

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

18.1

February, 2018

Welcome to the first edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2018.

Having spent a lot of January cleaning out the wardrobe, pantry and filing cabinets, I decided we needed a day off for a drive somewhere...but where? The beach would be crowded, shopping was the last thing on anyone's mind, and consensus on a film couldn't be reached. My daily early morning walk around the river solved the question. A regular dog walker called John, who just happens to own Ned – a Kelpie with boundless energy and a single purpose in life called 'chase the ball' – suggested a walk through the Redwood Forest the other side of Warburton. "Never been", said John, "but everyone who has says it's beautiful."

So off to the Redwood forest we went. The weather was on the coolish side, but sunny, and the drive to Warburton relaxing. On arrival at the forest we skipped across the grass and entered a forest of Californian Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*).

Nothing had prepared me for this. Planted in a grid these trees range from 20–55 metres. They are magnificently straight and majestically tall. As I walked in silence on a thick carpet of leaf matter, the only sound was bird song. I had walked into another world where sunlight filtered through canopies of foliage, casting patterns on the ground. The park rangers had gathered branches into circles, inside which you could sit and just look heavenward. Rain the previous day had enhanced the scent of this sanctum and as I stooped to pick up a small branch, I wondered at the lightness of the wood and the softness of the bark of these towering trees.

I always feel at one with trees and I didn't want to leave. The only thing that finally drove us out of the forest was a heavy shower of rain.

I am resolved to return to this place and when I do, I'll sit for a long time in one of the circles of branches, letting nature's peace surround me.

I'll thank John on my next walk and tell him all about it, while Ned-Kelpie waits for one of us to throw the ball, never taking his eye off it for a microsecond.

Leigh Hay

PAST MEETINGS

Leigh Hay led the November meeting. In line with the 30th year of Wordsmiths, she gave brief backgrounds and read poems written by former members of the group who have since passed away. Leigh read poems by Marj Kosky, Marie-Louise Stephens, Vera Urban, Stella Mary Churchward Macdonald (Ray Kelly) and Kathryn Hamann.

At the December meeting, **Joan Ray** took the group through an exercise in Ekphrasis. Joan explained that Ekphrasis is the technique of making a work in one art form in response to a work in another art form. Distributing a handout on Paths to Ekphrasis, Joan read two of her own Ekphrastic poems 'Fantasy in Red' and 'Dragon Dreaming', and then handed out Christmas Cards for the group to respond to the image on the card in poetry. Poems were read out at the end of the exercise.

WORDSMITHS TURNS 30



The December meeting of Wordsmiths was a time of celebration, as Wordsmiths of Melbourne celebrated their 30th year.

Coby Hill, one of the original members of the group was present, in company with her daughter Wendy Higgs, and after lunch Janette rang Joy Chellew on speaker phone so that as another original members of the group, Joy could pass on her words of congratulation and encouragement.

Coby Hill spoke of the friendship and fellowship of Wordsmiths as did Jean Sietzema-Dickson. Stan and

Carolyn Vimpani were presented with certificates of appreciation for their hospitality in hosting Wordsmiths each month in their home and Janette presented Leigh, Maree and Jean with gifts of appreciation for their commitment to the editing and publication of PCP's anthologies. The afternoon concluded with the cutting of a 30th birthday cake.



L-R: Leigh Hay, Maree Silver, Jean Sietzema-Dickson, Janette Fernando, Coby Hill

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 organise with another member to take your place.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
Feb	Jean	Joan, Maree N, Don
March	Greg	Jean, Peter, Lucia
April	Janette	Maree S, Cath, Rebecca
May	Poetry workshop	Greg, Florence, Janette

LAUNCH OF WONDERMENT



L-R: Jean Sietzema, Leigh & David Hay, Maree Silver
Janette Fernando welcomed everyone and acted as MC for the launch, while her son Tim provided musical interludes, including music by the Beatles, Midnight

On Saturday 2 December, Poetica Christi Press launched their anthology *Wonderment*. Launched by **Jean Sietzema-Dickson**, the event was conducted at All Saints Mitcham, with a good crowd attending, despite being the wettest weekend of the decade in Melbourne.

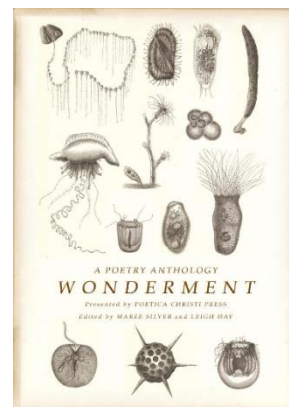
Oil, George Harrison and an arrangement of Silent Night by Franz Xavier Gruber.

Readers included Wordsmiths members as well as poets from country Victoria and interstate.

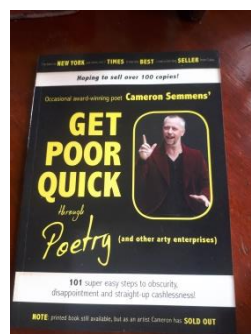
Avril Bradley, whose poem *Flight of the monarchs* had been awarded first prize, was not able to attend, so Leigh Hay read her poem, while Maree Silver read Gabrielle Rowe's poem *Illumination* which had been awarded second prize, by judge Dr Peter Stiles.

As co-editors of *Wonderment*, Leigh and Maree thanked all those who had contributed poetry; the PCP book committee (Janette Fernando, Carolyn Vimpani and Peter White); Cameron Semmens for book layout, design and cover design; and David Hay for his exquisite sketches throughout the anthology.

The afternoon finished with a delicious afternoon tea and time for poets and others to chat and enjoy time together.



MEMBER NEWS



On 11 December, Cameron Semmens launched '**Get Poor Quick through Poetry**' (and other arty enterprises). This latest book from Cam gives 101 super easy steps to obscurity, disappointment and straight-up cashlessness.

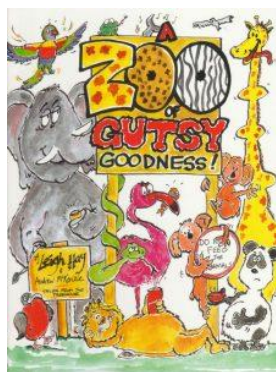
"**Get Poor Quick through Poetry**", says Cam, "is the perfect antidote to those blocked, jaded and confused with their arty pursuits." Cam has infused this book with his trademark quirky humour and catchy phrasing. It's the ideal creative gift for anyone who is or wants to be an artist or for anyone who just wants a good laugh. Copies can be ordered through www.webcameron.com and retail for \$14.95.



On December 17th, Joy Chellew's latest book in her trilogy, *In Search of Wisdom*, was launched at Ocean Grove.

Joy is turning 93 this month, so WELL DONE JOY! *In Search of Wisdom* is available for \$20 through the PCP website www.poeticachristi.org.au.

Leigh Hay has also written and published a new title, **A Zoo of Gutsy Goodness**. Illustrated by Andrew McKenzie, this book is a full colour, rhyming children's story about what happens when a zoo gets fat on junk and thin on goodness. The zoo animals have discovered takeaway and they're munching, crunching, sopping and slurping on anything with the lot. They're SO tired and SO cranky and SO mightily unhealthy, that no-one wants to visit anymore. Their stomachs are full but their hearts are empty. Things have to change and the zookeeper has a plan. Copies can be ordered through www.talesfromthetreehouse.com.au for \$25.



Congratulations are extended to **Carolyn and Stan Vimpani** who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on 23rd December with a party for

relatives and friends at the Doncaster East Uniting Church. The original wedding party (but one) were in attendance, including a page boy (now in his 50s). The afternoon was most enjoyable with Carolyn and Stan reaffirming their wedding vows and cutting a cake for the 2nd time!

We also congratulate **Cecily Falkingham**, who has been given a Whitehorse Community Achievement Award along with 6 other residents -for time which she has devoted to environmental sustainability and protection over many years. She has been an active member of a number of committees and worked closely with local and state government on environmental projects. Cecily also leads nature walks of the Mullum Mullum Valley to help the public understand the ecology of the area and appreciate how unique it is. She also gives her time to advise and consult state and local government on local conservation issues. Cecily's extensive local Knowledge and expertise as a naturalist are highly regarded at both a local level and more widely around the state.

Joan Ray is having an exhibition of her pastel paintings, due to be launched on Sunday 11th February, 2 - 4pm, at the Old Shire Hall, cnr Doncaster Road and Council Street, Doncaster. Anyone interested is welcome to drop in, but please RSVP (or bring a plate!) Phone: 9852 1616, jray.29@internode.on.net.

WELLSPRING CENTRE POETRY DAYS 2018

If you've ever attended a poetry day at Wellspring, you'll know they are not to be missed! This year, there are four such days:

Thursday March 15th : 10am-3pm, *Easter* (Facilitator Janette Fernando)

Monday May 21st : 10am-3pm, *Australian Voices* (Facilitator Elizabeth Lee)

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. For more information: info@wellspringcentre.org.au www.wellspringcentre.org.au Ph 9885 0277.

FOUR DAY WORKSHOP WITH MARGARET SILF : The Future is Within Us. May 14-May 17, 2018, 9am-5pm.

Venue : Kardia Formation P/L, 197-199 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn. Cost : \$495. A four-day workshop to explore some of the directions that are emerging in today's world as we journey spiritually towards the future, striving to become the best version of humanity we have the potential to become. Each day will focus on specific themes offering participants the opportunity to reflect, individually and together, and to engage in conversation around the issues that emerge. **WEEKEND SUMMIT WITH MARGARET SILF: Imagining the Self in a Spirituality Expansive World.** 18 – 20 May, 2018 Melbourne, Australia. Hosted by Kardia Formation P/L. Imagining a spiritually expansive world requires that we are edge people looking outwards to what might be and looking inwards to the creative capacities latent and potent within each one of us. This Summit invites you to stand at that edge and dream together with Margaret Silf as we imagine and explore how we can participate in God's expansive world. Friday night plenary with Margaret Silf: 7 -9.30pm \$35 (early bird \$30) Full Summit: Friday night 7 - 9.30pm Saturday and Sunday 9am - 5pm \$290 (early bird \$280) For more information :

<http://www.kardia.com.au/summit/>

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2018 Poetica Christi Press Poetry Competition

The theme is 'Interludes' – a topic that lends itself to poems about being 'in between', a time of rest, a space between journeys, remission, suspension, taking stock, waiting, having a break, silence, time out, recreation, breathing space, recovery, leave, holidays,

opportunity, intermission. Entries close **April 30th**.
Email entries are now accepted. For more information
and entry forms : www.poeticachristi.org.au or from
PCP Competition Coordinator, PO Box 110,
Greensborough, VIC 3088.

Elyne Mitchell Writing Awards 2018

Open from 1/1/18 – 23/8/18. Theme 'Reach for the
Stars – Strive for Excellence'. Fiction & non-fiction. The
award commemorates the celebrated author of the
Silver Brumby's life and work, and has been established
to encourage all writers to focus their stories on the
Australasian rural landscape. For entry forms :
www.elynemitchell.com

Sutherland Shire Literary competition

Inaugural competition for Australian residents over 18
years of age. Traditional verse, free verse, short story.
Entries open Monday 5 February 2018. Entry fee \$15
per poem/story. Entries close 30 April, 2018.

[http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Community/
Library/Sutherland-Shire-Literary-Competition](http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Community/Library/Sutherland-Shire-Literary-Competition)

Bruce Dawe National Poetry Prize 2018

To sign up and express interest, contact
brucedaweprize@usq.edu.au

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, February 10, 2-5pm: Meeting of
Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

Saturday, March 10, 2-5pm : Meeting of Wordsmiths.
8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

Thursday, March 15th, 10-3 pm: Poetry day at
Wellspring, 10 Y St, Ashburton. Ph: 9885 0227

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



POETS' CORNER

The Train to Belgrave

We caught the train to Belgrave
they are going to Paris next week
we trawled all the book shops
they are shopping at Armani and Gucci
we used our discount tickets
they are travelling first class
we found some great op shop bargains
they have spent a small fortune
we had cheese wedges and dip

they dined at the Hilton more than once
we found an abandoned clothes basket in the street
they send their clothes to the Laundromat
we came home exhausted and happy
they came home exhausted and broke
we have plans for our next train ride
they are going to Disneyland next year
we are going to Geelong to walk on the beach
they are having a great life
we are having a great life
love your life and do what makes your heart sing.

© Cecily Falkingham

The Miracle

When the seed finds conditions right
it germinates, nourished, unique.
For its own life it must fight
but on its own it is weak.

Parents have the best chance
of guiding their offspring.
In the jungle, skills enhance
ensuring their young will win.

The fittest in the cycle know
how to secure a place
just right for their seed to grow,
so the future of the species is safe.

© Maree Nikolaou

GODWISE

Man and woman chose
to disobey
so God closed the gate on Eden
breathed a mighty sigh
of love
which ever since has blown
down history's generations
over Calvary's cross
into the hearts
of those who believe
lifting them up
like eagles soaring on thermals
back towards His heart.

© Joy Chellew (from In Search of Wisdom)

To send any news for the May newsletter, email
leighhay@optusnet.com.au by April 15th.
Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando.