

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

14.2

May, 2014

GUEST EDITORIAL BY JANETTE FERNANDO

Dear Wordsmiths and friends,

The reason I'm writing this editorial is because Jean Sietzema has decided to retire as Newsletter editor as well as from her role on the book committee, which helps to select the poems for our anthologies. Jean began the Wordsmiths poetry group together with Don Hudson way back in 1987 and it has been going ever since.

I joined the group in 1991 just after Jean had put together the first book *Tree of Life*, for Poetica Christi Press and have been working with Jean for PCP ever since. We're very grateful that Maree Silver has helped us with the finance and administration in recent years.

For over 20 years, Jean hosted and led the Wordsmiths at her home in Mont Albert North. She also initiated and co-ordinated poetry readings on community radio and at the Surrey neighbourhood house and in recent years, at the Box Hill library.

In 2006, Jean retired as Managing editor of PCP, having been at the helm for 16 years. During her time as Managing editor she edited four anthologies, co-edited three anthologies, edited four books for other authors and had five books of her own poems published. She came out of retirement briefly to work with me on the jewel in PCP's crown- our coffee table book *Reflecting on Melbourne*, which has really put PCP on the map. Although she is not on the book committee any more, she remains the Director of PCP's committee.

Jean is a woman of great vision, optimism and enthusiasm. She is also dedicated, hardworking and a great networker, advocating PCP's cause to all and sundry.

The phrase 'Jean is retiring' seems like an oxymoron to anyone who knows her, because she could never be described as a retiring type! Although she is now aged 81, she has hardly slowed down the pace of her life and her mind



is as active as ever. She is hoping to focus this amazing mind of hers into working on her memoirs, which should include many poems along the way.

Jean, thank you for everything! We wish you success in this venture and many more years of writing poetry and being active in Wordsmiths. May God continue to shower you with grace in every part of your life.

Our new newsletter editor is Leigh Hay, who has been sharing her gifts on the PCP committee for many years. Welcome, Leigh!



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
May 10th	Sue	Rebecca/Joan/Don
June 14th	Joan	Leigh/Jean/Maree S
July 12th	Don	Sue/Vicki/Maree N
August 9th	Carolyn	Greg/Peter/Cath

PAST MEETINGS

At the February meeting, the first for 2014, Cath Barnard led the group. Cath highlighted the work of CJ Dennis, with facts about his life and work and some light hearted readings by Cath and Don Helmore. We welcomed Cathy Jansz to the meeting, joining us for the first time.

The March meeting was led by Janette who shared some amazing poems and pictures by a young Lithuanian/American girl, Akiane Kramerik, who was spoken to by God when she was only four. We welcomed a new attendee, Jannah Jenkins. In April, members of Wordsmiths attended the poetry retreat at St Andrews Beach and it was a pleasure to welcome a new face - Lisa Hames-Brooks.

ST ANDREW'S BEACH RETREAT – 5-6 APRIL

The wind-chimes intoned its melodies tirelessly. The people walked the labyrinth or made solo trips to the surf beach or sat in the sun, listening, listening, writing, listening. This was a special time for participants to commune with God in blissful, uninterrupted silence - part of the retreat at the home of Bronwyn Prior at St Andrew's Beach. Coming from our busy lives, it was a joy to be given permission to be silent for a few hours and spend this time in communion with our Maker!

Many other activities were planned for the weekend, the chief one being a workshop after lunch on Sunday with Cam Semmens. In his inimitable creative style, Cam helped us explore different approaches to poetry writing. He gave us ideas to write at least one poem every day.

It was late afternoon when we returned to our homes, glad of the relaxation and peace that the weekend had engendered.

Sincere thanks to Bronwyn Pryor who gave of her time and her generous hospitality to make it a memorable weekend for those who came.

*[Maree's partner, Ron won the prize for the best volunteer dish-washer in the country!]

Cath Barnard



LAUNCH OF MEMORY WEAVING

On Sunday March 2nd I attended this launch at the Doncaster Civic Centre because I was fortunate enough to have my poem included in this publication, along with those of other members of our Society who are established poets, Judith Green, Maree Silver and Sandra Topp. The poems, collected and edited by Carolyn Vimpani, a member of Wordsmiths of Melbourne, had a common theme - Dementia. The people who wrote them and the people who came to listen to them had a common bond – they were, or had been carers, or were closely related to people with Dementia.

You might think this launch, with readings of poems from the book, would be a mournful occasion. It was not. It was dignified and joyful with the anticipation of sharing. The room was packed with people who wanted to share their experience without explanation, with others who understood what it was like. You were greeted at the door by Jean, the Director of Poetica Christi, or Janette, the Managing Editor, or Maree, the Administrative Assistant, and then you wandered in and found yourself a seat. There were people of all ages including remarkably well behaved children who lay in comfort on the carpeted floor. There was even a cheerful harpist whose musical interludes put the children to sleep.

A nervous young representative from the Council made the formal launch then the readings began, conducted by Carolyn and Janette. Poems were across a great range. Some were tenderly affectionate, others gently humorous, some prompted chuckles and laughter, like the poem by the young man who told his grandmother he was engaged. It made her so happy she

congratulated him every time she saw him so that when the engagement fell through, he could never bring himself to tell her. There were poems that became more emotionally charged by being read aloud, mine among them. It took me a while to relax in the warmth of understanding around me and know others there were feeling the same. Six years ago my husband died of a heart attack and vascular dementia. The pain and pity of years of watching him dwindle from a vibrant intelligent man remain. At this gathering I was one among many.

'Memory Weaving' is the 32nd publication by Poetica Christi. After enjoying the generous afternoon tea provided, I had time to look at previous publications on display and was very impressed with the scope and quality of these books of poetry on a range of themes. Great care is taken with lay out and some have beautiful artwork skilfully placed throughout the book. Catalogues of all published books are available and books can be ordered through the Poetica Christi website. (Article written by Lynne Murphy, sourced from Write Away March 2014.)

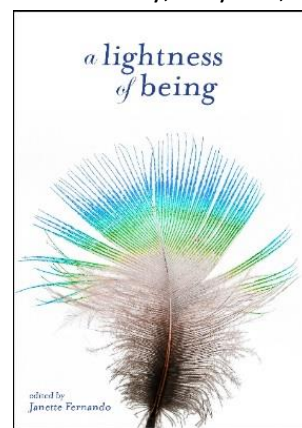


Janette Fernando & Carolyn Vimpani

MORE POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS

We are delighted to announce the launch of **Cathy Altmann's** *Circumnavigation* – her journey through breast cancer told in poetry – on Saturday, May 31st, at 2.30 pm at PLC. An invitation and order form are attached with this newsletter.

We are also looking forward to the launch of our annual anthology **A Lightness of being**, edited by Janette Fernando, at 2 pm on June 22nd, at Box Hill Lutheran Hall.



Marlene Marburg's first collection of poems, *Grace Undone*, is also due to come out, hopefully by August.

MEMBER NEWS

Kathryn Hamann's new book *Lady-in-waiting*, can now be ordered from www.shardlight.com

Marlene Marburg had a poem published in *Eureka Street*,

Janette Fernando had a poem accepted for an anthology in the UK : *The Poet's Quest for God*.

We wish **Peter White** safe travelling through Europe for the month of June.

Joy Chelley is recovering well from recent surgery and extends her greetings to everyone.

VALE Nan Good. We were very sad to hear at the end of last year that Nan Good had died. For a number of years she was part of The Wordsmiths and contributed greatly to our gatherings, by her warmth and her wit. As Pippa Griffiths and Catherine Carr say in their obituary in *The Age* (21.4.14)...*(She) touched everyone she met in a deep and personal way, and will be missed by many.*

She was an actor and artist and became a Christian when Bryan Green came to Melbourne in 1951. She was one of the first women to be ordained in the Anglican Church and became a chaplain at the Royal Women's Hospital. There *she transformed the department from a Christian religious visiting service into one of holistic spiritual caring for people from all creeds and cultures...she devised services for those who had lost babies, which have been described as beautiful events helping many, and allowing some to acknowledge their loss for the first time.* In her last years she gathered the fruit of her life together into a book she called *Just Anybody*.



with all poets invited to BYO poetry, kids, grandkids, or just your inner child.

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Positive Words Magazine

Positive Words magazine is seeking submissions of short stories, articles and poetry for upcoming issues of the monthly magazine. Stories and articles up to 1000 words and poetry up to one page. Open theme. Send submissions and SAE or email address for response to the Editor, Sandra James, PO Box 798, Heathcote 3523, Victoria. positivewordsmagazine.wordpress.com

Right Now

Right Now are currently accepting poetry and spoken word about human rights and social justice for publication on their website. See the website for upcoming themes. melbournespokenword.com

Visible Ink Anthology

This anthology, which has been publishing emerging writers and artists since 1989, is open for entries for its 2014 issue. This year's theme is 'encounters'. New fiction, poetry, photography & illustrations are welcome. The editorial team are working towards paying contributors this year. www.visibleinkanthology.com

The Val Vallis prize for an unpublished poem (or suite of poems) of 100 lines or less. **1st Prize:** \$1,000 + 1 week @ Varuna + publication in *Cordite Poetry Review*. Closing date: 5pm, 10 July. Go to www.queenslandpoetryfestival.com.

The 2014 Blake Poetry Prize. Entries close 4th July. Entry forms and more information available at <http://www.nswwc.org.au/whats-on/competitions/blake-poetry-prize-2/>

REPORT ON BOX HILL LIBRARY READINGS.

In March, **Wendy Fleming** and **Sue Donnelly** were featured readers at the library, supported by contributions from various members of Wordsmiths.



Wendy Fleming Sue Donnelly Greg Burns
Featured readers on May 2nd were **Marion Lemin**, **Sunni Sun** and **Greg Burns**. Their poetry was culturally distinctive and much enjoyed by a sizeable crowd of regulars, newcomers and supporters. The next reading is on **Friday July 18** and will feature illustrator/cartoonist **Penne Gilles**. An open reading,

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, May 10th: 2-5pm: Wordsmiths Meeting at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster East.

Saturday, May 31st, 2.30 pm: Launch of *Circumnavigation* at PLC, 141 Burwood Hwy, Burwood.

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

Sunday, June 22nd, 2- 4pm: Launch of 'A Lightness of being.' at Box Hill Lutheran hall.

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

Friday, July 18th, 6.30-7.30 pm: Poetry reading at Box Hill Library with Penne Gilles as guest reader.

*** Please note that membership dues of \$30 are now due (see Response slip)**

POETS' CORNER



Nobody knows

Nobody knows what heaven is like –
“The Hereafter” ...how can we?
There are no brochures, glossy or otherwise.

I feel ambivalent about going there.

I am puzzled and surprised by my reluctance.
A bit ashamed.

It has to be better than this
Better than the best I can imagine
Let alone already know
From the interesting charivari of my life:
Highs and lows, joys and woes,
Woven together by a golden cord,
The lively lovely love of God.

In ‘the life hereafter’ which some call heaven
I shall see and know and understand.
I shall be who I truly am.

What niggles me is this –
What shall I *do*?

The purpose, the aim of my life,
The wellspring of pleasure,
Has long been in helping and giving and doing –
The great endeavour to realise
And to reflect into the world
The love of God.

Your love
Creating me, blessing my desire,
My yearning burning struggling straggling desire
To create, to heal, to embody,
To capture the glory,
To try to convey
That which is beyond my doing, utterly,
But burns within me none the less
As holy fire.

To this my life, my way of being for so long.
How else shall I be my own true self?
When all is said and done, what shall I *do*?
©Nan Good

Passing the Old Children's

No longer royal just a building –
bare bones sinking into the rubbish
heap formed from its unmaking

And my office in Oncology? where
I would work through files fronted
with bold strokes of black text
an individual number and
a child's name. My job –
reduce whatever lay within to
data so survival might be mapped.

There was one particular day
when in search of a missing
history I got up and left
my statistics... outside
in the corridor... a five-year-old
left stretchered... post-chemo
vomiting.

All my elegant graphs...
somehow they had not
barred the cost.

© Kathryn Hamann
(published in *Omega Writers Newsletter #8, April '14.*)

Wax and Wane

Wax well today, my child.
Rich honey networks in the comb,
buzz of the bustle drives the bee
wholesome vibrations hum the hive.
Wax polishes with warming rub.
Queen centres love alive.

Wear well your life, my son.
Put on Paul's armour, make it shine.
Suppliant long tasks are your worth
so stitch and stretch loose sinews taut.
Act often beyond self, wisely,
replace your pace with thought.

Wane well my dear old friend.
Ebbing sun is mellow ember.
As fuel fails, temper flames subside.
Solomon's wisdom be your compass,
God's Son's compassion your solace,
the Spirit of heaven your guide.
©Don Helmore

auction day

ominous
dark clouds gathering
imaging the mood
within the home
committed to selling...

on purchasing their dream home
they hadn't foreseen
retrenchment
now they wait

regretting... © Carolyn Vimpani

RESPONSE SLIP – send to PCP Treasurer, 12 Cypress Ave, Burwood, 3125

I have enclosed my yearly membership dues (\$30) as a Wordsmith/Friend of *PCP*.
Cheques should **only** be made out to **POETICA CHRISTI PRESS** (Not Wordsmiths)
or direct debit (quoting your name in the reference):

Name : Poetica Christi Press, BSB: 633-000, Account number : 118162593

I cannot afford \$30 but enclose a donation.

Please delete me from your mailing list.

Please email me the newsletter from now on.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE : _____ **EMAIL:** _____