

# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

20.1

February, 2020.

Welcome to the first edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2020, and welcome to a new year of poetry. By the time this newsletter is emailed out, the holiday season will be well and truly over. Children are back at school, adults are back at work. But for many Victorians, this summer has brought heartache and tragedy as bushfires stripped people of homes, possessions and businesses. So much rebuilding needs to be done – both physically and mentally. On a recent morning walk I was listening to ABC Classic on my iPhone. The announcer had been playing some beautiful music, when he cut to an interview with a lady who had started an initiative after Black Saturday to replace the musical instruments lost by people in the King Lake area. She spoke how a man who after being given a set of bagpipes to replace those he lost in the fire, broke down and sobbed.

It brought home to me that the loss of something that is innate within us – be it a love of music, literature or art for example – can create a void that can't be filled by anything else.

I see poetry in this light. Without poetry to read, write or recite, the world would be diminished. I feel very blessed and fortunate that I have access to poetry all year round. For instance, a clue in the general crossword in a recent Saturday Age was: 'In Les Murray's poem about a man weeping in Martin Place, what is 'absolutely ordinary'?' It gave me great pleasure and a sense of satisfaction to write the word 'Rainbow'.

As a community, we can donate money and goods to help people rebuild their homes. But a book of poetry, like a set of bagpipes, can help rebuild a person's soul. This summer, schools, libraries and people have lost books that were precious to them. Might be time to donate my spare copy of Bruce Dawes' *Sometimes Gladness*.

Leigh Hay.

## PAST MEETINGS

**Leigh Hay** led the November meeting with the poetry of Henry Lawson. Lawson was born into poverty in the gold fields of Grenfell NSW on 17 June 1867. His father (Neils) was a Norwegian born miner and his mother (Louisa) took a significant part in women's movements and edited a women's paper called *The Dawn*. She also published Henry's first volume of work. Lawson suffered from profound deafness, depression and alcoholism for most of his adult life, yet his writing was prolific. Leigh read *A Song of the Republic*, *Ned's Delicate Way* and *Mary called him Mister*. We welcomed a new attendee – Mike Lewis.



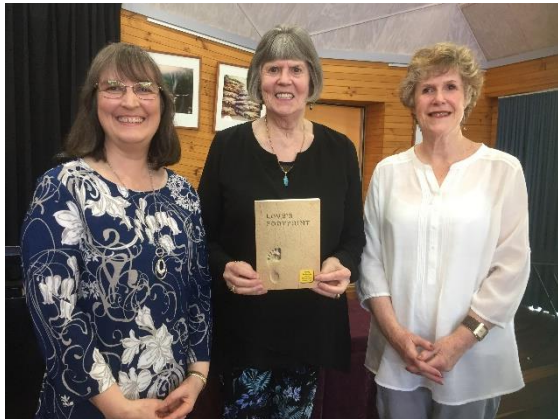
**Peter White** shared some Christmas poems at the December meeting. Included in his readings were *In the Bleak Midwinter* (Christina Rossetti), *Christ's Nativity* (Henry Vaughan), *The Oxen* (Thomas Hardy), *Little Tree* (EE Cummings) and *Tense Christmas* (Brian Bilston).

## 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.

Month	Leader	Afternoon tea
Feb 8th	Janette	Greg, Maree S, Leigh
Mar 14 <sup>th</sup>	Greg	Jean, Peter B, Maree N
Apr 11	Florence	Cecily, Janette, Don
May 9	Jean	Joan, Cath, Daryl
June 13	Cecily	Peter W, Florence, Linda
July 11	Don	Greg, Maree S, Leigh

## LAUNCH OF LOVE'S FOOTPRINT



L to R: Margaret Campbell, Maree Silver & Leigh Hay

On Sunday 24 November, at the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Poetica Christi Press launched its 49<sup>th</sup> anthology *Love's footprint* (edited by Maree Silver and Leigh Hay). In launching the anthology, Dr Margaret Campbell (Pilgrim Theological College, University of Divinity) summed up the spirit of the anthology very well, highlighting a number of poems that captured the essence of love in all its guises and manifestations.



An appreciative crowd of poets and others enjoyed both the individual readings of selected poems and Cora Van Pinxteren complemented the readings with classical pieces played superbly on her viola. Maree

Silver introduced the afternoon, Peter White compered, and as the winning and runner-up poets who live interstate could not attend, Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando (Managing Editor of PCP) read their poems. Janette also

thanked Maree Silver and others who had worked hard to make the launch such an enjoyable event. As always, a plentiful and delicious afternoon tea concluded a very enjoyable afternoon.

Copies can be ordered through PCP's website [poeticachristi.org.au](http://poeticachristi.org.au) or by emailing [poeticachristi@optushome.com.au](mailto:poeticachristi@optushome.com.au)

## FROM THE TREASURER

Membership payments of \$30.00 for the year 1 January 2020 -31 December 2020 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.

## MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **Joy Chellew**, who is turning 95 this month! She is still living independently and writing poems on a regular basis.

**Maree Silver**, our Administration Manager, will be in our thoughts and prayers as she undergoes shoulder surgery in a few weeks time. Please also pray for **Cate Lewis** as she undergoes chemotherapy for bile duct cancer.

Congratulations to **Kate Hay** (Leigh Hay's daughter) and Brad Insley on the birth of Theodore Insley Hay on 11 January. For the last two years, Kate has helped Maree Silver with administration to coordinate PCP's annual poetry competition. Theodore (Teddy) is the first grandson on both sides of the family and Kate and Teddy are doing very well.

**Leigh Hay** has written poetry for *Overschie : a personal recollection 1940-45* which was launched on 14 December at St Peter's, Box Hill. *Overschie* features the artwork of Henk van Oosten, with poetry by Leigh. Melbourne musician Joe Chindamo also wrote music to accompany Leigh's poetry, which was sung by Mezzo-soprano Kristen Leich at the launch. Henk van Oosten had created a series of paintings depicting his wartime memories as a small boy during WWII in Holland. Tragically in 2011 the paintings were lost in a bush fire in

Western Australia but fortunately photographs survived. *Overschie* brings together paintings, poetry and the recollections of several members of the van Oosten family to tell the story of one family's survival. Copies are available from Leigh (RRP \$25).



### WELLSPRING 2020 Poetry Days

On four days during 2020, poetry facilitators will present workshops at Wellspring to share a love of poetry. Each of these days will include time for sharing poems in a group setting, as well as opportunities for personal reflection and creative responses. Each day runs from 10am to 3pm. at 10 Y St, Ashburton. Cost: \$72 / \$62. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email [info@wellspringcentre.org.au](mailto:info@wellspringcentre.org.au).

**Wednesday 25 March** : Reflections on Easter with WR Rodgers: Elizabeth Lee will facilitate *Resurrection: An Easter Sequence*

**Thursday 7 May** : *New Zealand Poetry* with Julie Robinson and Elizabeth Lee

**Monday 10 August** : *Flavours of Country* with Ros White

**Tuesday 20 October** : *Poetry of the Presence* with Julien Winspear

### COMPETITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

#### Poetica Christi Press Poetry Competition

The theme for this year's competition will be **Joy in the morning**. 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$300 2<sup>nd</sup> prize \$100, with 25 poems to be selected to be included in this anthology.

Forms can be downloaded from PCP's website [www.poeticachristi.org.au](http://www.poeticachristi.org.au) or email [pccpcompetition@gmail.com](mailto:pccpcompetition@gmail.com) Closing date for the competition will be 30<sup>th</sup> April.

#### The Blake Poetry Prize

Entries for the 66th Blake Art & Poetry Prizes are now open. Submissions exploring the wider experience of spirituality, religion and/or belief are invited. The Blake Poetry Prize invites

written submissions of up to 100 lines which will be displayed alongside the Art Prize in 2020. The winning entry receives a prize of \$5000. Entry fee \$25. Entries close 3 April <http://www.casulapowerhouse.com/get-involved/prizes/the-66th-blake-art-prize>

**Gulgong Henry Lawson Literary Awards** The Leonard Teale Performance Poetry section and Written Verse (Poetry) Competition will this year be divided into two sections : Humorous and Tradition with a \$500 first prize for both sections of Performance and Written Verse. Entries close 10 April, 2020. For entry forms : [www.henrylawsongulgong.org.au](http://www.henrylawsongulgong.org.au) (click on Events) or email : [henrylawsongulgong@yahoo.com.au](mailto:henrylawsongulgong@yahoo.com.au)

#### 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**. <https://wbyeatspoetryprize.com/>

**Boree Log Award for Bush Verse** Australian Bush Theme, 80 lines, Entry fee \$8. \$100 prize. Closing date 15/5/2020. Go to <https://hillsfaw.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/boree-log-2020-conditions-of-entry-entry-form.pdf>

### DIARY OF EVENTS

**Saturday, February 8, 1-5pm:** Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster E.

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

**Wednesday, March 25, 10-3 pm:** Poetry Day at Wellspring, 2 Y St, Ashburton, Theme: *Resurrection: An Easter sequence*. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email [info@wellspringcentre.org.au](mailto:info@wellspringcentre.org.au). Cost: \$72/\$62

**Saturday, April 11, 2-5pm:** Meeting of Wordsmiths. 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster E.

**Thursday, May 7, 10-3 pm:** Poetry Day at Wellspring, 2 Y St, Ashburton, Theme: *New Zealand poetry*. To book, phone: 9885 0277 or email [info@wellspringcentre.org.au](mailto:info@wellspringcentre.org.au). \$72/\$62.

## POETS' CORNER



### A love poem

Dove cooing,  
peace brewing,  
so utterly imbuing  
my heart.

Bees buzzing,  
love nuzzling,  
into my heart.

My mind swarming,  
my feelings warming,  
head over heels I'm free-falling...  
into your heart.

© Florence Lisner

### butterfly dance

butterflies chase each other  
in an endless display of affection  
as they dance over  
the shade-dappled inflection  
strewn on the leaves by the sun  
as the wind changes direction  
albino wings mark a contrast  
to the mottled green situation  
they make no sound with their tiny stops  
hardly make a connection  
they flit and dash and hide and seek  
in myriad forms of concentration  
were they not deaf they'd hear my words  
written in adoration  
as is they're gloriously unaware  
of the magnitude of the situation  
they are in and out and back again  
not knowing of their demonstration  
the dance, the art so choreographed  
that describes their situation

© Peter White

### Plane tree

The cold susurrations  
of trees: the one  
outside my window  
breathing now, a soft  
flightiness of white  
sound in the night.

You have fed me  
with fanned leaves,  
woken me with  
sap, told me I could  
be wired green, flushed  
when I cried. You raised  
psalms of bee-gold  
over my head: I exulted.  
Even on Saturdays  
I saw you glowing, fed  
my ambitions on your fat  
trunk – told my children  
to sit in your branches –  
made myself a lark.

© Cathy Altmann

### Nanna

Face creased by time  
yet pressed with love  
in apron strings  
of memory  
Cast in that lens  
I shrink  
but not diminished  
grow to innocence

© Greg Burns

### All poems taken from *Love's Footprint*

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

**RESPONSE SLIP – send to PCP Treasurer, 12 Cypress Ave, Burwood, 3125**

I have enclosed my yearly membership dues (\$30) as a Wordsmith/Friend of *PCP*.  
Cheques should **only** be made out to **POETICA CHRISTI PRESS** (Not Wordsmiths)  
or direct debit (quoting your name in the reference):

Name : Poetica Christi Press, BSB: 633-000, Account number : 118162593

I cannot afford \$30 but enclose a donation.

I wish to buy a copy of *Love's footprint* for \$20 (plus \$3 postage)

I wish to buy a copy of *On arrivals of breath* for \$20 (plus \$3 postage)

Please email me the newsletter from now on.

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE :** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_