

# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

15.3

August, 2015

Welcome to the August edition of the Wordsmiths newsletter for 2015.

In another life, I used to be a radio announcer. I loved this job because it gave me the opportunity to interview people, play music I liked, and occasionally read stories and poems into a microphone. Was anyone listening? Who knows. The point of the exercise for me was communication. A broadcast studio with only a mic for company is a very intimate setting and I always felt that I was speaking to only one person, one-on-one.

Radio is a great medium for reading poetry. You don't have to make yourself heard above café noise, or dress to the nines to impress, or even comb your hair. No-one sees you. All the listener hears is your voice, your intonation, your vocal expression. The imagery of the poem is expressed through how you read and the listener has the pleasure of concentrating on the words, not the person reading them.

If you have a community radio station nearby, why not contact them and ask if you could occasionally come on board to read your poetry. It's a challenge, it's fun, and it's a learning curve like no other. Try it...and take some of your favourite music with you to claim the gig as your own.

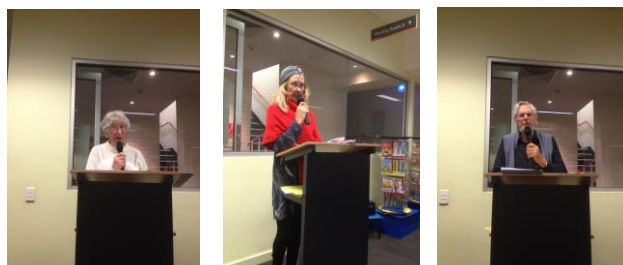
*Leigh Hay*

## PAST MEETINGS

The April Wordsmiths meeting was led by **Jean Sietzema-Dickson**. Jean commenced the meeting with a brief biography of Judith Wright and then proceeded to read several poems by Wright, whom Jean considers one of Australia's greatest poets. In May Peter White led on a theme of poetry relating to war, and in June, **Bron Williams** led with a potted history of her favourite poems, from poets including AA Milne, CJ Denis, John Masefield, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Rachael Bradley. In July, **Joan Ray** led and handed around

a page of 23 quotations by well-known people. These quotations collected by Joe Dolce, are called 'Imaginary Gardens Real Toads'. Each person took it in turns to read a quote, some of which were quite humorous.

## BOX HILL LIBRARY READINGS



At the 17 July readings, **Jean Sietzema-Dickson, Avril Bradley and Don Helmore** were the featured poets. Both Jean and Avril are experienced readers, and Don enjoyed reading his work in public for the first time. The night was MCd by Janette Fernando with open mic readers including Sue Donnelly, Joan Ray and Sandra Topp.

The next reading will be held on Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, featuring **Christina Spry and Pauline Reeve**.

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Leader*	Afternoon tea duty*
8.8.15	Maree N	Jean, Janette, Rebecca
12.9.15	Cecily	Cath, David, Maree N
10.10.15	Cath	Cynthia, Don, Leigh
14 & 15 <sup>th</sup> November	Poetry retreat	
12.12.15	Maree S	everyone

\*If you are unable to lead or do afternoon tea duty on the day listed, please arrange with another Wordsmith to take your place.

Please keep the **14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> of November** free for our annual Poetry retreat. Details next newsletter.

## BOOK LAUNCHES

### ***With other senses* by Rebecca Maxwell**

Held at the Balwyn Library on May the 31<sup>st</sup> this launch brought a room full of people together to celebrate the birth of a new book. The coordinator of the Hawthorn writers group spoke first telling us of the great contribution made by Rebecca to that group. **Molly Travers** launched it, speaking highly of Rebecca's work and her insights, which in some cases astounded us all with their understanding of space and form, in spite of Rebecca's inability to see. Our warmest congratulations to Rebecca on this achievement! *With Other Senses* is available from Rebecca by emailing [beckybrl@hotmail.net.au](mailto:beckybrl@hotmail.net.au).



### ***In search of peace* by Joy Chellew**



Joy's launch was held on July 5<sup>th</sup> at Ocean Grove and was well attended by a crowd of around 70. It was a marvellous afternoon, with the launch of the book by Rev **Jill McCoy**, who spoke highly of Joy's poems and how they were personal yet universal and full of

wisdom. The book has delightful illustrations by Joy's granddaughter Ellie Radke. Copies of *In Search of Peace* are available for \$20 through PCP's website [www.poeticachristi.org.au](http://www.poeticachristi.org.au)

### ***10 Little poems that could really help you through a tough spot* by Cameron Semmens**

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> of July, Cameron Semmens teamed up with guitarist Rod Gear for the launch of Cam's latest book (*10 Little Poems that could really help you through a rough spot*) and Rod's latest CD (*As Gently Falls*). Themcombined launch at Earthly Pleasures café in Belgrave, was well attended and with mulled wine, sensational playing and accompanying



from Rod Gear, and Cam's inimitable performance style, the evening was memorable.

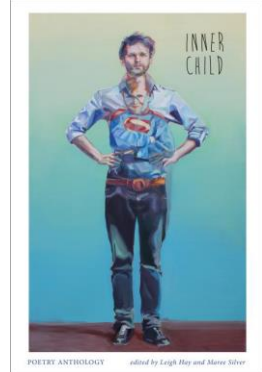
A great atmosphere and engaging performances from two very professional artists.

To order Cam's book, which is \$11.95, go to: <http://www.webcameron.com/buy.php>

### ***Inner Child* edited by Leigh Hay and Maree Silver**

On a cold winter's afternoon the Wordsmiths of Melbourne came together with friends and fellow poets to launch Poetica Christi Press' latest anthology *Inner Child*. There was a good turnout for the launch and a wonderful afternoon was had by all. Launching the book, **Marlene Marburg** was gracious and affirming in her praise of the book, highlighting the different emotions and thoughts the poems had captured in reflecting on the ideas of inner child. In between the poems Daniel Tan regaled us with his violin playing pieces by Elgar, Bach and Dvorak.

The poems shared covered the whole range of experiences: from walking to school in a thunderstorm to memories of Adelaide post WWII; from new ideas to a life-long friendship recollected after fifty plus years. Congratulations to editors Leigh Hay and Maree Silver on a lovely book and a successful launch. The book is available for \$20 via our website. [www.poeticachristi.org.au](http://www.poeticachristi.org.au)



## MEMBER NEWS

In April, **Leigh Hay** visited the UK with her husband David. After David purchased an original oil painting at auction of a WWI British Major who had been highly decorated, the Hays tracked down his descendants, thanks to a torn death notice from the 1918 London Times pasted to the back of the painting. They returned the painting to Major Farrer's great niece and nephew at a special service at St Mary's Anglican Church, Bridport, Dorset. Major Farrer's father had been Canon at St Mary's at the outbreak of WWI and the current Canon, Andrew Evans, was keen to have the painting handed over to the Farrer family in the

church. Leigh wrote a poem titled 'Legacy' and the poem is now the centrepiece of a display in St Mary's, Dorset. (see *Poets Corner*.)

**Marlene Marburg** has been interviewed on spirituality and Ignatian spiritual direction by Norm Currie for the Channel 31 Program *Harmony in Diversity*. You can watch the interviews at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbCjEyrYD9k>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f018xFhCiL8>

## COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Poetica Christi Press 2015 Poetry Competition:** Poems up to 50 lines (inc. spaces) on the theme IMAGINE. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$300, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize \$100, top 25 poems to be published in an anthology. Closing date : 31 August, 2015. For more information: <http://poeticachristi.org.au/?p=476>

### New Poetry Reading Project

Calling all poets and lovers of poetry, especially all those who write in another language than English and/or have their work in a bilingual or a translated form. Every second Saturday of the month, there is poetry reading at Emerald Hill Library & Heritage Centre, 195 Bank St., South Melbourne (opp. South Melbourne Town Hall) 11.45am- 1.45pm. Poetry Reading dates are as follows: August 8, September 12, October 10, November 14, December 12<sup>th</sup>.

For more information:- Dimitri Troaditis [troaditisdimitris@gmail.com](mailto:troaditisdimitris@gmail.com) or ph.0432 094 342

**Melbourne Poets Union 21<sup>st</sup> International Poetry Competition.** First prize \$1500, second \$500, third \$200. Judged by Claire Gaskin, entries close 6 September 2015. For more information: [melbournepoetsunion.wordpress.com](http://melbournepoetsunion.wordpress.com) or write to MPU, PO Box 266, Flinders Lane, Melbourne 8009 for an entry form.

**OBheal Five Words Poetry Competition:** this competition runs until the end of January 2016. Each Tuesday at noon (GMT), five words are posted on the competition page at [http://www.obheal.ie/blog/?page\\_id=2371](http://www.obheal.ie/blog/?page_id=2371). Entrants have one week to compose and submit poems that include all five words given for the week. For more information go to [http://www.obheal.ie/blog/?page\\_id=2371](http://www.obheal.ie/blog/?page_id=2371)

'Vine Leaves' literary journal is currently accepting submissions for Issue 16: Vignettes. A vignette is a snapshot in words that focuses on one element,

mood, character, setting or object. They accept prose, poetry, script, and artwork/photography for the cover and/or interior of the issue. Go to: <http://www.vineleavesliteraryjournal.com/submission-guidelines.html>

**Post Road** publishes twice yearly and accepts unsolicited poetry, fiction, nonfiction, short plays and monologues, and visual art submissions. Our submissions periods run from July 1 to August 31 for the spring issue. Simultaneous submissions are accepted, but we ask to be informed immediately if your work is accepted elsewhere. Go to: <http://www.postroadmag.com/submit.phtml>

## DIARY OF EVENTS

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

**THE MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL** runs from **August 20-30<sup>th</sup>**. At 10 am on Friday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, you can hear Les Murray read from his latest collection at ACMI Cinema 1. Visit [www.mwf.com.au](http://www.mwf.com.au) for more information.

**Friday, September 4th: 6.30-7.30 pm:** Poetry reading at Box Hill Library. Featured poets will be **Christina Spry and Pauline Reeve**. If you wish to register to read in open mic, contact Maree Silver [gmsilver@optushome.com.au](mailto:gmsilver@optushome.com.au)

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

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

**CHRISTIAN WRITERS CONFERENCE AUSTRALIA** **October 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>** at Bacchus Marsh. for information on programme, costs, etc. go to: <http://www.christianwritersconference.org.au>

**Friday, November 6th: 6.30-7.30pm :** Poetry reading at Box Hill Library. Featured poets will be Craig Coulson and Cath Barnard. If you wish to register to read in open mic, contact Leigh Hay [leighhay@optusnet.com.au](mailto:leighhay@optusnet.com.au)

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>-Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> of November:** Our annual Poetry retreat at St Andrews beach, with a Quiet Day led by Bron Pryor and a Poetry Workshop led by Marlene Marburg.

## POETS' CORNER



### Legacy

*For Major Henry Wyndham Francis Blackburne  
Farrer, R.F.A. Killed in Action at Mazingheir  
30/10/1918, aged 24 years.*

Brave (they said)           gallant to boot.  
The Croix de Guerre   mentioned in dispatches  
MC (with two bars) –  
a decorated man.

One miserable fortnight and the war is over  
but not for the soldier who is gone before.  
In one fell swoop of a flighty shell  
your life snuffed out.   No last symphony;  
no last thwack of leather hitting willow  
no ducking, weaving or shoving the scrum  
no blood red sunset or barrage of command  
only a sudden thud   crippling slump  
death's silent spoor.

But still you live   a likeness on canvass  
sitting straight in dress uniform.  
From the auction room to our plastered wall  
a century gone   where have you been?  
It's time to return to those still living  
the family you had and never knew  
who say you so  
resemble your brother.

We'll wrap you with care   the glass won't break  
together we'll journey half the world  
take you home where you belong  
to re-live years lost to war  
surrounded by love  
at ease with peace.

*©Leigh Hay*

### Degraves Street

small snug Degraves street  
stretches herself leisurely  
between tall sober buildings,  
and enjoys hosting sociable crowds  
at her informal coffee and snacks tables –  
softly stimulated.

pulsing leisurely,  
she listens in to an abundant mix  
of quietly earnest conversations here,  
gentle jocular repartee there.

tempting smells cajole her appetite,  
she nibbles and sips, and bustles with her guests,  
fizzing and murmuring –  
she is fulsome enough, but never rowdy.  
her pace is quiet, light, and unhurried,  
spared the rush and row of roaring cars  
which only pass by  
at right angles to her,  
along frowsy frenetic Flinders Street.

*© Rebecca Maxwell  
(from With Other Senses)*

### Where is Peace?

Is it a place somewhere?  
Maybe it's a place in me  
a quiet retreat  
deep down  
sheathed in a sigh -  
contentment  
in spite of mayhem.  
Is it some secret knowing  
a meeting-place  
a 'holy of holies'  
a God space  
in me?

*© Joy Chellew  
(from In Search of Peace)*

### Perfect Partum

Newborn as an old man  
turns pink and fresh before our eyes  
tiny hand reaches out.

We are speechless  
in awe of another miracle of birth  
as we take his hand.

With one look he is ours  
hereditary bonds tie the knot  
that bind him for life.

*© Sandra Topp  
(from Inner Child)*