

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

19.3

August, 2019

Welcome to the August edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2019.

As poets we can always find words to fit each season of the year. Spring generates words for new life, the close of winter and promise of summer; Summer suggests we write about long, hot, languid days or holidays remembered; and Autumn proposes we create sonnets of soft sunshine, leaf fall and stillness.

But what of winter? Melbourne in particular has been for the most part, cold, wet and altogether miserable this winter, especially if you happen to be caught without an umbrella, gloves, hat or scarf.

But despite its bleakness, Winter can be a particularly creative time of year, and not just for knitting by the fire. For poets (and artists), the starkness and extremes of winter can be a much needed thermal lift or hot chocolate to the sun-deprived mind.

Winter imagery in poetry is a treat not to be missed. The crunch of ice underfoot; bare, moss covered branches; ducks sheltering high on branches before the rain; biting winds that colour noses and cheeks a ruddy shade of red; puddles for splashing in; hot water bottles or heated wheat bags for curling up with; or sitting inside behind glass, soaking up the morning sun. By August, birds are beginning to think about nesting; magpies are into swooping; and Brush-tailed Possums have probably eaten anything left in the garden worth having. By August, our parks and gardens inherently know that Spring is coming and tiny buds and shoots begin to appear.

Winter gives us so much to write about; so much to capture in poetry – from the deafening hail on the roof to the first snowdrops.

Staying inside by the fire is admirable, practical even on the really bone numbing days when the temperature struggles to make it past double figures, but should I choose to isolate myself from what Winter has to offer, I feel I miss an opportunity for poetry that captures the true spirit of Winter – from grey, overcast skies to distant purple mountains.

Leigh Hay

PAST MEETINGS

Jean Sietzema-Dickson led the May Wordsmiths meeting with a tribute to Australian Poet Les Murray who passed away on 28th April. Born in 1938 at Nabitac, Murray's awards included the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, Christopher Brennan Award and Petrarca-Preis (a European literary and translation award named after the Italian Renaissance poet Francesco Petrarca). Jean read : *Broad Bean Sermon* and *An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow*.

Carolyn Vimpani led the June meeting and began with an explanation of **Onomatopoeia** and its usage by poets because it allows the reader to visualise the scene by creating a multi-sensory experience. She used examples from Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Morte D'Arthur*, and Gwendolyn Brooks' *Cynthia in the Snow* and Robert Browning's *Pied Piper of Hamelin* to illustrate this.

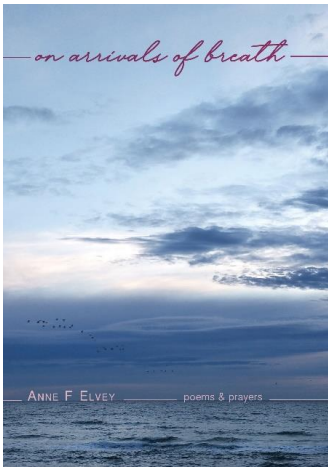
Joan Ray led the July meeting, featuring the work of Gilbert Keith (GK) Chesterton (1874-1936). Chesterton studied art and literature but did not complete a degree. A follower of the works of Shaw and Wilde he turned to journalism, contributing to a weekly column in the *Illustrated London News*. In 1922 he converted to Catholicism and is best known as author of the *Father Brown* novels. Joan read *The Donkey* and an excerpt from *The Ballad of the White Horse* (book 1).

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.

Aug 10 th	Maree S	Daryl, Cecily, Cate
Sept 14 th	Cath	Don, Peter B, Jean
Oct 12 th	Poetry workshop	Joan, David, Cath

POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS



Poetica Christi Press is pleased to be publishing *On Arrivals of Breath* by Dr Anne Elvey – editor, researcher and writer, with interests in ecological criticism, ecopoetics and also theology. Her previous collection of poetry, *Kin*, was shortlisted for the Kenneth Slessor Award in 2015. *On Arrivals of Breath* is due to be

launched at 6 pm on October 15th by Dorothy Lee at Trinity College, Melbourne University.

RESULTS OF THE PCP POETRY COMPETITION 2019

JUDGE'S CHOICES – Love's footprint

The following is a list of prize winners and place getters for this year's PCP anthology, as chosen by the judge Christopher Ringrose. The list is also available on PCP's website :

<http://www.poeticachristipress.org.au>

WINNER : *Motherlode* – David Terelinck

RUNNER-UP: *A Wake for Amy* – Kerry Harte

ANTHOLOGY PLACE GETTERS (alphabetical order)

Clan Call – Robert Reid

Even Though We Are Half a Universe Apart – Rhonda Pohlke

Galleries – Judyth Keighran

Heather – Toni Brisland

Invisible Print – Valerie Volk

Love's Footprint – Eve Norton McGlashan

Nexus – Suzi Mezei

Nous ne sommes pas un couple – Jacqueline Law

Now That He's Gone – Janeen Samuel

Que je t'aime – Joan Ray

Renewal – Robert Reid

Returning – Janeen Samuel

The Gardener's Love – Clare-Louise Grace Watson

The Rhythm Line – Tim Collins

The Sweetest Moment – Vivien de Jong

The Tracking Harness – Joan Ray

These Reductions – Tru S Dowling

Things That Kept You Alive – Charles D'Anastasi

Trimester – Suzi Mezei

Unblemished – Pamela Heemskerk

We – Bethany Evans

We Are Dog Lovers – Vivien de Jong

Wheatfield Wind – Marilyn Humbert

2019 WELLSRING CENTRE POETRY DAYS

The **Wellspring Centre** conducted two poetry days earlier this year. The first was 16th of May, *God's Fingerprints : The Poems of Luci Shaw – Finding the Extraordinary in the Ordinary*, facilitated by Janette Fernando.

The second poetry day was Wednesday 3rd July, *The Poetry of David Whyte* – facilitated by Elizabeth Lee. For both days there was a good representation from members of Wordsmiths as well as other local poets. These poetry days give attendees the opportunity to study one poet's work in depth, and are a perfect forum for discussion and learning. The Wellspring Centre in Ashburton is an oasis of calm and reflection, providing creative renewal for mind and spirit. The poetry days are moderately priced and well worth attending.

The final poetry day for 2019 will be

Tuesday 8 October, *Poems as Icons* – facilitated by well-known Melbourne poet Julien Winspear.

More : <https://www.wellspringcentre.org.au>

MEMBER NEWS

VALE MARGUERITE KISVARDAI



Marguerite Kisvardai (or Marguerite Varday as we knew her) has been a member of The Wordsmiths for many years, even travelling down from near Kilmore to attend meetings until the last few years when health issues prevented her.

She was a keen poet and contributed greatly to our meetings. I managed to attend her funeral and met Trudy Oldaker, a member of the Society of Women Writers Victoria. She spoke glowingly about Marguerite's contribution to the Society in which she held office as Vice-President and Treasurer and then as President for two years. In her younger days she worked in radio. Her husband worked on the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme, so her time in the mountains gave her abundant material for her writing. She and John had two children and Marguerite was devoted to them and her grandchildren.

As long as she was able, she was involved in various writing groups and, with friends to transport her, sometimes, even this year, came down to the Nandina Poets, but she kept on writing until her last days. She was a delightful, loving member of our group and we will go on missing her.

jmsd

(photo credit Veronica Schwarz)

On July 20th, **Janette Fernando** was invited by the Society of Women Writers (Vic) to present the Kathryn Purnell Poetry Prize and also give a workshop for the Society's Poetry Seminar. Held at Docklands Library, those attending were officially welcomed by the President of the SWWV Paula Wilson. As judge for the Kathryn Purnell prize, Janette then gave an insightful introduction into what she looks for in a poem, giving numerous examples of poetic style. The winner of the Kathryn Purnell Poetry Prize was Janice Williams, a member of the Society. Together with Joe Dolce (American-Australian singer/songwriter, poet and essayist) Janette facilitated afternoon workshops and the day concluded with poetry readings.



L to R: Judith A Green (Runner-up), Janette Fernando, Janice Williams (Winner)

Cathy Altmann was recently interviewed by Andrew Moody on her book *things we know without naming*. To hear the interview : The Gospel Coalition Australia:

<https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/made-cathy-altmanns-things-know-without-naming/>

COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2020 Peter Porter Poetry Prize Australian Book Review welcomes entries in the 16th Peter Porter Poetry Prize, honouring the life and work of Peter Porter (1929-2010). First prize \$7,000; Four other shortlisted poets \$500ea. Entries close 1 October 2019. More information : <https://www.australianpoetry.org/competitions/2020-peter-porter-poetry-prize/>

Cicerone Journal submissions Issue 3 of Cicerone Journal's online publication of poetry, short stories and non-fiction is currently open for submissions! For Issue 3, we'd love to see people exploring stories of place, wherever this place might be. Lead us somewhere new, or cast a fresh light on something old or forgotten. Closes August 31st.

Our submissions guidelines can be found on our website here: ciceronejournal.com/online-submissions/

The Toolangi C.J. Dennis Poetry Competition

The CJ Dennis Society aims to promote Australian "bush" poetry by keeping C.J.Dennis' works alive and to devise ways to make sure that C.J.Dennis gets the public recognition this great Australian writer deserves via activities such as our poetry competition. Submissions for entries NOW OPEN and close 7th September 2019. Categories (prizes in brackets: (1st / 2nd / 3rd) 1. Open Poetry (Marian Mayne Prize: \$250 / \$150 / \$100) 2. Open Short Story (CJ Dennis Society Prize: \$250 / \$150 / \$100) 3. Poems written by adults for children (\$250 / \$150 / \$100). There will also be a prize of \$150 for the poem in this category chosen as the best by a group of local children. For further details and to obtain a copy of the Entry Form please visit <http://thesinginggardens.com.au/c-j-dennis/the-c-j-dennis-poetry-festival/> or contact us via thecjdennissociety@gmail.com

The WB Yeats Poetry Prize Open to residents of Australia for previously unpublished poems. First prize \$500, two 2nd prizes \$75.00ea. 50 line max. Closing date 31 March 2020. More information : <https://www.wbyeatspoetryprize.com/home>

Judith Wright Poetry Prize Submissions open 12 September 2019. The major prize is \$6000, with a 2nd prize of \$2000, and third prize of \$1000. All three winners will be published in the first issue of Overland's print magazine of 2020. More : <https://overland.org.au/prizes/overland-judith-wright-poetry-prize-for-new-and-emerging-poets/>

Katharine Susannah Prichard Poetry Competition

Closes October 11th. Poems up to 50 lines on an open theme. Entry fee: \$10 for 1, \$15 for 2, \$20 for 3. For more information: <https://www.kspwriterscentre.com/poetry-competition>

DIARY OF EVENTS

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

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

Tuesday, October 8th, 10-3 pm: Poetry Day at Wellspring, 2 Y St, Ashburton, Theme: *Poems as icons* facilitated by Julien Winspear. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email info@wellspringcentre.org.au.

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

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



POETS' CORNER

Search for freedom

Confined within the country they call home,
lost people dream of places far away,
believe they can escape to search and roam
until they find their freedom, night and day.

In time they take a chance, embark, explore,
discover hope and fear in alien seas,
defy the storms that bar their way to shore
and in a new land wait for certainties.

Bewildered, lost again, they look around
at wilderness, and listen for a voice
to follow. Then at last they hear the sound
of greeting, friendship. Now they can rejoice.

Love is the resolution, free and clear,
calling to everyone, *Your home is here.*

© Marguerite Varday (*Hope Whispers*)

Fallen leaf flutters
Flies up from Autumn colour
Oh! A butterfly.

© David Dwyer

The Plea

The resident noisy miner
bandit-masked, yellow eye patches
usually warns us off, shrieking stridently
from the jacaranda's ferny fronds
but as I climb the back steps
an urgent twittering in the stunted pine
attracts my attention
Perched openly on a low branch, the bird
doesn't fly off when I make eye contact
continues to chitter softly

This summer I filled the birdbath
with clean water morning and night
It is now half empty, covered in downy feathers
and scurf from the magpie who bathes here
Knowing what is needed, I empty the bowl
refill with clean water
The miner flies down, alights to drink
before splashing in to preen

I am well trained

© Maree Silver

Bleeding woman

(Luke 8:43-48)

she had bled years of painful yearning to feel herself
complete,
to taste the new valuing of every woman's life.
with courage she broke convention
for renewing humankind.
her contact with the Lord of love
ensured fair freedom was enshrined.

she had bled away the sorrows
of defunct restrictive ways,
she had bled away the suffering
of women's low estate;
she had bled until she touched him,
and met the limitless power of love.
with hope and soft humility,
she reached for a new liberty:

she sensed the new replacement
of old authority,
from blood to light,
through Christ among us,
the spirit's true validity.

the turning point of time
found its threshold in her soul,
she had drained away the old biology
with her act of new autonomy.
of her own accord she touched him,
and claimed love for all humanity.

© Rebecca Maxwell (*Interludes*)

Fairy-wren

A fairy-wren visited our camp-site
bounced towards us on dainty legs
adorned in its immaculate blue suit
how could we not stop and admire?

Lit by the sun, bluer than the sky
despite its diminutive size
this bird with attitude and shrill call
commanded our attention our delight

Blue wren you are truly superb
courting your Jenny wren partner
a contrast of humility and showmanship
making our day with your sweet presence.

© Cecily Falkingham (*Interludes*)