

# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

18.3

August, 2018

Welcome to the August edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2018.

With the 100<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Armistice in November, I have noticed a resurgence of interest in many of the poets of WW1, particularly the more well-known British poets such as Sassoon, Owen, Blunden and Grenfell, to name but a few.

However, the poetry of WW1 wasn't restricted just to works by the men who were involved in the fighting. There are also some fine poems by women, especially those involved in working the farm, labouring in munitions, driving an ambulance, knitting socks and other comforts for the war effort or keeping the home fires burning.

A few years ago, I came across a book titled *Scars Upon My Heart – Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War*. The title is taken from words written by Vera Brittain in a poem to her beloved brother, four days before he died in June 1918... 'your battle wounds are scars upon my heart'. Selected by Catherine Reilly, a Manchester librarian, the poetry in *Scars Upon My Heart* reflects that women were in fact writing protest poetry before Owen and Sassoon, and that the view of the 'women at home' as ignorant and idealistic, was quite false.

This anthology reflects the effect of war on individuals, families and communities. In this year of the 100<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Armistice, the poetry of WW1 makes for sober, yet inspired reading. Wars end, but poetry stays with us as we remember.

## Love 1916

By May Wedderburn Cannan

*One said to me, 'Seek Love, for he is Joy  
Called by another name'.*

*A Second said, 'Seek Love, for he is Power  
Which is called Fame'.*

*Last said a Third, 'Seek Love, his name is Peace'.*

*I called him thrice,*

*And answer came, 'Love now*

*Is christened Sacrifice'.*

Leigh Hay

## PAST MEETINGS

**Carolyn Vimpani** led the May meeting. Carolyn talked about Alliteration, a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series.

She gave examples from Tennyson, Shakespeare, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. She also handed out a sheet with single words listed and invited everyone present to write a line or two, incorporating alliteration, using one or more of the words.

**Peter White** led the June meeting and he began by reading poems about frogs. Authors of the poems were Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, Florence Earle Coates, Charles Lamb, John Clare and an anonymous one. His readings were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

**Cath Barnard** led the July meeting where she reacquainted poets with the works of Robert Burns (1759-1796). Cath reminded us that Burns' poems are difficult to read, yet exciting, and there are many quotable quotes from his poetry. Burns was not highly educated but learned to read and love the Bible. He also studied Shakespeare and throughout his life was at times, penniless. Cath read *To A Mouse* and *A Winter Night* (part only). Cath also encouraged the wordsmiths to sing *Auld Lang Syne*.

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The following is a roster of poets to lead the monthly meeting, and also share afternoon tea duty. If you cannot make it on the date shown, please let Janette know.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
Aug 11	Maree S	Joan, Daryl, Cate
Sept 8	Judith Rodriguez	Jean, Rebecca, Cath
Oct 13	Don	Janette, Maree S, Leigh
Nov 10	Joan	Florence, Greg, Cecily

Note that at our **September meeting**, we will have well known guest poet **Judith Rodriguez** taking us for a Poetry Workshop until afternoon tea, after which we will have our usual workshopping of poems. Cost will be \$10.

## POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS

On 14<sup>th</sup> May, at Hedley Sutton Community in Camberwell, **Don Helmore** launched **Behold!** – a collection of his unique and inspiring poetry.



Edward Durham Smith AO launched Don's book to a gathering of family and friends and spoke warmly of Don and his ability to communicate so effectively through poetry. Don thanked all those who had come along to the launch, and in particular thanks were extended to Maree Silver, who did the bulk of the editing as well as Janette Fernando and Leigh Hay and to Cameron Semmens (for graphic design) **Behold!** is PCP's 45<sup>th</sup> publication. [don.helmore@bigpond.com](mailto:don.helmore@bigpond.com), RRP \$20.

Judging is now complete for this year's PCP Anthology 'Interludes'. Congratulations are extended to those poets whose work was chosen for inclusion in the anthology by this year's judge, Jeff Guess. In particular, congratulations are extended to **Ros Black** (1<sup>st</sup> prize for 'True North') and winner **Joan Ray** (2<sup>nd</sup> prize for 'A Walk with Ghosts'). Jeff Guess has provided the following report:

### Judging the Judge

Some years ago, I was invited to join with a group of two other judges to award the national poetry book award for a collection of poems to be announced at Writers' Week in South Australia - with a very rich prize. There were about thirty books of poetry entered. I can't recall any of the collections not being eligible for the shortlisting of six by all three judges. We met many times, argued, agreed, and finally went away to shortlist initially and then later to come up with an overall winner. There were no second prizes. The three shortlists were not identical. The three books chosen ultimately for the first prize were all different – although those same three books appeared in each shortlist.

I remember well that last meeting when we all agreed that all three collections were not only made up of excellent well-made poems but superb anthologies of those same poems. What we argued about until well after midnight was quite simply the emotional element. In other words how these poems touched our hearts and minds. One of the collections followed the

theme of birth, another, the natural world and the third a collection of contemporary prayers or meditations.

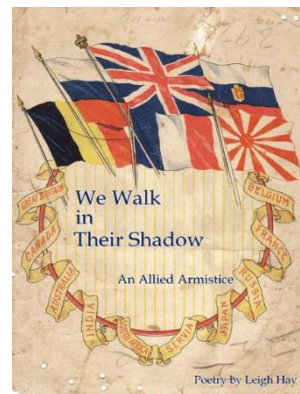
Harold Bloom the eminent American literary critic and Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale University has commented in one of his many books 'We read poems to find ourselves'. Any individual sitting on (invited) judgement on others poems must firstly determine that they are all well-made and whether traditional or modern do not falter when it comes to the integral elements of poetry. For example, the poems should not contain prolix, sentimentality, mixed or ludicrous metaphors, etc.).

The poems chosen here are all well-made and some are superb. The winner and runner up were the latter but in addition, had a profound emotional impact on me.

**Jeff Guess, Gawler, June 2018**

**If any Wordsmiths would like to submit up to three poems to be considered for the Interludes anthology please email them to [poetica@iprimus.com.au](mailto:poetica@iprimus.com.au) by the end of August.**

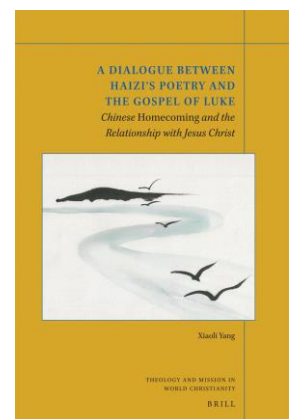
## MEMBER NEWS



**Leigh Hay** has published a book of poetry, **We Walk in Their Shadow : An Allied Armistice**.

The poems in this collection honour the lives of Major HWFB Farrer (RFA, UK) and Sergeant Jack Grinton (C Coy, 38<sup>th</sup> Batt, AIF). These two allied soldiers never met, but their shared experiences serve as emblems of a generation which must not be forgotten. To order: [www.talesfromthetreehouse.com.au](http://www.talesfromthetreehouse.com.au) \$15.

Congratulations to **Xiao Li Yang**, whose book 'A Dialogue Between Haizi's Poetry and the Gospel of Luke: *Chinese Homecoming and the Relationship with Jesus Christ*' is to be launched on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 5.30 pm at Whitley College.



**David Dwyer** has moved to Alice Springs for a one year contract with work, but is keeping his pen busy. See Poets' Corner for one of his poems.

## WELLSPRING CENTRE POETRY DAYS 2018

**Tuesday August 21st:** 10am-3pm, *The Poetry of Mary Oliver* (Facilitator Elizabeth Lee)

**Thursday October 18th :** 10am-3pm, *Contemporary Poetry – Bridging the Gap between Mystery and Meaning* (Facilitator Carole Poustie).  
Cost : \$65/\$55 (conc) per session.

### DADIRRI RETREAT DAY AT ST ANDREWS BEACH

The next retreat day is on August 18<sup>th</sup>, with the theme *The Role of Women in Celtic Christian Spirituality*.

“Pelagius’ desire to educate women [in the scriptures] was rooted in his conviction that God’s image is to be found in every person, both male and female, and that the goodness of that image is nurtured and freed largely through the grace of wisdom...

The Celtic church gave much greater scope to the role of women and more fully incorporated women into its religious life and imagery than did the Roman church.”  
J Philip Newell, *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality*

10.00 - 3.30 pm. Bring some food to share. Cost \$10 [\$5]60 Bass Meadows Blvd, St Andrew’s Beach Rsvp, Tel 5988 5257 Mob 0412 301 450

**SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT – Santa Casa, Queenscliff**  
10 – 18 October 2018, led by Spiritual directors Marlene Marburg and Bernadette Miles

The silent directed 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. We offer you a beautiful environment, silence and daily spiritual direction in which you can rest and reconnect to the source of life. Further info at <http://www.kardia.com.au>

## COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Society Women Writers Tasmania

Annual short story competition 2018.  
Competition open to all short story writers. More information : [wendylaing02@gmail.com](mailto:wendylaing02@gmail.com)  
Closing date : 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

### Boroondara Literary Awards

Open-themed and free to enter. Full terms and conditions and entry details : [www.boroondara.fic.gov.au/literary-awards](http://www.boroondara.fic.gov.au/literary-awards)  
Closes 31 August 2018.

## 2018 Australian Poetry Slam

For performance poets of all ages. An eclectic event where the audience is the judge. The national champion wins an international writers festival tour prize pack worth up to \$10,000.

Closes Friday, September 21.

For info: <http://www.australianpoetryslam.com>

### Mornington Peninsula Writing Prizes 2018

Offered by Frankston Writers Block. Short Story and Poetry Competitions, open now, closes September 30, 2018. Poetry: Up to 50 lines. Short story: Up to 3000 words. Open theme: \$5 per entry. Prize: \$100 and publication in 2019 Anthology in each category. Entry forms, send a SSAE to Angela, P.O. Box 8098, Burnt Bridge VIC, 3936 or email: [davidptk68@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davidptk68@hotmail.co.uk)  
Enquiries: 03-9789-5496.

### The 2018 Betty Ollie Poetry Award

For traditional Australian rhyming poetry with an Australian theme. Entry fee – open \$10 per entry (2 poems). Entry forms and conditions of entry available on the Australian Bush Poetry Association website [www.abpa.org.au](http://www.abpa.org.au) Closing date 31<sup>st</sup> August.

### DIARY OF EVENTS

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

**Tuesday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 10-3 pm:** Poetry Day at Wellspring, 2 Y St, Ashburton, Theme: Poetry of Mary Oliver. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email [info@wellspringcentre.org.au](mailto:info@wellspringcentre.org.au).

**Saturday, September 8th, 2-5pm :** **POETRY WORKSHOP** WITH JUDITH RODRIGUEZ at Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

**Saturday, October 13th, 2-5pm:** Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

**Thursday, October 18th, 10-3 pm:** Poetry Day at Wellspring, 2 Y St, Ashburton, Theme: *Contemporary Poetry – Bridging the Gap between Mystery and Meaning*. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email [info@wellspringcentre.org.au](mailto:info@wellspringcentre.org.au).

**Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2-5pm:** Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

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To send any news for the December newsletter, email [leighhay@optusnet.com.au](mailto:leighhay@optusnet.com.au) by November 15th.  
Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando.



## POETS' CORNER

### Movement of Prayer

Prayer  
that articulated worry  
that becomes for us  
such transport of joy

That busy  
business  
of caring  
that cares to  
carry us away

It is driving at the horizon  
But keeping our eyes  
On the rear-view mirror

Lensing the past  
we look at the future  
to avoid striking the present  
in the most unpleasant way

Although we may tire  
yet we don't break  
instead we accelerate  
with wisdom  
to speed to a halt

*@Greg Burns*

### One man's war

He's never kept a diary  
but will from now –  
blunt pencil kept ever sharp  
thanks to a pearl handled pocket knife –  
Grandad's farewell gift.

He'll commit his words to grubby paper,  
wonky lines, phrases struck out,  
muddy finger prints, sometimes a smudge,  
maybe he'll learn to spell the slang.

At close of day he'll add a line;  
document the tedium  
make sense of the slaughter  
scant mention of his mates –  
the ones who will forever remain.

He and his diary will make it home,  
heroes' welcome much ado.  
He'll secrete the diary in a biscuit tin –

a barnyard bunker  
known only to him.

He'll return to the farm, life as it was,  
while silver fish feast on stories of sacrifice –  
a battle for survival on yellowed pages  
where his Great War story  
will become but a memory  
and Pozières  
just a name.

*@Leigh Hay*

### Interwoven

translucent strands  
necklaced with dew  
strung tightly  
from branch to leaf

the web spinner  
draws out filaments  
to mesh and interlink  
refashions unifies

the weaver patrols  
healing rifts and breaches  
strength in wholeness  
not in brokenness

*@Maree Silver*

### Alice Springs Autumn

There is a breeze that wafts right through The Gap  
it is a wind that delivers no change.  
It originates somewhere off the map  
and sweeps all along the McDonnell Range.

The sky is blue and the trees are all green  
though it's April the leaves stay on the trees.  
They're Gums, no deciduous to be seen –  
all year long leaves rustle in the breeze.

It's wet or it's dry, it's hot or it's cold  
we don't appear to have all the seasons.  
I'm new to town, so I wait to be told  
how it works and all the good reasons.

The Summer is endless, six months or more  
and Winter is when the nights drop to freeze.  
Spring flowers after desert rains I adore  
but Autumn comes here twice a day to please.

Our seasons change, but Autumn comes around  
with every sunrise and every sunset.  
Not in the trees, but down here on the ground  
from gold, to bronze, ochre and burnt russet.

*@David Dwyer*