

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

15.1

February, 2015

Welcome to the first edition of the Wordsmiths newsletter for 2015.

As Wordsmiths, we're in for another year of meeting and workshopping together once a month, to read our latest effort...and have it read to us.

This got me thinking. For me, one of the joys of writing a poem is being able to share it with others. I really enjoy reading my poems out loud to a living (or non-living) audience.

For instance, my grandmother's portrait has heard my poems about her and my grandfather. Our Whippets were always very keen on listening to me relate anything that included a dog or walks by the river. I have often sat on my brother's grave and launched into A.A. Milne (his and my favourite poet from childhood) and a number of sunny park benches around Melbourne could probably recognise this odd woman who sits and reads aloud, especially on mild spring and autumn days.

So in 2015, don't keep your poetry on your laptop or in a box under the bed. Either come along to Wordsmiths or share with the universe. I for one want to be read to!!

Leigh Hay

PAST MEETINGS

The November Wordsmiths meeting featured a workshop led by Earl Livings (see article below). The December meeting was the last for 2014 and was well attended by Wordsmiths who shared an end of year lunch together, followed by poetry workshopping led by Maree Silver, who began by sharing some marvelous Christmas poems by various authors.



WORKSHOP BY EARL LIVINGS

Thirteen poets - eleven Wordsmiths and two visitors, were fortunate to have Earl Livings, who is well-known in creative writing circles, and who publishes the on-line poetry magazine *Divan*, present a generous Workshop - "POETS USING DREAMS" at the November Wordsmiths meeting held at Carolyn Vimpani's on 8 November last year.

Earl first gave us an overview of what he calls The Writing Cycle. The steps he spoke of were Preparation, First Draft, Secondary Composition, Publication and Business.

He then talked about using our dreams as a source for our poetry and presented some sensible options for recalling them. I had to admit that I rarely remember a dream and therefore would find the exercises he had planned a bit challenging, however I did manage to work through them because of the way Earl explained the steps to recording a dream, and because the steps worked well with a memory even if it was not actually a dream. Some of the poets were able to recall their dreams and had the basics for future 'dream' poetry. In my case I also found ideas for a future poem or two.

We had some fun during the 10 minute speed writing exercise which followed, trying to stick to Earl's instructions and after the time was up to dissect our writing for words or phrases from which we could form our poems.

The handout was comprehensive and as our workshopping time quickly ran out, we took them with us to work through at home, as and when dream recall helps us to form our writings into poetry.

Earl stayed for afternoon tea and then joined our usual workshopping session afterwards. I was really pleased to have received his expert critique of my poem along with comments from the Wordsmiths.

Earl also offered to present a future workshop on Poets using Myths.

Maree Silver

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The first three meetings of the year will be on the 14th of February and March, and the 11th of April, at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster east, from 2-5 pm. In April we usually have a Poetry Retreat at St Andrews, but this year we are holding it over until November. Here is the roster for the next few months.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
14.2.15	Janette	Jean, Leigh, Rebecca
14.3.15	Carolyn	Greg, Peter, Janette
11.4.15	Jean	Don, Maree, David

REPORT ON BOX HILL LIBRARY READING

The November reading was well attended, with at least 30 people present. It featured **Marlene Marburg**, who read from her new book *Grace Undone: Love*. Her poetry is profound, her deep faith infusing her observations of everyday life. **Peter White** was the other featured reader, entertaining us with a selection of his poems, including a few of his plague poems as well as some poems inspired by his overseas travels. Other readers included Cath Barnard, Jean Sietzema-Dickson, Joan Ray, Janette Fernando, Roslyn White, and Carole Poustie.



The next reading will be on **Friday, March 13th**, with **Cath Barnard** and **Don Helmore** as the featured readers.

FROM THE TREASURER

Membership payments of \$30.00 for the year 1 January 2015 -31 December 2015 are now due. Payment in cash preferred, correct money if possible to Maree Silver (Treasurer), or if paying by cheque, make the cheque out to Poetica Christi Press or direct debit (quoting your name in the reference):
Name : Poetica Christi Press, BSB: 633-000,
Account number : 118162593

VALE ELAINE FOSTER

Wordsmiths was saddened to hear of the death of Elaine Foster who passed away in December. Elaine had been a member of Wordsmiths for a number of years and Janette Fernando and Jean Sietzema-Dickson attended Elaine's funeral on December 12. Jean has written the following obituary:
Elaine Mary Foster was 88 when she died, older than she would admit to members of Wordsmiths. In those many years she had lived a remarkable life, two thirds of which she had lived as a man.
Elaine was born on 19/9/1926, named Ralph Leo Gunther, and as that person gained a PhD from the University of California Berkeley in 1960. Known as Leo,



he held degrees in the general area of Biophysics also from England and probably Germany. He was an Amateur Radio operator at the age of 13, a US Marine in Japan at the end of WWII, racing car driver in the US, and an activist who had a visit from the FBI. Leo moved to Tasmania in the 1960s where he worked at the University of Tasmania.

In about 1975, Leo rang Rodney Reynolds to tell him what Rodney had already guessed, that he was about to undergo a gender change. Elaine, as Leo became, moved to Melbourne and sought positions looking after children. At some stage before we met, her house had burned down and with it many possessions, including books. Always she was seeking to know more and although her short term memory failed in the last year she was still able to think about the past very clearly. Only a couple of days before her death Elaine was questioning the ability of electrons to store digital information in a readable form during a discussion on subatomic physics.

Elaine spent much effort in seeking a compatible Christian community, trying one church group after another and always finding them wanting.

I am grateful to her for bullying me into joining her on many theatre outings, which I would probably not have organised for myself.

Elaine was both a fascinating and challenging person, very demanding and yet always thinking about interesting matters and eager to discuss them.

Jean Sietzema-Dickson (with acknowledgement to Rodney Reynolds for information supplied).

MEMBER NEWS

Maree Silver's first collection of poetry, **Threshold – A miscellany – Poems of Country and City**, (published by Poetica Christi Press) will be launched by Cameron Semmens on Saturday February 21 @ 2pm in the Wesley Room at Burwood Uniting Church, cnr Warrigal Rd & Hyslop St (entry in Hyslop St), Glen Iris. Afternoon tea will be provided and copies of **Threshold** will be available for purchase @ \$25 per copy. Copies can also be purchased from Poetica Christi Press, (add \$2.50 for postage). www.poeticachristi.org.au

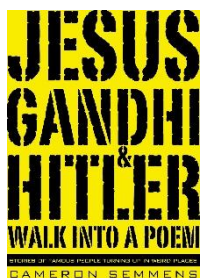


Sue Donnelly will be celebrating 'A night of Romance for Lovers of all Ages' to promote her book **Heartfelt Moments**. The venue is Eltham Library, Thursday 12 February 7.00-8.00pm., Panther Place, Eltham. Sue will be focussing on romance and fun and is willing to post the book to anyone unable to attend.

Congratulations to **Joy Chellew** who will (DV) celebrate her 90th birthday on 22 February. Joy is Wordsmith's oldest, original member. Her second book of poems is due out this year.

Cam Semmens has released his latest collection of poetry, *Jesus Gandhi & Hitler Walk into a Poem - Famous people turning up in weird places*. Copies are priced @ \$12.99 and available from Cam :

<http://www.webcameron.com>



Congratulations to **Rebecca Maxwell** who was awarded 2nd prize for the Christmas Competition of Vic Society of Women Writers.

WINNERS OF THE 2014 PCP POETRY COMPETITION

The winners of the 2014 PCP Poetry Competition for Inner Child have been announced.

First prize : Christopher Ringrose for *1952: Survivors*

Second prize : Christina Spry for *Tempus Fugit, Nil Desperandum*

Poems by Wordsmiths members Maree Silver and Cam Semmens were also included in the judge's top 25 choices. A list of all poems selected by the judge is now available on PCP's web site <http://www.poeticachristi.org.au/competition.html>

Submissions invited for Inner Child Anthology

All members of Wordsmiths are invited to submit poems for selection for this year's anthology *Inner Child*, to be published by PCP. This topic lends itself to poems about childhood, innocence, enjoying the simple things in life, feeling carefree, fun, exuberance, zest for living, playfulness, hope, wonder, imagination, reminiscence, vivacity, whimsy, birth, ageing. Poems are to be no longer than **50 lines** (excluding title but including line spaces) and entries are NOT to show the poet's details. Poems can include previously published work, and deadline is **end of February**. Poems can be submitted at the Feb 14 Wordsmiths meeting, or emailed to Maree gmsilver@optushome.com.au

WRITERS' RETREAT IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

A unique opportunity – a writing holiday against the backdrop of the Australian outback. Camping beside a waterhole and absorbing the sights, smells and ancient atmosphere of this country provides a rare opportunity for individual creative writing which can be shared with likeminded scribes and scribblers each evening under the stars. For more information go to : <http://www.treklarapinta.com.au/VolunteerAndSpecialtyTours/WritersRetreat2015.html>

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Josephine Ulrick Prize : Among the richest poetry and short story prizes in the world, the Griffith University Josephine Ulrick prizes in 2015 are worth \$30,000 in total prize money. Closes 13 February 2015

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/humanities-languages/school-humanities/news-and-events/josephine-ulrick-prizes>

Vice-Chancellor's International Poetry Prize :

The prize celebrates the enduring significance of poetry to cultures everywhere in the world, and its ongoing and often seminal importance to world literatures.

<http://www.canberra.edu.au/vcpoetryprize>

Closes 29 May 2015

Woorilla Poetry Prize

The PAVE Festival (Performing And Visual arts in Emerald) is working in collaboration with 'Woorilla Magazine' to restore the Woorilla Poetry Prize.

<http://www.pave.org.au/>. Closes March 11

Submit to 'Best Australian Science Writing 2015'

Entries are now open for the 'Best Australian Science Writing' 2015 anthology. Submissions can be news stories, features, blogs, opinion pieces, poems, short stories, book chapters and excerpts published since 1 January 2014. Soon-to-be published works will also be considered. Maximum length is 7000 words.

<http://www.newsouthpublishing.com> Closes 31 March

Field of Words Writing Prize

Field of Words aims to help emerging writers grow. Their biannual short story competition is open to Australian residents aged 18 and over. Writers are invited to enter a story of between 1000-2500 words on any theme, in any genre. Entry fee \$20.

<http://fieldofwords.com.au/> Opens 2 February

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, February 14 : 2-5pm: First meeting for 2015 of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

Saturday, February 21st, 2pm: Launch of **Maree Silver's** book *Threshold* at Burwood Uniting church. (see attached invitation.)

Friday, March 13 : 6.30-7.30 pm: Poetry reading at Box Hill Library. Featured poets will be Cath Barnard and Don Helmore. If you wish to register to read in open mic, contact leigh@leighhay.com.au

Saturday, March 14 : 2-5pm: Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

Saturday, April 11th, 2-5 pm: Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

---O---

Newsletter prepared by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando. Please send any news to leighhay@optusnet.com.au

POETS' CORNER



Lighting A While *by Elaine Foster*

A companion is gone, and therein lies a doom.
Some friends fill that place at times these days,
To share the lights and darks of the weaver's loom.
And yet... and yet, one wanders in a lonely daze.

The bards declare, *Nor foes nor friends should hurt,*
And, *All should count with you, but none too much...*
And yet... and yet, one moves upon the darkening deep
To seek with one to share... to share... to touch...

Yet, in sharing, what mortal coil will move that deep
To stab the heart in this life of dream and sleep?
For fear of this we live, and move our being
in these dreams,
And plod our way, alone until it seems
Too much to bear... and then like snow
Upon the desert's dusty face,
Lighting a little while,
We go.

Spring haiku *by Jean Sietzema-Dickson*

Clouds purloin pink
from a newly risen sun
to colour my day

Lemon scented gum
does a tantalisingly
slow strip tease

On five fingers
bottlebrush spreads its glory
transient, crimson

NUB *by Don Helmore*

adam's eve
garden walked
nubile
in loveliness
trees did not bow
sensing her beauty
blemished
by their fruit

but willows weep
and leaves fall
still

Murray River Reflections *by Maree Silver*

River overflows
in age-old
cycle

Parched country,
ancient red gums
drink deeply

Hushed stillness,
motionless air,
reflections float and flicker –

land and water merge,
image and reality create
a masterpiece

Mallee mystery
engulfs

(from her new collection *Threshold*)

Tar Pit *by Greg Burns*

I pressed the
waste-my-kinetic-energy-
and-turn-it-into-heat-
by-the-destruction-of-
metal-ceramic-pieces
pedal.

I wondered how I'd met
this impasse.

Was it a result of
too much application of the
convert-chemical-
into-kinetic-energy-
by-use-of-a-heat-engine
pedal?

I sat over a strip of solidified oils
covered by steel cabinets
of varying age. Each held
a complement of other
organic residues inside.

My heat engine made noise,
but no discernible work was produced
other than escape
of hot gases and
hydrocarbon fumes.

Perhaps that is my purpose.