



# Issue The Third, November 1998.

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Works about poets and poetry are pretty hard to place. Please let's have them for an airing.

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## Editorial

Welcome to the third issue of PixelPapers, marking the sixth month of its existence. The policy of filling invisibly over the two month gestation period will continue, so that contributions are already invited for PixelPapers 4, which will rise into view on 1st March, 1999. Previous issues will be available on site so long as my fairly generous cache with my internet service provider holds out.

My gratitude to the contributors who have trusted me with their work and best wishes for the festive season to all our writers and readers.

The magazine (e - zine) is open to contributions from all writers. So far, with the exception of John and Tracy in Cambridge in England and Shen in Adelaide, our support has been solidly Western Australian, but we would prefer a regional base, hopefully taking in all of Australia and its

neighbours.

My html software has unexpectedly quit and I have lost four well-considered paragraphs, stimulated by a short article in The Australia Council's strangely named newsletter, ARTFORCE, written by Jose Borghino, writer and executive director of The Australian Society of Authors. Rather than try to re-create them on this Christmas Eve, I promise to beg Jose for permission to re-publish his excellent article in PP4.

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## Poetry - Poems About Poetry And Poets

Poetic Success

Walter Vivian

For instant fame, young poet,  
simply change your name to,  
Anon,  
or perhaps,  
Trad Rhyme or Old Saw;  
a vast body of work  
will be nominally yours, but,  
folk will criticise your style  
for lack of modernity,  
and expect you to be much older!

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## Poetry - Virgin Verse and Verse From the Pros

On the realisation that adolescence had passed

Roland Leach

1

Twenty years since I stepped out into the moon  
from Annie's window  
when her parents arrived home early.

Thinking myself the world's first lover  
as I hitch-hiked home along Marmion Ave  
blowing lassos of smoke into the night  
dragging down stars with egotistical ease.

It was four years before I saw her again.  
She took me up to her small room  
above the Scarborough beach-front shops,  
her hair cropped at the front & blonde,  
the bed unmade in an untidy corner,  
with a Hendrix poster above,  
half-hanging like a torn bird.  
It was my first lesson in time.

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Twenty years and the wearing begins.

I kill myself a little every day,  
everyone does - it cannot be helped.  
Some ways are just quicker than others.  
It is a small defiance.  
A friend's methodist aunt  
is still alive in her eighties,  
proud of a life where  
people could eat off her floors.

There are strategies to cope, of course -  
the clean eating floors may be one after all.  
There is defiance:  
seeing its darkness coming across the sea  
and standing on the beach  
your middle finger raised to the sky.  
Its opposite is prayer.  
Or to work each day & get half-drunk each night  
like the librarian poet.  
Or finding appropriate metaphors to console:  
the spirit released like a butterfly  
from its cocoon of flesh.

Nothing original, but is there more to death  
than inventing new ways to imagine it?

My father is 76 & hobbles each day  
to the television screen.  
When you're dead you're dead,  
nothing you can do about it.  
My mother will have none of this:  
she wants to be reincarnated  
as a thrush in a monastery garden.  
She has built the surrounding wall already.

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In a cemetery on the west coast of Ireland  
you look straight into the sea  
from the headstones & ruins of church.  
I picked up a drakestone,  
flecked & smoothed by time,  
its edges only slightly sharper  
when all the buried were alive.  
They may have also crawled from windows  
or at least wanted to,  
and walked home with a swagger  
smoking along a country lane.

From the cemetery you can dive  
and swim to a small island,  
a quarter mile off shore.  
The water ice cold on your face,  
your head turning to the side,  
taking each slow breath as though it mattered.

## Over Here

Shen

It eludes me;  
this difference  
between come and go -  
being asked:

"Where'd ya come from?"  
by an old man,  
back propped against  
a bus shelter wall  
tattooed with posters

telling those with lives  
coloured as mine  
where to go.  
My reply is  
wet and indistinct

as tarmac hazed with steam  
in the afterglow of rain.  
Sun usurps an empire of cloud  
to turn everything gold again  
and the road now glistens

like opportunity -  
the mirage that lures  
countless boats each year  
with the urgency  
of expectations seeking asylum.

Is that where  
this underlying discomfort  
comes from, the same homeland  
this feeling should return to,  
to which it should go ?

## Noodles

Shen

"Eating noodles....."  
mother says,  
putting down  
her coffee cup,  
".....the only thing  
Chinese about you."  
I look up  
from the steaming  
bowl of noodles,  
eyes half-slit  
against the dawn,  
too tired to argue,  
so slip into  
old habits ;  
an inscrutable smile  
and a filial,  
obedient nod.

Shen

## Permanent Aberrations

Helen Jean Hagemann

From all sides they come  
eyes like cold breath in morning dew  
corruption in contemptible aberration-  
ordering the night  
to fit the day.

They shape themselves  
like tomorrow's conscience-  
minds of hardened steel  
voices in lean-to digital angles-  
red noses in polished rooms.

These appendages come in company suits  
opening doors at just the right  
tax angle;  
winging first-class to shores with island tans  
in austere smiles, exciting pathos  
to fit their particular needs-  
conserving energy to tighten the political noose  
around the imbroglio  
of greedy necks and trusty bank-balances.

And in the sunburnt country  
of sleeping seats, their seeds grow under carpet-  
ideas pop like 60watt bulbs  
childlike, they inhale and explode  
the thrill of brown-paper bags.

In their need for distant lands  
& Spanish sun  
they take with them other lives  
wringing out their skins  
like dead kangaroos crisping in the sun-  
wheeling and hip-hopping in comfortable ventolin boots  
from surf to shore  
not caring or feeling the heat  
of the why, or the where, or how  
they left these homeland lives.  
'Si, hombre!' - I'm talking to you! 'Espero que este bien.'

Prosperous and cunning  
these aberrations are the new corporate swagman  
at the billabong (although the legend they kick  
like rags in the corner).  
Still they come, with enough loopholes  
in their carpetbags  
to bag, not one, not entirely perhaps  
but more-the grabbing  
of skirts from the farmyard bed  
the farmer's plough & field  
his one-eyed dog.

Corporate prats in Akubra hats  
floating a new history at the billabong  
making the plane ticket sky-walker  
the ladder-climbing artiste  
the viajero-the olive hero  
sound whole.

## Second Year Love

Fran Sbrocchi

I made a row of stars  
and hung them  
above the green board.

I made a row of X's  
and hung them  
under your name.

I made a row  
of green paper bells with red ribbons  
and placed them over the chalkboard.

Your green strip  
covered my bells  
x'd out my name  
and blinked out all my stars

That was fifty years ago  
and you are not forgiven.

## At 3:30

Fran Sbrocchi

An empty box, its sawdust  
spilling  
evidence

Windows opened wide against the pong  
that scent of small boys' wet moccasins  
wood smoke, chalk, and a fart or two

The world a cracked globe,

swings from the ceiling  
Faded paper hollyhocks twist  
in their orange jar

The alphabet fringe on the green blackboard  
is missing letters g, m and capital T  
Four stools, legs up, pose on the red table  
a tin mug of cocoa dumping sludge  
three crumples of paper stuck in it

On the lowest shelf  
six worn readers  
two torn copies of "The Wind in the Willows"  
a golliwog, a teddy  
and twelve shiny new copies  
of "Jim and Judy Go to the City "

And on the board  
in fourteen forbidden colours  
Teddy Melanchuck's name

## The Colors of Christmas

Jim Cornish

The colors of Christmas demothballed reappear,  
The HO-HO men ease out their stiffened limbs,  
salute St Nick the patron of their trade,  
assume the red and white, the padded knee  
to star in the culminant commerce of the year,  
ensconced among the lollypops and hymns,  
the cotton beard and spectacles prescribed  
(for pulling at unless they're very wary  
by smart ass kids who've realized the truth  
or terrified toddlers who, spite being bribed,  
are captive of this monster huge and hairy.)

Reindeer soaring over the flowing stairwell,  
red felted, colored plumes, brown plastic antlers  
plunge and rear when tickled with electrodes  
and jingle bells with every leap and canter.

A new-sprung forest rises from the floors,  
green pines with golden lights and silver stars.  
The music of cash registers and bells

greet credit cards that surge in through the doors.  
The fairy lights, the coruscating tinsel,  
the avenues of Toyland and the beauty bars  
become Alladin's cave and all its treasures.

Slippers and socks, mustered and marched away,  
while carol music permeates the systems,  
will unsurprise dear Dad on Christmas day  
or gift-wrapped scent for Mother with pink ribbon  
plus Xmas cards with angels gold and blue  
from October in an emporium near you.

## An Expostulation of Vexatious Sex

Jim Cornish

I met a grammar gremlin gambolling in my garden;  
I spoke to him. "Gremlin" I said "I say, I beg your pardon,  
I'd like to have a word with you about this curious passion  
for mixing singular subjects in an oddly plural fashion,  
like saying 'each student has to have their proper money with them'  
or 'A person who puts their head out of the bus might find it missing'  
I find it disconcerting and I think it's pretty thick  
I fail to see the reason and it's getting on my wick"  
"Well I dunno" the gremlin said "hang on, I'll ask me mate.  
I saw another gremlin then, swinging on the garden gate.  
"Her and me" he stated "get some assignments each;  
she done them plural things, I work on parts of speech,  
interpolating double negatives and misconstruing verbs.  
Hey, Sloppy, got a moment to discuss this feller's nerves?"  
"I seen him there said Sloppy "and I heard his weak complaint--  
you think me and Stroppy are interfering but we ain't.

How would it be if people said 'His head out of the bus'  
because when females heard it, what would they think of us?  
but if it were made 'Her head, the males would surely shout  
and we'd lose our employment, they'd want to kick us out."

Me-

"I can see there is a problem now, a veritable enigma.  
This strange ambivalence does create a grammatical stigma,  
for sex has reared its ugly head and put us in a quandary,  
accentuating a circumstance most profound and ponderous  
but you can't deny these sentences are syntactically abstruse  
and conjugation of the genders has led to much abuse.  
I think I've got the answer though, it's fairly simple really,  
if we got some neuter pronouns made, we could use them freely.  
I've thought about the problem and I've got a good idea-  
if instead of 'him' or 'her' a brand new pronoun could appear  
like 'hem' for either sex [or both] I think it would be better  
and 'hess' could be for hers and his by changing just one letter,  
so hem when used instead of them would have the same effect  
and hess if put in place of their would surely sound correct.

"oh, dear! oh dear!" said Sloppy with a kind of strangled sob.  
"Tut, tut, no, no." said Stroppey "You'll cost us both our jobs.  
By making it too simple you'll revert to proper grammar  
and the Institute of Malaprops would throw us in the slammer.  
They're devoted to the principle of the line of least resistance  
with a pragmatic attitude for syntagmatic inconsistency."  
and, chuckling like demons at some misanthropic joke,

both the gremlins disappeared in a puff of purple smoke.

## Orpheus in his Underpants

Jim Cornish

He quavers pizzicato with tooth brush strokes, foaming  
madly at the mouth through clenching teeth: rinses  
then burbles through the bubbles of the shavesoap,  
baritoning Old Man River between scrapes,  
descending to a hum when pinching up the nostrils  
to avoid a nasty nick beneath the nose.

Basso when the blade gets swizzled in the basin,  
the wiping and the patting face begin  
then the 'oooh' in E sharp major with  
the stinging of the afterbalm is  
the keynote for the Road to Mandalay.

The water needling sharply from the shower  
sets off a vigorous appeal to Danny Boy  
till a burst of cold turns tenor to a shiver  
and liquefaction of the lips denies the tune.

The flip and flop and flapping of the towel  
beats time for brown haired Jeannie's summer air  
and the fatal ambulations of Mary Malone in Dublin  
get involved with baby powder under where  
those endearing young charms are marshalled

for the bathroom grand finale  
and climbing every mountain will be next.

## Crabbing at Coodanup

Dianne Beckingham

In the estuary's green hair-nets  
my crabscoop tangles as sun angles down

I practise my backhand swing, kill time  
the first crab turns up and away, apaline

claws like elegant salad servers  
its luck is diametric to mine

blue faience now clatters in the wires  
my reluctant supper on the move.

## Making It Matter

Jennifer Jones

In the cafe we sip our coffee  
And talk intelligently,  
Skipping over topics of great depth light as a skimming stone,  
Getting our feet wet and then moving on,  
Not wanting to get too serious,  
Too academic.  
We talk, pleasantly, as friends,  
No suggestion of anything suggestive,  
No eye contact to make us think  
That anything else is going on here,  
Or even that we want it to.  
And maybe I'm feeling a bit frustrated by this,  
Even though I'm telling myself, this is great, this is how it should be.

And maybe you're telling yourself to keep it cool, to keep your  
distance,  
Because we both know it's impossible, there's no future in anything  
else.  
And maybe we both know we're lying our heads off,  
Because in the cinema ... it happens,  
Unspoken and immediate,  
Before the first picture even appears on the screen  
We reach for each other, we're in each other's arms,  
Our mouths meet in a sweet, impassioned kiss,  
Which we can't stop, which I want never to stop.  
I watch the film curled up in your arms,  
My head pressed up against your chest, listening to your heart beat.  
Nothing more ... no desperate groping, we're not undignified,  
In fact, you're a real gentleman.  
I love your long, pale scholar's fingers,  
Your slightly myopic eyes and your thin, sensual lips,  
Your fine, soft hair that refuses to grey in spite of your age,  
I might even love you.  
Afterwards, we walk.  
There's nowhere else to go ... well, there is, but we're not going  
there.  
Down by the Thames the wind is cold  
And there's no shelter from it anywhere,  
Not even wrapped around each other as we are.  
It's getting to us, but we pretend we don't care.  
We talk, trying to hang on to the moment,

Making it matter, making it real,  
A gentle longing underlying our words.  
We're making memories, to carry in our hearts,  
We're being very brave.  
But you are ill and I am married  
And in the end we say goodnight and go our separate ways,  
You to your bedsit and I to mine.

(THE FOLLOWING POEMS, SANS ILLUSTRATIONS BUT DRIPPING WITH NOSTALGIA, ARE FROM MY COLLECTION, JUVENILIA STYLE, *NOT A PROPER SHOP*, PIXELPRESS 1997.)

## Midwife

Walter Vivian

Nurse Thompson's little car  
had bright blue wheels and body,  
a black top, and dickie seat  
where she carried her baths  
and pans and bowls, so that she,  
could deliver babies to people;

Nurse Thompson liked to see me run,  
and gave us some jam she'd made,  
which I said was as good  
as proper jam out of a tin,  
and I don't think that she  
was very pleased;

I wanted Nurse's little car,  
as bright and clean as any toy,  
I'd squeeze the hooter bulb all day,  
but only Nurse could wind it at the front,  
before chugging away, sitting straight,  
and the wheel axles droning a tune.

## Jack O'lantern

Walter Vivian

When pie melons were ripe,  
they made jam with  
fragrant lemons and lots of sugar,  
steeped in the big china dish,  
and I had a tiger stripey melon,  
to gouge hollow and cut  
with an old spoon and a blunt knife,  
managing to bloodstain tasteless pith,  
in carving a silly leering face;  
we put it on a post in the dark  
with a candle inside,  
glowing evilly with evil smell,  
to scare the cows and passersby,  
and I was scared.

A Hard Man

Walter Vivian

Danny Ryan was a champion,  
tanned and muscular with short hair,  
a broken nose and hoarse voice,  
steely strong arms that could,  
slap leather gloves into a punch bag,  
and pound opponents into insensibility;

He skipped staccato, sparred and shuffled,  
on his trellised verandah,  
trained hard, fought hard,  
and if any man offered profanity or abuse,  
he would feel Dan's wrathful fists;

For his wife he washed and ironed and sewed  
and gently combed his daughters' golden curls,  
his fate's paradox, a family of girls!

## The Dunny Man Comes

Walter Vivian

There is a clattering down the lane,  
an old Ford idling, bonnet panels a-rattle,  
as the dunny man clamps lids  
on pans full of night soil,  
swinging them onto the truck,  
the euphemistic night cart,  
and replacing them with empties,  
and anxious matrons,  
fearful of being caught at their pee  
mooning to the dunny man's gaze,  
frantically finish so that they may  
retreat from the garden,  
with feminine dignity;

My Dad says that the dunny man's truck  
is very powerful, because,  
it has a hundred cylinders;

I saw the dunny man eating, with dirty hands,  
snow white sandwiches in his truck.

## The Rattler

Walter Vivian

At six of the morning  
in winters' dark,  
or summer dawn's honey glow,  
the rattler chuff-chuff-chuffed  
from the port through the city,  
to Midland's locomotive workshops,  
and the driver, as machine muezzin,  
played cockadoodle-doo with steam,  
shattering sleep for miles ahead,  
so laggard apprentices aroused,  
could leap into boots and dungarees  
and sprint to the rail station;

The rattler called some to work, but  
spiced stolen sleepy minutes for many!

## A Double First

Walter Vivian

The first motor bicycle we ever saw,  
buzzed our stony white streets  
on a bright blue summer afternoon,  
shattering suburban serenity  
with delicious noise and speed,  
doing it was said, as much as forty;  
Satisfied with our gawkish wonder  
and triumphant palls of smoky dust,  
the rider, big with goggles and gauntlets,  
kicked his silver machine to throaty life  
and roared along the limestone road,  
that over the steep hill vanished  
like a desert river, into drifts of beach sand,  
and had our first motor bike accident!#

## Clothes Props

Walter Vivian

Props! Props! The husky call,  
carries on the warm land breeze,  
Props! Props! The sound is closer,  
and a dark man,  
shouldering bone-white saplings,  
newly felled and peeled,  
pointed at the butt and forked,  
detects interest and varies his call;  
Props! One and six. Props!  
Poles sold, the dark man  
disappears back into the bush;  
new props thrust clotheslines skyward,  
saving reckless suburban garrotting,  
and laundry soiling on the sand.

(SEVERAL ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES LIVED IN THE DISTRICT NEAR BUTLER'S LAKE. AS CHILDREN WE WANDERED FREELY IN THE BUSH BEHIND THE SWANBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL WHERE THERE WERE GUM BRANCH WURLIES. ACTIVIST ROBERT BROPHO WAS A SCHOOLMATE FOR SOME TIME.)

## Winter Gales

Walter Vivian

Torn and tossing black, black night,  
roaring rain-flailed pouring roofs,  
windows yammering, squalls shake walls,  
trees writhe and tear in fierce agony,  
then, in a lull of lesser violence, as  
noise of storm past is gradually drowned  
by threat of approaching storm,  
a lonely ship's foghorn intones fear,  
answered by fearful shriek of a locomotive,  
striving to gain traction on storm slick rails  
to escape from the coast to sheltering foothills;

Snug bedsheets closed out my monster storms,  
and my child self slept, confident of immortality  
the young perceive, in loved protected lives.

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## Shorts - old and new

(WITH THE CONSENT OF THE WRITER, AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE IS PRINTED AS A PREFACE TO THIS INTERESTING STORY.)

Some say that the last person you should trust in talking about a piece of writing is the author, but you might be interested in my ideas about this short story, entitled 'You'. I wrote it about a year ago in Dali, Yunnan Province, China, under a mountain, by a swimming pool, and near a lake. I think that has something to do with the interaction between land and ocean in the story. And on the subject of water and the sea, I think it is possible to interpret the repetition in the story as modelled on the action of waves, the way they always repeat themselves, falling on the shore, but are never of course exactly the same from one wave to the next. However, and this might make the story particularly appropriate for 'PixelPapers', it is tempting to see the repetition also as a sort of response to the nature of computer writing itself,

and indeed of computers in general, which is linked so closely to functions of repetition, copying, etc. (Although the story was not composed on a computer, but tediously written-down by hand.) I think what I really want to say about 'You', however, is that by the form of its composition it invites the reader to read the same sentence or word just a little differently each and every time it appears, by virtue of the slight context changes that are always taking place. The story might be said to remain the same while always becoming something else, that is. So, I hope you find 'You', which has not been previously published elsewhere, suitable for your publication; and I would of course appreciate any thoughts you might have about it.

## You

You drive hundreds of miles. There is a moment when it seems that the land will go on forever. Then it comes to an end and the ocean is there. Nothing could have prepared you for this. All is changed in the instant when you see the breaking waves. You leave the car and walk on the beach. An hour passes. There are people near, and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

There is a moment when it seems that the land will go on forever. Then it comes to an end and the ocean is there. Nothing could have prepared you for this. All is changed in the instant when you see the breaking waves. You leave the car and walk on the beach. An hour passes. There are people near, and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses.

Then it comes to an end and the ocean is there. Nothing could have prepared you for this. All is changed in the instant when you see the breaking waves. You leave the car and walk on the beach. An hour passes. There are people near, and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week.

Nothing could have prepared you for this. All is changed in the instant when you see the breaking waves. You leave the car and walk on the beach. An hour passes. There are people near, and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week.

You think by the water in the days.

All is changed in the instant when you see the breaking waves. You leave the car and walk on the beach. An hour passes. There are people near, and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week.

You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently.

You leave the car and walk on the beach. An hour passes. There are people near,

and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week. You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently. Feelings flood across your mind as if leaving you forever.

An hour passes. There are people near, and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week. You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently. Feelings flood across your mind as if leaving you forever. In the world, things are steady.

There are people near, and far away. You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week. You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently. Feelings flood across your mind as if leaving you forever. In the world, things are steady. You want to go back precisely the way you came.

You see them, or you don't see them, as the case may be. Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week.  
You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently.  
Feelings flood across your mind as if leaving you forever. In the world, things  
are steady. You want to go back precisely the way you came. You think you can  
remember every detail of the journey.

Water floods across the sand towards you. The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week.  
You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently.  
Feelings flood across your mind as if leaving you forever. In the world, things  
are steady. You want to go back precisely the way you came. You think you can  
remember every detail of the journey. One day you leave.

The world is as it is.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week.  
You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently.  
Feelings flood across your mind as if leaving you forever. In the world, things  
are steady. You want to go back precisely the way you came. You think you can  
remember every detail of the journey. One day you leave. You drive hundreds of  
miles.

Behind the beach there are houses. You no more than sleep in one for a week.  
You think by the water in the days. You imagine things happened differently.  
Feelings flood across your mind as if leaving you forever. In the world, things  
are steady. You want to go back precisely the way you came. You think you can  
remember every detail of the journey. One day you leave. You drive hundreds of

miles. The dry land dances about you.

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## Do Unto Others

Lloyd Davies

When I was four and my brother Owen six, Granny Dobbs served our breakfast daily in the kitchen of our old colonial home, Bleak House, on the Peppy Gully ridge above the sun-blue river. It was a cosy place to start the day in, that kitchen. Warmed and slightly smoked throughout by a massive cast iron wood-stove, it smelt of onions, tea, bacon, porridge, burnt toast, boiled-over milk and the ghosts of all Bleak House meals going back to 1880, the year it was built. 1880, when Peppy Gully was all bush and still called Cottesloe and they could see the ocean a mile away to the west.

The old limestone walls gave off a whiff of musty damp through cracks in the plaster, but even that was comforting, a snug cave-like smell. Granny reminded me of the drawings of little old ladies in the books by Charles Dickens she read to us at bed time. Her silver hair was combed into a bun at the back of her head. The collar of her blouse was buttoned high at her throat and clasped with one of those cameo brooches you still find sometimes in antique shops. Under her apron she wore a long old fashioned bell-shaped skirt.

At breakfast time she bustled amid the smoke and steam, from stove to table to sink and back, clattering plates, scraping the black off toast and doing her best to stop us squabbling. We breakfasted at a scrubbed deal table pushed hard against the wall alongside a wide sash type window. Many years of banging the window up and down had caused a triangular piece of plaster to break away from the corner of the window frame, baring the crumbly rock beneath and revealing a dark, draughty crevice between stone and timber. My brother always claimed the window seat until one day he recoiled from it with a wail of fright:

"There's a spider in the crack! Squash it Granny! Squash it!"

He pushed back his chair, spilling his porridge, elbowing me and spilling mine too. Granny clunked down her frying pan and came over to inspect the object of his terror.

"Nonsense! It's only a little black house spider. It won't hurt you."

"It might be a poison one."

"If it was poisonous. It would have red marks. That's Nature's way of warning us".

"It still might be. Squash it Granny."

"Never kill anything unless you have to. Remember the Ancient Mariner. 'He prayeth best who loveth best all creatures great and small'".

Owen was never one for poetry.

"I'm not gonna sit there but."

"Well I'm sure your brother won't mind. Will you dear? It will be a nice bit of nature study to tell every one about at kindergarten."

I accepted. Little brothers learn to accept. I changed places and

settled down to make the best of things by studying the little black spider and reporting daily on its activities to my kindergarten class.

In a microcosmic way it was a fascinating creature. It grew in size until it was quite a formidable little nub, about the size of the top joint of my thumb. If I looked closely enough I could make out its eyes and the sharp pincers of its ever moving mandibles. As it grew it expanded its web outwards from its cave in the wall-crack in a fan shape, almost as though it was trying to re-plaster the hole.

I put little bits of breakfast on the edge of the web, the spider would scurry out, grab the food and scurry back inside the crack.

"Say thank you, Bill" I would scold.

I named it Bill after a friend of mine at kindy. I had to change the name when a much smaller spider came onto the scene and began to share the web.

"That's a man spider." Granny informed me. "Bill must be a lady spider. You'll have to call her Wilhelmina".

"What'll I call the man spider then?"

"I shouldn't worry much about him. She'll kill him and eat him once she starts laying eggs."

"But why should she do that?" I demanded in some distress.

"It's Nature's way dear. Nature can be very cruel." Granny consoled me.

I suppose I reconciled myself to domestic violence in the spider family because I don't remember being upset when Wilhelmina's mate just disappeared one night. Instead of mourning him I watched, fascinated, as Wilhelmina spun her egg sac and that grew steadily, breakfast by breakfast.

My brother got jealous of the attention I won from Granny by reporting Wilhelmina's affairs.

"Silly 'ickie and his silly spider" he sneered. 'Ickie was his nickname for me - a corrupt abbreviation of "little brother" -- all the more attractive to him, and annoying to me because it rhymed with "sickie" and "dickie". When he wanted to be particularly nasty he strung all three together and chanted, "sickie ickie dickie!"

Granny encouraged me to ignore him by invoking the old maxim:

"Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me."

The climax came one morning when the egg-sac suddenly burst before my eyes and the web began to vibrate with a myriad of tiny tightrope artists. I yelped with delight:

"Baby spiders! Granny, come and see the baby spiders!"

Granny left the stove and stood behind me for a moment with her hands on my shoulders, sharing my excitement.

"New life, darling," her voice caressed me. "It's always a marvel to see it happen. You'll remember this all your life. Now finish your porridge before it gets cold."

She returned to the stove. Owen leaned across in front of me. In a sudden movement he doused the web with a mug of scolding tea. Wilhelmina shrivelled into a little dead ball and dropped to the floor. Her young hung crucified in discoloured specks upon the web. I began to wail in great shuddering bursts.

"He's killed Wilhelmina. He's killed the babies. All of them."

Granny came quickly from the stove, a steaming kettle in hand and held it over him.

"Oh you wicked boy. Let's see how you like boiling water over you."

She tilted the steaming spout. My brother cringed in terror:

"No! Granny! No! Please Granny!"

My own flesh winced in empathetic horror. I was robbed of speech. Overwhelmed at the awfulness of events. My grief suppressed by the

spectacle of my loving grandmother on the brink of such terrible retribution. After a menacing moment she put the kettle down and mercifully but firmly boxed his ears. She then directed a homily at his bowed and sobbing head.

"You're lucky I'm not your great great grandfather. When my father was a little boy he threw a cat into a gorse bush. Great Great Grandfather picked him up and pitched him in after it. Father told me it took him weeks to get all the prickles out."

My brother snivelled into his porridge all through this fragment of family history. To me it was a relief from the trauma of the last few minutes.

"Why did he do that?"

"He was a Plymouth Brother. Lived by the Bible. All the family did in those days. While my father struggled screaming in the gorse bush, Great Great Grandfather preached to him in a loud stern voice:

Do thou unto others as thou wouldst they would do unto thee!

Then just left him there to pick his own way out."#

## Naked Anthropology

Walter Vivian

The aliens came in the night.

It was four days before Christmas. The night was clear and starry and there were the usual shooting stars and the occasional satellite passing by, but we were used to that. We'd even become blase about rocket launchings which we'd been able to watch up until ten years ago, when they used the distant range in the desert. Our sleepy little farming town had been brought right to the cutting edge of technology when the government and the Americans had built the aerospace transmitter with its fancy antennae strung around the town common.

Harvest was nearly over and it was as hot as hell, or as hot as Australian summers usually are, when I helped Old Billy the town drunk, out onto the bench, and locked up the front door. I can remember being mildly surprised to see a cloud blotting out the stars over the wheat silos, but I checked out the other doors and cleaned the front bar before climbing up the stairs to flop into bed. We'd had to feed and find beds for a coachload of Japanese tourists. Running a pub is busy work.

We were wakened early in the morning by the sound of excited chirping voices. I cursed the kids and turned over to try to sleep some more, but my good wife, Jean, nudged me in the ribs and said, "You'd better see about it", before she dropped off, sound asleep.

I pulled on my pants and waddled out onto the balcony.

There was a long shadow over the wheat silo and the railway shed. Hanging in the air between the silo and the aerospace installation that Hank, Elmer and Bob looked after at the edge of town, was a monstrous piece of rock, three or four hectares of it! It was suspended about a hundred metres up in the air.

I tell you I couldn't believe my eyes and hung onto the verandah post because I felt weak in the knees.

Moments later, I ran down the stairs, unbolted the front door and ran out into the street to join the growing crowd of onlookers.

"I saw it first", said young Meggsie. "I was on me skateboard".

"Jesus!" said Father Ryan, crossing himself. He was in his jogging shorts and didn't look very priestly.

Miss Prime, the post mistress, prayed hysterically.

Billy, the town drunk, came over and leaned on me as he looked at it. He shook his head and returned to the bench and pulled his hat over his eyes.

"I wonder if Hank knows it's there", said a voice with a strong American accent, and I turned to see Elmer and Bob giggling nervously. It would be Hank's shift and he'd be dreaming over the monitors

in the control hut of the installation that registered the mysterious space signals being sent or received by the lines of antennae that stretched towards the hills. The irony of the situation was not lost on them.

"What's going on?" boomed Sergeant O'Hara in his best official voice as he rounded the hotel corner and stepped out from the shade of the verandah to gaze, suddenly slack-jawed with surprise, at the monstrous slab of rock hanging in the air. A forest of hands rose to point helpfully at the huge object.

"There's a space thing up there!" said Meggsie.

"It's true," said young Samantha Allen, in support, looking earnestly at the policeman as if he needed to be convinced of the fact.

"You'd better open the bar and get me something to drink", said O'Hara. "I'll keep watch."

I backed into the pub, my eyes fixed on the great slab of rock, scooped up a bottle of Johnnie Walker, a black Corio and another of Jim Beam, to cover all tastes, and hurried back to the crowd. We drank with our eyes fixed on the rock.

"It doesn't make any noise", said O'Hara, taking a swig of the Johnny Walker.

"No", I said, being careful not to blot out the scene as I drank from the black bottle.

"What should we do?" said Elmer, after he'd had a pull of the Jim Beam and handed it across to Bob. "They must have come down the wire. Down our signal."

"I can see some plants," said Meggsie. "It's probably flat on top."

Sure enough, there was a fringe of blue green and some white blossom like honeysuckle.

The tourist coach rumbled around from behind the pub, yawning Japanese tourists nodding at the windows, and turned down the main street to head towards the sunrise and breakfast at the next big town, sixty kilometres away.

Somebody brought out a tray of stale scones and some cakes from the Country Women's Association Hall.

"Stand back", I'm taking a photograph", said Izzy, editor of the Valley Times and Red Plains Messenger. Izzy is the only Japanese-Australian I know and a real character. I could imagine him mentally composing headlines. "That's pretty good", he said, peeling off the cover from the instant print. And surely it was. The space thing looked like a rocky island set in the blue sea of the sky.

The Raddle boys drove up in their station wagon. They'd been duck shooting and Craig brought over his shot gun. He looked at the sergeant, who nodded.

Craig aimed at the rock and fired. We howled with pain and it's a wonder that somebody didn't lose an eye, for the shot came zinging back, singing like angry bees. I pulled a pellet out of my neck and Jean had to pick another out of my scalp later on.

"You'd best not do that again," said Sergeant O'Hara.

The tourist coach came back into town, its passengers goggle-eyed and straining to view the spacecraft. Japanese of all shapes, ages and sizes spilt onto the road with cameras whirring, flashing and clicking.

The morning wore on and as the heat of the sun's rays scorched down, we retreated to the shade of the pub verandah.

"I do believe there's people up there", said Father Ryan.

Sure enough, there were figures to be seen peering over the edge, like people do when they're looking down at the street from high buildings. They waved and we waved back.

A few minutes later there was a gasp of shock from the crowd. One of the figures fell from the space thing but gently decelerated to land in the main street, like abseiling with an invisible rope. It was very plainly a woman, for she stood there stark naked except for a circlet that held her golden hair in place and an elaborate necklet which hung down between her shapely breasts.

The crowd parted as she walked over to Elmer and inspected him by walking around him and opening his shirt to look at his very hairy chest, for Elmer was from a very hairy southern Italian strain of American. He looked pleased, embarrassed and aroused all at once, for the alien was very pretty but unaware of her nudity.

The woman approached Miss Prime and touched her breasts, as if to satisfy herself that they were real. Miss Prime began to have soundless hysterics.

Unconcerned, the alien marched into my pub. We followed her firm, bare buttocks as she casually looked about.

"She shouldn't be allowed around like that", said my Jean, confronting her. "I'll get her some clothes."

The alien said something like "Qwerty", and smiled at Jean, one hand gripping her necklet and the other fondling Jean's cotton batik shift that she'd bought in Bali and liked to wear in summer because it was cool. There was a moment of a sort of fuzziness and the alien was suddenly dressed in an identical cotton batik shift. We gasped in surprise.

The alien looked at me long and hard, peering into my eyes, which I suppose was only fair because I'd looked long and hard at her, but not especially at her eyes. It was only at that moment that I realised that her eyes were a deep blue and I felt uncomfortable.

"I am the anthropologist", she said and I noticed that she quite suddenly had acquired a long forked staff like the late Dr Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist, affected in her declining years. I'd seen her on television.

Qwerty gave us hell for the next three days. She was everywhere, prying into our lives. She opened bathroom doors, marched into bedrooms to see what was going on in intimate moments, upset both Father Ryan and the Reverend Jim by walking round their churches during service and asking questions. Father Ryan was particularly incensed to be asked how often he had sex and how many children had sprung from his loins. She checked out the hospital in detail and nearly caused a riot at the school, but fortunately it was the last day for the term, anyway. She spoke fluently with a sort of academic American accent and a hell of a vocabulary that often left us puzzled. Her questions were incessant and often embarrassing.

Sergeant O'Hara tried to restrain her only once and found himself gently propelled backwards by an invisible force that persisted for about ten seconds so that he was half a block away from her and

sitting in the water trough before he knew it.

We became used to her for she was otherwise friendly and obviously meant us no harm, although the loud noise of Meggsie's ghetto blaster seemed to annoy her mightily. It was suddenly whisked out of his hands to hang in the air about half a kilometre away, near the town dam, still playing.

We tried to to tell people about our visitor, but the telephones would not ring out. The Americans could not radio out from the Installation. No commercial travellers called into the pub. The Raddle boys reported that they couldn't drive far out of town because of heavy, impenetrable haze by the Ten Mile Bridge. The coachload of Japanese tourists booked into the pub and we were run off our feet.

On Christmas Eve at four o'clock, the aliens landed in force. The townsfolk watched goggle-eyed as alien men and women, all stark naked except for their necklets, drifted down from the craft and wandered through the town peering at us in a friendly fashion. It occurred to me that probably they regarded us as savages and we were the ones with the clothes! You know, until you're used to it, it's hard to look a naked person in the face.

A tall, very well developed, fair young man, marched into the bar and sat on a stool next to Izzy , touching him lightly on the shoulder. In a moment they were dressed alike in Izzy's tee shirt, baggy shorts and thong sandals. We laughed.

"G'day. I'm Qaz. I'd like a middy of beer", said the alien. I drew a beer for him and passed it across the counter.

"You have to pay for it", said Izzy. "Look". He pulled out his wallet to show some twenty dollar notes and passed one across to me.

"She'll be right, mate", said the alien and suddenly, he too, had an identical wallet full of notes. We laughed as he proffered a note. I looked at it. It was perfect. Izzy found that his credit cards had also been duplicated.

"No problem", said the alien, and there was another wallet then another and another on the counter and a pile of twenties.

The aliens clothed themselves simply by duplication. One shapely young chick took delight in trying out several lots. She duplicated Billy's old hat, flannel shirt, droopy dungarees and old boots and looked marvelously like something out of the chorus of Oliver. Another had the Plains Emporium in uproar as she walked up and down the racks changing her gear in a flicker as she touched each garment.

Their tolerance for the grog was not very good, especially with the hard stuff. They'd take a drink and sit back all sort of stunned, with dreamy expressions on their handsome faces.

What a joyous Christmas party we had! Townsfolk visited the spacecraft freely, but I was too busy so I promised myself a visit after Christmas. Apparently it was just a matter of walking around the edge of the spacecraft until an upbeam was found and up you went. On top it was like a green park with sort of classical buildings, although reports are surprisingly hazy. The town kids played in the upbeams and downbeams until it was too dark to see.

The aliens visited our homes and chatted freely, but seeing that they were mostly half stoned, we didn't learn very much about them excepting that they were basically happy souls and had travelled from a distant galaxy. We thought of lots of questions to ask them, afterwards.

When I showed some concern that with the extra population and not having had a weekly delivery, the grog could run out, I was treated to an awesome display of the alien's powers of duplication and we had cartons and kegs stacked everywhere.

We partied on throughout Christmas Day and into Christmas Night. It was as hot as hell, with the warm scent of sun-scorched eucalyptus in the air, excepting at Elmer's place, where he and Betty-Lou entertained the Americans and they had softly falling snow and icicles hanging from the windows, courtesy of their alien guests.

My recollections are vague as I had a little too much to drink. I remember Qwerty, the alien anthropologist, being everywhere. I can remember the joyous feeling of goodwill and peace on earth. I'm not sure whether I wandered into an upbeam or a downbeam or not.

I was awakened next morning by the sound of Meggsie's ghetto blaster playing in the deserted street. I struggled out of bed to see that the sky was blue and empty. The aliens had left.

Mid-morning there was a hell of a bushfire and we had to forget our hangovers and fight all day to save the town.

Folk rarely talk about the aliens these days, chiefly because outsiders make fun of us and the media really sent us up as dingalings. Izzy's photographs have been dismissed as shots of a rocky island in the blue sea, taken from an aircraft. Hank and Elmer and Bob have been replaced and gone back home to the US of A. Sergeant O'Hara was invited to take early retirement. Father Ryan was called back to the city to assist the bishop.

But I haven't had to buy grog for nearly a year, and there have been some puzzled federal policemen staying at my pub, as they've tried to sort out the mystery of scores of bank notes around the town, with identical numbers, but all apparently legitimate and genuine.

Sometimes I'm tempted to join Miss Prime's group that meets on moonlit nights on the common, to conjure back the aliens by dancing around in the nude and singing peculiar chants. They drive the local bankers crazy, for they insist on drawing out their savings to have handy to be duplicated, as mostly they were the standoffish types who didn't fraternise with the aliens and missed out on our new wealth and prosperity.

Miss Prime pesters me to let her have Qwerty's forked stick, which I keep above the bar, but I use it to amuse travellers with my story. People tell me that my alien story is famous across the country as the wildest yarn this side of the black stump, and I believe I even have a small reputation overseas, but especially in Japan.

And of course, anyone who's watched anthropologists on the television will tell you that they always come back a few years later for a follow-up study. I'm waiting for the day that Qwerty saunters into the bar again, motherless naked, with perhaps a streak of silver in her golden hair, to claim her staff and have another look at the savages.#

(THIS STORY WAS A SEMI-FINALIST IN THE "WRITERS OF THE FUTURE CONTEST", AND ACORDING TO A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF JUDGE, ALGIS BUDRYS, WAS FAVOURED BY HIM FOR THE FINALS BUT WAS NOT FAVOURED BY HIS COLLEAGUES. I HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN PLACING IT IN MAINSTREAM PUBLICATIONS. NOTE THE COOL INVENTION OF THE ALIENS' NAMES!

IT, TOO, WAS WRITTEN TO PLAY WITH THE IDEA THAT THE INTRUSION OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS WAS A PAIN TO THE SUBJECTS, SO I REVERSED THE SITUATION SOMEWHAT AND TRANSFERRED THE CUSTOM OF NUDITY FROM THE INFERIOR TO THE SUPERIOR.)

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## Articles old and new

### Nuts and Bolts:

#### Getting On-line

The internet has grown from a linkage of a few military and university computers in the United States to a worldwide network that is expanding in number and content daily. It forms a vast storehouse of information in text, pictures and clips on an equally vast array of subjects.

The nodes of the network are the internet service providers (ISPs), who have huge computer storage, banks of modems and a rented permanent telephone line or lines capable of taking many calls simultaneously. (They are rated in capacity in the same way as computers in kilobytes, megabytes, etc. My ISP proudly advertised recently that they had laid on another five megabytes.)

To join the internet, you must contract with a service provider (ISP) to allow you to use part of his or her permanent line on an occasional basis, when you seek to send or receive information to or from a distant site and to make use of part of his or her storage to carry your cache of information such as home page details and in-coming e-mail.

There are an amazing array of options and prices available from the ISPs, ranging from about \$10.00 per month for a simple e-mail account to about \$60.00 per month for a full graphic interface that allows you to surf the web. Some ISPs offer an hourly rate so that you pay, fairly dearly, for what you use. ISPs have had a difficult task in setting up in a new industry for which there were no precedents or useful analogies, so that it is understandable that there will be a wide range of prices and services.

Somewhere around \$30.00 - \$40.00 per month is a reasonable price to pay for general purposes, provided that you don't expect instant connection whenever you feel like it. In general, the more you pay, the less time you would expect to be kept waiting for a vacant modem slot. Conversely, from my limited experience, if you pay very little, this is exactly what you get, as a consortium of arts groups found to their cost when they signed up together for a cheap service that did not function.

The other important consideration is the availability of help. At the outset, you need some hours of help to set up and overcome problems presented by your ineptitude and the quaint language and assumptions of computer and software manual writers. (Rather like football commentators, they also have many names for the same thing. For instance, my user name became a userid without any bothersome clues pointing to the fact that the two meant the same and id meant user identification as in user-id rather than the logical use-rid!)

My first provider had an off-putting charge of \$2.00 per minute for real time consultation, but otherwise free consultation via e-mail, which could separate question and answer by twenty four hours! Neither was satisfactory as the first was too dear and the second meant that you had to be competent to frame questions, which is not very easy when you are floundering.

My latest server has a free help desk available during extended business hours, at no extra charge. I have not called them for a long time, but for a few weeks they were like intimate friends.

As with buying a horse or computer, the advice of trustworthy, knowledgeable friends is invaluable in choosing an ISP. They'll probably know the reputations of some of the various providers and whether they're competent to protect themselves and you against predatory hackers or are about to fall over through muddleheaded policies.

You can find out about most ISPs by simply contacting by telephone, mail or fax to have their brochure mailed. Better still, through a coffee shop computer or the machine of a knowledgeable friend, log on to their home page as a visitor to sample the style of what they have to offer as well as the substance. ISP web addresses may be found in the yellow pages or the computer section of newspapers.

When you have fixed on what you expect to do with the internet, try a month or two with a recommended ISP, before embarking on the economy of signing up for a year at the slightly cheaper annual rate.

Software does not present a problem. If your computer is modern, there will be adequate software provided with it. Otherwise, your service provider can provide you with free basic software, possibly with a small charge for disks or CD.

Most new home computers are packaged with the basic versions of either Microsoft Explorer or Netscape Communicator (or both). They are called browsers, because they allow you to search out what is available on the net, like a grazing animal. Browsing is a much more appropriate metaphor than surfing, that indicates a whole lot more purpose, control and direction than is often the case. Even for surfers, that be breakers yonder!

An e-mail is something like a fax that goes from a computer to the addressee's cache or storage area in his or her server. There it waits until log-on and request for new mail, whereupon it is delivered to the user's screen. An e-mail can be sent or read at any time. When replying, you can quote the original and zap it back in seconds. But don't expect to have voice, sound, photo or movie attachments unless you have paid for a full account with graphic interface. The cheaper accounts offer only plain text.

There is much to be gained from the internet, but be warned that a great deal of data has yet to be entered. It takes time to scan or type in material from the pre-electronic era. If, for instance, you require genealogical or demographic data, you will find vast gaps, and also the addresses of some eager beavers trying to work out a way of gaining a dollar from helping you to fill them. In text, you'll probably find headings rather than the actual material.

There is concern that internet pornography is rife, but I have not encountered it. Not even a mere tittle and certainly not a tit-bit. My computer is secondhand so that perhaps somebody removed a pornograph whatsit card from its innards! Of course, another reason could be that I have not consciously browsed in that direction!

To close on the main theme, try to sort out what you want from the internet and then shop around for the best service for the best price. It is well worth the effort.#

(THIS SHORT ARTICLE IS OBVIOUSLY PITCHED MORE TO THE BEGINNER)

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## BLIMPS AND BLIPS - GOVERNMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THE ARTS

(Imagine if you will, a timeless, panelled interior, real offices with grimy glass panels and clerks scratching away with dip pens at high wooden desks. The boardroom is sumptuously decorated with pictures of past war heroes and notable battles, dominated by the portrait of queen Victoria in her mature years. The chairs have cracked leather upholstery and there is a water jug and glasses on the polished wooden table. An ornate sideboard bears the silver and the port.

According to a press report, Nicholas Hasluck QC has been appointed to chair the Literature Board of the Australia Council. It is an excellent choice. Nicholas has a solid reputation as novelist, essayist and poet. Furthermore, his legal and judicial experience should be useful in overhauling the Board's evaluation process, which has not been without its critics.

I searched the Australia Council site for verification of this news item, without success. It is worth a visit, but you must be prepared to wait as the graphics materialise. As an observer of many thousands of animals in the wild, the quaint, rampant kangaroo logo perplexes me, as the posture is aggressive and suggests feinting for a rip-kick, which does not augur well for clients!

(CONSIDERTED CRITIQUES OF POLICIES ARE WELCOME HERE. ANON WHISTLEBLOWERS ARE ESPECIALLY WELCOME.)

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## Publishing News - the rise, fall, amalgamation and gossip about hard copy & electronic presses

Opinion - readers views and feedback, especially with a literary flavour.

What about some flaming arrows for editors or arts policy?

What's wrong with rhyming verse?

Are verbs as good as they used to be?

We'd love to have some views on the Writers Centre/Literature Officer Program of the Australia Council. Is it a boon to writers? Should it be extended? Is it right that funds should gradually be withdrawn? Or should it be scrapped in favour of other initiatives?

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## Contacts - URL's to visit on the net

Andrew and Miles Burke have a site which is a gateway to other useful links and contains a great deal of useful information at [lit.bam](http://lit.bam)

[Australian links](#) is a homely site with a lot of useful information.

[The Australia Council](#) has useful links to other arts agencies but be prepared to wait as graphics mount.

[The Ozlit site](#) is massively comprehensive, with a huge database of Australian writers, but it is very, very slow.

[Fremantle Arts Centre Press](#) has a clear and simple site which tells all you need to know without distracting bells and whistles.

Prolific and successful writer, [Sherry-Anne Jacobs](#), has a prize-winning web site which is well worth a look. It is a model of clarity with speedy graphics.

[Web Wombat](#) is a recommended search engine for Australia.

Inklings: newsletter for writers. This excellent Canadian site emphasises technical aspects of writing, especially targeting and marketing. It's worth a look at [inkspot.com/inklings/](http://inkspot.com/inklings/)

## Australian Writers Organisations On-line e-mail Addresses:

Australian Society of Authors <asauthors@peg.pegasus.oz.au>

Australian Writers Guild <awgsyd@ozemail.com.au>

Society of Women Writers (WA) <trudy@inet.net.au>

Fellowship of Australian Writers (WA writers centre) <fawwa@inet.net.au>

Peter Cowan Writers Centre (WA writers centre) <nwacowan@inet.net.au>

New South Wales Writers Centre <nswwc@ozemail.com.au>

Queensland Writers Centre <qldwriters@peg.apc.org>

South Australian Writers Centre <writers@eastend.com.au>

Victorian Writers Centre<writers@vicnet.net.au>

(Home Page URLs, if available, may often be found by re-jigging the e-mail address:  
http://www.(address after @)/~(address before @)/  
for example, pixpress@ iinet.net.au becomes http://www.iinet.net.au/~pixpress/)

## Contributors

(Published contributors are invited to contribute their details to this section.)

Helen Jean Hagemann, is a student of creative writing at Edith Cowan University as well as a writer.

Diane Beckingham is a well-known West Australian writer and teacher.

Jim Cornish is a writer of whimsical (and other) poems and co-author of a chapbook with Fran Sbrocchi, an accomplished and prolific writer and poet. They have recently returned from Canada.

Lloyd Davies is a prolific writer of short stories with several anthologies to his credit. Presently, he is in the enviable position of awaiting arrangements for the production of a film, which was to star Nigel Hawthorne, based on his excellent story, "Pastmaster"

Roland Leach is a prize-winning West Australian writer and teacher.  
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Patrick West teaches at Edith Cowan University. Recently he has been a writer in residence and also the judge of the FAWWA short story award.

## Advertisements.

### Brillig

edited by Roland Leach

Brillig is a brilliant little magazine for secondary students. In quality and sophistication, it displays work rivalling much to be found in adult literary magazines. The slithy toves produce two issues per year.

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Richard Polden

In October 1996, photographer Richard Polden set off on an extraordinary adventure. Together with an international crew of men and women, he sailed from Fremantle, Western Australia, bound for London aboard the magnificent Endeavour replica. Two

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FACP. Published in association with Sunday Times, Perth, on 18 March 1998

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Walter Vivian

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## Sudden Alchemy

The winning poems from the annual Tom Collins Poetry Prize have been compiled and published in this work.

\$24.95 from booksellers or FAWWA

## Dancing On The Freeway

By Ethel Webb Bundell (LMP - Aus \$15.00)

Ethel Webb Bundell spins a tale of heartbreak and despair, which may be too familiar for some in *Dancing On The Freeway*. The story centres around Vee, who is coming to terms with the tragic loss, two years earlier, of her husband and baby son. She finds a dangerous kind of solace in the arms of Grant, who was once a brilliant journalist, but is now reduced to a pathetic drunk.

The issue of women who love too much is explored throughout, as Vee gathers her strength to begin the long awaited journey back to reality. A place long since vacated by Grant, who is more or less, in constant hallucinatory state as the story progresses.

In most films, or any other medium which tries depicting alcoholism, the worst case scenario for a drunk is to have him or her (mostly Him) driving down the street, and having a fender bender with another vehicle. This person's alcohol problem is then amazingly cured by this incident, or a few harsh words from loved ones. Bundell therefore, strives to expose the side of alcoholism, unknown to many, a side which exemplifies how low "rock bottom" can be for sufferers of this disease. As she stated in the novel's introductory note, "I wrote this because, at the time, I felt the literature and

information about alcoholism was far too hopeful.

Extremely well written, Bundell's story gives the reader's heart a good tugging with some wry humour injected along the way.

Chi Tran in New Readers World Book Reviews.

E&OE. IN THIS CASE, ERRORS AND OMISSIONS EXPECTED. IF WRITERS DETECT THAT WE HAVE SINNED IN DISPLAYING THEIR WORK, THEY ARE INVITED TO E-MAIL CORRECTIONS, IN THE KINDEST POSSIBLE TERMS, AND CORRECTIONS WILL BE MADE FORTHWITH.

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