in *The Age* this morning about a woman who lost her holiday house at Marysville and is concerned that, for people like her, there has been no financial compensation. And yet they too suffer greatly.

Since then there have been other calamities, including Haiti. The scale of suffering there seems almost beyond comprehension...

So it has been good to have finally picked up a book I have had for some time but never read: *Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich. Probably her most well known saying is, 'All shall be well and all manner of things shall be well' The remarkable thing about this is that she lived in a time of great tumult. But her great gift to us is the understanding that the joy of Christ's salvation is immeasurably greater than the pain and sorrow caused by sin.

I have also been reading *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence. His understanding of being in the presence of God all the time is heart-warming and challenging. I also found  *Casting Nasturtiums* by Greg Shallless, a local author, good value for its humorous way of pointing out malapropisms. In between these I have relaxed watching the tennis. I hope you have all found time to relax in your different ways.

### NEXT MEETINGS

As arranged last year, our meetings this year will mostly be held at the home of Carolyn Vimpani, **8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster East 3109**. Phone : 9842 4489 , email [vimpani@bigpond.net.au](mailto:vimpani@bigpond.net.au)

Our first meeting will be this Saturday, **February 13<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**. As we did last year, each meeting will be led by a different person. This involves opening in prayer, spending the first 10-15 minutes sharing poetry by favourite poet(s), or articles about writing/poetry, followed by facilitating the workshopping of each other's work. One way that

was done at the Wollongong Poetry Lab, was to have someone other than the poet read the poem first and then have the poet read it. Then the poet is in a 'cone of silence' for the first five minutes while everyone else makes comments. The advantage of this method is that the poet gets to hear how others are 'reading' and interpreting the poem without giving them prior knowledge, thus allowing a more realistic appraisal.

Below is a list of leaders and people on duty for afternoon tea, which involves bringing a plate of food to share and getting the dishes done afterwards. If you need to swap with someone else, please let me know or organise it yourself.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea
February 13th	Janette	Carolyn V, Jean S, Anne
March 13th	Leigh	Paige, Rebecca, Sue
April 10th	Joy	Leigh, Dilys, Marlene
May 8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup>		<i>Poetry Weekend</i>
June 12th	Marlene	Sondy, Maree N, Joy
July 10th	Joan	Maree S, Cam,

### POETRY WEEKEND AT ST ANDREW'S BEACH : MAY 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

To our delight we have managed to book our Poetry weekend at St Andrew's Beach at the home of Robin and Bronwyn Pryor. Those who came last year will remember what a lovely experience it was to stay there.



We have asked **Bronwyn Prior** to lead the *Quiet Day* from 10.30am till 3.30pm on the Saturday and **Joan Ackland** has agreed to lead a poetry workshop on the Sunday afternoon, from 1-3pm. As it is Mother's Day, some people may need to leave the moment it concludes. As accommodation is limited, please let us know ASAP via the return slip or via email: [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au) if you'd like to book in for this weekend. Day visitors are also welcome.

## REFLECTING ON MELBOURNE

Until Christmas, Janette and I were busy bees, promoting and selling *Reflecting on Melbourne*. We had radio interviews on Port Philip radio, 3RRR, 3CR, Whitehorse FM, Southern FM, 3SBS and on the ABC with Richard Stubbs on 774. There were also articles published in *Whitehorse Leader*, *Mt Evelyn Mail*, the VWC magazine, the FAW magazine and The Salvation Army's *War Cry*. The write-up of an interview with Janette and myself in *The Two of Us* in the *Good Weekend* magazine, published with *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* on December 19th just before Christmas attracted plenty of comment, many people delighted to see the way it was an expression of our faith.

We have now sold over 800 copies and have broken even to the point of paying the first round of honorariums. The book is also stocked by 16 different bookshops around Melbourne and suburbs. Now we need to think about organising some readings so we can sell more. So if you know of any venues or groups who might be glad to hear us reading, please let us know.

I have one lined up for March 7<sup>th</sup> though it will be part of a concert at the Augustine Centre so we will not be able to have many readers. I'm hoping we can have a series at the Box Hill Library again.

## PAST MEETINGS

Our November and December meetings were well attended. **Kathryn Hamann** shared the poem *The Annunciation of Joseph* by Ben Belitt and we had a lively discussion about it. We enjoyed the company of some new faces: **Evangeline Yong, Kay Meckie and Glenn Waters**. In fact, with Glenn's presence in December, we had a record number of five men!



## READINGS

Our reading at Box Hill Library in December was not so well attended but that was not surprising so close to Christmas. Those who came thoroughly enjoyed the reading with Anne Carson as our special guest.

## POETRY DAYS

This year there are two poetry days at Wellspring. **Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>**, at 10 Y St, Ashburton. 9.45am-3.15pm. with Barbara Rautman. \$15/\$20 "Beginnings and Endings" will be the theme of the day. Later this year : **August 26<sup>th</sup>** Poems by Denise Levertov. There will be group discussion of the poems and time for individual reflection/ writing/art. I can highly recommend it as an experience not to be missed.

## COMPETITION RESULTS

We'd like to congratulate **Robyn Rowland**, whose poem *At the edge of the day* won 1<sup>st</sup> prize in our 2009 *Everyday Splendour* Poetry competition. 2nd prize went to **Rhonda Pohlke** for her poem *Five layers of potting*. Congratulations also to Wordsmiths **Maree Silver** (for her poems *Bay of Fires* and *Tracks and Trails*) and **Cathy Altmann** (for her poem *Parables*) for having their poems chosen by the judge to go into the anthology.

## BOOK LAUNCHES

*Blind and Busy* by Rebecca Maxwell was launched to an enthusiastic crowd at Manningham Art Gallery on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Then on December 6<sup>th</sup>, Cameron Semmens launched his latest book *23 versions of Psalm 23* in a wonderful service at One Community Church, where he was accompanied by music from *Sons of Korah*. Both books are available from their authors at our meetings, so don't miss out!

## BOOKS TO COME

Plans for this year include the publication of *New Beginnings*, (from our competition from 2008) hopefully by May and *Everyday Splendour* later in the year. If you have any last minute submissions for these topics, send them to Janette at [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au). We also hope to get on with the book of Prayer Poems, already long delayed. And Leigh Hay and I are hoping we can dream up more ideas for books for children, while I am also hoping to get back to doing my autobiography with relevant poetry interspersed.

## MEMBER NEWS

**Joy Chellew** has decamped to Barwon Heads, renting for a year to see how it suits her. So far it seems to be going well. In fact she has already been asked to be guest speaker at the Barwon Heads meeting for the World Day of Prayer! But do pray for her son-in-law and family living nearby as he recovers from a stroke and a subsequent fall. **Mary Macdonald** is glad when occasionally a poem or song of hers gets a mention.

**Nel Lewis**, who lives at Mirboo North, has had another mini-stroke, so please keep her in your prayers as well.

We bid farewell to **Lucy Bastecky**, who is moving to Canberra as her husband has a job there. Thanks Lucy, for your editing help with *Reflecting on Melbourne*.

**Dilys Terry-Smith** has been wearing herself out by getting rid of couch grass lately but has also written her first poem for ages.

We commiserate with **Catherine Barnard** whose grand-daughter, Catharine Longmuir, died recently after a long illness. Our condolences also go to her parents, Anne & James and siblings, Julia and Daniel.

Congratulations to **Marlene Marburg**, whose poem *Old Hand, New Wounds* has received a Highly Commended in the 2010 *Eyre Writers Awards* and to Kathryn **Hamann** who came second in the Melbourne Believers Slam.

## VALE JOHN WEST



Some of you may remember John West, who launched our 2007 anthology *Earth Works*. He was a well-known member of Melbourne's poetry community even after

shifting to Frankston. He had two poems in *Reflecting on Melbourne* as well as two selected for *Everyday Splendour*. John died of a heart attack late last year and we extend our sympathy to his family and friends.

## COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

**Poetry Matters:** For a complimentary copy of this poetry journal send a self-addressed envelope large enough for A5 journal (16cm x 22.5cm) and stamped (\$1.10) to The Editor, Poetry Matters, 61 Palmer Cres, Newham, Vic, 3442. Email enquiries: [poetrymatters@optusnet.com.au](mailto:poetrymatters@optusnet.com.au)

**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

### **The Tasmanian Times**

Selection for this ezine is ongoing. Tasmanians or those with a Tasmanian link are welcome to send up to 5 poems not previously in print or electronic media and not under offer elsewhere to [peter.macrow@gmail.com](mailto:peter.macrow@gmail.com) The link can be state of

origin, holidays, family or business connections...

**Prospect** - Closing dates: end of February and end of August. Up to 5 poems not previously in print or electronic media and not on offer elsewhere. for #2, to: Gillian Telford [gilltel@optusnet.com.au](mailto:gilltel@optusnet.com.au)

**PressPress Chapbook Award 2010** – closing 31 May 2010. Entry fee : \$15 for an original manuscript of poetry between 20-40pp. The winning manuscript will receive \$600 and chapbook publication with PressPress. The Award will be announced in July 2010 on the PressPress site. MS must be unpublished and not on offer to another publisher in Australia or elsewhere (except that individual poems can be already taken or on offer to journals, sites or anthologies where you keep the copyright).

[www.presspress.com.au](http://www.presspress.com.au)

### **Moving Galleries**

The next exhibition, scheduled to begin its travels on the trains in 2010, will feature poems based on the theme of 'Observance' – whether it's the peripheral view of the commuter, the oblique observance of the surroundings, reflected in a window, concealed behind glass or the daily observances of our lives.

[www.movinggalleries.org.au](http://www.movinggalleries.org.au)

### **Leonard Teale Memorial Performance Poetry**

**Award** . First prize \$1000 for a reading of a poem by an Australian poet, to be entered on tape or cd.

Phone 02 6374 1213 or go to

[www.henrylawsongulgong.org.au](http://www.henrylawsongulgong.org.au)

### **Extant Press**

New Perth-based press looking for manuscripts of innovative poetries, innovative engagements with language, innovative poetry theory and innovative writers, both emerging and experienced. Queries and chapbook-sized submissions (20-48 pages) emailed to [ExtantEditor@gmail.com](mailto:ExtantEditor@gmail.com) in word or rtf format.

## DIARY DATES

**Saturday, February 13th:** meeting of the Wordsmiths at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster, 2-5pm

**Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup> , 7.30pm:** Concert with organ and other instruments, poetry readings including Japanese Poetry read by Sue Stanford and throat singing at The Augustine Centre, 2 Minoa St, Hawthorn. Contact Jean (9890 5885) if you want to attend.

**Saturday, March 13th:** meeting of the Wordsmiths at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster, 2-5pm.

**Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> :** meeting of the Wordsmiths at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster, 2-5pm.

**Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>** Wellspring Poetry Day, 9.45am – 3.15pm *Beginnings and Endings*, at 10 Y St, Ashburton. Ph: 9885 0277 (\$15 for Wellspring members, \$20 others)

**Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>:** Poetry Weekend at St Andrews Beach.

## POETS' CORNER



### Case study

at Southern Cross  
my sister leads off graciously

handle extended  
well travelled and trained  
her case follows obediently

my cheaper version  
(advance purchased in anticipation  
of heavy tripping)  
a novice at obedience  
refuses to heel  
as we trundle under the waved roof

stooping to lower the centre of gravity  
I will my wheels to stay grounded

entrained in reserved seats  
cases heaved overhead  
we relax into the journey  
our trip punctuated by stops  
in dry country towns  
and visits to the buffet car

arriving hours later  
we head for our accommodation

excited by its freedom  
my bag lollops its way down the footpath  
careers behind  
rollicks beside  
performing an acrobatic cartwheel  
before tenuous control is gained

three tortuous blocks later  
my wilful companion unpacked  
our weekend exploration  
*sans baggage* begins

overflowing with local treasure  
return journey planned  
scientific packing fails  
heavy items over wheels  
are no solution for cunning disobedience

tail wagging with glee  
following its own agenda  
it remains unmanageable  
from country to city to suburb

I tug it from the tram  
and endure the final walk home

my patience exhausted  
the stray is impounded  
for its second chance  
in the RSPCA Op shop

© *Maree Silver*

### Camel's Hump Road Mt Macedon

stirrings of ancient  
silk roads

translucent blue  
of winter sky  
finding double exposure  
in transient pools

verdant green  
of regenerating forest  
miniature promises  
as growth unfurls

muted yellow  
of emerging wattle  
awaiting explosion  
into golden whorls

Camel's Hump Road  
alas  
not leading to ancient cities

rather

to a cross  
a testament to terror

I prefer the silk road

© *Carolyn Vimpani*

### High Up in Paris

The cornflower blue  
Of evening skies, the yellow lights, starry.  
I am on the divan in the studio, writing,  
Waiting for my young husband,  
Watching the flight of birds  
Circling, circling, now at rest

© *Beth Wunderlich*