

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

17.1

February, 2017

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

Well, Christmas has come and gone and the new year is now a month old and it's all happened so quickly that I don't seem to have come to grips with another new year yet. I'm doing all the same boring things as last year (read here living) but do I have other exciting projects on the horizon? Well, as a matter of fact I do, thanks for asking! There's that collection of poems I always wanted to write, and that special poetry book I always said was on the bucket list, or that verse novel I'm sure is lurking in the back of my brain.

Of course to initiate and complete any one of these projects this year is going to take some effort on my part. It takes certain skills to keep project balls in the air, and I probably need lessons in juggling. I often liken these project balls to Christmas baubles...shiny little magnets of colour and appeal that we like to finger and play with and attach to the tree and then stand back and admire and just as quickly turn away. They sit on the tree and continue to attract and shine, but they don't actually do anything. Then we take down the tree and put the shiny baubles back in the box...until next year.

So here's my New Year challenge – to take just one of my long forgotten projects out of the box, or bottom drawer, or computer folder, and start to reshape it. I intend to have fun reinventing the prose and then polishing to make my project ball as bright, shiny and perfect as I can. Then I intend to hang it up for the world to see, or read, or hopefully just appreciate.

OK, that's me. What's your New Year challenge?

- Leigh

PAST MEETINGS

At the November meeting, **Cameron Semmens** ran a workshop for the first half of the afternoon. Cam invited us to consider different ways of writing poetry and how flexible poetry can be. He encouraged participants to write a Dylan Thomas

Portrait (first line: ask a question, then subsequent lines: write two words only in answer to the question, and the last line: one word only). At the end of the session, participants read out their poems. Cam also invited participants to submit a one line statement of any thought they felt was significant to their life. These were put into a basket, and each person drew out a statement and wrote an Irish Blessing in response. Responses were read out and as the poetry was particularly poignant and uplifting, Janette requested everyone email their Irish Blessing poems to her, so the collection can remain intact.

For the final meeting of Wordsmiths for 2016, everyone brought a plate to share a Christmas lunch at 1pm and after enjoying both food and friendship, the meeting commenced at 2.00 as usual. We also welcomed Jerome Yong to Wordsmiths and Don read a very funny poem titled *Talking Turkeys*, by British poet Benjamin Zephaniah.

Bron Williams led the group, and read a piece titled *The Poetry of Christmas* (dated December 23, 2005) by David E Anderson, Senior Editor, Religion News Service. His piece included poetry by various authors over the ages.

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
February	Jean	Leigh, Maree S, Don
March	Don	Jean, Peter, Cath
April	Janette	Rebecca, David, Janette
May	Poetry workshop	Joan, Greg, Cecily
June	Peter	Maree N, June, Sharlee
July	Carolyn	Maree S, Don, Leigh
August	Cath	Janette, Maree N, David
Sept	David	Jean, Peter, Cath
Oct	Cecily	Rebecca, David, Janette
Nov	Maree S	Greg, Joan, Cecily
Dec	Joan	Everyone bring something to share

FROM THE TREASURER

Membership payments of \$30.00 for the year 1 January 2017 -31 December 2017 are now due. Payment in cash preferred to Maree Silver, or pay by cheque to Poetica Christi Press, or bank transfer – see Response slip.

POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS

Janette Fernando and Maree Silver are hard at work on the forthcoming anthology *Hope Whispers*, which features the poems chosen from the 2016 Poetry Competition. It is due to be launched on Saturday, April 1st at 2 pm, at All Saints Anglican church, Mitcham.

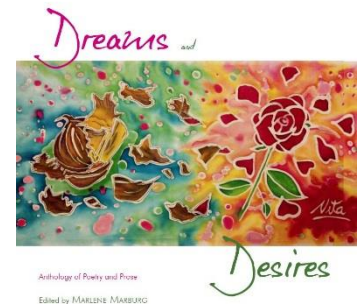
MEMBER NEWS

On December 17th, **Marlene Marburg** launched **Grace Undone. Encounter**, the final gift book in her series *Grace Undone*. As a series, the three books are companions to the prayer of the Seasons of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. **Grace Undone. Encounter**



includes imaginative contemplations on Gospel-texts as well as poems on life and Mystery. The book offers parallel scriptural texts for many of the poems. Norm Currie, (Channel 31 - Harmony in Diversity; poet and spiritual director) launched the book at Stirling Theological College. Copies are available from Marlene marlene.marburg@kardia.com.au RRP \$24. The complete series of *Grace Undone* retails for \$74.

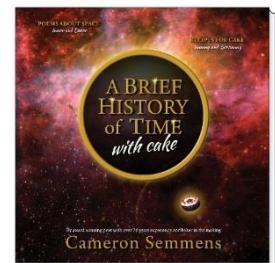
Dreams and Desires was also launched on 17th December at the Kardia Formation Thanksgiving Soiree 2016 at Stirling Theological College. Edited by **Marlene Marburg**,



Dreams and Desires is an 84-page square paperback anthology of poems and prose which showcases the important emerging consciousness of over 40 people from around the globe. When asked their dreams and desires in this changing world, the themes of love, justice and attentiveness emerged as paramount. The heart-felt responses will move the reader again and again. Launched by David Marburg, **Dreams and Desires** retails for \$18 and copies are available from Marlene marlene.marburg@kardia.com.au

Janette Fernando has had a poem published in a new anthology of poems published in the UK, *The Poet's Quest for God*, edited by Oliver Brennan and Todd Swift (Eyewear Publishing).

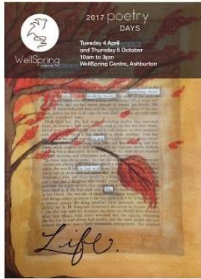
Cam Semmens launched **A Brief History of Time with Cake** (Poems about Space – Inner and outer and Recipes for Cake – yummy and scrummy) at an event titled 'Cake Expectations' at the Grunge Café, Belgrave on December 12th. Cake recipes include: The Zero Gravi-teacake; The Baked Moon Cheesecake; The Anti-gravitational Mousse; or even, a Pavnova! Poems include : The Asteroid Theory for The Extinction of Despair; Poem 9 from Outer Space; and The 23rd Jedi. **A Brief History of Time with Cake** is available from Cam www.webcameron.com for only \$16.95.



At our first meeting this year, we met **Percy Shozi**, who is launching his second book of poems on this Saturday, February 18th at 3 pm at Stairway Church, 171 Rooks Rd, Vermont South. You can buy his book for \$25 or get more information at his website <https://www.percyspoems.com>



POETRY DAY AT WELLSRING



Poetry Day: 'Changing Seasons' with Elizabeth Lee as facilitator for the day.
Tuesday 4th of April, 10am to 3pm, at Wellspring, 10 Y st, Ashburton. Bookings: ph. 9885 0277 or go to: www.wellspringcentre.org.au

An opportunity to tune in to the rhythms of life and reflect on the different times and seasons of the heart and of the world around us.
Cost: \$65 (full) / \$55 (members/concession)

THE POETIC AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Saturday 4th March 2017, 10am – 3pm
Cost: \$65 (BYO lunch)
Facilitator: Marlene Marburg
Venue: Kardia Formation, Suite 1, 198-199 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn VIC 3101

The poetic way that a person listens to the world of nature, events and relationships is similar to the listening which is required in the spiritual direction relationship. This day workshop offers input, reflection and conversation which emphasizes the role of attending to the present moment. To book please email: enquiries@kardia.com.au

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Adelaide Plains Poets Inc Poetry Competition 2016/2017 Entries close : 13 April, 2017.
Theme 'Freedom'. Poems no longer than 60 lines, fee of \$10 for 1st poem, \$5 for subsequent poems.
<http://carolyn-poeticpause.blogspot.com.au/>

Nillumbik Ekphrasis poetry award

Poets are invited to respond to Nillumbik's public artworks. More information at: www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/arts

Henry Kendall Poetry Award – 2017

For established and emerging poets. Maximum length of 30 lines. General enquiries can be made to hkpa@centralcoastpoets.com.au or <http://centralcoastpoets.com.au/henry-kendall-poetry-award-2017>
Submission deadline : 28 February, 2017.

2017 Bruce Dawe National Poetry Prize

\$2500 prize endowed by Emeritus Professor Dawe to celebrate Australian poetry. Competition opens 10 February, 2017. For more information : outreach.engage@usq.edu.au

2016/2017 Henry Lawson National Literary Award competition.

Entries close 30 April 2017. The Henry Lawson Society is inviting poets to enter this year's National Literary Award. Categories and prizes for Rhyming Verse, Free Verse, (max 60 lines) and Short Story (max 1000 words). For more information : <http://henrylawsonsociety.org/poetry-competition/>

WB Yeats Poetry Prize for Australia

Open to residents of Australia for previously unpublished poems. 50 lines max, entries may be submitted via email as an attachment. Entry fee \$8.50 for first poem, each additional poem \$5.50
<http://www.wbyeatspoetryprize.com/>
Closing date : 31 March, 2017

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, March 4th, 10 am-3 pm: *The Poetic and Spiritual Direction* at Kardia Centre, Hawthorn.

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

Saturday, April 1st, 2- 4pm: Launch of *Hope Whispers* at All Saints' Anglican Church Mitcham Hall – 18 Edward St, Mitcham.

Tuesday, April 4th, 10-3 pm: Poetry day at Wellspring, 10 Y St, Ashburton. Ph: 9885 0227

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

To send any news for the May newsletter, email leighhay@optusnet.com.au by April 25th. Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando.



POETS' CORNER

Special delivery

In Winter's early darkness
I potter down
my long, steep
driveway
to check for mail.

Right in front of me,
at my eye-line,
the rising moon
is jammed between hill and cloud –

a letterbox of golden light.

I post
my thanks
for the day.

© Cameron Semmens

Invocation

may my inner self
reach for the light
gifted from earth's beginning

may I be newly created
lifted out of darkness
by empathy and courage

may I hear
the word of grace
share in new understanding

may I journey with wisdom
justice and peace
in my heart

may I see beyond fear
and cultural differences –
welcome those I do not know

may I walk
together with love
into the unknown

© Maree Silver

A Lebanon Dream

My house is clad in cedar;
weathered boards encase my heart –
a contentment of circling arms

each board once knew life was leafed
sun warmed rain soaked
free to mature in hope
secure in nature's purpose

I dream
my cedar boards
will one day bud anew;
boughs burgeon beyond my being
fragrant with the scent of life –
timbered shade canopied shelter

I dream
my solid boards
will sprout with certainty;
trunks thick with tranquillity
spread and swell
cede succour under growth

I dream
my cedar trees
will channel my contentment;
scatter seed green hearts
rooted deep, plantations of peace will rise
majestic over earth

© Leigh Hay

God's morning light

fractures a rainbow
across the waterbath

Her arms a cave
surround her new-born wonder
holding him

as if she feels the longing
of his amniotic dreaming.

Colours filter through
the fissures of her love.

He raises her

face to face
child to child
to touch all beatitude
all favour.

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