



# WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

## August, 2023

Welcome to the August '23 edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter.

A few weeks ago, I was approached by a member of our choir as she was interested in purchasing some poetry books. We got talking and she revealed that she had only recently been introduced to poetry and had discovered how satisfying it is to pen thoughts and ideas. She also revealed that she had never shown her poetry to anyone.

We met for a coffee, talked poetry (as you do!) and I told her about Poetica Christi Press and their annual competition and anthology. We talked of the myriad ways poetry can be expressed and communicated ... poems about travel (accompanied by photos), books for children, poetry in response to paintings, sketches, sculptures and other art forms (ekphrasis), anthologies and verse novels ... just to name a few.

She was enthused, I was enthused, and a few days later she emailed me two of her poems. I was astounded at how well they were crafted. With any poet, at any stage of their writing, there is always scope for learning and experimentation. Mentors, poetry groups, workshops, and reading the works of others are all excellent ways of developing a mature poetic voice and experimenting with style.

I'm hoping my new found poetry friend will join a group as she clearly has a heart for poetry and even as an emerging poet, is expressing her thoughts and ideas with clarity. We decided subsequent conversations over coffee were sorely needed. I may be more of an established poet than she, but I'm sure there's a lot I can learn from her, and her from me. After all, communicating through poetry is invariably a two-way deal.

**Leigh Hay**

### MEETINGS

**Leigh Hay** led the May meeting with the poetry of Melbourne poet Janet Howie. Janet writes articles and poetry and has a particular interest in haiku. She is also interested in botanical art and her work has won a number of awards and been published in literary magazines. Her books include *Rotation* (2004), *Footprint* (2013) and *rePresenting nature* (2018). Leigh read three poems from *Rotation – Haircut, First Things* and *She*.

**Maree Silver** introduced the June Hybrid Zoom meeting of the Wordsmiths and friends by reading poems written by Wordsmiths, taken from *Celebrating the gift of poetry – a Collection from the WellSpring Poetry Network* and produced by the WellSpring Centre. The meeting was attended by 12 poets in person and also by 2 on zoom, one of whom was 'zooming' in from Tennant Creek. Carolyn Vimpani and Greg Burns worked together to produce a coherent sharing of the group's poetry enabling us able to see each other and our poems via the shared screen.

**Peter White** led the July meeting, which 8 poets attended. Given it was NAIDOC week Peter chose poetry by Uncle Wes Marne from his book *Through Old Eyes*. Marne is an indigenous man who lived in the bush until he was 9 years old then was taken to a mission. He became a boxer and served in the Korean war. He is from a long line of storytellers and supports Aboriginal self-determination. Peter read *Campfire Dreaming; Return; Indigenous ones; The Let Down; Invasion Day* and *Dream On*.

### 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              |
|-----------|---------|-------------------------|
| August    | Cecily  | Daryl, Janette, Greg    |
| September | Greg    | Cecily, Jean, Peter B   |
| October   | Janette | Leigh, Peter W, Maree N |

## MEMBER NEWS



Congratulations to **Cam Semmens** and Ramak Bamzar on the occasion of their wedding. Cam and Ramak were married at the Tim Neville Arboretum in Ferntree Gully on 27 May. To mark the occasion, Cam has published a Wedding Book of his poignant poems and Ramak's beautiful graphic designs, with some of Cam's poems translated into Farsi by Ramak. On behalf of all the Wordsmiths poets, we wish them every happiness.

**Cam** is also running a series of Poetry workshops over the next four weeks, starting on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Introducing:

## Cam's Poetry Workshops

I just loving writing poetry, and I love-helping others discover their own beautiful words, so I decided to run some fun online workshops on Thursday nights this August:

**Personification** – Aug 10  
**Metaphor** – Aug 17  
**Sequels** – Aug 24  
**Brevity** – Aug 31

Come write with me!

Fees: 1 session: \$50. All 4 sessions: \$150.  
 To register, email me at [cam@webcameron.com](mailto:cam@webcameron.com) and tell me what you're up for.

Each session is 7:30–9:30pm online through Zoom.  
 Link will be sent upon booking.

Be ready to write – paper or screen.  
 If you don't know me,  
 go to [www.webcameron.com](http://www.webcameron.com) to find out more.

**Graeme Turner** has a most interesting podcast going, called *Talking out of School*. His latest one features John Cox, from St Luke's church, South Melbourne. You can follow this at <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5DZCQLZvU2vZ4eYVFIKfme?si=9N0iukbyQKCezpvPL04hog>

**Janette Fernando** has recently returned from a few months of travel : camping for 97 days and nights in South Australia, Western Australia and Northern Territory. She sent out a daily photo blog to family and friends, via a What's App group and had a few adventures along the way – they hit rock bottom when their car scraped the rocks in the Pentecost river on the Gibb Rover Rd in the Kimberley and got a crack in the fuel tank.

Then Janette got Covid at Kununurra and they had to isolate in a caravan park which backed onto Mirama National park (not a bad place to isolate – this was the view from their tent!)



Hiking through gorgeous gorges in National parks, snorkelling at Ningaloo reef and bush camping in the desert were highlights, as well as meeting many interesting characters along the way.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual membership fees of \$25 or \$20 concession are now due. Direct transfers to : 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 and 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.

More : <http://www.kardia.com.au>

### **Our Unforming - Ten-Week online reading retreat**

**7 September - 17 November 2023 (Incl).**

Based on the book *Our Unforming: De-Westernizing Spiritual Formation* by Cindy S Lee, in this retreat, we will learn from our collective wisdom, what parts of ourselves might be called to be un-formed. We will meet online on Thursday afternoons 4.30pm – 6pm for group spiritual direction.

### **2023 EVENTS AT WELLSPRING CENTRE**

Winter Prayers: Weekly for four weeks from Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> Aug 2023 starting at 7:15 pm – in person. Different prayer styles, with Alan Marr, Liz Johnson and others.

#### **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.

More information:

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

### **VICTORIAN WRITERS CENTRE**

#### **Poetry and the Archive**

**Date:** Sat 2 September– 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

**With: Manisha Anjali**

Configuring the poet as a historian, this workshop examines the relationship between poetry and the archive. Whether we are exploring colonial documents, prison field recordings, war photographs, letters or family heirlooms, creative archival research is an important process for the poet, often with radical and political illuminations. Poetic language and cultural memory intersect to create new historical documents, which facilitate provoking dialogue

between the past and present. We will practice ways of rendering the object into poetic form.  
Cost: \$140 (Conc) \$160 (members)

### **Poetry in Performance**

**Date:** Sun 29 October 2023, 10:00am – 4:00pm

**With:** Amy Bodossian

Are you ready to unleash your unique poetic voice in a safe, supportive and inspiring environment? Do you want to bring your poetry to life and take it beyond the page? Join acclaimed performer, spoken word artist and published poet Amy Bodossian for this incredible workshop where she'll share invaluable performance tools that will allow you to embrace your unique presence when sharing your work with others.

Cost: \$140 (Conc) \$160 (members)

**Phone:** (03) 9917 8463

### **COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **The 2023 BR4R Seeking Asylum Poetry Prize**

Open to anyone living in Australia. Theme : Finding Freedom. Up to 3 poems of 50 lines. No entry fee. Closing date Sunday 20 August 2023. **More :** <https://br4r.org.au>

#### **Woorilla Poetry Prize**

Open section: 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$3000, runner-up \$500

Closes September 30<sup>th</sup>. Go to : <https://woorilla.submittable.com/submit>

#### **KSP Poetry Competition**

Open to Australian citizens. \$10 per entry for adults over 18, no limit on entries. Max 50 lines. Closes 27 September 2023.

<https://www.kspwriterscentre.com/poetry-competition>

#### **MiNDFOOD Poetry Competition**

Open to Australian and NZ residents only. Poems must be previously unpublished. 100-400 words. No entry fee. Closing date 13 October 2023.

More: <https://www.mindfood.com>

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Send any news for the November 2023 newsletter to [treehousepoet318@gmail.com](mailto:treehousepoet318@gmail.com) by October 15 2023. Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando



## POET'S CORNER

### Momentary Stillness

s l o w  
de lib er ate

catching light  
reflecting scene

d r o p s  
un der own weight

glistening sweet  
cerulean serene

c r a s h e s  
dis si pates

ground dry  
once been

s o a k s  
in fil trates

returns earth  
slowly greens

© PW (Peter White)

### Ballroom

He leans against the wall,  
as though its chest of bone could hold him,  
breathes the spin and whirl,  
the squeal and turn of bodies  
as they skelter, waltz, foxtrot  
across the floor.

Here in this decanted time  
where boys and girls still draw together,  
he can only ache.  
Hasn't he been told?  
His feet just crash to crush bugs,  
drop in leaden gongs.

He's statued, there in his cave  
not too far from a bathroom's relief.  
She sees him, her eyes not so much as bright,  
but lenses discovering their focal length.  
She glides towards him, not quick but meas-  
ured.

Exhales a whisper he can scarcely understand.  
What Him? She leads him to a bowl of light  
which shimmers amber. With a twist of hand,  
she guides left foot, and right.

He finds the beat, the step.  
Beyond his back, wings glisten and spread.  
The wall recedes beyond shadow.  
He leaps in a glow which he never wishes to  
end.

He knows his feet can jump, can vault,  
can gallop to this song, as he rings,  
soaring in contentment inside the tango of  
her eyes.

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### Judgement

Table kicked  
to the ground  
Crashing  
                    sound resonating rage  
Shouting    screaming  
                    sweat pouring down  
Hair wild  
                    Dripping

Coins roll  
from the table  
                    Faceless coins of judgment  
condemn and block  
                    Loveless degradation  
good turned bad  
                    What should have been a welcome  
now a barrier to all

When I see them rolling there  
bile rises in my throat  
                    blood pounds in my temple  
as if eager to escape  
and when it does  
                    intends to change the world

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