



WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

12.4 November, 2012

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

It's almost the end of the year again! I have found this a very busy year with Rachel and Marco coping with renovating their new house and having to face surgery for Marco's brain tumour. The surgery is over and they are trying to avoid having chemo but the house is far from comfortable at the moment and the front yard has been looking like a bomb site. However, progress is being made.

I have been reading an assortment of books including the Australian Poetry Journal which has a very varied collection of poetry and several by Robert Harris. I also have enjoyed Kristin Henry's latest book, *All the Way Home* which is a very catchy verse novel, and Judith Rodriguez' *The Hanging of Minnie Thwaites*, a very interesting collection of poetry and prose (from various sources). This was a very thoughtful look at the provision of child care since the early days in Melbourne.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on Saturday **November 10th** at the home of Carolyn Vimpani, 8 Woodhouse Rd. Doncaster East. We look forward to an interesting **poetry workshop** led by Kathryn Hamann and Carolyn Vimpani with news about their forthcoming anthology. Please bring pen and paper as they will be getting us to write! Our final meeting this year will be on **December 8th**. We hope to meet at 1 pm so that we can share lunch together, so everyone please bring a plate.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea
Nov 10th	Kathryn & Carolyn	Rebecca, Cecily, Don
Dec 8th	Joan	All bring a plate

PAST MEETINGS

Again three well-attended meetings have been held. In August **Janette** led the meeting, sharing some excellent poetry from a *Poems from the*

Underground booklet she picked up in London's subways during her travels. At afternoon tea-time she presented Maree Silver and me with bouquets and we were treated to a cake and singing for our respective birthdays.

The September meeting was led by **Cath Barnard**, who delighted us with some lesser-known poems by AA Milne.

The October meeting was led by **Don Helmore**, who regaled us with a selection of work: Paul Verlaine's *The Art of Poetry*, *Morning Knowledge* by Kevin Hart, the *Epitaph* from C.S. Lewis from his wife's grave and familiar and beloved by most of us, *Pied Beauty*, by Gerard Manly Hopkins. Despite having a large group with 14 of us, Don managed to lead the group successfully hearing everyone's contribution.

We welcomed some new faces at our meetings: Jonny Wouters, Vivien De Jong, Jodi-Anne Menzies and Greg Burns.

READINGS AT THE LIBRARY

In September we had another enjoyable reading at the Box Hill Library. Our guest reader was **Jennifer Chrystie** who shared some marvellous poetry with us and we had other very good contributions. All this ably was hosted by Kathryn Hamann. Since she has been organising our readings, we have had some great readers and she has managed to arrange for five readings next year, so we are finally getting established there. It is really good to be able to use the room upstairs where we are not interrupted by noises in the library.



However, due to an earlier booking, our November reading, on **Friday November 23rd**, will be downstairs again. For this, we Wordsmiths will read some poems from the latest competition but mainly Christmas poems, so do be diligent in looking for your best contributions

for this and encouraging your friends to come and join us. I wonder whether some people would like to have a meal together afterwards at the Penang Restaurant, just across Whitehorse Rd? If so, please let Kathryn or me know and we can book a table.

POETICA CHRISTI PRESS

Since Janette's return from leave (in May-July), she has been working hard, with help from the committee, on the next anthology *Taking Flight*. It looks like it will be ready to launch in February next year.

MEMBER NEWS



Kathryn and Conrad Hamann belatedly celebrated Conrad's 60th birthday with the launch of a beautiful book with Kathryn's poetry and Conrad's marvellous cat drawings: *Cat at Work*. The launch was on Sunday, October 14th at St George's

Anglican Church in Alphington. The book was launched by Jennifer Strauss with great style and wit. She likened the book to Kipling's cat: The Cat who walked by himself saying that the book was ready to go out and do the same, stand on its own paws. She said the images and poems worked well together, avoiding the trap of sentimentality. Her favourite lines from the book: *The Cat is born with mouth one smiling curve It is for man to fret, to fuss, to serve.* It was an afternoon of much hilarity where the poet found herself descending into the litter Tray of Doom. If you're interested in buying a copy, go to www.shardlight.com. Conrad also recently authored an impressive volume on Architecture and Kathryn has had some poems published in *Mozzie*. They will be moving house shortly. Please pray for Kathryn's health in this stressful time.

Congratulations to **Maree Nikalaou**, whose poem *A Dream Scheme* was published in Australian Unity's September-October newsletter.

Elaine Foster has been in hospital as she's been losing weight dramatically. This has halted and she is feeling somewhat better but would value your prayers for continued recovery.

Congratulations to **Don Helmore** who has just become the proud great-grandfather of April Roses.

Congratulations also to **Cameron Semmens** whose book, *The Zoo in You* won not just the non-fiction category, but also the overall CALEB Prize. It was also short-listed for the Australian Christian Literature Society Book of the Year awards. You can buy his book through his website <http://www.webcameron.com/buy.php>



Our thoughts and prayers are with Cameron and Sonya as Sonya's father Harry Burggraaf is seriously ill in an induced coma following pancreatitis.

Stevie Wills has been doing some performance poetry and now has her own website, which is well worth a look: <http://www.steviewills.com/>.

A few Wordsmiths joined me, **Jean Sietzema**, to belatedly celebrate my 80th birthday with high tea at Coonara Springs. Those who toured the garden found it magically beautiful and we had a very happy afternoon of vigorous chatter interspersed with people sharing humorous poetry.

Some people think we should do something like this again! To those who came, many thanks for giving me many joyful memories and a special thank you to those who contributed to the Aboriginal Literacy Foundation in lieu of presents. To this very worthwhile organization struggling on a shoestring budget, we can now give \$200.



COMPETITIONS

2012 Overland Judith Wright Poetry Prize:

Closing date 15th November The prize was established in 2007 to foster poetry by writers who have not yet published a book of poems under their own name. Submit a poem of up to 80 lines. This year the major prize is \$6000, with a second prize of \$2000 and a third prize of \$1000. Go to <http://overland.org.au/prizes/poetry-prize-guidelines> before submitting.

Peter Porter Poetry Prize: Closing 30th November 2012 Australian Book Review – the Peter Porter Poetry Prize Entry to the ninth annual Australian Book Review Poetry Prize – named the Peter Porter Poetry Prize, in memory of the late Australian poet – is now open. The Prize is one of Australia's most lucrative and respected awards for poetry, and guarantees winners wide exposure through publication in Australian Book Review. The Prize is open to all Australian writers. First prize: \$4000; shortlisted entries: \$400. Judges: David McCooney and Bronwyn Lea. Full guidelines and entry form <https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/prizes/peter-porter-poetry-prize>

Max Harris Poetry Award 2012: Closing date 15th December Up to 60 lines \$3000 <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/cil/poetryandpoeticscentre/poetrycompetition.asp>

Gallipoli Poetry Project

The 100 Years from Gallipoli Poetry Project wants new poetry that illustrates the diversity of views about Australia's anniversaries of military history.

The author of the best poem will win \$2500 and selected poems will be published in an anthology. For an entry form go to <http://ozzywriters.com/index.php/100-years-from-gallipoli> **Closes: 11 November**

FAW John Shaw Neilson poetry award

Entry Fee (per entry): Non-Members \$10, Members \$5 First Prize: \$600 Second Prize: \$150. *Sponsored by Collected Works Bookshop.*

An award for an unpublished poem between 14 and 60 lines, including epigraphs.

A suite of poems linked thematically may be entered as one entry provided the line limit is adhered to.

Poems should be typed in single-spacing. One copy of each poem (or suite) is required. Get an entry form at www.writers.asn.au

The Tom Collins Poetry Prize is an annual competition inaugurated by FAWWA in 1975 in memory of Australian author Joseph Furphy (1843 - 1912) who wrote as Tom Collins. Poems to 60 lines. First prize \$1000, 2nd:\$400. Highly commended \$150. Enquiries:

<http://www.fawwa.org.au> - email admin@fawwa.org.au Closing date- 15th Dec.

The W B Yeats Poetry Prize for Australian Poets

is accepting entries for the 2012 Prize. Closing date is December 31, 2012. First Prize AU \$500 Runner up Prize AU \$75. Commendation Certificates. Enquiries, go to poetryprize@johnbutleryeatsseminar.com

Black & BLUE

Poetry, Drama, Prose & Other from a variety of new & established writers from all over the world. To submit work you can email submissions@blackbluewriting.com or check out their website.

INTERESTED IN SELF-PUBLISHING, POETRY, MEMOIR? Fee Sievers is a writer

but mostly a poet. She is editor of the Melbourne Poet's Union newsletter (POAM) and she runs Rebus Press, assisting writers to self-publish their work. Fee has four published books and a couple of self-published chap-books. She will run a seminar from 4-6 pm on Sunday, November 18th at Warrandyte Café, cnr Forbes & Yarra Sts, Warrandyte. She will split her session into two parts and will chat about self-publishing - the pros and cons, and then look at the verse novel as fiction or memoir. For bookings call Karen Throssell 9844 1839 - entry is \$25 and includes drinks and tapas.

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, November 10th, 2-5pm: Wordsmiths Meeting at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster East. Poetry workshop led by Kathryn Hamann and Carolyn Vimpani.

Friday November 23rd, 6.30 pm: Reading at Box Hill Library with Christmas readings by the Wordsmiths of Melbourne.

Saturday, December 8th 1-5pm: Wordsmiths meeting at 8 Woodhouse Rd, East Doncaster. Please bring a plate of lunch to share.

Newsletter produced by Jean Sietzema-Dickson and Janette Fernando. poetica@iprimus.com.au

POETS' CORNER



The Reading of the Will

Hebrews 9

they sit
faintly sketched faces
looking like you and me at times
nameless
around a blank expansive table
dressed in sombre shades
of charcoal
perhaps to mourn their loss
perhaps to collect chickens already counted
—hatched or not—

at the reading of the will

I sit
this day
—like every day—
sometimes in the morning
oftentimes in the evening
on a large wooden chair
in my quiet place
wearing everyday clothes
devouring words of scripture
from the good book
the promises of God

from my reading of the will

© *Peter White*

A Dream Scheme

The plan for the Snowy was boldly bright.
The building of a nation, people thought.
Displaced persons had Australia in their sight
when Europe's destruction was wrought.

Politicians dreamed the scheme.
With borrowed finance and labour stream,
they could make the inland green,
diverting the river with this team.

Along the way the hydro-power
would supply the cities' need.
Bi-partisan support saved the hour,
for inland plains would people feed.

The pollies thought they'd got it right.
Hungry males, fresh from the fight,
left their weapons where things were tight,
heading Downunder in mass flight.

Seven days a week they wanted work
to send money to their kin.
No one thought his duty to shirk.
Australians benefit from Nazi sin.

When the Snowy flowed west instead of east,
the Murray was an untamed beast.
Dams were made and flooding ceased
and irrigation promised a feast.

Channels made the desert bloom,
towns in the Riverina thrived.
No one saw the problem loom
till the ten year drought arrived.

The Murray system was on the blink
as many fish died, which caused a stink.
They saw the Coorong waters shrink
so pollies again did a rethink.

A buyback plan contained the fear,
financial ruin to family farm.
With allocations reduced, 'twas clear,
the climate's changing caused alarm.

The Government's diplomatic teams
went to the towns affected.
Farmers heard concerns of the Greens
which they angrily rejected.

In Australian outback style
they cursed and lit a flaming fire,
quickly burning the pamphlet pile,
showing their red-necked ire.

The last two years of flooding rains
have cooled the campfire's heat.
However, the problem still remains:
How long will the rivers meet?

© *Maree Nikalaou*

(published in *The Lawsonian*, Australian Unity)

Wisteria

purple rays
dangling the sun
from the trellis decks
drawing eyes to glory
grown from strands above
painting pavement patterns
with sun burst and with shade.
Singing of the summer, within their fragile span
then waiting for the season to find their voice again

© *Greg Burns*