

# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

## 13.3. August, 2013

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

We're more than half way through winter and it seems to me we have had very little really cold weather. Of course I am blessed by living in a warm environment at home, unlike so many in this world of ours. At this time of year the plight of the homeless weighs on my consciousness as does that of asylum seekers. We watched a very powerful film, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* at church recently and some of us have been moved to write letters of protest about our Prime Minister's latest attempt to fob off our concerns onto people who have less resources than we do to deal with them.

In some ways I struggle with even mentioning these problems having just had a delightful break by going to Canberra with a group to see the Turner exhibition. We saw the old and new houses of Parliament and the new Arboretum and revelled in Canberra's frosty nights and clear sunny days and fresh air. Turner's paintings are truly remarkable in that he moves from careful landscapes and finely worked architectural paintings to expressing the grandeur of nature in an avalanche and in storms at sea and to finally show sunset in an abstract form, which preceded, but must have influenced, the Impressionists. I had hoped that the paintings would inspire some poetry, but maybe that will come later.

**OUR NEXT MEETING** will be held at the home of Carolyn Vimpani on August 10<sup>th</sup> from 2-5pm. We will have the pleasure of a **Poetry Workshop** led by **Sherryl Clark** an excellent writer who had just been awarded a Ph.D. for her work. I have known Sherryl for many years and I can assure you of a very worthwhile afternoon. The cost will be \$10 or \$5 concession. Please note that the workshop will take up the whole time, so we won't be looking at each other's poems as we do at our usual meetings. Phone her on 9842 4489 or me, Jean on 9890 5885 for any queries or apologies.

### ROSTER

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
Aug 10th	Sherryl	David, Sharlee, Sandra
Sept 14th	Jean	Cameron, Sue, Leigh
Oct 12th	Kathryn	Elaine, Janette, Jean

**N.B. Advance notice that the December meeting will be held on December 7<sup>th</sup> rather than the 14<sup>th</sup> and we'll have a shared lunch.**

### PREVIOUS MEETINGS

In May **Maree Silver** led this meeting capably as always. She entertained the 13 people who attended with a reading from Pam Ayres which gave us all a good chuckle.

In June **Leigh Hay** gave us a mini history of C.J.Dennis and read us *The Intro* about Doreen from *The Sentimental Bloke*.

The July meeting was led by **Carolyn Vimpani** who read selections from the Wordsmiths with around 15 people gathered together.

### POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS

#### Launch of 'Capturing Clouds'



Leigh with granddaughter Emma at the launch.



On July 13<sup>th</sup> Cameron Semmens launched **Leigh Hay's** collection of poetry to a packed room at the Eltham Library. In his inimitable style he enthused us about this lovely collection. Though having some darker notes it is generally light in tone. With delightful sketches by Leigh's husband, David, this is a book you will want to browse through again and again. You can buy copies for \$20 from PCP or direct from Leigh via her website [www.leighhay.com.au](http://www.leighhay.com.au)

#### Taking Flight

We were delighted to hear that *Taking Flight*, the anthology we launched in March, has been shortlisted for the CALEB award, Poetry section.

#### Exploring the Depths

Janette and the committee have been working on our next anthology *Exploring the Depths*, which came from last year's poetry competition. We are still accepting **late submissions until Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup>**, preferably by email to [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au), but please send no more than five poems.

Our **2013 Poetry Competition** begins this month, on the topic '*A Lightness of Being*'. Please see the attached entry form for more information.

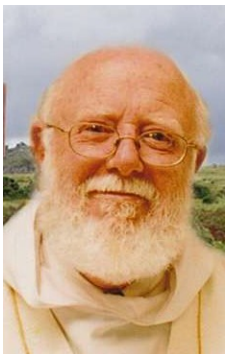
### READINGS AT BOX HILL LIBRARY

Ablly compered by Sue Donnelly, the July reading, featuring our own **Janette Fernando**, was accompanied by the sound effects of a stormy night. Those who braved the cold to come were well rewarded by Janette's reading of her own poems and some from *Taking Flight*. Other members of The Wordsmiths contributed their poems to make the evening an enjoyable one.

The September reading will be on **September 6<sup>th</sup>** and will feature **Carolyn Vimpani and Joan Ray**, with readings from the forthcoming book about Dementia.

### MEMBER NEWS

#### Vale Robin Pryor



To those who knew him, the death of Robin Pryor did not come as a shock because we had had time to prepare for it as he, himself, and the family had. But it gave us great sadness to lose this great man. Big in stature and big in heart he was one of the great blessings in my own life and, judging by the tributes that flowed at the celebration of his

life, of countless others. The service was led by Jill Manton who had been his Spiritual Director. Janette, Maree Silver, Keith Wray and I attended and found it a moving and uplifting experience.

I first met Robin at a weekend run by Camps Farthest Out and later at other camps and then did a retreat with him when we went to Flinders Island and he shared his deep sadness and concern for the fate of Tasmania's aboriginal population. In recent years he has led the Quiet Day for the Wordsmiths weekend, once at Palotti College and several times at his home at St Andrew's Beach. His knowledge of geology gave him a great concern for the land and how we cared for it, as was evidenced by his and Bronwyn's care of their garden and their abundant supply of home-grown vegetables. In recent years he took a great delight in his Cornish heritage and in writing poetry. A number of his poems have appeared in our recent anthologies. Those of us who followed the last month of his life journey by email were amazed at his continuing sense of humour in the face of such adversity. He even wrote numerous 'Odes to the Pancreas'! We thank God for his life and the blessing it has been to us and to so many others. And we pray for strength for Bronwyn as she travels on alone.

Please pray for **Joy Chellev** who has just had spinal surgery and was in great pain when I rang on Wednesday but sounds much better now. Her recovery will involve many weeks in Rehab.

Please also pray for **Maree Silver** who has had trouble with her shoulder for months and is undergoing a new course of treatment.

Our condolences go to **Sue and Steve Donnelly** on the death of Steve's mother recently.

Give thanks for the birth of Reuben Christopher, **Janette Fernando's** second grandchild, who arrived a month early and had to spend the first two weeks in hospital. He's now home with parents Karen and Cam. Congratulations to **Nan Good** who has just published her memoirs. Attractively presented and called *Just Anybody* it tells of her very deprived background and through many troubles she has learned to think about the meaning of life and shares some of her wisdom.

Well done to **Vivien De Jong**, who was a winner in the Poetry Matters competition.

#### **Kathryn Hamann**

presented a paper in Sydney at the *Addressing the Sacred* conference on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. See her report later in the newsletter. Her latest book *Where shadows go* is available from Shardlight publications and is due to be launched in September. That she can accomplish so much, with her health as it is, is remarkable.



We rejoice with **Marlene Marburg** in the birth of her first grandchild, Harriet Rose and congratulate her on passing her PhD thesis *Poetry and Grace: An Autoethnography which Explores Writing Poetry as Prayer in the Context of Ignatian Spirituality*. She thinks there might be two books of poetry coming from it, so stay tuned!

Congratulations to **Carolyn Vimpani** for securing a council grant via the Manningham Small Grant Program for 2012/2013 for \$3350 to help with the production of *Memory Weaving* - the anthology on the theme of people's experiences around dementia. Poems are being accepted up until October 31<sup>st</sup>. People can email Carolyn for more information at [vimpani@bigpond.net.au](mailto:vimpani@bigpond.net.au) or phone 0418 504264.

Congratulations to **Cameron Semmens** who has almost finished another new book, *The Poetry of Home*, due to be launched in September.

Several of our members have been attending and enjoying his lively workshops in the hills.

We wish safe travel to **Peter White** who is travelling to Europe for eight weeks.

### REPORT ON ADDRESSING THE SACRED CONFERENCE by Kathryn Hamann

In the first weekend in August I attended the conference: Addressing the Sacred in Literature and the Arts at the Australian Catholic University in Sydney. I have come back exhausted and exhilarated with so many ideas and images that I really need some time to be able to put them into form. Kevin Hart's erudite address was magnificent and I loved how he

talked about prayer (and poetry born in Augustine's 'the morning light') as exposing ourselves to the gaze of God... a wounding experience from which something new, unexpected comes (if allowed). I think his great emphasis was that as Christians, because of the incarnation we are not 'either or' people but rather, 'both and'; spirituality and materiality. This was picked up in a wonderful paper on Clement and Athanasius. This paper explored how Clement described Christ as Orpheus, whose song created, nay creates the cosmos. That in Christ incarnate therefore the song is an old one, the one that sang creation into being, but a new historical manifestation. And now Christ still sings, sings us and the cosmos into the new creation of everlasting life. And so for Clement, there was no distinction, no secular or sacred, only the song ever sung. I was also lucky enough to be able to attend Anne Benjamin's workshop on Tanka. What a way to start a morning! I also gave a paper, 'In the eye of the Beholder does Truth Lie' that began with a quote from William Blake:

And leads you to Believe a Lie

When you see with, not through, the Eye

and then went on, using this quote, to explore the poems / the themes of my latest book, *Where Shadows Go*. I gave the talk as a DVD and copies are available for a small amount (just to cover costs), via the website [www.shardlight.com](http://www.shardlight.com).

Professor Peter Howard has agreed to launch the book and hopefully this will take place in late September. I want to say a huge thank to those who prayed for me. Physically the trip was very tough, but I did it, and it was a most wonderful experience. I hope I can share more of it with you at some later time. Anne Benjamin's paper on Tanka, of which I have a copy, is well worth our exploring.

## COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

From Sharlee Young we have a request for submissions to *Zadok* magazine as she is poetry editor. *Zadok* is distributed in Christian organisations, bible colleges and theological libraries around Australia. You can email her at [lilyoung99@yahoo.com](mailto:lilyoung99@yahoo.com)

**Poetica Christi Press 2013 Poetry Comp.** Closing date October 31st. Poems up to 50 lines (inc.spaces) on the theme *A Lightness of Being*. 1st prize \$300, 2nd prize \$100, top 25 poems to be published in an anthology. Entries \$5 each or 3 for \$12. Entry forms available at [www.poeticachristi.org.au](http://www.poeticachristi.org.au).

**Blue Giraffe** - Closing dates February and August annually. Selection is ongoing. Up to 5 poems not previously in print or electronic media and not under offer [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

**Azuria**, Geelong's new, independent literary magazine is seeking submissions from Australian & overseas writers of essays, poetry (especially in languages other than English & their translations) and short prose. For further details contact the editor, Dr. E. Reilly, at [geelongwriters@gmail.com](mailto:geelongwriters@gmail.com).

**Uneven Floor**, an independent poetry magazine in blog form published out of Perth, Western Australia, is looking for well-written poems with soul. Poems may be sent in text, video, audio or image format. If you send audio or video, the Editor would like to have the text too, but it isn't essential. Read the submission guidelines (and poems!) at [unevenfloorpoetry.blogspot.com](http://unevenfloorpoetry.blogspot.com).

**Poetry Matters** – established 2006 – accepting submissions. Send 3-5 unpublished poems. Responses – within two weeks. Payment is one copy of issue in which work appears. For complimentary copy of current or previous issue send stamped (\$1-20) self-addressed C5 envelope to Cheryl Howard, 61 Palmer Crescent, Newham Vic 3442. Enquiries: [cherylhoward@tpg.com.au](mailto:cherylhoward@tpg.com.au)  
<http://www.poetrymattersjournal.blogspot.com>

**Plumwood Mountain:** Closing 16th August 2013 An Australian Journal of Eco-poetry and Eco-poetics. Calling for submissions of poetry, scholarly articles and book reviews for its first issue to appear online in February-March 2014. <http://plumwoodmountain.com> Send up to 3 poems in Times New Roman 12pt font, 1.5 spacing as separate email attachments to: [submissions.plumwoodmountain@gmail.com](mailto:submissions.plumwoodmountain@gmail.com) (only .doc, .docx, or .rtf files are acceptable). No personal data should be included with the poems. Send a separate cover sheet with poem titles, your name and contact email address and a short bio (50 words.)  
**The Toolangi C. J. Dennis Poetry Competition** - Closing 7th September 2013. As always, there are three adult categories, as well as primary and secondary categories. This year, 2013, marks the centenary of the publication of C. J. Dennis' first book, 'Backblock Ballads'. It is also an election year. With both these points in mind, the themed category for this year is a poem inspired by 'The Bridge Across the Crick', from 'Backblock Ballads'. For further information go to <http://toolangi.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/CJ-Dennis-Poetry-Comp-form-20131.pdf>.

**Glen Phillips Poetry Prize** has an open theme and entrants must be currently residing in Australia. Prizes 1<sup>st</sup> \$400, 2<sup>nd</sup> \$200 and 3<sup>rd</sup> \$100, with 4 Highly Commended and 4 Commended Certificates. Entry fees: \$10 for one entry, \$25 for 3 entries and \$40 for 5. Closing Date: 27 September 2013. [www.pcwc.org.au](http://www.pcwc.org.au)

## DIARY OF EVENTS

**Saturday, August 10th: 2-5pm:** Poetry workshop with Sherryl Clark, 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster East.

**Friday, September 6th, 6.30-7.30 pm:** Poetry reading at Box Hill Library, Meeting room 1, with Carolyn Vimpani and Joan Ray as guest readers, and featuring poems from the forthcoming book on Dementia.

**Saturday, September 14th: 2-5pm:** Wordsmiths meeting at 8 Woodhouse Rd, East Doncaster.

**Saturday, October 12th: 2-5pm:** Wordsmiths meeting at 8 Woodhouse Rd, East Doncaster.

## POETS' CORNER



### Thanksgiving for Marcia - 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013

precious thoughts  
written minutes before you went  
into the next world

the open door  
did you perceive  
your Lord waiting  
arms wide to receive you  
the moment that aneurysm  
burst in your body?

we search for answers  
about the big beyond  
just as you were doing  
when the word came

your message  
eloquent  
from the grave

life death faith  
beginning ending  
all mystery

one word remains  
explains our need

faith

© *catherine m barnard*

#### **A dark moment**

*Kelly's Cave, Kangaroo Island*

Dense, dark, blackness,  
searing the mind's retina  
of everything we've seen.  
Senses probe outward  
in the nothingness  
returning void of signal or trace.  
Only a stillness  
saturates the darkness,  
holds it still,  
resolute,  
unwavering,  
plumes the space  
with its  
cloud of unseeingness,

smokes up the mind's  
stripped caverns of sight;  
blacks out thoughts  
of paths to be trodden.

Darkness.  
Blankness.  
Nothingness.  
Not yet fear...  
for the time's yet too short  
for its taste,  
but an anxiety  
smudges the air.  
Discomfort breathes  
on some faces  
and a cry congeals  
on one throat.

Ten seconds  
was all that it lasted,  
but palpable,  
the relief from the glow:  
An optic fibre glimmers with hope,  
companioning the darkness,  
a small caved sign  
of God's large Love.

© *Robin Pryor*

(published in *Taking Flight*)

#### **Fractured**

a blue bowl sits on the potter's bench  
with a note handwritten  
*can this be mended?*

the seamless break reveals raw clay  
unadorned  
no touch of glaze  
earth's offering lovingly crafted  
thrown  
molded  
purpose fired

yet here it sits no longer whole  
in silence seeking restoration  
waiting  
for the craftsman's hand  
to piece together  
its reason for being

© *Leigh Hay*

(from her new anthology *Capturing Clouds*)

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*Newsletter produced by Jean and Janette. Any news  
items to [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au) please.*