



# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

17.3

August, 2017

Welcome to the August edition of the Wordsmiths' newsletter for 2017.

Recently, a friend and his wife ordered a book for me from the UK. I had no idea I was about to receive a present for just being me, so was very touched by their generosity. They presented the book to me with the words "we know you'll like this." I was intrigued by the title and the fact that it had been translated from the original German, but the story line seemed a bit depressing. I wondered what they thought I would like about a story of a WWII Protestant Minister summoned to counsel a soldier who had deserted and was to be executed at dawn the following morning?

Well, as is often the case with me, I shouldn't have judged a book by its cover. The story was so uplifting, on so many levels, that I simply couldn't put it down. I read this short novella in one sitting, enriched by the emotions it evoked, encouraged by the human spirit it evinced and educated by writing at its finest.

I reported back to my friends that I had thoroughly enjoyed this book and thanked them copiously for thinking of me. My friends replied that they re-read this book every year. They tell their friends about it, and as in my case, give a copy away.

It got me thinking that this is how we should be sharing poetry. Just giving it away, sharing it with those we know will appreciate it, encouraging and uplifting others with our words and the words of others.

So...my three copies of Bruce Dawes' *Sometimes Gladness* (that just sit on my bookshelf doing not much at all, 'cause I've got another one that's all mine) are about to take flight. Now I just have to decide who to give them to.

Leigh

## PAST MEETINGS

The first half of the May workshop was led by Melbourne poet **Peter Bakowski**, with the second half led by **Jean Sietzema-Dickson**.

Peter Bakowski spoke about his writing journey and how important regular writing is. He gave the

group an exercise starting with the words, "I can't sleep" and Wordsmiths members had to compose words from that point on. Peter stayed afterwards the tea break to share in workshopping, which was led by Jean reading *Easter Morning: Romans 13:12* by William R. Mitchell, a magnificent poem about light coming into the day and its significance in relation to Easter.



**Peter White** led the June meeting, reading a poem by poet Brian Bilston titled *Refugees*. Bilston is the author of 'You took the last bus home' and although he has a social media presence, does not reveal what he looks like. A very poignant and thought provoking poem, *Refugees* can be read from beginning to end and vice versa. It has a powerful social justice message.

The July meeting was led by **Caroline Vimpani**. Caroline spoke of journeys and the fact that each of us is on a journey going forward and our life experience is reflected in our poetry. She read some poems that talk of journeys, including *Sea Fever* (John Masefield), *Tracks and Trails* (Maree Silver), *Unchartered Journey* (Rebecca Maxwell), *Zig Zags* (LB Cowman) and *Senses of Being* (Annette Hanson).

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

At the June meeting, Wordsmiths welcomed **Peter Lim** and **Frances Natanni** was welcomed at the July meeting.

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Unless otherwise notified, all meetings for 2017 will be held at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster East, from 2-5 pm. The following is a yearly roster of poets to lead the monthly meeting, and also share afternoon tea duty. If you cannot make it on the date shown, please organise with another member of Wordsmiths to take your place.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
August	Cath	Janette, Peter, Lucia
Sept	David	Cath, Rebecca, Jean
Oct	Cecily	David, Florence, Joan
Nov	Maree S	Maree N, Cecily, Greg
Dec	Joan	Christmas meeting Everyone bring something to share

## FROM THE TREASURER

If you are a current member and have not as yet paid a Membership fee of \$30.00 for this year, please pay (cash preferred, correct money if possible) to Maree Silver (Treasurer), or if paying by cheque, make the cheque out to Poetica Christi Press.

## POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS

Congratulations to the winners of the 2017 Poetica Christi Press Poetry Competition on the theme of WONDERMENT:

### WINNER

*Flight of the Monarchs* – Avril Bradley

### RUNNER-UP

*Ink* – Gabrielle Rowe

Well done to the Wordsmiths who had poems selected in the 25 to go into the anthology –

**Florence Lisner and Joan Ray.**

Wordsmiths members are now invited to submit poems for consideration for this new anthology 'Wonderment'. Deadline for submission will be **31<sup>st</sup> August 2017**. Please email your entry/ies (limit of 3) to [poeticachristi@optushome.com.au](mailto:poeticachristi@optushome.com.au) or [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au) or post to PO Box 110 Greensborough 3088.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE POETRY READING

On 22 July, Wordsmiths participated in an afternoon reading of social justice poems at All Saints Anglican Church, Mitcham. The poetry

reading was jointly organised by Wordsmiths and the Rhonda Jankovic Society for Promotion of Social Justice Through Literature. There were 18 readers who covered a variety of topics including asylum seekers, poverty, homelessness, indigenous issues and the environment. All those who attended appreciated the readings and the afternoon tea which followed.



## MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to Poetica Christi Press and its authors. *Studio* magazine's Number 140 June issue carried positive reviews by Ian Keast that included – *Inner Child* (PCP's 2015 Anthology), *Threshold* (Maree Silver) and *Trumped by grace* (Peter Stiles). Also featured was Marlene Marburg's *Grace Undone*.

Congratulations to **Jean Sietzema** on her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday! We also wish her well as she has hip replacement surgery later this month.

Congratulations to **Xiaoli (Sharlee) Yang**, who was ordained a Baptist Minister at Crossway Baptist Church on 6<sup>th</sup> June.



## BOOK REVIEW

I have just finished reading Leigh Hay's intriguing and timely debut novel, *Home before the leaves fall*. The novel describes a journey of discovery. Two soldiers, two families, two wars fifty years apart. This is a story of courage, sacrifice and love. This book will keep you wanting to know more from the time you pick it up and begin to read. It is timely because the First World War (1914-1918)

officially concluded on 11 November 1918, almost 100 years ago.

Leigh Hay is a freelance writer and editor, a published author and poet. She is a Committee Member of Poetica Christi Press, a long-time member of The Wordsmiths of Melbourne and editor of its newsletter.

Leigh has contributed poetry to the Poetica Christi Press Annual Poetry compendia from 2003, and wrote the Libretto for *When the Bugle Calls* to music by composer Nicholas Buc, first performed by Heidelberg Choral Society in August, 2016.

*Review by Maree Silver*

Copies of *Home before the leaves fall* are available for \$25 plus p & h from [www.talesfromthetreehouse.com.au](http://www.talesfromthetreehouse.com.au)

### **DADIRRI LAYBRINTH REFLECTION DAYS 2017**

This year, the Dadirri Labyrinth Reflection Days at St Andrews Beach on the Mornington Peninsula will focus on "The case for the Missing Intervening God".

Remaining Reflection Days for 2017 include :

*Jesus and the Christ* (**September 9**)

*Significant Dreams* (**November 11**)

*A Quiet New Year's Eve Covenant Meditation* (**31 December**)

There will also be a Silent Retreat in October involving the Labyrinth at Pallotti College Retreat Centre, Millgrove. Leader: Bronwyn Pryor, date to be announced.

Email: [robron@ptryor.org.au](mailto:robron@ptryor.org.au) or website <http://addirri.pryor.org.au>

### **POETRY DAY AT WELLSRING**

**'What Do the Tall Trees Say?' (Wendell Berry)  
Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> of October**

Today we will share poems by Wendell Berry, Mary Oliver and others who invite us to listen to the messages and invitations arising from experiences with the natural world – especially the trees.

Facilitator: Elizabeth Lee

Time: 10am to 3pm

Cost: \$65 (full cost) / \$55 (members/concession) per day

Book securely online at

[www.wellspringcentre.org.au/bookings](http://www.wellspringcentre.org.au/bookings)

or call (03) 9885 0277

WellSpring Centre

10 Y Street Ashburton VIC 3147

### **EIGHT DAY RETREAT (SILENT DIRECTED)**

From the 19<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> of November Kardia Formation is offering the beautiful grounds of St Joseph's by the Sea, Williamstown, space, silence and spiritual direction in which you can rest and reconnect to the source of life. The eight-day retreat is a privileged time when we can tune out the noise and distractions of our regular routines in order to more intentionally focus on our relationship with God. You will meet with your director daily for spiritual conversation. It is also possible to make a shorter retreat during this time. For more information go to [www.kardia.com.au](http://www.kardia.com.au) or to make a booking contact Kardia [enquiries@kardia.com.au](mailto:enquiries@kardia.com.au) phone 9818 4836.

### **COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **Words of Wyndam Writing Competition**

Australian writers, enter your previously unpublished short story, graphic short story, poetry, and flash fiction in Wyndham City Libraries' Words of Wyndham writing competition. Prizes from \$80-400, and publication. Total prize pool \$1350. All short-listed entries will be published in an anthology. Opening Thursday, June 1 and Closing Thursday, August 31 For more information, go to: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/wordsofwyndham>

#### **The Mozzie Poetry Prize**

The Mozzie is an independent poetry magazine publishing over 400 poems a year.

No need for entry forms. All poems received by post during 2017 are eligible.

Send contributions to The Mozzie, 28 Baynes Street, Highgate Hill, Qld. 4101.

Closes December 31, 2017.

<http://www.australianpoetry.org/competitions/the-mozzie-poetry-prizes/>

#### **The 11<sup>th</sup> Aesthetica Creative Writing Award**

The Aesthetica Creative Writing Award is an international literary prize that celebrates excellence in Poetry and Short Fiction.

The prize is now in its 11th year, hosted by the international art and culture publication, Aesthetica Magazine. With the aim to support and nurture new writing talent, it awards publication within an inspiring anthology to a shortlist of 60 writers, including a winner from each category. Entries close 31 August, 2017.

<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/creative-writing-award/>

## DIARY OF EVENTS

**Saturday, August 12th, 2-5pm:** Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East

**Saturday, September 9th, 2-5 pm:** Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

**Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 10 am-3 pm.** Poetry day at Wellspring. Ph: 9885 0277

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

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## POETS' CORNER

### Legalism

charm and beauty  
a façade and pretence  
with overly intellectualized complications  
through the technique of using components—  
name, origin, content and purpose

just to convince the minds of mindless crowds  
and to ensure they are stayed  
in the frame of thought  
that can be organized and controlled

but devoid of substance  
painted on the pallid countenance  
it dries up the bones  
till its skeletons are buried  
with the dust  
on a shelf  
in a soulless museum

© Xiaoli Yang

### Michelle Turning Sixty

You cast the enormity of your heart  
into the pool of humanity  
watch the smiling sea of faces swell around you...  
vibrations rippling ever outwards.

Earth Mother,  
Water Diva,  
weaving love amongst your fellows...

© Florence Lisner

## Hidden Vision

Fingertips respond tinglingly,  
nerving through arm to memory,  
stirring his wishful mind  
with something...talc-like...smoother,  
clearer than clarity,  
a higher remembrance, wondrously sensual,  
*sans* sight, *sans* sound.

He knows with joy, to smile,  
touch again, now with affection,  
now with lips comes sweet fragrance.  
“Tiny babe, your cheeks, I’ve heard...are rosy”

His vision aches with secrets.

© Don Helmore

### Chiaroscuro

a doona of clouds  
rolls over the sky  
over cast  
down cast  
lowering my lintel

suddenly  
sky wakes  
tosses clouds aside  
shakes out the day  
showers me with sun

– lightens my lintel

© Janette Fernando

### View from my window

Sky is bruise blue and  
washed out pinkish ochre  
pencil-crossed with rain.  
Thunder roars,  
ricochets across the sky,  
snarls along clouds  
snapping their flanks  
to send them scudding,  
roiling...

my oak tree, gust shaken,  
dumps a deluge of drops  
on a sodden lawn.

© Joan Ray