



WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

February 2024

Welcome to the first edition of Wordsmiths Newsletter for 2024.

At the close of 2023 I promised myself I would clean out my bookshelves. More specifically, I would clean out the shelves that house the dozens of books of poetry that I have managed to squirrel away over decades.

'Dozens' is an understatement. At the end of three days of sorting, dusting, rearranging, and bagging, I now have four enormous carry bags of books and very little idea of what I'm actually going to do with them.

I did promise myself that as I took a book from the shelf, I would NOT stop to read a poem or two and then decide to put said book back where I found it. Trouble was, that included in the many Melbourne-based anthologies dating back to the 70s, 80s and 90s, I kept finding names I knew in the indexes. How could I possibly throw away the works of these people? It felt like poetic betrayal!

So then it occurred to me that I could ask these poets if they would like a copy of the anthology that included their work. But then I realised that some of them had passed away and for others, I had no contact details. Perhaps, I thought, members of the poetry groups I belong to might like some of these books? But then a small voice in my head reminded me that I was just passing the problem of too many poetry books onto others, who like me, cannot say no to a free book.

So if you want to know what I've finally decided to do with all these books, the answer is nothing ... yet. The four ginormous carry-bags are sitting on the floor of my studio and a second hand bookshop might get a call from me this week and I might pay a visit to the local op shop. What I WON'T do is pull the books out of the bags and reconsider which ones I can't give away. I promise I won't do that. Of course if you want any, give me a call.

Leigh Hay

2024 POETRY COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

The 2024 competition is now open and is seeking entries on the theme 'A new day dawns'. It can be downloaded from the PCP website – <http://www.poeticachristi.org.au>

MEETINGS

Jemma van Loenen led the November meeting with poetry by Evelyn Araluen, Australian poet and co-editor of *Overland*. Evelyn was born and raised on Dharug country and is a descendant of the Bundjalung Nation. Widely published, Evelyn was awarded the Nakata Brophy Prize for Young Indigenous Writers, the Judith Wright Poetry Prize, and the 2022 Stella Prize with her first book, *Dropbear*. Evelyn writes poetry oriented around indigenous issues and colonialism. Jemma read *Pyro*, *Barloo* and *Concessions*.

The December meeting was preceded by a shared lunch and then followed by followed a workshop run by Joel McKerrow - Writer - Poet - Speaker - Educator - Creativity Specialist - Director of the School for Creative Development and Artist Ambassador for TEARFUND Australia. The workshop was enjoyed by all present, including those on Zoom and Joel inspired the Wordsmiths to create poems for readers to 'hear the words a busy world does not hear'.

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

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Month	Leader	A'noon tea
February 10	Maree S	Leigh, Jean S-D, Peter W
March 9	Jane	Maree N, Greg, Jemma
April 13	Carolyn	Jane, Maree S, Cecily

MEMBER NEWS

Janette Fernando and her husband Roger have returned to Alice Springs to teach at Araluen Christian College again in 2024, as Roger has been appointed Assistant Principal. However, they are planning visits to Melbourne to see family every 10 weeks during the holidays. Roger will continue teaching fulltime, but Janette will only teach one day a week (plus emergency teaching as required), which will leave her more time for poetry and working on PCP's 2024 anthology 'A New Day Dawns'.

After many years of commitment to PCP, **Maree Silver** has stepped back from administrative duties involved with preparing anthologies for publication, as well as organising book launches. Peter White is 'in training' to take responsibility for uploads to the PCP website. Maree has worked tirelessly for many years, and at the PCP AGM in December, Janette Fernando officially thanked Maree for her invaluable help and expertise.

Janette was able to visit **Joy Chellew** at her home in Barwon Heads in January and reports that Joy is doing very well (for someone due to turn 99 on February 23rd!) and is working on her sixth book of poems: *In Search of Love*.

LAUNCH OF JOURNEYS

The launch of **Journeys** (PCP's 62nd publication) was well attended on Saturday December 2. Held at the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, the anthology was launched by Caroline Webber, Proprietor of Green Olive Press and currently President of the Society of Women Writers of Victoria.

Peter White acted as MC and Cathy Altmann and Angela Chandler provided musical interludes. Peter read the winning poem by Sharon Rockman (*Space travel in the 80s*) and Leigh Hay read Janice Williams' (*Birth journey*), runner-up in the 2023 competition judged by Paul Turley. 16 poets read their works and the launch concluded with afternoon tea and a chance for those attending to purchase from the PCP book table. Thanks are extended to

Maree Silver & Leigh Hay for co-editing **Journeys**, and Cameron Semmens for graphic design. Thanks are also extended to Maree for organising the launch and to Peter White, Carolyn & Stan Vimpani, Jean Sietzema-Dickson, Leigh Hay and Graeme Silver for additional help on the day.



L-R Peter White, Maree Silver & Leigh Hay



Caroline Webber launching *Journeys*

MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

2024 EVENTS AT WELLSPRING CENTRE

Poetry and Prayer with Pádraig O Tuama

Irish poet and theologian, Pádraig O Tuama will return via zoom in a series of evenings in March.

For more information :

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

VALE MARGARET ELIZABETH 'LIZ' LEE

The WellSpring Centre is sad to announce the death of Margaret Elizabeth Lee, known as Liz, who died on Friday 5th January. The particular gift Liz brought to WellSpring was her knowledge and love of poetry. A number of Wordsmiths are members of the WellSpring Poetry network, and Liz would always choose excellent poems to share with members every month by email. Many of us have also attended poetry days at WellSpring run by Liz. She had such a warm, reverent way of sharing and wondering at poems that clearly delighted her and her love for God was clear to see and hear as she spoke. She will certainly be missed by many.



COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

Bronze Swagman Award

Open to all Australians. Bush poetry, no limit. Entry fee \$25 per entry, up to 3 poems per form. First prize \$1500. Closes 30 April 2024. More: <http://www.abpa.org.au/events.html>

Positive Words Mini-Competition

Open to all. Theme: Contains the word 'Proposal'. Short story or poetry, 100 words or 10 lines. Entry Fee \$2.40 in unused stamps. Prize : Six months subscription to Positive Words. Closes 29 February 2024. More: <https://positivewordsmagazine.wordpress.com/competitions/>

Victorian Bush Poetry Championships – Written

Open to all. No theme.
Silver Brumby Poetry Award – Serious (120 lines). Entry fee \$10 (plus \$10 for critique)
Corryong Larrikin Award – Humorous – 120 lines
Entry fee \$10 (plus \$10 for critique).
Closes 29 February 2024.
More : <http://www.abpa.org.au/events.html>

SCWC Poetry Award

Open to living in Australia over the age of 18.
Theme : Gentle. Poetry 50 lines. Entry fee \$15.
First prize \$1000. Closes 5 March 2024.
More info : <https://southcoastwriters.org/scwc-poetry-award-2024>

Ada Cambridge Poetry Prize 2024

This prize is open to all poets over 18 years of age who live in Victoria. Each poet can submit up to two poems with a maximum length of 30 lines each. Each poem has an entry fee of \$15. \$500 first prize. Competition closes at midnight 8 March 2024. For more information, go to <https://www.willylitfest.org.au/home/writing-prizes/ada-cambridge-writing-prizes/>

Mulga Bill Writing Award 2024

Goldfields Libraries and Eaglehawk Festivals Inc. are calling for entries from writers all over Australia for the annual Mulga Bill Writing Award. Writers are encouraged to take inspiration from the theme 'mystical waters', and submit a poem (max. 25 lines) or short story (max. 2000 words). Short story: \$500 first prize, \$150 second prize, Poetry: \$200 first prize, \$50 second prize. Entry fee: \$5
Closing Date: 23 February, 2024
Website: <https://www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/mulga-billwritingaward>

Minds Shine Bright Writing Competition 2024

Each entry must be original, unpublished fiction or poetry written by the submitting author and include the theme of **Light and Shadow** in some way. Entry Fee: \$5. Word limits: Up to 2,500 words per entry. Prizes: Combined \$1500 plus shortlisted entries will be published in the second Minds Shine Bright Seasons series anthology *Light and Shadow*.
Closing Date: 31 March 2024
Website: <https://mindsshinebright.com/>

Send any news for the May 2024 newsletter to treehousepoet318@gmail.com by April 15th, 2024. Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando.



POET'S CORNER

Time zones

Within this ageing form of myself
lie compatible Geminied-beings

the one retro-spective

celebrating	
past joys	with
unlimited capacity	for
living	loving
caring	gratitude

the other future-spective

expectation		
focused		on
unlimited capacity	for	
mystery		wonder
hope	trust	

a final revelation
connecting both

© Carolyn Vimpani

SONGLINES

Songlines

– carrying the stories
criss-crossing the land
from the rich red blood
of the centre
reaching, leaching
out to the white sands
of the coast.

Songlines

meeting along the way
singing to each other
reaching, reaching hands.

The feet of its children
are drumming
the land.
Earth vibrates

with the rhythm
of life
of story
of song.

Wake up

– feel the thrum!

Let the story rise up
from the soles of your feet
and course through your veins.

The heart of the land
sings to your heart.

Can you hear it?
feel it?

Join in the chorus –
link hands across the land

and sing its refrain
till you rest in its embrace.

© Janette Fernando

Riverbend

by the bend of the river I stood
waiting
for the deluge that had emerged
to make up its mind
and continue to flow to the ocean

staying
searching out cracks
and caverns in the riverbank
visiting areas long forgotten
time for renewal or washing away
in that brief time it stayed

moving
life resumed the bend of the river changed
water takes its own course
grasses stand, branches straighten
slightly enhanced
slightly broken
moving upward and onwards
to life

© Yvonne Torrico

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

☐ I have enclosed my yearly membership dues (\$25 or \$20 concession) 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 \$25 but enclose a donation.

☐ I wish to buy a copy of *Journeys* for \$20 (plus \$4 postage)

☐ Please email me the newsletter from now on.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE : _____ **EMAIL:** _____