

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

19.4

November, 2019

Welcome to the final edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2019.

Don't know about you, but I always get to this time of year and wonder where the year has gone. In the course of 12 months, so much happens in everyday life. But if I was to single out one project that has been comprehensively satisfying, it would be co-editing this year's PCP anthology (*Love's footprint*) with Maree Silver. For starters, Maree and I (plus three others on an editorial committee for PCP) get to read every single entry submitted to PCP's annual competition, from which the poems are selected for the anthology. An invited judge selects the prize winners and 25 poems that he or she feels merit inclusion in the anthology. Then it's up to the committee to individually select additional entries.

Reading through every entry is such a privilege. Australia has some wonderful, insightful poets and the standard is always high. I always marvel at the diversity of poetry on a selected theme. This year's theme, *Love's footprint*, elicited poetry about nature, pets, families, loss, thankfulness, grief and God. On second or third read of a poem, both Maree and I could appreciate the beauty, passion, understanding and perception that poets were expressing in words. Poems were beautifully constructed and when it came to poems that were clearly close to the poet's heart, (especially grief and loss), our response, as readers, was one of empathy and emotion.

As poets we understand that the connection between poet and reader can be powerful. Through poetry we can encourage, strengthen or comfort. When we use poetry to highlight the quirkiness of the human condition, we can put a smile on someone's face.

Thanks to all those poets who submitted entries to this year's anthology. Your creativity is appreciated, and this year's anthology is all the better for your well-crafted work.

Along with Cam Semmens' inimitable stamp as a unique graphic designer, Maree and I have thoroughly enjoyed editing quality poetry from print to publication. If you can make it to the launch it will be great to see you there.

Leigh Hay



Merry Christmas to all Wordsmiths and a safe and prosperous 2020.

PAST MEETINGS

Maree Silver led the August meeting with the poetry of David Whyte. Born and raised in Yorkshire, Whyte earned a degree in marine biology and for a time led naturalist tours. His poetry is known for its eclectic and spiritual bent. Whyte is an associate fellow at Said Business School at the University of Oxford and in 2008 was awarded an honorary doctorate from Neumann College, Pennsylvania. He currently lives in the Pacific Northwest. Maree read *The Opening of Eyes* (after RH Thomas); *The Lightest Touch*; *Loaves and Fishes*; and *Four Horses*.

Cath Barnard led the September meeting with the poetry of Adam Lindsay Gordon (1833-1870). Gordon was an excellent horseman and after leaving the UK at 20 years of age, he secured the job of trooper in Mt Gambier. His poetry describes his great affinity with the sea and with horses. He loved steeplechasing, married at 29 and in March 1864, bought Dingley Dell, a cottage near Port MacDonnell. He rented Craig's livery stables in Ballarat, and in January 1868 joined the Ballarat Troop of Light Horse. On 23 June 1870 his *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* was published, but his increasing melancholia and preoccupation with financial difficulties, led him at dawn the next morning to the beach at Brighton where he took his own life. Cath read *To My Sister* and *Banker's Dream*.

Published Melbourne poet **Jennifer Chrystie** gave a workshop for the October meeting. Jen took the Wordsmiths through sources of inspiration and some imaginative exercises, including word association, writing a poem from the Odd Spot in *The Age* newspaper, creating words reflecting compressed conflict (eg glorious waste), choosing one word and writing a poem from it and writing a poem about writer's block.

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.

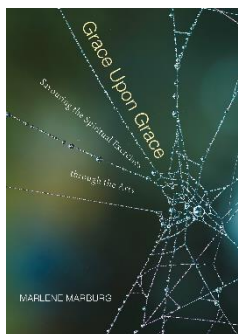
| Date | Leader | Afternoon tea duty |
|---------|-------------|--|
| Nov | Leigh | Cath, Peter W, Florence |
| Dec | Peter White | Christmas breakup – everyone bring a plate |
| Feb '20 | Janette | Greg, Maree S, Leigh |

MEMBER NEWS

Sympathy is extended to **Cecily Falkingham** on the death of her husband Reg. After a short illness, Reg died on 22 October 2019 at Knox Hospital, after he and Cecily had shared a few happy days walking at Marysville before he was admitted to hospital. Reg died with all his family and grandchildren beside him.

Marlene Marburg launched her latest book **'Grace Upon Grace – Savouring the Spiritual Exercises through the Arts'** on 20 October 2019 at Kardia Formation P/L, Mulgrave.

Margaret Silf wrote about **Grace Upon Grace** : "I am very familiar with the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, but the invitation offered by this book opened doors that I did not even know were there in the walls of my understanding and perception. Dr Marburg has drawn together an astonishingly original landscape of prayer through which she invites us to encounter more deeply the Mystery in whom we live and move and have our being. This landscape comprises words, movement, poetry, image, music, ideas and responses while remaining faithful to the spirit and structure of the Ignatian Exercises. A remarkable achievement that will become a powerful personal guide to many who long to take their inner journey to a deeper level."



RRP \$29.95 www.kardia.com.au

POETICA CHRISTI PRESS NEWS

Launch of *On arrivals of breath : poems & prayers* by Anne F Elvey

On October 15th, at Trinity College, extra chairs were needed to seat the audience at the launch Of *On Arrivals of Breath* by Anne F Elvey. Janette Fernando, (Managing Editor) spoke of what attracted PCP to publishing Anne's work: her ability to pay attention to everyday life and imbue it with the sublime.

Rev. Canon Professor Dorothy Lee, in launching the book, said, 'Anne's poetry is, first and foremost, tactile and sensory. The language, the imagery, are that of the senses: touch and sight and hearing and smell and taste. There is an attentiveness, a listening, a mindfulness to the body and its sensations in these poems: not just to the poet's own body but also that of others... Anne's poetry has such an eye and such an ear to the created world around us, to all manifestations of body and flesh, in and beyond the human... Then there is the spirituality of the poems which is in no way separate from their palpability, their concrete, living reality... This is an incarnate and material spirituality, of the world and of the flesh. When you read the poems you experience what the poet sees and hears, and afterwards you look at the world in a new way: more perceptive, more detailed, more attuned.'



L: Anne Elvey

R: Dorothy Lee and Anne



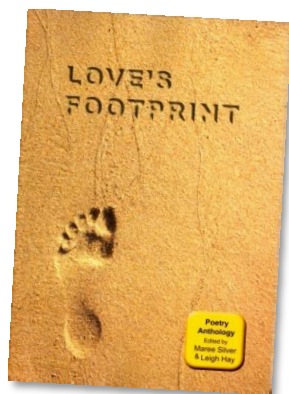
E A Gleeson wrote about the book, 'This is the joy of poetry: poems that tend the soul, sing to the heart and challenge the consciousness. In this collection, Anne Elvey opens a window on to her eco-soul providing readers with that rare gift of an intimate interspecies connection. She does this in poems that are widely imagined, deeply felt and beautifully crafted. The poems in this collection are set against a backdrop of theological thought, traditional texts made new by the importance of the work of attending to the world and the craft of a poet who shows us what it is to care deeply.'

Copies are available for \$20 through the website www.poeticachristi.org.au

An invitation to the Launch of *Love's footprint* – PCP 2019 Anthology

On Sunday November 24, 2019 @ 4.30pm, Poetica Christi Press invites you to the launch of ***Love's footprint***, a poetry anthology edited by Maree Silver and Leigh Hay.

The anthology will be launched by Dr Margaret Campbell, at the Arbour space, Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Cnr Station & Combarton Sts., Box Hill.



Enter from Combarton St, (Melway 47 D11). Parking is available in car park opposite and surrounding streets.

Love's footprint includes poems by the winners of the 2019 PCP Poetry competition with contributions from The Wordsmiths of Melbourne and others.

RETREATS

DADIRRI: 60 Bass Meadows Blvd, St Andrews Beach

The October Quiet Day will be transferred to November 23rd with the theme "**Retreat from the bustle of life and electronic devices.**"

That day will be in silence from morning tea till afternoon tea. There will be no notes even, just come if you want and 'be' in nature. Find healing from exhaustion and compassion fatigue, or from anxiety or depression. Let God find you and gladden your heart once again as you soak up that peace to be found in God's natural world. If you want to stay the night, you are welcome. Have a bed or camp out on the veranda or in a tent if you wish. Bring some food to share. 10 am till 3.30 pm. RSVP to Bron 0412 301 450 or robron@pryor.org.au

KARDIA: Silent Directed Retreat - 14 - 21 November 2019 at the Holy Cross Centre, Templestowe

Would you like to slow down, rest and spend quiet time 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. It may also be possible to make a shorter retreat during this time. Cost: \$1390 for the full retreat, Or \$199 per day (includes accommodation, all meals and daily spiritual direction). To find out more, email enquiries@kardia.com.au



COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The WB Yeats Poetry Prize for Australia

Open to residents of Australia for previously unpublished poems up to 50 lines. Entry fees : \$10 for first poem, \$4 for subsequent poems. Entries close **31 March 2020**.

More : <https://wbyeatspoetryprize.com/>

2019-2020 Sutherland Shire Literary Competition

For Australian residents over 18 years of age. Categories include Rhyming verse (max 80 lines); Free verse (max 80 lines); Short Story (max 2000 words); Themes short story (max 2000 words – *Looking Back, Moving Forward*). Entry fee \$15 per poem/story. Entries close **16 December 2019**.

<http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Community/Library/Sutherland-Shire-Literary-Competition>

Tom Collins Poetry Prize 2019

The Tom Collins Poetry Prize is an annual competition inaugurated by FAWWA in 1975 in memory of the Australian author Joseph Furphy. Under the name Tom Collins Furphy wrote the Australian classic *Such is Life* as well as many poems. Poems up to 60 lines in length. Entry fee \$10 for each entry, limit of five entries per person. Closing date : **15 December, 2019**. <https://www.fawwa.org/writing-competitions>

DIARY OF EVENTS

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

Sunday, November 24th, 4.30 pm: Launch of *Love's Footprint* at The Arbour space, Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Cnr Station & Combarton Sts., Box Hill.

Saturday, December 9th, 1-5pm: Christmas Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East. Bring lunch to share prior to the meeting @ 2pm.

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



POETS' CORNER

If you dare

to put your heart in there
it will catch fire
and when hearts are aflame
there is assurance

no more daring

just sparks of the dream
showering stardust
awakening

© Marlene Marburg (from *Grace upon Grace*)

Today

I cooked us pea-soup and pizza
on the side. Lines of grace slipped

like old lingerie from my shoulders.
I hitched them, over knuckles of bone.

Now it's night in Seaford, where a skeleton
abuts a neighbour's home. The moon is

matt on steel. In our bedroom
a mosquito whines, as I worry an email

like beads, and my fan whirrs to tell me
what a difficult amenity is love. I yield

to objects. Unsolicited the break with
things when I am else, though the breeze –

artificial as it is – comforts. This ink
to ruled leaf is matter I will type

when sun spills again from trees, and
wattlebirds and nail guns counterpoint.

© Anne F Elvey (from *On Arrivals of Breath*)

Diagnosis

Lord
suddenly
the soft edges
of the future
have hardened
into sharper lines.
Hazy visions
of what might be
must find a place
within these lines
or be cut out.
Is this
a new freedom?
a chance
to let go,
with gladness,
burdensome dreams?
Or is it
a cutting out
of previous things?
Is it a call
to discipline
and focused action?
Or a release

from drivenness
and duty?

Lord
I want to know.
But can I give
uncertainty
into your hands
and let you use it?

© Cate Lewis

Transformation

We were there with him
and I'd swear that everything
changed
from that day on.

Standing there on the mountain
we were suddenly aware
of Moses and Elijah
talking with him

about what was ahead of him
of death being
an accomplishment.
What a strange idea!
But the strangest thing was
He was different.
Alive in a new way
absolutely radiant

and we were gobsmacked
having nothing to say
until silly words came out
and we asked to stay always

in that place where we had seen
who He really is...
forever.

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