

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

15.4

November, 2015

Welcome to the final (November) edition of the Wordsmiths' newsletter for 2015.

When I think of the Wordsmiths annual poetry retreat, it prompts me to think about the nature of a retreat. The first thing that comes to mind is silence, followed by solitude. I think of retreats as an opportunity to regroup, rethink, and reorganise. More importantly, we are given the chance to refresh and renew. A retreat is a time to step back from the busyness of life and just be. A time to meditate, a time to pray and a time to be still.

How many of us long to retreat from the everyday to find space and quietness to write that special poem? Some poems just happen, but the seeds of many poems require a calm mind, or a meditative space or both.

As poets, it is nice to enjoy a retreat together. Spending time with like-minded colleagues is always positive and nurturing. Our monthly meetings are a retreat of sorts – three hours during which time we encourage and support each other, workshop our poems and leave on a positive note.

But solitude, silence and stillness belong in another realm – retreating to a place most of us rarely have the chance to visit. I guess what I'm saying here, is if you haven't put your name down for this year's retreat on Sunday 16/11 at magnificent St Andrew's beach, there's still time to discover yourself and the poetry you are capable of writing. If you can't make it, then find some time to treat yourself to a retreat!

Leigh Hay

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

There will be no meeting in November, as this weekend has been set aside for the annual **Poetry retreat** at St Andrews Beach. As most people couldn't come on the Saturday, we have shortened the retreat to just the Sunday, November 15th.

Bron Pryor will lead the Quiet Morning from 10 am-1 pm on the theme *Finding Heaven in the Here and Now*, then after lunch **Marlene Marburg** will lead a Poetry workshop from 1.30-3.30 pm. See the attached flyer to register.

The final Wordsmiths meeting for 2015 will be on the first Saturday of the month rather than the 2nd: **Saturday 5th December**, commencing at 1pm instead of 2pm. BYO lunch to share. The meeting will be led by Cath Barnard.

VALE KATHRYN HAMANN



Christine Kathryn Hamann died on August 22nd this year. With her passing Melbourne has lost the voice of one of its most remarkable and prolific poets. Kathryn was only 60 years old, but she has contributed much to the various groups of which she was a part. And I have lost a treasured friend.

Though her upbringing was in the Catholic church her disgust at the official attitude of the church towards women and the recent scandals led her to join the Anglican church. Her funeral was held at St George's Anglican Church in Travancore on September 4. Not surprisingly the church was packed and the service paid tribute to Kathryn in using poetry of hers and from the great poets in her life. It also made clear that her faith in God was the focus of an incredibly dedicated life.

Married to Conrad she travelled with him to the USA where she worked in an atomic facility with no protection against radiation. As Conrad was on a scholarship she was not legally entitled to work so she could make no complaint about her situation but she suffered from increasing ill health from then on. This was made worse by treatment, which affected her in other ways, but nothing could stop the outpouring of poetry, or her encouragement of other poets.

Kathryn had a brilliant mind and a wicked sense of humour, which she used to great effect in her poetry. She never stopped studying poetry, Greek, Hebrew, and sharing her insights was an especial delight for her.

In the years since I have known her, Kathryn has had 11 collections of poetry published. Her coffee-table book *A Slight Fuzzing of perspective* shared first prize in the CALEB awards, Poetry section, in 2011.

She was a great advocate for those with disabilities, especially Autism and Dementia and many of her poems reflect this. She is survived by Conrad and their two children – Judith, who has become an incredibly gifted musician and William who now has a job in disability services where he uses his considerable skills.

Jean Sietzema-Dickson

BOX HILL LIBRARY READINGS



The 4th September readings were not as well attended as previous ones this year, but the poetry more than made up for the smaller gathering. **Christina Spry** and **Pauline Reeve** were featured readers and their poetry was of a very high standard. Both read extremely well from work that was well constructed and at times, very entertaining. Wendy Fleming, Cath Barnard, Janette Fernando and Leigh Hay contributed to the open mic section, and poetry on the night was well received and appreciated.



The final library reading was held on Friday, November 6th, featuring **Cath Barnard** and **Craig Coulson**. Cath read both poignant and humorous poems, including some reflecting her environmental concerns, which were appreciated by the large audience. Craig, who is a café poet, read poems mainly focussed on social justice and

these were also well-received. This reading marked the end of an era, as we have no further readings planned for the library. Thanks to Jean, Kathryn, Leigh and Maree for organising these since 2007.

PAST MEETINGS

The August Wordsmiths meeting was led by **Maree Nikolaou**. Maree read poems by one of Australia's best known bush poets, Henry Lawson, as well as the poem by David Campbell that won the 2015 Henry Lawson poetry competition.

At the September meeting **Cecily Falkingham** read two poems about mushrooms...one by Australian poet John Shaw Neilson and the other by American Sylvia Plath. Cecily also gave a background on both poets.

The October meeting was led by **Maree Silver**. Maree read poems that she had known since primary school, when children first begin to appreciate the rhythm of words. Chosen poets included Phoebe Carey, William Wordsworth, John Masefield, Walter de la mare, William Shakespeare, Ella Wheeler Wilcox and WB Yeats.

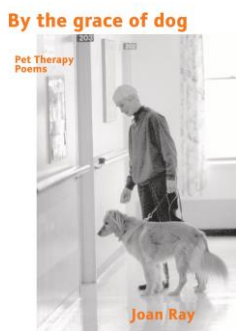
POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS

We have just received this year's competition results back and are pleased to announce that the winner is **Avril Bradley**. Second prize goes to Wordsmith **Cameron Semmens**. To quote from the judge: *The winning poem, "The view from a balcony in Noosa", and the second place-getter, "Upon holding a brand new person (womb-fresh and yawning)" coincidentally, as it turned out, evoke the opposite ends of life's progression: from old age with its loss and frailty and sadness to the wonder and newness and joy of birth. In different styles, each with powerful and lasting images, they evoke life ebbing away / life with all its promise and energy with flair and sophistication. A personal world is entered.* Other Wordsmiths whose poems were among 25 chosen by the judge to go into the next anthology include: **Joy Chellew**, **Bron Williams** and **Don Helmore**. Congratulations to all of them! If anyone would still like to send in your poems for consideration in the anthology, please email them to poetica@iprimus.com.au.

It's been quite a year for Poetica Christi Press this year, as we hope to have two more books out by the end of the year – *Trumped by Grace* by Peter Stiles and *White on White* by Gina Sbato. That will mean we have published five books this year- a record number!

MEMBER NEWS

Joan Ray is about to have her first book of poems launched, on December 3rd, at Manningham City Square (MC2) Doncaster & Templestowe rooms, 2nd floor (687 Doncaster Rd, Doncaster) at 12.45 pm on Thursday, December 3rd. The book is called ***By the grace of dog*** and features poems about her 25 years involvement in Pet Therapy in hospitals and nursing homes. If you can't get to the launch but would like to buy her book for \$20 (plus \$3.30 postage) please email her at jray.29@internode.on.net. Joan has also been awarded a second prize in the 'Art, other media (Novice)' section of the Veterans' Story Writing and Art Competition (SWAC) for 2015. Joan's picture was a pastel entitled 'Sea wreck & striated sand'. This year, instead of a poem, Joan researched background information on a story her father used to tell, and wrote it up for the 'True wartime experiences' category, under the title: 'Thanks, mate!' It was awarded third prize, behind two first-hand accounts by ex-servicemen.



Marlene Marburg has just had another book in the ***Grace Undone*** series launched. This one is called ***Passion***, and centres on Seasons Three & Four of the Spiritual exercises of St Ignatius, which are 'two sides of the same transformative and passionate mystery – from death and suffering emerge life and joy.' Marlene's poems reflect God-moments – in the scriptures, in her own life and the lives of others. They are intimate, deep, wide-ranging and attuned to God's spirit. If you would like to order her book(s) go to www.marlenemarburg.com.au. Marlene has recently taken up a post as Director of the new Kardia Centre, a Spirituality Centre in Hawthorn. To find out more about its programmes, go to www.kardia.com.au.



Leigh Hay scored an Honourable Mention for her poem 'Mobbed' in this year's SWAC competition.

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

* Rhonda Jankovic Literary Awards

Named in honour of the late Rhonda Jankovic, highly respected social justice advocate & former host of Radio 3CR poetry program 'Spoken Word'. Two sections: Poetry 1st Prize \$600, Judge: Judith Rodriguez; Short Story 1st Prize \$600, Judge: Tom Shapcott. Each winner also awarded trophy – an engraved vintage 3CR Sound Bite Cartridge. Certificates for 2nd, 3rd places, Commended/Highly Commended. Theme: Social Justice. Poems to 50 lines, Stories to 2,500 words. No limit to number of entries. Entry fee \$5 per poem or story entered. Enquiries, Entry Form: Philton: philton2@westnet.com.au or Colin 0487 411 117. Closes 25 November.

* O Bheal Five Words Poetry Competition

This competition runs until the end of January 2016. Each Tuesday at noon (GMT), five words are posted on the competition page at http://www.obheal.ie/blog/?page_id=2371. Entrants have one week to compose and submit poems that include all five words given for the week. For more information : http://www.obheal.ie/blog/?page_id=2371

*Internationally renowned literary journal '**Granta**' is currently open for submissions. You can only submit one category at a time, which includes fiction, nonfiction, poetry and art. Submissions will be considered for both print and online editions, unless you specifically state otherwise in your cover letter. Submissions are generally between 3,000-6,000 words. Closes 1 April 2016 <https://granta.submittable.com/submit>

* Adelaide Plains Poets Poetry Competition

The theme for this year's competition is 'Transitions'. A prize pool of over \$700 will be awarded to first, second and third prize winners. A \$10 entry fee applies for the first submission, then \$5 per additional poem. Poems must be original and unpublished. **Closes 29 January 2016** <http://carolyn-oeticpause.blogspot.com.au>

DIARY OF EVENTS

Sunday, November 15th: Poetry retreat day from 10 am-4 pm at 60 Bass Meadows Bvd, St Andrews Beach. Register using attached form.

Saturday, December 5th: 1-5pm: Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East. Bring a plate of lunch to share.

POETS' CORNER



*Joy comes in the morning
Joy is the noblest act of man
– Thomas Aquinas*

Hold to this in the high noon of mourning.
One day:
you will find the tomb of your life
has been emptied and there folded
will lie the fine rags you wore with pride...
the gardener shall call your name...
the sun shall rise on your face
and you shall be given joy – the deep vein
the inexhaustible treasure
that lay in the heart of pain.

© Kathryn Hamann
(from *A Poor Canticle*)

Poem power

I am moved when he hands me his poem,
Its papery lines soaked and sagging with love.
He cannot read the poem aloud or listen to it read.
I watch his edgy movements.
History has all but shut him down.
He lets me read it silently.
I am surprised at the weight of the paper,
heavier than the loops and knots of ink.
I believe the words –
a painful ointment applied in prayer.
His fingers are inside my wounds
to make sure I am alive.
He wants to feel my fingers put in his.

© Marlene Marburg
(from *Grace Undone – Passion*)

Camping Haiku 4/12/2011

Six hours hard hiking
Flourished Inspired Exhausted
Instant soup tastes great.

© David Dwyer

Phoebe

Here she comes, our little princess
She dances lightly in her new pink shoes
Multi-coloured ribbons shine
On her bouncing curls

Eyes shining, she spins and weaves
Her happiness sweeps us up and carries
Us to a new realm, where each
Minute is precious, each second enough

We could learn a lot from this child
She already knows some of
Life's big secrets

Embrace the now, dance, laugh, sing, love,
Explore and share these gifts
Put on the music grandma, let's dance

© Cecily Falkingham
(from *Inner Child*)

elsewhere

for seventy years
immersed in things manly
little time to savour life's joys

now as daily life becomes
complex
confronting
he recedes into
a world of boy-hood dreams
where reality is
undemanding
safe

a sphere where gentle
mother-love abounds
a familiar place he once knew
where no-one else can go

© Carolyn Vimpani
(from *Inner Child*)