

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

20.3

August, 2020

Welcome to the August edition of the Wordsmiths' newsletter for 2020.

Well, just as we thought we were making gains on the COVID pandemic, Melbourne has been thrown back into lockdown.

Second time round lockdown seems harder, more frustrating and disappointing on a number of levels. We say to each other *'tis what it is*, but deep down we wish it was over. To top things off, winter is upon us and 'gloomy' is a word that's snuck into our vocab. Winter's icy little footprint is everywhere. I have to admit I have been feeling the temporary loss of certain freedoms and now that mask wearing is mandatory, even my morning walk feels a bit suffocating. But the veil of gloominess was lifted on the second Saturday of July when Wordsmiths took to Zoom and poetry buddies joined in to workshop their latest creative masterpieces. Seeing well-known faces and hearing familiar voices was just what the doctor ordered. Despite the fact that haircuts are hard to get, beauty treatments out of the question and exercise classes currently extinct, we all looked amazing, sounded happy and were raring to go – all in the name of poetry. After the meeting, I reflected on the Spanish 'flu epidemic of 1919 when there was no Zoom, no Facetime or Facebook, no email, no way of seeing or connecting with people and I thought of how lonely and cut off people then must have felt. By comparison, I felt blessed.

Leigh.

FUTURE MEETINGS

On Sat 11 July, Wordsmiths had their first Zoom meeting, hosted by Carolyn Vimpani. Carolyn invited those wishing to be part of the meeting to email her their poems in advance so that each poem could be displayed on the screen. Poets were partnered so that poems could be read twice

(as per our usual meetings) and as individual poems were displayed on the screen, this made for much easier workshopping. Those Wordsmiths participating all agreed it was lovely to see faces again (13 of us) and share poetry, humour and camaraderie, albeit on an electronic device. Everyone is invited to the next Zoom meeting **this Saturday, August 8th** and email Carolyn your poem by **Wednesday, August 5th** if you wish to take part. BYO arvo tea is a must!! vimpani@bigpond.net.au. We expect the '12th September meeting to be a Zoom meeting as well.

WORKSHOPPING BY EMAIL

Janette Fernando has continued to facilitate the workshopping of poems by email. For those who either don't have access to Zoom and/or would prefer to receive written feedback on their poems, please email Janette to be added to the contact list.

poetica@iprimus.com.au

PCP 2020 COMPETITION : JOY IN THE MORNING

Congratulations to all the place-getters for the 2020 Poetica Christi Poetry Competition, judged by Anne Elvey. Prizes went to:

First prize: *My Grandfather's blessing*. (Toni Brisland)

Second prize: *How Joy arises*. (Scott-Patrick Mitchell)

Commended: *How you begin*. (Nicole Melanson)

Commended: *Instructions before forgetting*. (Eunice Andrada).

Other poets whose poems were chosen to go into the anthology were: Elena Healy, Helen Cerne, Janeen Samuel, Tim Collins, Richenda Rudman, Stefan Dubczuk, Carolyn Ingvarson, Dianne Cook, Kerry Harte, Cathy Altmann, Ruari Jack Hughes, Colleen Maranda, Nola Firth, John

Egan, Christopher Ringrose, Margaret Campbell and Avril Bradley.

Contributions from Wordsmiths

Janette Fernando is now receiving any poetry contributions from members of Wordsmiths for possible inclusion in *Joy in the Morning*. Up to 3 entries can be emailed to poetica@iprimus.com.au by August 15th.

WELLSPRING CENTRE ZOOM MEETINGS

The Wellspring Centre is currently closed due to lockdown, however you can still join groups on Zoom.

Men's Group – Every Wed from 7.30-9.30pm
Facilitator : Peter Leaver

Moments of Wonder : Noticing God's Voice in Everyday Life. Thursday 6 & 20 August 10am-12
Facilitator : Linda Leigh

Poetry Day : Flavours of Country Monday 10 August 2020 10am-12 noon. Facilitator : Roslyn White

A Contemplative Circle: Wed 19 August 10am-12 noon Facilitator : Chris Page
For more information:
<https://www.wellspringcentre.org.au>

FREE DIGITAL GATHERINGS ON SPIRITUAL DIRECTION RESEARCH

Spiritual Direction Australia's project is a series of 4 online symposia, hosted by SDI and supported by the Patrick and Anthony Wright Formation and Education Fund.... The first symposium started on July 23rd.... All sessions are designed for spiritual companions in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region.. But they are open to anyone. Learn more and register: <https://www.sdicompanions.org/spiritual-direction-australia/> ... Also, learn about the SDI Handbook Competition, which offers awards for articles on spiritual direction that directly relate to the Australian experience and perspective. More information can be found here: <https://mailchi.mp/9825911d948a/july-2020-sdi-asia-pacific-newsletter-229934>

or email Dr Bernadette Miles, Director Kardia Formation bernadette.miles@kardia.com.au

KARDIA FORMATION

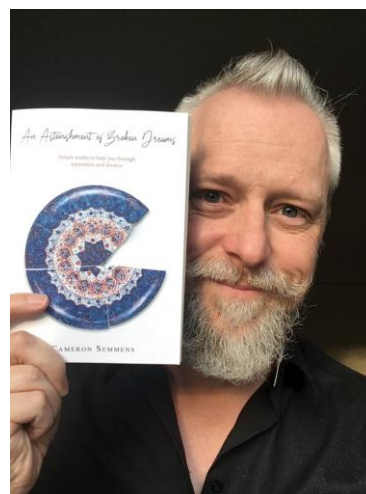
Eight day at home retreat : Grace Upon Grace 20-28 November 2020

Kardia is offering an invitation to join in forming a community of prayer during an eight day retreat while you are at home.

The retreat will be drawn from the book *Grace Upon Grace* by Marlene Marburg. You can make this a silent retreat or a retreat in daily life. You can choose to pray with one or more readings from the daily suggested readings. *Grace upon Grace : Savouring the Spiritual Exercises through the Arts* is available as an ebook. For more information : enquiries@kardia.com.au

MEMBER NEWS

Cameron Semmens has published a new book ***An Astonishment of Broken Dreams : Simple truths to help you through separation and divorce.***



An Astonishment of Broken Dreams is specifically designed to give practical and poetic advice to those people at the end of a relationship, but it also speaks more broadly on how to navigate any form of grief. 146 pages of encouragement and inspiration. RRP \$17.95 To order a copy : <http://www.webcameron.com/buy.php>

MELBOURNE WRITERS HUB

This is a group of professional writers and book designers, of which Poetica Christi Press is a member. MWH produces an e-journal and in the

most recent edition, writer and arts critic Carol Middleton talks about reading Vikram Seth's novel *An Equal Music* and the lessons she has learned from this author. Carol's podcast is a valuable resource particularly for emerging writers.

<https://www.melbwritershub.com/carol-middleton>. For more information on MWH, visit <https://www.melbwritershub.com> or email melbwritershub@gmail.com

COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Boroondara Literary Awards

In celebration of the creativity of Australian writers and poets, the Boroondara Library Services have opened their 22nd annual Boroondara Literary Awards for submissions. There are two awards this year: Short Story Competition open to all Australian writers, and the Keith Carroll Award for the best entry by a Boroondara resident. Open theme. Closes 28 August 2020 (5pm). Word limit: 1500–3000 words. Free entry. <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au>

Bass Coast Prize for Non-fiction

The competition is open to anyone living, working or studying in the Gippsland region or who has a strong connection with the Gippsland region, past or present. The theme is open but entries must relate to Gippsland people, places or issues. For instance, you could write about climate change, but the primary focus should be local rather than national or global. A memoir is acceptable but should be set substantially in Gippsland. Entries must be between 4000-10,000 words and not have been published previously, including on the Internet. Essay, profile, long-form journalism, narrative non-fiction, prose or poetry. Genres: biography, autobiography, memoir, family history, social history, local history, natural history, science, environmental, travel, true crime. Closes September 4th.

mail entries to Phyllis Papps
p.m.papps@waterfront.net.au

<https://writersvictoria.org.au/calendars/opportunities-competitions/bass-coast-prize-non-fiction>.

Alice Sinclair Memorial Writing Competition

In honour of Alice Sinclair, member and supporter of the Fellowship of Australian Writers NSW, the

Lake Macquarie Branch is inviting all writers to submit their short stories and poetry from 29 May 2020. Open theme. Word limit: Poetry category – free or traditional to 50 lines; Short Story category 2500 words. Entry fee \$10.00. Winners from each category will receive \$100 plus a certificate; second place \$50 plus a certificate. Closes 28 August.

<https://lakemacfar2.wordpress.com/alice-sinclair-writing-competition>

2021 Peter Porter Poetry Prize

First prize \$6000 plus \$1000 for four other shortlisted poets. Entry forms available <https://www.australianbookreview.com.au> Closes 1 October 2020.



POETS' CORNER

Blue sky mining

Black mine
dark and dank
people picking away
at dirt
smearing us
with shadowy lines
– the black lie
that power
has a future
in coal.

Blue sky
yellow sun
beaming down
its rays of light
infusing us
with pure warmth
and power
– a life-line.

© *Janette Fernando*

Today,

maybe you feel like you're broken.
Maybe, this is the breaking of you.
But maybe,
you could think of yourself as a horse
rather than a heart

made of stained glass –
you are being 'broken in';
welcomed
(perhaps against your will)
into the great union
of horse and rider;
of love and loss.
This is where you must learn
to carry a great weight upon you;
learn to listen to kicks and tugs
– the language of loss –
to guide you forward, faster,
left or right.
This is where you and your loss
slowly come together as a team
to carry and tow;
to shepherd and gallop;
to pull weighty wagons;
to lead grand parades.
Maybe,
this is the breaking of you.
Maybe,
it's a good breaking.

—
Maybe you feel half-dead inside.
Picture a rainforest.
Amongst all the vivid greenery:
hollowed-out trunks,
decaying limbs,
rotting leaf-litter.
All the lushness
and rampant growth of a rainforest
can only exist
because of all that life-giving death.
Maybe you are a rainforest,
and all that isn't dead inside
may now be able to thrive.

© Cameron Semmens

Dog Days

A lady
with two dogs
has just passed
the window
jauntily swinging
a plastic bag
weighed down
with something
I would rather not
think about

© Catherine Lewis

A Collective Silent Space creative words in the chatroom following a Zoom meeting during Covid-19

after the ocean wave of silence
colourful shells on the sand
form these musical lines:

entering the fire
dancing in the heart of flames
beating the drum with rhythms
immersed in the liquid love of the Spirit
soaring above the clouds
the shelter of each other where we live
infilling

detaching

uplifting

outworking

harness of God
energy of love
healing of all creation
sacred ground of truth
and mystery

let yeast permeate the dough of our reality^[P]_[SEP]
enliven our hearts to reach out
Christ takes shape among us
a new way of being
a unified space
enfolding each other in the Presence
sheer blessings

birds calling
ripples on a pond
go in peace
go with justice

go in love

© Xiaoli Yang

Send any news for the November newsletter to
treehousepoet318@gmail.com by October 15.
Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette
Fernando

