

# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

18.2

May, 2018

Welcome to the May edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2018.

Over the last 18 months, I've been presenting talks to groups of seniors. I rather enjoy this activity, as it gives me a chance to meet and share ideas with older people on ways to preserve their life memories.

As a writer and poet, recording my family's highs, lows and seasons comes naturally. But this is not the case for everyone, hence the talks.

Many older people (particularly women) often say to me that they don't consider their lives have been all that exciting. What is there to document? They've married, raised a family, belonged to a few organisations and now perhaps care for grandchildren or a partner. They tell me that putting words together is not, nor has it ever been 'their thing'. They certainly don't believe their lives are worth writing about.

So this is where the fun starts. I usually begin a talk by assuring everyone in the room that their life is indeed very important. The older generation is tasked with passing on 'the knowledge', for when a person dies, what they do know dies with them.

Next, I gently throw up a challenge or two. How about writing down unique family sayings and turning these into bookmarks? What about laminating your grandchildren's drawings to use as placemats? Try putting together a family cookbook, or lists of favourite music, traditions, or albums of family photos complete with quirky captions? Try sharing your childhood stories with your grandchildren and encourage them to write their own. Craft is also a beautiful and creative way to pass on your original work to the next generation. At one talk, a lady told me that a friend of hers had collected teaspoons and when she died, everyone at her funeral was invited to take one in memory of her. By this stage, everyone is contributing and we've all had a good laugh.

But the highlight of the talks is when I read from PCP's anthologies. Poetry is so accessible and I find it's an easy thing to encourage older ones to forget their inhibitions, find time to put pen to paper and just let ideas flow. Poetry crosses the generation gap. "Your poetry", I tell them, "is like you.....it's irreplaceable."

Leigh Hay

## PAST MEETINGS

**Jean Sietzema-Dickson** led the February meeting with readings of poetry by Rudyard Kipling and also John O'Donohue (Irish poet, author, priest and Hegelian philosopher). Kipling's poems included *The Answer*, *Harp Song of the Dane Women* (from Puck of Pook's Hill) and *Cold Iron* (which was read by Peter White). O'Donohue's poetry included *Elemental* and *The Pleading*.

**Greg Burns** led the March meeting with an interesting selection of poets and their works. Greg's selection included *Introduction to Poetry* – Billy Collins, Poet Laureate; S T Coleridge – *Metrical Feet*; Alfred Lord Tennyson – *Break, break, break*; and Rudyard Kipling – *excerpts from McAndrews Hymn*.

**Janette Fernando** led the April meeting, reading a collection of Easter poems from a workshop she had facilitated at Wellspring in March. Featured poets were Gerard Manley Hopkins (*Easter*), Luci Shaw (*Trauma Center*), Sandra Duguid (*If Christ had Lept*), Kathryn Hamann (*Joy Comes in the Morning*) and Cynthia Walkwitz (*Re-enactment*).

Welcomed at the April meeting were Daryl Pobke and Cate Lewis.

## 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
May	Carolyn	Greg, Florence, Leigh
June	Peter	Janette, Cecily, Don
July	Cath	Maree N, Joan, Peter

## MEMBER NEWS



Congratulations to **Carolyn Vimpani** who was recognised with an OAM in this year's Australia Day awards. Carolyn's award was for her work on community advocacy bodies advising Manningham Council on everything from housing to employment. Carolyn started advising the Manningham council on Manningham Activities for Special Kids back in 1981, a role she continues today, alongside her work with Manningham Inclusive Community Housing (MICH) — which she founded in 2013 — and REAL (rights, employment, accommodation and leisure). Carolyn has also taken up advocacy roles for people with dementia since joining the Manningham Dementia Alliance.



Congratulations to **Don Helmore** on the publication of **Behold!** — a collection of Don's unique and inspiring poetry. It is to be launched in May and if you would like a copy, please use the response slip. **Behold!** is PCP's 45<sup>th</sup> publication.

**Janette Fernando and Maree Silver** are also congratulated on the safe arrival of a granddaughter each - Charlotte Janette Fernando and Amelia Olivia Silver. Both babies and their parents are doing well.

### WELLSPRING CENTRE POETRY DAYS 2018

If you've ever attended a poetry day at Wellspring, you'll know they are not to be missed! Coming up on **Monday 21 May** is the second of the Wellspring Poetry Days, from 10-3, with **poems on Australian Voices**, facilitated by Elizabeth Lee. The address is 10 Y St, Ashburton. For information, check the website

[www.wellspringcentre.org.au](http://www.wellspringcentre.org.au), or you can email [info@wellspringcentre.org.au](mailto:info@wellspringcentre.org.au). Phone 9885 0277.

Other Wellspring days for 2018 include:

**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 (concession) per session.

**FOUR DAY WORKSHOP WITH MARGARET SILF: The Future is Within Us** May 14-17 May, 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. Info: <http://www.kardia.com.au>

**WEEKEND SUMMIT WITH MARGARET SILF: Imagining the Self in a Spirituality Expansive World. May 18-20.** 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. Full Summit: Friday night 7 - 9.30pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am - 5pm \$290. For more info: <http://www.kardia.com.au/summit/>

### DADIRRI LABYRINTH DAYS

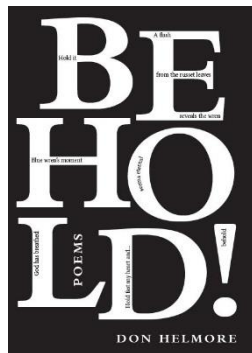
Some of you will remember the poetry retreat weekends we used to hold annually at the home of Robin and Bron Pryor at St Andrews beach. Bron is running labyrinth days every month, and this year's theme is *"The Heartbeat of God in all Life: Celtic Christian Spirituality"*. The next one is on **Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> of May:** *Finding God within Creation; within the here and now*. The days run from 10 am-4 pm at 60 Bass Meadows Blvd, St Andrews Beach, and cost \$10 or \$5 for pensioners. BYO lunch to share, morning and afternoon tea provided. To book, phone 5988 5257 or email [robron@pryor.ord.au](mailto:robron@pryor.ord.au) by Thursday evening before the Saturday. Other dates coming up are:

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>**- Spirituality in the Australian landscape. (at Pallotti College, Millgrove)

**July 28<sup>th</sup>** - The thin veil between heaven and earth.

**August 18<sup>th</sup>** – The role of women in Celtic Spirituality.

**September 15<sup>th</sup>** – The importance of St John.



**SILENT DIRECTED RETREAT – Santa Casa, Queenscliff, 10 – 18 October.** Spiritual directors - Marlene Marburg and Bernadette Miles

The silent directed eight-day retreat is a privileged time when we can tune out the noise and distractions of our regular routines in order to more intentionally focus on our relationship with God. We offer you a beautiful environment, silence and daily spiritual direction in which you can rest and reconnect to the source of life. To book or for further information:  
<http://www.kardia.com.au>

## COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### 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](http://www.elynemitchell.com)

**Eastwood/Hills Fellowship of Australian Writers Literary Competition 2018.** Closing Date: 15th May, 2018 (entries post marked on or before this date). All categories Open Theme. Cat 1: Short Story, Cat 2: Poetry (Includes all forms of poetry except Bush Poetry), Cat 3: Alan Russell Award for Memoir and Cat 4: Pauline Walsh Award for Short Story. Entry fee \$7 per entry or \$25 for four. Cheque or money order in A\$ payable to: Eastwood/Hills FAW. Fees can also be sent electronically this year. Each entry must be accompanied by a separate signed entry form. Conditions of entry and entry forms can be found at <https://hillsfaw.wordpress.com/>

**Eastwood/Hills Fellowship of Australian Writers Boree Log Award for Bush Verse 2018.** Closing Date: 15th May, 2018 (entries post marked on or before this date). First Prize: \$100 plus a trophy and certificate. Entrants are eligible for one award only. Ballads to be in perfect rhyme and metre with max 80 lines and an Australian bush theme. Entry Fee: \$7 per entry – Maximum 4 entries per entrant. Cheque or money order in A\$ payable to: Eastwood/Hills FAW. Fees can also be sent electronically this year. Enquiries: Marilyn Humbert [mah53@tpg.com.au](mailto:mah53@tpg.com.au) or phone 02 9456 1307. Each entry must be accompanied by a separate signed entry form. Conditions of entry and entry forms can be found at <https://hillsfaw.wordpress.com/>

### Australian Catholic University 2018 Prize for Poetry

Theme 'Empathy'. The competition is judged by Australian poet, distinguished academic, and critic

Professor Chris Wallace-Crabbe. The prize is made possible through the sponsorship of the Office of the Vice President, with a grand prize of \$10,000 for the winner, \$5,000 for the second prize and \$3,000 for the third prize. The winning and shortlisted poems will also be published in a chapbook which will be launched during the announcement of shortlisted, commended and winning poems on Thursday 6 September. Following the growing popularity of the contest, online submission of entries has been introduced this year in addition to submission by post. Australian residents, including any international student currently studying at an Australian university, are eligible to enter. Poetry submissions must not include the name of the poet and not exceed 80 lines. Please read the full list of entry guidelines before submitting at [www.acu.edu.au/literature-prize](http://www.acu.edu.au/literature-prize). Entries close at 5pm EST Friday 20th July 2018. Enquiries to: [aculiteratureprize@acu.edu.au](mailto:aculiteratureprize@acu.edu.au)

### Grieve Writing Competition

*Theme: You know the measure of your love by the weight of your loss.* Closes 8pm AEST, 28 May, 2018. For more information, go to: <https://calendarforwriters.com/events/2018-grieve-writing-competition/>

### Peter Cowan Writers Centre: 2018 Patron's Prize for Poetry Competition

Maximum 50 lines per poem. \$200 1<sup>st</sup> prize, \$100 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, \$50 3<sup>rd</sup> prize. Novice Poet Award \$50. \$10 per entry \$20 for three entries, \$30 for five entries. Closing date : 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2018. Info: [cowan05@bigpond.com](mailto:cowan05@bigpond.com) or phone (08) 9301 2282.

## DIARY OF EVENTS

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

**Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 10-3 pm:** Poetry Day at Wellspring, 2 Y St, Ashburton, Theme: Australian voices. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email [info@wellspringcentre.org.au](mailto:info@wellspringcentre.org.au).

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

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

---

To send any news for the August newsletter, email [leighhay@optusnet.com.au](mailto:leighhay@optusnet.com.au) by July 15th. Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando.



## POETS' CORNER

### EASTER SUNDAY 2004

Chaos  
has had his day  
of rage and hate,  
malice  
and blood,  
fierce cries of triumph,  
blows  
and cruel laughter.

And now he lies  
exhausted.

And in the morning hush  
of the garden,  
Love comes so quietly  
and gently gathers chaos  
into her strong arms,  
soothing him softly,  
as a mother rocks  
a weary, frightened child.

And chaos meets his match,  
lost in the love  
which will not let him go.

© Catherine Lewis

### CLOUD ARTISTRY

Watch blue cosmos depth.  
Without pregnant birth  
wisp builds fragile wisp,  
white on white on white,  
tumble on tumble.

Such svelte artistry  
mystically clouds minds.  
Communes of mist stray,  
happen, shape, resolve  
shadow without sound.

© Don Helmore (from **Behold!**)

### CLAIRE'S DAY

I arrive anxious at my lateness  
in this unfamiliar church,  
aware of sunlight on my back,  
children's happy chatter –  
gentle music playing.

Claire comes forward with excited smiles,  
a loving embrace and reassurances  
that I am still on time! –Relief!

### This is the day of her Baptism!

She leads me towards the music

into the circle of light and warmth.

I am embraced by family-

welcomed into church family -

We are **all** encircled by

The Everlasting arms!

© catherine m. barnard

### ...UNLESS I SEE HIM...

*I want to see Jesus*  
I said  
and I did  
– not in splendid robes  
or even sandalled feet  
but  
in a loaf of bread  
and cup of wine.

I saw  
smelled  
tasted  
heard the Word

and was touched  
by God.

© Janette Fernando