

WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

May 2023

Welcome to the May '23 edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter.

Since Covid, most of us have probably thought twice about travel, especially overseas. The thought of lengthy queues at airports, sitting for hours in a metal can otherwise known as a plane, or mixing with the multitude in a foreign city where we are most likely to contract a virus (any virus), has been enough to keep us confined to barracks.

But the world is opening up again, and when I think about it, so much of my poetry has been written on my travels. I am not the photographer in our family, so my husband does the honours with a camera, whereas I find I want to capture the moment or the scene in a poem either on my iPad or the battered notebook I take with me everywhere.

A picture may speak a thousand words, but a poem can manage even more imagery. I don't have a record of how many hours I've spent writing poems on trains, planes, in cars, resting in a B&B after a day's hiking, or sitting on a park bench or in a café watching the world go by. But what I do have are the poems and re-reading these can instantly take me back to the hour, the day, the weather and what it felt like to be in a foreign country noticing people, or landmarks, or recording a special time in place. Poems written on the hop are what I call 'sketches' – rough drafts that capture the essence and something I can play around with once I'm home and have more time to tweak and refine.

So even though I hate airports, queues, delayed flights and dodgy train services, just writing this column is giving me itchy feet and a desire to book a holiday – somewhere – anywhere – so that my battered notebook and I are on the road again.

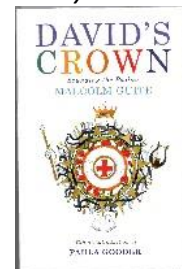
But before I do, better have my fifth Covid shot.

Leigh Hay

MEETINGS

Peter White led the February meeting, at which 7 Wordsmiths attended. He spoke about British poet Brian Bilston (an assumed name) who posts his work on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Peter read *This was a year that was not the year; Man of Action; Selected early writings of the poets; Memory of things pasta* and *To make poems rhyme can sometimes be rough*.

The March meeting was led by **Jean Sietzema Dickson**. Jean introduced the group to the poetry of Malcolm Guite, poet-priest and Chaplain of Girton College Cambridge, and author of 8 books. Guite has written a sonnet for every psalm, and the end line of the sonnet is the beginning line of the next. Jean read *David's Crown; Keats House in Rome; An Easter Triolet; Hilda of Whitby* and *Julian of Norwich*.



Carolyn Vimpani led the April meeting, which was held on Zoom, with five poets participating. Carolyn had looked for Easter poems and found the poetry of Malcolm Guite the most interesting. Guite writes 'Holy Saturday is a strange, still day, hanging in an unresolved poise between the darkness of the day before and the light that is not yet with us'. Guite wrote a sonnet for every station of the cross, and Carolyn read Sonnet XIII (*Jesus' body is taken down from the cross*) and Sonnet XIV (*Jesus is laid in the tomb*).

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Unless notified otherwise, meetings will be held, at Carolyn Vimpani's at 8 Woodhouse Grove, Doncaster East. Zoom facility will also be available if possible.

Month	Leader	A'noon tea
May	Leigh	Jean, Maree N, Cecily
June	Maree S	Leigh, Peter B, Greg
July	Peter W	Maree S, Daryl, Maree N

MEMBER NEWS

Janette and Roger Fernando who are both now retired, moved into their new home in Woori Yallock earlier this year. They are presently enjoying the life of grey nomads and travelling interstate for several months. Meanwhile Leigh and Maree are holding the fort here in Melbourne.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual membership fees of \$25 or \$20 concession are now due. Direct transfers can be made -
Name : Poetica Christi Press, BSB: 633-000
Acc: 118162593.

KARDIA FORMATION

Grace Upon Grace - Eight-Day at Home Retreat

6 - 14 October 2023

Kardia is offering you an invitation to join us 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.

For more information :
<http://www.kardia.com.au>

2023 EVENTS AT WELLSRING CENTRE

Winter Solstice with Marg Donald

Thursday 22 June – 10.00am-12.00pm.

Spring Retreat at Wantirna

Friday 15 Sept 5.00pm – Sunday 17 Sept 3.00pm, Wantirna South.

Retreat by the Sea

Monday 16 Oct 5.00pm – Monday 23 Oct 3.00pm, Queenscliff.

For more information
<https://www.wellspringcentre.org.au/events>

COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

2023 PCP Annual Poetry Competition

Entries are now closed for PCP's 2023 poetry competition, but any Wordsmiths who wish to contribute can still submit a poem. The theme is *Journeys* – a topic that lends itself to poems including those about pilgrimage, migration, adventure, making one's way, progress, odyssey, visitation, or being called on a journey.

Email submissions to Maree Silver
poeticachristi@optushome.com.au

Short Stories Unlimited – open themed poetry competitions

2023 poetry competition open theme (opened 1/4/23 – closes 15/5/23)

Urban theme (opens 1/6/23 – closes 31/7/23)

Rural theme (opens 1/9/23 – closes 31/10/23)

For more information on entry fee, themes and prize money :

<https://shortstoriesunlimited.com/poetry-competitions/>

2023 Society Women Writers NSW National Writing Competition

The Society's National Writing Competition for short story and poetry is open to women writers who are residents of Australia, aged 18 years or over, members and non-members. Conditions of entry are stipulated on the forms which can be downloaded from the website: <https://womenwritersnsw.org/news/national-writing-competition-2023>

Closing date is 6:00 pm on 30 June 2023.



POET'S CORNER

Transformation

lonely long-distance swimmers
 focused and determined
 with powerful arms
 leave sea for sand
 not resting 'til holes deep enough
 are prepared to hide their treasures
 under safe cover
 then return to the sea.
 Shiny white treasures transform
 shape, grow, enliven,
 instinct-driven they emerge
 digging upwards
 focused and determined
 with tiny powerful arms
 leave sand for sea
 and long-distance swimming

@Joy Chellew

Exterior design

After days of
 jackhammering,
 digging
 pruning
 clearing
 steel mesh reinforcing, and
 plastic orange fencing

our smooth new footpath is in place
 cordoned off to passing pedestrians.

As workmen leave
 magpies arrive.
 Intent on a tasty morsel or two
 they strut their stuff
 two toes forward, one toe back,
 an avian waltz
 on still wet concrete.

@ Leigh Hay

Australian Magpie

From downy roost
 at break of day,
 I stretch and sing
 my special tune
 to the One
 who made the earth.

What better way to offer praise
 and begin one's working days.

@ C. M. Barnard

The theophany of trees

How they wave to me
 in church, ziplines of
 joy. How the tree
 outside my window
 seems indifferent
 when the sun whitens
 its trunk, but its green
 growing has been
 a harbour for me,
 collecting me in its
 leaves. All their shuffled
 mystery. The small ants
 that know their way
 up its trunk. Its scarred
 limb and the grey whelp
 of its young bark –
 then at night it
 speaks like the sea.

@ Cathy Altmann

Threads and patterns

Held fast by threads of language
 thought strands are woven
 into a web of words
 Spun lightly
 to catch the imagination
 using the colours of life
 the pattern unique
 The fabric endures

@ Maree Silver