

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

20.2

May, 2020.

Welcome to the May edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2020.

It's only just a few months since the last newsletter, but how different the world is now. We are indeed living in a new reality with deserted shopping plazas, roads with less traffic, no rushing to our usual commitments or catching a train into the city. As for planning an overseas or interstate trip, well sadly, that's just a memory.

But even though a silent virus has been calling the shots and the death rate in some countries is depressing, humanity is showing amazing resilience and hope. It's ironic that self-isolation has in many ways brought us more together. People are out walking, playing, riding bikes. Kids are drawing rainbows on footpaths, home-cooked meals have suddenly made a resurgence and communities and companies are working together online.

With mandatory self-isolation, there's been time to reflect, contemplate, read, write and connect with family and friends through technology. Even though we can't meet and enjoy each other's company over a poem and a cuppa, workshopping our poems online has meant we've kept in touch and ensured that we compose new poems.

Without doubt, a post-COVID world will be different. I wonder if it will be kinder, more compassionate, more caring? Will people choose to slow down and continue to take time to smell the roses, or will they jump straight back into old habits.

The introvert in me has felt more peaceful in isolation. I'm in no hurry to get back to busyness.

Leigh Hay

PAST MEETINGS

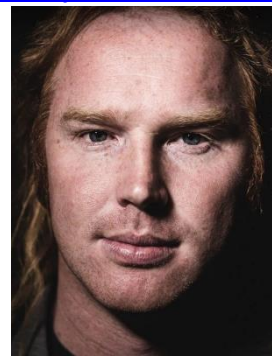
Janette Fernando led the February meeting, sharing the poetry of Marlene Marburg. Janette chose poems from *Grace Undone*, one of a series of books of Marlene's poetry, based on the four seasons of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. Janette emphasised that Marlene's poetry is strong and focussed – paying attention in the present moment. Janette read *Prepositioning God, Principle and Foundation, Reverie, Let Go and Becoming*.

Greg Burns led the March meeting with readings of Holy Sonnets, including *Sonnets 1, 6, & 10* by John Donne and *God's Grandeur* by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Welcomed at the March meeting were newcomers Tom Bone and Amina Elmrini.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Due to COVID-related restrictions, the May meeting is cancelled. Should we be able to meet on June 13th, performance poet **Joel McKerrow** has been booked to run a **poetry workshop**. For the last fifteen years, Joel has worked within the creative industries as a writer, speaker, performer, educator, poet, photographer, film-maker and actor. We'll be asking all those who attend to pay \$20 towards the cost of having Joel run the workshop from 2-3.30 pm. If this is a problem for you, please let us know and we can work something out.

For more information on Joel, visit his website : <https://www.joelmckerrow.com>



In the event of meetings later this year, if you cannot make it on the date shown, please organise with another member to take your place.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
June 13th	Joel McKerrow	Florence, Cecily, Janette
July 11th	Jean	Joan, Cath, Daryl
Aug 8th	Florence	Jean, Peter W, Linda

WORDSMITHS ONLINE

As most of us are now in lock-down and we can't meet together for our monthly Wordsmiths, Janette came up with the idea that any interested Wordsmiths could join and start emailing a poem to her each month instead. She then sends them out to the group who wish to be a part of this long-distance type of workshopping. This idea was keenly adopted by 10 poets, who are enjoying seeing the new poems which Janette emails one at a time, every few days, so those offering comments are not overwhelmed with poems. The system is working very well and is filling in time. If you haven't already told Janette you wish to belong to the group, it is not too late to join up as it seems the isolation restrictions are not to be lifted until at least later in May. Let her know at poetica@primus.com.au.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Now that the Poetica Christi Press Annual Competition has closed, Wordsmiths who didn't enter, can submit up to three poems for consideration to be included in the forthcoming anthology *Joy in the Morning*. These can be sent to poetica@primus.com.au.

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Maree Nikolaou** who recently celebrated her 80th birthday.

Jean Sietzema-Dickson had a fall in February and broke her collarbone, while **Joan Ray** had a fall and broke her hip. We wish both of them a successful recovery. **Maree Silver** is doing well after her shoulder replacement surgery, with plenty of physiotherapy exercises needed, but she's not allowed to drive yet.

David Dwyer is back working in Alice Springs after a stint in Tenant Creek. He's been participating in our online Wordsmiths.

VALE BRUCE DAWE
(15/3/1930-1/4/2020)



Renowned Australian poet Donald Bruce Dawe AO, died on 1 April in Caloundra, Qld. He was 90 years old.

Bruce Dawe was born in Fitzroy and educated at Northcote High School. He left school at the age of 16 to work as a labourer before joining the RAAF. As a teenager, his first poem was published in *The Age* under the pseudonym Llewellyn Rees. In 1962, he published his first collection of poetry *No fixed address*.

Dawe would go on to publish more than 15 books during his lifetime. His best known *Sometimes Gladness* has been reprinted several times and has sold well over 100,000 copies.

He was a recipient of an AO in the early 1990s, the Patrick White Award, a Centenary Medal and the Christopher Brennan Award for a lifetime achievement in poetry.

In the introduction to *Sometimes Gladness*, Dawe said he wrote poetry because it can help people "see ourselves and our world more clearly". "If we are lonely, then it will help us recognise that we are not alone in our loneliness," he wrote. "If we are hopeful, or angry, or loving, or sad, then it will help us to see these as universal experiences that proclaim us human, at the same time as they celebrate our individuality – that essential characteristic always under attack somewhere in the world, and always somewhere (thank God!) defended."

Jean Sietzema-Dickson sums up her memories of Bruce Dawe. "The death of Bruce Dawe touches

me deeply. He was the most accessible of Australian poets, understood where non-poets were coming from and could talk to them. When I was about to publish *Sing to the King* I sent him the manuscript and asked if he would write a blurb for the back cover. He did, most generously, saying that in each section there were poems he would like to have written!"

WELLSPRING 2020 Poetry Days

Should restrictions allow, poetry facilitators will present two remaining workshops at Wellspring to share a love of poetry. Each of these days will include time for sharing poems in a group setting, as well as opportunities for personal reflection and creative responses. Each day runs from 10am to 3pm. Cost: \$72/ \$62 (concession). To book:

Monday 10th August : *Flavours of Country* with Ros White

Tuesday 20th October : *Poetry of the Presence* with Julien Winspear

If you plan to attend, please check with Wellspring closer to the time. Ph: 9885 0277

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2020 ACU Prize for Poetry

The 2020 ACU Prize for Poetry will be awarded for outstanding poetry with the theme 'Generosity', reflecting on Katerina Stoykova Klemer's supposition, "If the truth doesn't set you free, generosity of spirit will."

Entries close Monday 6 July. 1st prize : \$10,000.
For more information :
www.acu.edu.au/prizeforpoetry

Rabbit 31 : The Science Issue

Rabbit, a journal for nonfiction poetry is currently accepting submissions of poetry that flirts with, wrangles with or inhabits science. 50 word max. Submissions close June 11th.
<https://www.australianpoetry.org/competitions/call-for-submissions-for-rabbit-31-the-science-issue/>

Aesthetica Creative Writing Award

The Aesthetica Magazine Creative Writing Award is now open for entries. Submit poetry and short fiction. <https://bit.ly/1NBc30v>

2020 Newcastle Poetry Prize

\$25,000 prize pool, sponsored by The University of Newcastle. Competition closes 23rd June 2020.
<https://hunterwriterscentre.org/newcastle-poetry-prize/>

2020 Grieve Writing Competition

Entry fee \$16.50. Max 36 lines of poetry. Open to all Australians. Closing date 25 May
<https://hunterwriterscentre.org/product/2020-grieve-writing-competition-entry-fee-for-your-poem/>

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, June 13, 1-5pm: Possible workshop by Joel McKerrow and meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

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

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

Monday, August 10th. 10- 3pm: Poetry Day at Wellspring, 2 Y St, Ashburton, Theme: *Flavours of Country*. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email info@wellspringcentre.org.au. \$72/\$62.



POETS' CORNER

The Seeker

Alone in the night
the seeker comes to God
far from the distractions
of the day – eye ear
touch taste and thought.

There in the aloneness
aware of the other
days' guide and night's delight
the seeker accepts
the offered piece of peace
gift of the night
and awaits the test of day.

© PG Baker

Isolation

Shut away from life's usual busyness
I hear the purr of passing traffic
its tireless roar muted
so many vehicles idle.
This morning's bird-shriek
lessens to sporadic tweets.
Quietness bathes the neighbourhood.

The earth, unaware of changing times
sends up the pink and red florets
of nerine and naked lady.
The pumpkin flowers fertilise
and swell with miniature fruit.
Leaves turn burgundy, gold and bronze
storing food, preparing for winter.

Floating inside this bubble
tranquillity
washes
over me.

© Maree Silver

Lily (The Sister I never knew)

I dreamed last night that I was in heaven,
And there I met someone I had never
known.

It was great for me to meet Lily,
Who was lost but not a lonesome filly.

As I crossed a wide field of flowers,
I saw her down by a river.
At a glance, I knew it could be no other,
She turned and laughed with joy to see her
brother.

She ran to me, and we met with a hug,
In her rush, she knocked me down.
We wondered how things had gone willy
nilly,
As I looked into the clear blue eyes of Lily.

We stayed with each other for a long while,
But then it seemed she needed to go.
I knew that I would go with her, but not yet,
She smiled and told me not to worry or fret.

Then I awoke and knew it had been a
dream,
It has followed me down through the years.
I don't think that I was being willy,
For one day I will meet my Lily.

© Daryl Pobke

twilight zone

a New Year beginning
excitement building
a date brimming
with potential
symmetry
stability
order
tidy
2020

the reality...

2020
Isolation
seclusion
repetition
lock-down
duplication
monotonous
twilight zone
time-warp trap

© Carolyn Vimpani

Ahead

In night solace
press the stars aside
to form a space
opening through
to whatever is beyond.

Do not imagine
but lead on
to what you might
love...and be loved,
so take a friend

for that is
your purpose
in spirit,
following
creation's light.

© Don Helmore

Send any news for the August newsletter to
treehousepoet318@gmail.com by July 15th.
Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette
Fernando