

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

16.1

February, 2016

Welcome to the first edition of the Wordsmiths' newsletter for 2016.

2016 has been an interesting year for me already as regards poetry. At the beginning of January, I was asked to compile and write the libretto for a choral work for chorus, soloists and orchestra. The work will commemorate the battles of the Somme (WWI) and Long Tan (Vietnam). The poetry of war has always been an interest for me, and so the task of bringing together the poetry of others and then writing additional verse to tell a story of two wars, loomed as a very large challenge indeed (read here scary).

When poetry is required to be sung, rather than read, the placement and repetition of words to form solo pieces and choruses takes on new meaning, as does the accuracy of text. Many emails were exchanged with a Canberra-based military historian, and feedback sought from performance poet Cam Semmens.

However, there came a point where the focus of the challenge morphed from intensely absorbing to enjoyable. I realised that libretto was something I could do if I put my mind to it!

Where this story is leading is that I realised a challenge to my creativity was not such a bad thing. I've labelled this little observation as 'growth'. Even the military historian was supportive, adding.... "and I'm no poet".

Of course what the young Australian commissioned to compose the orchestration will think, is another matter. I might be getting ahead of myself here. Proof of the pud is in the eating, as my mum used to say. My dad used to say "ye of little faith". Watch this space.

- Leigh

PAST MEETINGS

Cath Barnard led the December meeting. The group met at 1pm for a shared Christmas lunch, and then the meeting commenced at 2pm as usual. Cath read a prologue of John's Gospel as poetry to look at

today. Cath believes John's Gospel is poetry – music to draw you in, thanking God for these wonderful words and bringing them to us. Some Wordsmiths workshopped poems and some members read their favourite Christmas poem. Here's a photo of the group at our December meeting.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Unless otherwise notified, all meetings for 2016 will be held at 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster East, from 2-5 pm. In May we have guest poet **Cathy Altmann** leading us in a Poetry Workshop.

Below 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 of Wordsmiths to take your place.

Date	Leader	Afternoon tea duty
February	Jean	Leigh, Maree S, Dahlia
March	Joan	Maree N, Bron, Don
April	Cecily	Cath, David, Janette
May	Cathy Altmann	Rebecca, Greg, Jean
June	Peter	Joan, June, Sharlee
July	Janette	Peter, Cynthia, Sandra

FROM THE TREASURER

Membership payments of \$30.00 for the year 1 January 2016 -31 December 2016 are now due. Payment in cash preferred, correct money if possible to Maree Silver (Treasurer), or if paying by cheque, make the cheque out to Poetica Christi Press. See attached Response slip.

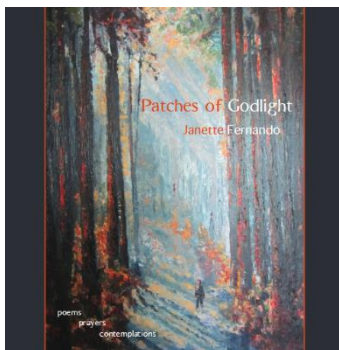
NEWS FROM POETICA CHRISTI PRESS

We finished last year with two new books out before Christmas: *Trumped by Grace* by Peter Stiles and *White on White* by Gina Sbato.

This year we have already published our first book, *Patches of Godlight* by **Janette Fernando**, who took a sabbatical from being Managing Editor last year so that she could work on her own book. (See details of the launch below.)

We also hope to publish the anthology *Imagine* that came out of last year's competition in the next few months.

Book Launch –Prelude to a Party!



What a brilliant idea! A book launch with a difference!

Janette Fernando's much awaited book, *Patches of Godlight* arrived in time for the celebrations for hers and Roger's 40th

Wedding

Anniversary. This beautifully crafted and presented book was launched by Michelle Dempsey, CEO of Christian Education National.

Janette has taken personal and often intimate conversations with God from her journal and laid them beside poems that reflect similar thoughts. The book also includes 23 pages of colour photographs she has taken.



The effect is an inspired brilliance of an honesty and clarity that leads the reader into new encounters with God. It is very aptly named: *Patches of Godlight*! Thank you Janette! To get your copy, use the response slip attached.

- Cath Barnard

BOOK LAUNCHES



On Thursday 3rd December, **Joan Ray's** new collection of pet therapy poems *By the grace of dog* was launched at the Manningham City Square (MC2). Those attending were welcomed by Councillor Meg

Downie (Manningham Council) as the launch was part of Manningham Council's pARTicipation day. John Gosling OAM, from Guide Dogs Victoria, officially launched the book and Megan Nutbean from Lort Smith Pet Therapy also spoke. The launch was very well attended and Carolyn Vimpani, a member of Wordsmiths, opened the proceedings. Highlights of the day included Joan reading five of her poems; Sally Hearn (daughter of Jenny Royden) reading 'Dog Lover' Joan's poem written in memory of Jenny; a delicious afternoon tea; and a door prize (won by Maree Nikolaou). Orders for *By the grace of dog* (RRP\$20) can be placed with Joan: jray.29@internode.on.net

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Sharlee Yang**, who has passed her Ph D with flying colours!

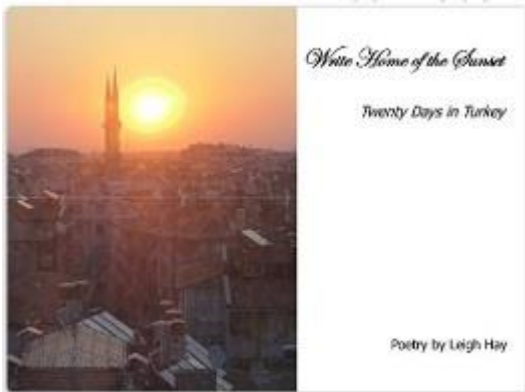
Some of us enjoyed celebrating with **Cath Barnard** on the occasion of her 80th birthday recently.

June Close, a new member of Wordsmiths, launched her new book of poetry, titled *Where My Mind Leaps*, at Vermont Retirement Village on 12 December 2015.

June's collection of poems deals with the soldiers in the family who were involved in WWI, Melbourne life, Australia wide, travels overseas and some personal meditations. RRP \$20, copies available from June, junclose@bigpond.com

Leigh Hay has published a new book of poetry. *Write Home of the Sunset : Twenty days in Turkey*, is a compilation of Leigh's travel poems as she visited the Gallipoli peninsula, followed by a cultural

tour through Anatolia, finishing in Istanbul. Accompanying photographs by David Hay. *Tales from the Treehouse*, RRP \$10. ebook <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B018DBXDMO> or printed copy www.leighhay.com.au



WELLSPRING POETRY DAYS

Wellspring is running two Poetry days for Good Friday and Easter, with Barbara Rautmann, on *Monday 7 March: 10am to 3pm (Good Friday Poems) \$65 (full) \$54 (members/concession) & Monday 21 March: 10am to 1pm (Easter Day Poems) \$45 (full) \$36 (members/concession)* Discount for both sessions \$100 (full) \$80 (members/concession)

For bookings and further information visit www.wellspringcentre.org.au or call (03) 9885 0277

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

WV Regional Writing Comp

Using the theme of 'local colour', current regional members of Writers Victoria are invited to submit a short piece of fiction, non-fiction or poetry for publication in the Aug/Sept edition of The Victorian Writer magazine. Closes 2 May

The winner of the Regional Members' Writing Comp will receive a paid commission of \$500. Two runners-up will receive \$250 commissions.

<https://writersvictoria.org.au/calendar/competitions/regional-members-writing-comp>

'Don't Talk to Me About Love' Contest

What does LOVE mean to you? We want your fiction, non-fiction and poetry, exploring love in any of its myriad expressions: romantic, platonic, parental, and much, much more. We know there is a whole world of love out there, and we want to read about it. First prize is \$1000 CDN.

<http://www.donttalktomeaboutlove.com/contest/>
Closes 14 February

Eastwood/Hills Fellowship of Australian Writers Literary Competition 2016

Submit all forms of poetry except Bush Poetry. Max 80 lines per poem. First Prize \$150, Second Prize \$50. Closing date 31 May 2016.

More information : <http://hillsfaw.webs.com> or email Marilyn Humbert mah53@tpg.com.au

Boree Log Award for Bush Verse 2016

Eastwood/Hills Fellowship of Australian Writers. Ballads to be in perfect rhyme and metre, max 80 lines and an Australian bush theme.

Entry Fee \$5 per entry – max 4 entries.

Enquiries: Marilyn Humbert mah53@tpg.com.au
Ph : 02 9456 1307.

Conditions of entry and entry forms: <http://hillsfaw.webs.com>

Australian Poetry Journal 6.1 submissions

Editor Michael Sharkey, Publisher - Australian Poetry. Poetry submissions to Australian Poetry Journal 6.1 (pub date 14-30 June) remain open, strictly, between 15 January 10 am and 15 March, midnight, 2016. For more information on the Journal go to: <http://apj.australianpoetry.org/> Email submissions can be sent to: apjsubmissions@gmail.com. Poets, both Australian born or international, are invited to submit, in one email, up to three poems. Work sent past the deadline will not be read or considered. The three poems must be previously unpublished.

Nilumbik Ekphrasis Poetry Award

Australian poets are invited to respond to one or more artworks selected from the Shire of Nilumbik exhibition 'Laughing Waters Road', which can be viewed on the Shire's website or in person at Montsalvat. Winner receives \$550. **Closes 31/3**

DIARY OF EVENTS

Saturday, February 13th : 2-5pm: First meeting for 2015 of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

Monday, 7th March, 10-3pm: Wellspring Poetry Day – poems for Good Friday.

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

Monday, 21st March, 10-1pm: Wellspring Poetry Day – poems for Easter.

Saturday, April 9th, 2-5 pm: Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East.

Saturday, May 14th, 2-5 pm: Poetry workshop with Cathy Altmann, 8 Woodhouse Rd, Doncaster East.



POETS' CORNER

Gentleman wear hats

Such a gentleman!
Why was he here?
Home folk wear
tracky pants, urine-stained,
cardigans or tops
with the day's menu
spread across the front.
They shuffle on a frame,
sprawl chair-bound.
Wheelchairs mark the mobile.

But he walked.
He talked.
Dressed in slacks and sports coat,
shirt and tie.
Always wore a hat.

Now he strolled the passage, debonair –
below the waist starkers.

Gently he smiled,
wished me "Good morning!",
doffed his hat.

© Joan Ray (from *By the grace of dog*)

Incarnation

God of my universe
did you google earth
and come zooming in
to a particular place
at a particular time
to a particular girl,
chosen with care?

God of my nakedness
who formed me before birth,
how could you allow
your own son
to be stripped so bare
that he, who was not created
but Co-Creator,
should be born of one of us,
become one *with* us,
become one *of* us?

God of my self
who bared his own son,
do you invite me
to bear him now,
to carry the seed of Hope
who will take over my self
and bear me?

© Janette Fernando (from *Patches of Godlight*)

Cappadocia summer

In the last days of summer
sturdy haystacks three bales high
burnish a carpet of halva coloured stubble.
From the back of an ageing, rusted truck
women fork and winnow –
as grounded others, backs bent,
bag mulched mounds of compost.

The lush valley floor is alive with pumpkins –
full moons ripe for the picking.
A smattering of sunflowers yellows the green
of dripping wet potato fields
running flat to a far horizon
where clouds furrow cashmere white
ruching ridges of arid hills.

Sheep bunch in shade
Shepherd dogs lie, some slow march –
lazy in the heat of late afternoon.
The valley is fired with golden light
summer embers slow to die
in this tranquil, timeless land.

© Leigh Hay (from *Write Home of the Sunset*)

Praise

Deep in a sea of golden staves,
tincture of sun on a summer sky.
Strangely blunted distant sounds,
and a whisper of thanks
met with peace and gladness.
Why come to me for so little, Lord?
A sheaf of grace
for the husk of my scribbling,
Wheatfields of love
for this kernel of praise.

© Peter Stiles (from *Trumped by Grace*)

---o---

Newsletter prepared by Leigh Hay and Janette
Fernando. Send news to: poetica@iprimus.com.au