



WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

8.2 May, 2008

Dear Wordsmiths and Friends,

There have been times when I have felt almost overwhelmed by the immensity of the task that we have in front of us with the Melbourne book as submission after submission has come pouring in. I know Janette has felt the same as we consider the amount of finance we need to raise to make the project manageable. But I do believe that the time is ripe for this project and the enthusiastic response of the Melbourne Poetry community has been heart-warming. I have been busy with the **flood of poems, a number from leading poets including Lyn Hatherly, Kristin Henry and Bruce Dawe.** We've also received a number of excellent artworks and photographs for consideration. I am thankful for the uplift I have felt from the gathered prayers of the group as we go on with this exciting project.

We have had an initial encouraging response from a few Wordsmiths in finding sponsorship for the book (over \$1800 so far) but **we need many more sponsors if this side of our fund raising is to be effective.** I see this not merely as a begging exercise, which I find hard myself, but as a way to make this book truly a communal production. So please folk, offer your friends, family and small businesses you know an opportunity to be part of this exciting project.

Our last meeting was again one of the largest meetings of the Wordsmiths we have yet had: 21 people participated and there were two apologies. As a consequence the meeting did not disband till after 6.00pm, by which time my husband was feeling he needed some space. I think we shall have to put a time limit more securely in place. At our meetings this year numbers have been still growing: 20 in February, 18 on the long weekend in March and 21 in April. We thank God for this growth but Janette and I have discussed this and think the meeting should start at 1.45 for a 2pm start and go no later than 5.30pm. If there are 18 or more we will have two separate groups for workshopping – one in the sunroom and one downstairs. **We welcome new members Louise Joy and Mary O'Shannessy.**

Meetings have been lively affairs with much converse going on at the tea break. As with church I feel this socialising time is an important

part of our meeting. With this newsletter you will also receive a revised membership list. Please do make time to look this over every now and again and hold your fellow poets up in prayer. I believe this is one of our great strengths as a group. If any of you are interested in being paired with another member as prayer partners, please let us know. We also need to make sure that one person is not left to do the clearing and washing up alone. My special thanks to Joan Ray who selflessly and quietly slipped out while we were all engrossed and did it virtually by herself this time. Many, many thanks Joan! Here is a roster for afternoon tea (i.e. bringing some food and doing dishes.)

June - Louise, Lucy & Cath
July - Dilys, Cameron & Leigh
August - Sue, Ros & Marguerite
September - Keith, Maree N & Marlene
October - Joy, Carolyn & Paige
November - Poetry Weekend
December - Maree S, Kathryn & Sondy

If you cannot come, swap with someone else. I was delighted with the number of people who contributed cakes and biscuits for afternoon tea this time, as I had had a particularly hectic week, but from the number of objects belonging to others that are gradually gathering at my home I think I shall have to open a **Lost Property Office!** To date I have: a metal basket, which arrived laden with figs, belonging to Maree Nikolaou. I also have one white knitted, cotton jumper, and several plates. Please, if you have brought contributions for afternoon tea, remember to collect your plate or dish. I'm sure my grandchildren will enjoy the jelly babies that Sue Donnelly contributed last time!

Next Meeting will be on May 10th. Instead of meeting at my place we will gather at Federation Square at 2.00pm to support Kathryn Hamann and Cameron Semmens who are featured readers for the FAW reading there.

(Poetry@fedsquare is in the Atrium within the alcove of Jolimont Cafe . You enter it from Flinders St, 1st caf on the left .) We have been given the opportunity for The Wordsmiths of Melbourne to fill up the open reading time. We have asked some readers to take up this

opportunity and to give us a good profile. **I would be glad if all who are reading could meet under the clocks at Flinders St. at 1.30pm** so we can decide on our order of readers. I also believe this is a great opportunity to showcase the *Melbourne Reflections* book so any of you who have poems which have been selected already please bring them along to read.

I suggest that we could all have a cup of coffee nearby afterwards so we can discuss the whole afternoon and give Kathryn and Cameron some feedback. Phil Ilton has already said he would be happy to do that, and Margaret Campbell is coming up from Werribee, so it is on for all who want to share afterwards.

Our next Wordsmiths meetings on June 14th and July 12th will be back to usual, but the one after **that, on August 12th will be a Poetry Workshop, led by Kathryn Hamann.**

Please also keep the weekend of **November 7th-9th free so you can attend our annual Poetry Retreat.**

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING?

Two of our Wordsmiths have had launches in the last two months. Cameron Semmens was first, with his new book *Through the Lover's Window*. Not only is it a beautifully presented book, thanks to the illustrations by Hamish MacWilliam, but the poetry in it just makes you want to keep reading. The way it was launched, with Mike Carney on keyboard and Rod Gear on double bass accompanying many of the poems as Cameron read them, made for an evocative reading indeed. The book should be required reading for anyone who has experienced (or is contemplating) a relationship break-up.

Dr. Peter Steele launched Kathryn Hamann's *The Threshold of Silence* on April 20. Held at the Yarra Theological College this was a well-attended affair. We gathered on the balcony for nibbles and moved into a lecture room for the launch. Br Angelo spoke wittily and warmly, Peter Steele gave Kathryn's book a well deserved write up and we were regaled with music from



Judith and Will Hamann and Monique Lisbon (who also formatted the book for publication.) Kathryn shared a few poems with us to whet our appetites for the book itself. A joyful afternoon to conclude what for me had already been a joyful day as my fifth grandchild, Shontai Josie de Vries, was born that morning to my daughter Rachel. If you want to buy the book, for \$25 plus \$3.50 postage, email Kathryn at hamann_k@optusnet.com.au

or phone (03) 9893 3224 or you can order the book securely on-line by going to the website: www.shardlight.com

The next evening four Wordsmiths were present at the launch of Joan Ackland's first book of poetry. This remarkable woman, now over 80, has been a musician and an actress as well as being the author of a number of books. In 1992 she edited a book to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the national Council of Women. Several Wordsmiths were represented in *The Whirling Spindle* and as a result we asked Joan to launch our poem cards that year. She has been a good friend and a great encouragement to us ever since. Her book *At the Wind's Hand* was launched by Judith Rodriguez at Readings in Carlton. A great crowd had gathered for this event and we were rewarded by hearing Joan speak of her life and read a few of her beautifully crafted poems.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

I managed to visit **Jean Jeffery** recently. She is still her feisty self but has had another fall recently. Do pray for her and for **Mary Macdonald, for Nel Lewis** whose eyesight is not up to much and who is still limited after a slight stroke and **Marie-Louise Stephens** whose health is not good.

Leigh Hay has had a wonderful trip to England and we welcome her back. Work on her children's book *Stick your neck out* is continuing.

Cameron Semmens is also close to finishing off a new children's book: *Water, Wine and a Wonderful Wedding - Jesus changes water into wine in W!* All the illustrations are bright, vivid and energetic, done by the same illustrator - Rod Allen - who did his previous children's book. It is due out in a couple of months.

Cathy Altmann and Janette Fernando have poems in the 2008 Moving Galleries exhibition, to be launched on May 8th, so you may spot their work on a train anytime after that.

My book *The Huggle* is almost ready and we hope to launch it in August or September.

COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

The Mozzie - poetry 'zine. Poetry from 'round Aust. & the globe. Monthly publication. Submissions welcome. Eds; Gloria B. Yates & Ron Heard. 12 Elgata St, Petrie Qld, 4502

Stylus Poetry Journal – send up to 3 contemporary poems to Rosanne on editor@styluspoetryjournal.com and haiku to Janice on janbos@dodo.com.au www.styluspoetryjournal.com

'**Mascara**', is a new online poetry journal with particular interest in Australasian poetry. Submissions by email are now open. Send 3-5 of your best unpublished poems or an essay to editor@mascarapoetry.com Payment will apply for work published in 2008.

Wet Ink accepts hardcopy submissions of poetry, short fiction and essays. www.wetink.com.au

The Tasmanian Times - no closing dates. Poets with a Tasmanian connection (can include holidays, relatives, business...) may send up to 5 poems not previously in print or electronic media. Check out the ezine first to see the type of ezine and range of poetry published. Poems to peter.macrow@gmail.com

Woorilla Annual Poetry Prize 2008 - Closing 30th May 2008

Judged by Judith Rodriguez Open Section: Prize \$1000 Youth Section: Prize \$100
Send entries and fee to: Woorilla Magazine, 255 Macclesfield Rd. Macclesfield, Vic 3782
Enquiries to woorilla@tpg.com.au

2008 Shoalhaven Literary Award – Closing 30th May 2008

Judge is Jennifer Compton. First Prize \$1000 plus 4 x prizes of \$200 each plus commendations. Any theme to max 60 lines. www.fawnswshoalhaven.org.au for info and entry forms

PressPress Chapbook Award - Closing 30th May 2008

Unpublished manuscript of poetry up to 40 pages total suitable for chapbook. Prize \$300 plus publication. Entry \$15 Enquiries to www.presspress.com.au/award.htm

Connex Moving Galleries Exhibition - Closing 30th May 2008

Spring theme is 'innocence' and Autumn theme is 'transformation'. Moving Galleries exhibitions will be incorporating all forms of poetry, from rooku to sonnets, acrostics to blank verse. Check at <http://movinggalleries.org> to register or phone (03) 9650 8800 for more info.

Blake Poetry Prize - Closing 27th June 2008
Theme: bliss blasphemy and belief. Entry \$15.

Prize: \$5000 Go to: www.wetink.com.au for details

Blast: poetry and other critical writing – Closing 31st July 08 for Sept issue

Blast has been awarded an arts ACT grant to pay contributors in 2008. Submissions can be forwarded by mail to *Blast*, PO Box 134, Campbell ACT, 2612; or to anugent@annsverandah.com
Details: www.annsverandah.com/blast/

DIARY OF EVENTS

Tuesday, May 6th Poetry Seminar "Threads and Patterns" with Barbara Rautman at Wellspring, 10 Y St. Ashburton. 10am-3pm. \$20. To book, phone Wellspring 9885 0277 at 9.30am.

Saturday, May 10th 2.00-4.00 pm Federation Square, Poetry@fedsquare is in the Atrium within the alcove of Jolimont Cafe . You enter it from Flinders St, 1st caf on the left. (Reading followed by coffee together.)

Wednesday, May 14th 2.00-4.00pm Reading at 157 Union Rd, Surrey Hills, with **Kathryn Hamann** as special guest. (\$5 entry)

May 24th 2.00-4.00pm with afternoon tea break. Jean S-D and Ros Aldersea to present poetry at St Timothy's Bulleen, 30 Lilian St, Bulleen. I'm sure the group would welcome any others who would like to come to that event. But it might be good if you were to ring Shirley Morris, 9842 7617.

Wednesday, June 11th 2-4 Reading at 157 Union Rd, Surrey Hills. Guest reader is **Aileen Kelly**. Don't miss this chance to hear words of wisdom and poetic insight from one of Melbourne's leading award winning poets.(\$5 entry)

Saturday, June 14th Wordsmiths meet at 493 Elgar Rd. 1.45-5.00pm.

Wednesday, July 9th 2-4pm. Reading at 157 Union Rd, Surrey Hills. Guest reader: **Kristin Henry** who has endeared herself to Melbourne poets by her lucidity and humour. (\$5 entry)

Saturday, July 12th Wordsmiths meet at 493 Elgar Rd. 1.45-5.00pm.

MID YEAR BOOK SALE (valid till June 30th)

Why not shout yourself a new book, or stock up for future presents for those you love?

Water of Life, Source of Life, On our Reflection, Life Dance, Set Free and Getting into the Spirit are all available at **half price** - only \$5 each, plus postage!

And savings of around **20% off** all our other books! See enclosed order form.

POETS' CORNER



Mobile phones

Unlike little children, who start small and grow big
mobile phones are just a new kind of gig.
They began too large, too heavy for me
then they grew smaller, down four by three.
They're much thinner now and no longer black,
they slip into pockets, so easy to pack.
What do you think of that red one of mine?
My friend's one is pink and she thinks it's fine.
There are more colours neat shapes and sizes
colours are welcomed, 'specially as prizes.
It's a way of talking, in crowds or alone
You can't feel left out with a mobile phone.

© *Dilys Terry Smith*

The Coming of Light

Light :
breaks through the tiniest cracks
easing itself into spaces
otherwise unrecognizable

giving colour
to what was drab
form
to what was shapeless
meaning
to what we could not
understand.

© 2005 *jmsd*

Winner of St Andrew's Uniting Church,
Bacchus Marsh Poetry Competition 2008

Lilydale 5:06 Express

train travellers
too tongue-tired to talk
like peace in a pod

© *Janette Fernando*

Rock of Ages

you trod lightly on the earth
millennia ago
leaving neither
relics nor antiquities
nor footprints fossilized in rock
to verify your journey

yet

imprints of your teaching
communicating mystery
still resonate within

updraughts of your spirit
breathe gifts of love and truth
and eternal water flows

© *Maree Silver*

untitled

Once
thoughts speared
sharp as lightning
to my pen
but when I spoke
tangled confusion reigned.
My head has always known
the sharp intelligence
often locked within;
tongues, bodies of the palsied
drooling
mumbling
knowing
lifetime frustration.
At the wonder
of spastic courage
I stand in awe.
Thank you God
for understanding.

© *Nel Lewis*

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send them in now to Poetica Christi Press,
42 Hawkins Rd, Montrose, 3765*