



WORDSMITHS NEWSLETTER

May 2024

Welcome to the May edition of Wordsmiths newsletter.

A month or so ago, my car decided it needed a service. The dealer I have to take the car to is situated in Hawthorn, and given it's difficult to get home from there on public transport, I set off on the train into the city, my trusty old iPad in my backpack.

I wandered for a while through the arcades and some of my favourite spots (read here op shops and the odd café for a flat white) and given I had a book voucher to redeem at Readings, I ventured off to the Emporium. As I crossed the walkway from Myer to the Emporium, I noticed students sitting at a specially constructed study and internet hub. Intrigued, I sat down, opened my iPad (which has a separate keyboard) and decided I would join them.

Two hours later, I had watched some students complete their essays, others spend a couple of hours scrolling their phones, a colourful mix of humanity stroll pass and best of all, I had written three poems. I then dawdled off to another café in another arcade and wrote another poem.

If I had been at home working, these four poems would never have been written but because I was detached from the everyday routine, ideas for poetry just seemed to flow. By the time the garage texted me to say the car was ready and I could catch a train back to Hawthorn, I felt as though I had had the most productive day for months. I also felt peaceful and at one with the world.

The day had brought home to me that sometimes we just need to get away from it all and let the creative juices flow....even in a busy shopping plaza.

Leigh Hay

MEETINGS

Maree Silver led the February meeting with poetry by Rose Mary Boehm. A German-born UK national, Boehm, short-story and novel writer, copywriter, photographer and poet, now lives and works in Lima, Peru. Two novels and a poetry collection (*Tangents*) have been published in the UK. Well over 100 of her latest poems have appeared or are forthcoming in US poetry reviews. Maree read *In Celebration of Solitude; Changing of the Guard; Summer Trance; and Poinciana and then some*.

Leigh Hay led the March meeting with the poetry of Kathryn Hamann. Kathryn, a former member of Wordsmiths, was also a member of Nandina Poets and Melbourne Poets Union. Born Christine Kathryn Hamann on 14 September 1954, Kathryn was an outstanding poet. Her award winning work was complex, superbly constructed & immensely powerful. Her poetry appeared in Australia and overseas, and she published eleven books of poetry, a number of which were published by Poetica Christi Press. In 2011, her book *A Slight Fuzzing of Perspective* was joint winner (with Andrew Lansdown) of the poetry section of the Caleb Award. After years of poor health, sadly Kathryn passed away on 22 August 2015. Leigh read *Pearl/Bronze Anniversary; Red Ladder to Heaven* and *Banquet*.

Carolyn Vimpani led the April meeting with TS Eliot's *Portrait of a Lady*. The poem revolves around the relationship between a callous young urban man and a sensitive older woman who desires love. Carolyn summarised the poem, and spoke of the structure and poetic techniques of the three parts of uneven stanzas highlighting a central message of social satire.

Unless notified otherwise, meetings will be held at 2 pm at Carolyn Vimpani's home at 8 Woodhouse Road, Doncaster East. Zoom facility will also be available if possible.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Month	Leader	Afternoon tea
May 11	Peter W	Jean, Leigh, Carolyn
June 8	Greg	Jemma, Peter W, Cecily
July 13	Cecily	Greg, Maree S, Maree N

POEM SUBMISSIONS INVITED AND ADVANCE NOTICE OF LAUNCH – A NEW DAY DAWNS

Now that the 2024 Poetica Christi Press Poetry Competition has closed, any Wordsmiths who didn't enter or who have poems that have already been published that might suit the theme *A New Day Dawns*, are invited to send them (no more than three) to Janette at poetica@iprimus.com.au by the 15th of June. This year's judge, Tru S Dowling, will launch the anthology at Box Hill Community Arts Centre on 22 September 2024 from 2pm – 5pm. Place a note in your diary so you don't commit to any other event.

MEMBER NEWS



Congratulations to **Cathy Altmann** on the publication of her third book, *Stars like Salt*, which was recently launched at Surrey Hills neighbourhood house by Angela Costi. 'The luminous insights of *Stars Like Salt: Poems by Cathy Altmann* emerge from the isolations of long COVID. The sweep of stars lifts our gaze, while salt reminds us of what is close to hand – tears, waves and the prospect of healing.'

Cathy Altmann's mastery of voice, and of the tumblingly fluid potential of the short free-verse line bring to us a sumptuous poetry in the simplest language. These poems of spider webs, sand grains, tidelines, small fish by a pier, trees that sing are truly, in her sure hands, 'ziplines of joy'. Kevin Brophy

The book is available in digital format for \$11.99 (e-book) or \$26.99 (soft cover) at <https://liquidamberpress.com.au/>.



L to R: Rose Lucas, Anne Elvey, Cathy, Angela Costi

Cameron Semmens is holding an Art/Poetry Exhibition, titled '*Am I in Heaven, or is my flash too bright?*'

I've always loved photography, and I've always loved poetry – this exhibition is a synthesis of these two loves – images and words interlacing with pictures worth 1000 words and 1000 words worth a picture. And this body of work is based around my body... how I inhabit my skin and my community, dancing with a light-heart through questions of identity and purpose with a spacious aesthetic. This is the culmination of years exploring 'visual poetics' – how words can be expressed visually and how images can be integrated with words. This is a personal, playful exploration of what it means to be a white man with white hair in his middle-age.

Saturday, 11 May 2024 at 2pm at 'The Memo' 235 Maroondah Hwy, Healesville VIC 3777



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 WELLSRING CENTRE

Introducing the Intensive Journal process Online session (3 hours).

Led by Kate Scholl this 3-hour workshop offers a brief introduction to the work of Dr Ira Progoff and the dynamic process that makes the Intensive Journal method a powerful tool for personal and spiritual growth.

Sunday 4 August 2.00-5.00pm – via Zoom

Mapping the Soul with Enneagram

This unit explores the relationship between the spiritual aspects of our lives and our identities. Tuesday 2nd of July at 9.30am & Tuesday 20th of August at 2pm.

National Reconciliation Week

Join Aboriginal Christian Leader Brooke Prentis for a National reconciliation Week event at WellSpring. The 2024 theme is *Now More Than Ever*. Saturday 1st June 2024, 7-9pm.

More information for all Wellspring events at <https://www.wellspringcentre.org.au/events>

EVENTS AT KARDIA FORMATION

Aging with Wisdom and Grace – Eight day at home retreat

The retreat will be drawn from the book *Aging with Wisdom and Grace* by Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon Au. You can make this a silent retreat or a retreat in daily life. 14-21 October. enquiries@kardia.com.au

COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor's International Poetry Prize

Open to 18 years and over. Open theme. 60 lines and no more than 1,000 words in total. Entry fee \$25 for first entry, and \$20 thereafter. First prize \$15,000. Closing date 14 July 2024.

www.austwriters.com/competitions#acu

ACU Prize for Poetry

Open to Australian residents. Theme : Faith. 60 lines. Entry fee \$25. First prize \$10,000, Second \$5,000 Third \$3,000. Closing date 2 July 2024.

<https://www.acu.edu.au/faith-and-values/office-of-the-vice-president/acu-prize-for-poetry>

FAW Tasmania Poetry Prize

Open to residents of Australia. No theme. 60 lines, Entry fee \$5, First prize \$150, runner up \$50. Entries close 31 August 2024

<https://fawtas.org.au/competitions/>

Local Word Poetry Prize

Open to anyone living in Australia, over 16 years. No theme. 75 lines, entry fee nil. First prize \$2000 + one-hour mentoring session. Second prize \$250. Entries close 1 July 2024.

<https://www.grlc.vic.gov.au/local-word-poetry-prize-2023>

Island magazine is currently accepting submissions of poetry for their next print issue. You may submit a maximum of five poems in any form. If you would like to submit more than one, please submit them all in the one submission and in a single document. Do not make a different submission for each poem. *Island* does not accept work previously published in print or online, including on blog. Submissions close 13 May. For more information about how to submit go to <https://islandmag.com/submit>

The Flying Islands Manuscript Prize for Emerging Poets. The prize for the competition is \$1000 cash, publication in the Flying Island Pocket Poets Series (with thirty free copies to the poet) and the possibility of negotiating a short writer's residency at Arbaro Writers and Artists Residency. Entries close at midnight on 31 July. For more information go to <https://flyingislandspocketpoets.com.au/manuscript-prize-for-emerging-poets/>

Send any news for the August 2024 newsletter to treehousepoet318@gmail.com by July 15 2024. Newsletter edited by Leigh Hay and Janette Fernando.

POET'S CORNER



The web

Drawn outside, I find
single strands
of spider web
in the olive tree.

They flash an
erratic semaphore
in the morning sun.
Each spans

a gap from leaf
to stem. None
makes the expected
web. Are they

first drafts, flimsy
lines left in the
branches, the night's
work? I cannot

read them. Yet
each morning
they adorn the tree,
flicker between light

and invisibility.
My daughter joins
me, and as my words
create a string

clogged with grit, she
brushes the tree. Too late,
the threads unmoored
stream toward me,

silver filaments
illuminating
what I have failed
to see.

© *Cathy Altmann*
(from *Stars like Salt*. Liquidamber press)

Swallowtails

'Blue Triangle' – *Graphium aristeus Parmatum*
St Vincent's Hospital ground, Toowoomba,
5/3/92.

Foliage of cypress, blue-green, feathered,
shifts and sways to an errant wind's sigh.
Flash of azure, flittering, fluttering –
butterfly skittering – fragment of sky,
black-edged, triangular, skimming, fast-
winging,
circling the cypress, riding the breeze –
meets a mate, and together they circle and
quiver,
dancing entranced off through the trees.

© *Joan Ray*

Communion

facing each other
elbows resting on
the small cafe table
we're hankering for
intelligent conversation

it's been a while
she hasn't changed
together again
locked in friendship
our eyes do the smiling

bright-eyed glowing
in fresh summer dress
her intellect beguiles
as spontaneous passion
embellishes her narrative

between sips of wine
it's my turn to talk
a precis of creative pursuits
while knowing she hears me
soothes my soul

an hour maybe two
we've lost track of time
but part we must
she clutching my latest read
I toting three of hers

© *Leigh Hay*