



Issue The Seventh, September, 1999.

CONTENTS:

[Editorial](#)

[Poetry - Virgin Verse and Verse From the Pros](#)

Fran Sbrocchi, Diane Beckingham, Walter Vivian, Roland Leach, John Kinsella, Shen, Kevin Gillam, Helen Hagemann

[Shorts - Old and New](#)

The Land of Smiles by Rosanne Dingli

The Flautist by Janet Woods

[Featured Writer/Reader](#)

New Literature Board members

[Best of the Box](#)

[Poet Laureate](#)

[Reviews](#)

[Articles old and new](#)

Electronic Publishing - What's It All About? by Sherry-Anne Jacobs (aka Anna Jacobs, Shannah Jay

Writers Protocol

[Words Worth](#)

[Blimps and Blips - Government for and Against the Arts](#)

Seeding Money- Walter Vivian

[Joker](#)

N.anon

[Contacts - URL's to visit on the net, etc.](#)

As PixelPapers is unfunded by any funding agency, we don't pay. A contributor's only reward is the showcasing of work to a growing, potentially worldwide audience. Work previously published in hard copy is welcome.

Western Australian Writers

Tribute

At 6.00 pm for 6. 30 pm on Friday, 1st October, the W.A. Writers Forum will honour three distinguished writers in a function at the Alexander Library lecture hall, courtesy of LISWA.

ALEC CHOATE, poet.

JACK DAVIS, playwright and poet.

TOM HUNGERFORD, writer and novelist

Please RSVP Alan Payne on 92071172 at AWG

Poet Laureate \$100.00 Millenium Competition

Pretend that you are the newly appointed Australian Poet Laureate. Choose a recent significant event in Australia, or since it is a royal sort of office, that foreign country that many old Australian's used to call home, and write a poem extolling or defending it in any style you like, with whatever spin seems appropriate. Monarchists and republicans are equally welcome to write.

The GST, Tim Fischer's retirement and the Collins Class Submarine are topics which beg some sound verse. The recent royal nuptials, or the preceding exposure, (in part) of Sophie Rhys-Jones in The Sun Newspaper, could also be tempting topics.

Send it before 31st October to PixelPapers for publication, so that readers may vote on it. Votes from readers, via e-mail, will be accepted for the favoured entry, and the \$100.00 will be awarded, at the discretion of the

management, to the most pleasing paen or whatever, and announced in the 1st January issue of PixelPapers 10.

Editorial

PixelPapers has a paradoxical problem. Although it continues to grow and has about as many readers as the average hard copy literary magazine, with potential for worldwide exposure, contributions are modest and I've had to commit the editorial sin of including my own poems and stories. This may be gratifying and I'm sure that I can manage to furnish enough material for two or three years, but it is not the purpose of the magazine. PixelPapers is for showcasing the work of writers, whether that of beginners or the re-publication on the internet of work previously published in hard copy by established writers.

Please keep those contributions coming in. Unlike hard copy magazines, we promise a decision within each two-month publication period, instead of yawning months and perhaps years!

This is the final, allegedly polished version of PixelPapers 7. My thanks to contributors. Please keep in mind that PixelPapers 8 will fill over the next seven weeks, so keep in touch. I'm looking forward to a spate of poet laureate entries and interesting poems and stories. Feedback is important, whether by letter or e-mail.

Writers are naturally concerned with honing their skills to have their work published. Part of this process is to work to acceptable standards of presentation, hence the re-publication of the Writers Protocol, which is somewhat dated, but useful as a starting point for discussion. When it was written, there was no general standard of presentation, nor a code of behaviour associated with the editorial process. Since then, whilst the standard of presentation has improved due to computer driven printers, there has been deterioration in the editorial process so that work is often unacknowledged or decisions on submissions not made for an unacceptable time after lodgement. It is noteworthy, that with one exception, the worst offenders have been the subsidised literary magazines.

There are also developments in the publication process, with smaller print runs or "boutique" publishing, partner publishing for poetry, and electronic developments such as e-publishing, as outlined in Sherry-Anne Jacobs' excellent article. A recent report that there are now expensive machines capable of printing and binding any book that is stored electronically, for the same price as a normally produced book, gives food for thought. Apparently the process is being pushed by the American Society of Authors. It means that

once scanned or loaded into a computer, books will always be in print, as the cost of setting up another edition, about six thousand dollars for a two hundred word novel, will be avoided.

The goods and services tax is an impending cloud on the horizon of the book publishing world, as it appears that books will be dearer, probably leading to fewer sales. During the lead up period before innovation of the tax, the rhetoric suggested that there would be offsets which would compensate, so that the situation would be much the same as previously obtained. Let us hope that such is the case.

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

Poetry - Virgin Verse and Verse From the Pros

Crystal duck with chrysanthemums

The duck has stewed
in rice wine, sliced ginger
and onion for almost
the entire afternoon -
there's no need to taste it,
it will be so tender. I arrange it
in a circle on
a serving plate
and pour broth with
gelatine over it.
The chrysanthemums
carefully dotted
around the glistening
duck skin already
seem to glow.
I sit on a stool expectantly
as dusk emerges,
bent over
a dish as though
flesh might
become transparent,
reveal its bones
to me, watching this duck
cool, awaiting
it's secret.

Shen

(FIRST PUBLISHED IN SIDEWALK 2.)

Gestures

I watch a deaf couple in a restaurant,
astonished at the economies they make of flirtation.
Watch them opening their hands, the supple
opening and closing of one fist into another,

fingers fluttering briefly against wrist
or palm - all to spell out just one word.
The play of a handful of words to and fro
that makes up the whole conversation.

And when they break out in a soundless grin
as she points out something on the menu,
connecting without need of comment, its as if
the mouth was only an instrument

to express joy, nothing more. Its her hands which
move assertively, pushing forward this body language
as if every sign were an opinion - and his hands
gracefully reply with seamless movemets,

you can tell he's a real charmer. So, later
in the evening, when I catch them staring into each
other's eyes and saying nothing, just holding hands
across the table, it seems possible that for once

it might be more than just a romantic gesture.

Shen

The Ascension Of Sheep

The sun has dragged
the fog away
and now the sheep
in sodden clothes may

fleece the farmer -
who warm by the fire
tallies heads and prices

and thinks about slaughter -

each soul taken upwards
from its fertile
body -- columns of mist
like pillars of a temple.

Come midday they'll
have dried right through
and follow the trail
down to the dam

where the water refills
the empty chamber
where the soul
could never feel secure.

John Kinsella

(FROM *THE SILO - A PASTORAL SYMPHONY* FACP1995)

Poem For Those At Wheatlands

You only realise
that the stars
over the low
fluorescent crops
are particular
to the frame
of Wheatlands,
that the canvas
stretched
against the salt
is a photo-
sensitive plate
that might take
generations to expose
(below, another waits!).
And that family
ashes
are the size
that will hold
souls, stars, and soil
in place.

John Kinsella

(FROM *THE SILO - A PASTORAL SYMPHONY* FACP1995)

accents

around the writing table,
American,
metallic shavings off the tongue,
Irish, tin-snipped, 'clod'
or 'cloud'? Canadian
curling 'curling'.
Kevin Gillam

queen of tomes

her that her books are too long to start with,
a birthday visit, rooms full

of word balloons,
moths fighting rubber for light,

her, queen of tomes, bride
of bibliography,

emotions on card index,
whispers of another life behind

that librarian bun living with Mum look,
engorging cake

with too few candles, pudgy flesh oozing

books too long to start with

Kevin Gillam

merlot

sip

from a blackberry moon

sediment reads like

yesterday

Kevin Gillam

girl friday

he went to a beach flat
every friday night
to be loved

by a girl named nightingale
she had said her mother
named all the sisters
after birds

but he saw nothing bird-like
about her
more like an older alice
in wonderland

she waited for him each friday
where she told him
of the dull necessities
the sipping tyrannies of afternoons
of how she rose each morning
swimming out to sea
for moments of heaving transformations

lust she said
fluttered egg-warm
a fragile melting point

on ascended clouds
where she returned
each friday
like a longing Undine
to her lover
holding him softly
inside her mouth

claiming her everlasting virginity
saying she was a mirror
that no man
could enter

Roland Leach

elliott road

Elliot road swept around
the back of the coast dune
between Scarborough & Trigg.
My uncle was stocky & tanned
always laughing & joking
calling me *his charlie-wooper*
boasted of how he took the back way home
drunk with his head out the window
as if this was the greatest freedom life offered.

I was eight and in the kitchen
the old fridge covered in stuck-on notes
when my father gasped
and bending over
with his face in his hands
saying *damn elliot road.*

My uncle was in hospital
having rolled his car
on a bend in elliot road.
Thrown from the car
he had broke his back
on a telegraph pole
my father saying
he would be better off dead
which he was three days later.

When we were older
it was the road

we took home to avoid police
the passengers always complaining
about me taking bends so slowly
as I imagined my uncle on the telegraph pole
like some broken Christ.

Roland Leach

ronny

ronny burnt it up real fast, the latenight blitzos, smacking out on red & greens,
rohypnol when it came through,

days lost on end, when waking was more a dream, like some street-wise
butterfly out of lao tzu,

his arms peppered in black holes as if he was a galactic nightmare sucking in
space in some dead universe,

& dad a doc who he stole from, who didn't like odd number sons & nose-rings,
who wondered what he did wrong,

thinking death as sharp, a knife point, a tear of shark teeth, (till his first son
sucked a exhaust pipe)

& ronny thought he wouldn't go that way, no way, he'd slug it out with life and
admitted himself to graylands

where he changed his name to kurt after the seattle grunge king, dyed his hair
blonde and played his music on headphones,

trying to find in his words a hidden secret, the password from the labyrinth, to
stop mid-song & emerge from a street sewer

and find spring all yellow & green, and when that didn't work he tried for a
complete transfusion in case it was in the blood,

but they wouldn't give it, saying, 'hey isn't your real name ronny', he shook his
head & said 'no, he's a dead man now',

as if he was the resurrection gone wrong, as if someone got the dates mixed, &
he was paying for it in someone else's skin,

taking to the streets again, shouting at cars & an acetylene sky 'Where did you
sleep last night?', looking as if he would cry,

and no one answering of course, till a hit one night took him up a wrong street,
and some people are just mean-sons-of-bitches,

not liking losers singing & asking where they had slept,

and his dad the doc nodding, knowing he had it coming, as if he had been right
all the time, knowing death as sharp as a knife,

even if it was just a piece of old metal off a building site filed to a point, stuck
inside ribs.

Roland Leach

disappearances

My uncle was obsessed with the past & mortality,
said he didn't want to live a small life,
so he kept travelling,
disappearing in his valiant with a jerry-can of petrol
till we only saw him twice a year.

There was a place inland from Jurien
where he said he wanted to die,
he didn't mind a drink and told us
that if we held a wine glass
to the side of sky
we could hear the ancient silences:
deep tribal sounds of dance,
of stamping feet grey with ash,
the cries of painted faces,
and sometimes if you listened hard,
the aching heaves of the universe.

'Nothing disappears', he said,
as if justifying his own vanishings,
'It is all out there in the stars',
and continued telling us that if you held
the trunk of a grass-tree,
old enough to be to be sprouting
when the first Europeans came,
you could imagine a place
before sailors of the Dutch East Indies
driven by westerlys in avalanched seas
collided clumsily into land
and declared it *found*.

He would lie on the side of a hill

staring up at a night sky
and then he knew that he would never die,
where things stretched to infinity
and a dead star was still being seen,
'now that's travelling', he would say
as if he was doing the same thing by lying on a hillside.

Roland Leach

Haiku-ing On The Murray

Green taffeta grass
mushroom-pearls appearing now
black velvet cows dance.

Fish net coils, tulle pink,
soon to have spangled mulltet
strewn in sequins.

Samphire saltmarsh scene
filters load of city cares
sifts outlook upward.

Diane Beckingham.

A Game of Singles

Season me in sauce for a little while
separate the fruit and add the sour cream
quantities of the necessary
such beauty in our needs
and I'm in the mood to straighten out
pepper and salt a sexual boy
find a bit of lost improvement
a fondling stampede
to make the sugar leak
explore, before I buy.

Damn! he's in bed drunk!

I hesitate to call again
kill the memory
separate the syrup of the night
there's room enough for strength
it's obvious he's full of bone
and rugby matches
exotic full-back

prefers a beer and a smoke.

Still, there's always Gordon
playing vintage with the cool
hair piece sticks, at least
impresses heaps of reliable tarts
after his nutty riches
Gordon, 'top of the bubbly set'
guest observer at the tennis match
paying \$90 for a seat
hissing dentures non-stop
to red heels in lips.

Pivotal healing is what I need
Saturn's influence rediscovering life
but Mercury is moving
and I'm not comfortable with that
I need to radiate
contemplate my potential
this lack of twenty two.

I must resist this sudden urge
of photocopy hunting
images of my younger self.

Hm! I'm not surprised!
Gordon rang and suggested more
than a game of sport.

Helen Hageman

(FROM KARRINYUP WRITING COLLECTION, KARRINYUP WRITERS, 1999.)

Defeat At The Summit

Climbing Mount Toolbrunnup
up up and up
a thousand metres
past burnt areas regrown
lizard, spider, flower, fern

crawling, coolly, around ledges
scrambling, sweaty, over scree
to reach the peak at midday
a small rock platform
the panorama to survey

Where, without sting or malice
ecstatic legions of insects

disputed our right to the space
harlequin bugs, ladybirds, flies, midges
a dozen species of motes and specks

flitted, floated, tracked and tickled
forcing us down to lunch
at lower, humbler levels
effectively dethroned.

Diane Beckingham.

Owlet Nightjar

Flushed from its cool cave
at noon, an owlet nightjar
dazed with light, clings
to a mulga branch.

Soft whiskers, round brown eyes
delicate tail flurried by the wind
- I want approach and stroke it, like pet.

I think it might even purr.

Diane Beckingham.

Saskatchewan

I walk at dawn across the hills
and wonder why they call them "Hollow hills"
For these hills have no caverns at their base
rich black earth encrusted over clay
they cling close to earth's ancient rock.

Pine edges the horizon. Voluptuous earth
supports a hundred kinds of seed
now harvest is over
fields lie dormant
waiting for winter.

I walk at dawn across the hills
for only these have been unchanging
through my years — April
the wide snow pack will melt
deep into the covering, wake

the seed of dandelion, crested
wheat grass and the endless
fibres of bearded barley.

I will seek out the tiny pansy faces
of wood violets, and find
a yellow orchid, lady slipper
a pale anemone will show and a snowdrop
dip fragile and tender above the last
cool pool. Later there will be
sturdier yellows and oranges here
We find the prairie lilies, mustard
and milkweed, blue bells that do not
ring but greet my coming and a hedge
of wild roses.

Centuries
of glacier ground rock and residue
of ten million trees save winter's bounty
for hot summer days. Rich country,
my country, my country
where there are
no hollow hills.

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

Monkey Mia

Monkey Mia is dolphins.
They follow the slow drumming
of fishing boats returning
to the crowded shore
near sacrificial tables.

In clear shallows two roll fondly,
almost dutifully,
delicately open mouths
for fresh fish offerings
from squeamish fingers.
Their eyes are round, alert.
Who senses affinity with whom
and why do they seem to smile?

Before this gentlest of mammals
we are the captives
with cameras at the ready.
A child squeals, a dog barks,
a red umbrella is unfurled -

they curve away gracefully
and are gone.

Having made my pilgrimage
I could turn now from this Mecca
but stay searching the sea-mirror
for the farewell flash of their tails
far out in no man's pool.

Diane Beckingham

St Patricks Burthen

*Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
stole a pig and away he run,
the pig was eat and Tom was beat,
and he went crying down the street.*

Thomas Shiels at age twenty one,
in County Limerick
on the third of March in 1837,
and the county of Londonderry
on that same day,
was sentenced to be transported
seven years, for stealing a pig.

Apart from the puzzle
of that inter-county pig,
pig-napped not on an Irish border
or from a farm straddling the same,
I wonder if it was *that* Tom Shiels,
in old age on his farm at Stawell,
sired Kit Shiels, my grandmother,
and her sister, little Maggie,
cutting them from the family
when they married protestants,
never to see parents or brothers
Thomas and Edward again?

If so, he should've been proud of Kit,
who kept alive the true faith,
catholicly christening my father, and,
stealing me from mother's sickbed
away to Sacred Heart in Highgate,
to be holily sprinkled and blessed,
so that now, when I hear that
orangeman kills a catholic man,
or catholic murders orangeman,

I am saddened equally.

Walter Vivian

(FROM *SAPPHO'S DELIGHT*, PIXELPRESS 1999.)

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

Shorts - old and new

The Land of Smiles

All my dreams used to be about places. With no need to wake from them, I voyaged. I voyaged because I knew even as I dreamed that I would wake and dissolve it all. I arrived and departed, I revisited and recognised, I explored.

When I was a boy, we lived close to an aqueduct, and I would climb the grassy slope with a cousin, who would pretend to be King of the Mountain when he got to the top. "When I grow up," he would say, "I am going to be a bandmaster." He waved a twig like a baton. "Did you hear me, Franz?"

I had similar ambitions, but I was not about to damn them with such foolish declarations. My superstition held me in check, kept me silent. I was not about to ruin things like Gregor. He ran back down the grassy slope, rolling down the last few yards, breathless, reckless like a child. And I, with all the sagacity and prudence of my eleven years, plodded slowly down the aqueduct side like an old man.

"Dust yourself off," I said to Gregor, impatient with his levity.

I was a solemn boy, wanting more than was available in Komarom. Wanting what was so near, and yet so far, across Hungary's border into Austria. Wanting more than just sheet music, more than just what the aunts hummed under their breath as they darned stockings.

Gregor was scornful of my caution, scornful of my superstition. I never told him secrets. Yet, when we grew up, he became a bookkeeper, pushing a pen, counting columns of figures. And I - I went on from the Prague Conservatorium to bigger and better things. I remember bowing on meeting Antonin Dvorak. I dared not lift my eyes to meet the famous composer's until a decent interval had passed. How could I presume such an intimacy? Yet I could sense something in the man. He liked me, encouraged me, and from him I learnt a circumspect kind of daring.

Ah - what heady days those were. I really did become a bandmaster, and thought of Gregor every time I waved my baton. Every time I took a bow or an encore I thought of Gregor rolling down the side of the aqueduct in the watery eastern European sun of our long long childhood. I conducted the band with a new verve, a new gusto in the last months of 1899, knowing that when the great celebrations started, when new century began, people all over Austria would be playing my music, my songs.

"I wonder where you get the inspiration", wrote my cousin Gregor from Tatabanya, where he was auditing the books of a textile factory. Was it possible he did not know it was Vienna itself? The people, the music - everywhere there was music - the laughter, the companionship and the tinkle of cake forks upon fine china. Was it possible his childhood passion had ebbed and died? Did he no longer hear the music?

I wrote and wrote, pushing Leon and Stein, librettists who understood and accepted that acknowledgment and applause - not to mention renown - always went to the composer. I pushed until they understood my pace, my peculiar kind of quiet ambition that flamed only when fanned by success. They wrote words - and such words! - but I concentrated on the waltzes.

"What is this?" They asked, perplexed. They had never seen such a plan for an operetta.

"Yes," I cried. "It is a new kind of operetta!" I ignored their looks of disbelief.

"But..!" they tried at once.

"And it will take the whole of Europe by storm."

And it did of course, and not only Europe. It was La Belle Epoque - a breathless, sensual, sumptuous time - and it was everywhere. *Die Lustige Widwe*, The Merry Widow, was heard all over the world, overwhelming not only its writers but our critics as well. No one could deny the notion worked.

Gregor wrote from Pecs - the furthest he ever travelled in his life - to congratulate me, and I am afraid I laughed, tossed his careful papers in the air and proceeded with what many thought was insanity. How dare I introduce music so like the can-can into operetta? Was I not afraid it would be a nine day wonder?

My response was tacit. Perhaps I had retained something of my youthful prudence. But I laughed again when the success of The Merry Widow burgeoned. It took only two years before it was lauded in places like Buenos Aires, where it was playing at five theatres at once. That, I thought, would be answer enough for any critic.

The hardest audience to please is an English audience. They are slow, discriminating consumers of all that is novel, groundbreaking, risky. But the Widow brought houses down there too. Audiences rose to their feet as one, roaring and begging for encores.

And I found my name was now a household word. Franz Lehar - everybody knew who I was. What would my father think? And my dear mother? What would the aunts, in their stiff black skirts, suppose about my operetta widow whose inspiration evolved from those silk stockings, that even fresh from the laundry basket, smelled of them? The rustle of taffeta, the swing of brocade, the flash of jewellery, the shimmer of sparkling shirt fronts and the small glimpse of onyx cuff links as dancers whirled around a floor. That was what I wrote in my music. It was all about the life of the dance floor, the fleeting romance, the perfidy and loyalty lost and gained at an elegant *the dansant*.

And what of Gregor? His letters dwindled then stopped altogether, even when I thought there was still a chance he would one day visit me in Vienna. But I was travelling, revelling in the way *Il Conte di Lussemburgo*, as they called my latest operetta, was doing

in Rome. People were humming snatches on the street. Ladies summoned all the patience and indulgence of their escorts by stopping me at cafes, longing to touch my arm or look into my eyes. I looked back, searching more for inspiration than for adulation. I saw in some of those eyes all I needed to write another piece. Like *The Land of Smiles*. What a show! What lightness and sweetness. I wrote the music of colour, the music of satin skirts swirling, of black hair and golden hair drawn up into daring chignons under tiaras sparkling in chandelier light.

And when I paused to think, I thought of my dreams. They were a muddle, a kaleidoscope of faces. Of mouths wide with smiles, of eyes sparkling, of the reflection of theatre lights upon the shiny back of a violin. I no longer dreamed of places.

A solemn pause is inevitable after months and months of social whirling and gallivanting. I gathered my wits one empty night, one dull and freezing night when the condensation of my own breath shrouded the window of my hotel room. It was 1932, and the world was a noisy place, full of my music and of laughter, of the tinkle of crockery and glasses, the chink of coins in a pocket. I stood alone for once in a hotel room in Paris, a fringed scarf of cream silk still thrown around my neck, creasing my bow tie. I could not see past the fog of my breath in the gelid room. Someone had omitted to light the fire, but I was patient, benign. I did not summon a valet. I did not move. I stood at the window in the dark and thought of my dreams.

Strange, but it was then I thought once more of Gregor, and his childish rolling down a grassy hill. I wished suddenly - but only for a brief moment - that I was a painter rather than a musician, and could capture on a canvas the aqueduct, the games of my childhood. I longed for dreams about plices, just places. Landscapes unpeopled by the crowds, the laughter, the strident gaiety. I longed for a stretch of moonlit sand, a damp-smelling cove of birches, a group of lichened crags, a meadow of corn waving in the wind, an endless sea. Perhaps, just as I had inherited Gregor's ambition by keeping quiet about it, he had similarly inherited mine. Perhaps he was at that very moment in some solitary place, alone, without a soul to accompany him. Alone on a hill overlooking a lonely place warming with his own presence.

That week, I started the outline of my most ambitious piece, *Giuditta*. With the package of new score paper, tied with string and inviting in its brown wrapper, came the letter that announced Gregor's death. His cabriolet was involved in a level crossing collision, and he was killed instantly, with the horse and the driver.

I tried to recall, counted the hours, tried to stem my grief with a slow calculation. Had he died while I stood alone at a cloudy hotel window, thinking of him as a child, rolling down the green slope of the aqueduct? But no - it was too romantic a notion. I was merely trying to mask my guilt. I had allowed my success to come between us, and had not even bothered to write or visit him for years. What was I? What sort of unfeeling success-bent monster had I become?

I threw myself into my work, ignoring all who summoned me to the glittering world outside. I heard *La Terra Dei Sorrisi* was again having a successful season in Milan, I heard that any number of sopranos and soubrettes were lining up to audition for the *Widow*. I heard *Gypsy Love* was once more showing in Vienna. People flocked to watch, to listen, to laugh at the musical comedy. My little attempts at satire were small

diversions, perhaps not even noticed. No matter: was it not the music I wanted them to take away, as they left the theatres in their evening clothes?

I shaved off my small moustache, then grew it again in the space of a fortnight. I wrote like one demented. I paced and hummed and played and sang. I consulted books, even the bible. And on impulse, confided in a woman. It is not important to say her name now - it is a small matter. It is a small matter.

I told her all about my new work, all about my great attempt at a serious opera, *Giuditta*. I told her too much. She laughed, smiled, and her rope of pearls clattered against a gold chain around her neck. It was then I remembered my own superstition. How silly, I thought to myself. That was only a childish thing I would do then, when I was young. But still I wondered. I had let on my plans, my ambitions, to another person. What was more, I treated it all lightly. What would happen?

It was two years later, 1934, long after I forgot the whole episode, that I was looking at a string of reviews clipped from the Vienna papers. The opera had not succeeded. They all expected yet another light musical comedy from me and I let my audiences down.

I stood in the wings at one of the last performances. I listened to the crowd. They did not think my opera was such a great idea, in spite of the polite applause.

"They are applauding the singers," not the work, I said to the Italian impresario.

He looked sideways at me, but remained silent.

"Next season..." I started to say.

He interrupted, smiling widely. "Next season, we'll put on the *Widow - La Vedova Allegra!* And everything will be all right again."

I left the theatre alone, an unusual thing for me, but I wanted solitude. I wanted peace. I wanted to put myself into a quiet frame of mind so that I would sleep deeply. And long. I wanted to return to dreaming of places again.

This fictionalised episode from the life of Franz Lehar was inspired by the picture, Scene from Musical Comedy 1967, by Jack Brack (The University of Western Australia art collection at the Lawrence Wilson Gallery, Nedlands). It was first published in a special edition of Westerly.

The Flautist

by Janet Woods

He caught the body on its first painful journey, and twisted painfully to take possession of

the subconscious.

Why this mother, so fragile and immature in emotion, so vulnerable and self abused by life?

Yet, she pushes me with her last ounce of determination, into a world of filth and darkness - as if the act of recreation will absolve her sins.

She wraps me in yesterday's newspaper and fumbles in her pocket for a fix. Our eyes meet and understand before she departs. She would love me if she could.

We will meet again.

Ben was ten when he knew for sure he was different.

He was on a camping trip with his two uncles. His big adventure, his mother had called it.

He lay in his sleeping bag, sometimes staring up at the wonder of the sky, at other times watching the flickering red of the camp fire.

The world without walls, awed him.

The sound of the sea was sibilant, and uneasy. In the day, the booming waves had crashed against the rocks, reaching for them when they fished.

He'd felt sorry for the fish he'd caught. Hook caught in its mouth, it had thrashed and struggled against the line. Water had sprayed from its vibrant body, iridescent against the sun, like a thousand small rainbows.

He'd taken his uncle's knife and cut it free, laughing as it jumped from his hands and with a flick of its tail, flipped backwards into the water.

His uncles hadn't laughed.

Within the periphery of light cast by the campfire, all was safe. Beyond, the unknown beckoned, cloaked in darkness.

He'd seen the hill that day, looming black against the setting sun. It had called to him in a silent voice.

He whimpered at the thought of the freedom it offered. He wasn't ready.

"Where's daddy?"

"Go to sleep," his uncle said.

He closed his eyes and snuggled into the womb of the bag, longing for his mother's arms around him - for the comfort of his father's voice telling him a story.

"Why did you invite the half-wit?"

"They wanted a break. Couldn't say no, could I?"

"S'pose not. All the same, he's a bloody nuisance. He might go wandering off into the bush."

"Aw, he's all right. He 'd better make the most of it, I reckon. He'll be going back once the baby arrives."

"Whose kid is he, anyway?"

"Some little drugged up slag dropped him in an alley. No wonder he's stupid."

"Shush, he might hear you."

"He won't understand, poor sod."

She appeared to him in his dream, the woman he'd known before time.

Standing in the darkness beyond the fire, her smile was as serene and as incandescent as moonlight.

When their eyes touched, his soul filled with music.

"What does half-wit mean?" he asked her.

"It mean you're special." The kiss she placed on his cheek comforted him. "Because you're special I'm going to give you a secret to keep."

Knowing he was special pleased him. He was the keeper of the secret. Locked away inside him was all the beauty and knowledge of the universe.

Sometimes, the doctors tried to trick him into telling, but he just smiled at them. They would know in their own good time.

"He's brain damaged. He'll never be like other kids."

Ben didn't want to be like other kids.

Baby was one of the other kids. She was small, and smiled at everyone, except him.

"She's so pretty ..." everyone said, and they'd glance sideways at him, "... not like poor old Ben."

He couldn't understand why baby cried when he smiled at her. One day he picked her up and cuddled her against him like father did. She smelled of baby powder, and milk, and her bottom was wet.

He fetched a nappy and laid her on the bed. Her legs kicked at him and he didn't know how to put the nappy on. He stared down at her bare bottom. She had a neat little slot where he had a tag.

He puzzled over it, then took out his tag and stared at it too. Was that why he was special?

Her crying gave him a headache. He frowned, and shook her, like his uncle had shaken him when he'd let the fish go back to the sea.

The screaming baby and his parent's shouting, frightened him. He hid in the darkness under his bed where none could see, as safe as a bird in a cage.

"He didn't understand what he was doing."

"We can't trust him."

"Poor Ben, he'll have to go."

He banged his aching head against the wall until the blood flowed.

The doctor shook his head. "A tendency towards violence, I'm afraid."

It was sad to leave them.

"Everything will be all right," the lady said to him that night. "You're going on a journey."

"And what will be at the end of the journey?"

"Everything will be as it should've been."

"I don't understand."

"Ben shouldn't have lived."

And he still didn't understand - until he remembered the hill.

The place for special people was a house in the country with bars on the windows. The garden had high walls and a vegetable patch.

There were yellow birds in the aviary in the garden. They jumped from one perch to another, but didn't have room to fly. Sometimes, they sat on their perches looking sad, stared at the sky and sang for their freedom.

Ben knew they'd be free one day. It was part of the secret he kept.

He slept in a cream painted dormitory with the other men, and the door was locked at night.

His tenth birthday was spent there. He had a cake with candles.

Everyone kissed him- especially John, who hurt him at night, and sometimes put his hands around his neck and squeezed until he couldn't breath.

He told John the story of the singing birds in the aviary, and how one day they'd be freed

and fly into the sky.

John said he'd sing too when he was free.

One day a doctor came to see him. He asked about the bruises on his neck, touched him where John had hurt him, then asked how he been injured.

John was taken for a ride in a car. He was singing when they drove him away, and had a big smile of freedom on his face.

Ben was happy for him, and thought about the birds in the aviary.

When he unlatched the cage, they flew up into the sky, their throats bursting with song. Tears slid down his face at the beauty of the sound.

When he was seventeen, he moved into a house with some other people.

There was a woman called Betty who taught them how to catch buses, to cook and to wash their clothes.

He learned to take his pills four times a day without being reminded. When Betty told everyone, they all clapped and made him feel proud.

He liked Betty, so he told her about the hill and his secret.

She smiled and misunderstood. "Don't expect too much from life, Ben, that way you won't be disappointed."

One day they all went into the city on the train. They ate sandwiches in the park, then lay on the grass and listened to an orchestra play.

His whole life changed from that moment on. Inside him, the knots tying his headache together began to unravel.

The music tasted of rain beating on the arid earth, it smelled of flowers and moss, and waterfalls gushing over rocks.

The notes from the flute were sharp and clear in his head.

She came to him, the woman.

First, they danced upon the grass, then floated with the rise and fall of sound cadences upon the currents of air.

In the distance he saw the hill, and knew that's where he had to go.

Far below, his body was stretched upon the grass asleep, the orchestra played and the silver instrument of the soloist sent notes of joy and freedom into his soul.

Ben couldn't stop laughing when he woke. The others laughed too and didn't know what they were laughing at.

Betty said they were all crazy, but she was laughing as well, her kind, blue eyes all crinkled up at the corners.

Then it started to rain and they all dashed under the stage to shelter.

It was then Ben saw it, lying on the edge of the stage. It felt smooth and cool under his stroking fingers.

Like magic, the sun came out to sparkle across it and a rainbow arched across the sky.

His hand closed over it.

When Ben saw the blue light flashing outside the bedroom window, he knew they'd come for him.

He remembered John and the bars on the window, the happiness of the singing birds he'd set free.

It had been wrong to steal the silver flute, but he hadn't been able to stop himself. He wouldn't give it back - not now, when he was nearly there.

Taking the instrument from under his mattress, he stuffed it up his jumper and headed out of the back door before anyone saw him.

The train took him into the city, and he started to walk towards the hill.

He walked for a night and a day. It was dark when he got there, the sky all purple and soft.

There was a steep path winding upwards. By the time he reached the top his legs ached, and he was panting like a dog in the sun.

They would be looking for him, but there was no going back. They would take the music from his soul before he could release it.

The hill wasn't as dark as he'd imagined it would be. It was shades of grey, and alive with rustling noises. The wind was cold against his body, but a flat rock had retained the heat of the day.

He stood in the middle of it and bowed. Tingling with excitement, he took the flute from its hiding place and placed it against his lips like the flautist in the orchestra had.

He knew exactly how to blow into it.

Notes rose into the air like shimmering crystal shards and shivered in the silence. The music poured from him.

He played a tune for her, the mother of the universe, and for himself - because he was different.

Afterwards, he lay on his back, looking into the star-crusted velvet sky to watch the world turn.

Below him, the city spread across the horizon, gaudy with light. He could see the alley where he'd been born. He remembered his birth, and the mother - little more than a child - who'd given him his body.

He hoped her soul had become a humming-bird.

He remembered a time before his birth - a time of oneness and light.

His heart began to pound against his chest, and a pulse beat in his head where the knot had untied.

He'd forgotten to take his pills, but it didn't matter. He didn't need them now.

When he was rested, he played again - a trill of silver birds to soar into the cool night sky with his secret.

She came for him and took his hand. They floated upon the music he'd made and smiled at each other, at one with the universe.

"Time to leave," she said.

He dropped the flute to earth next to Ben. There would be another flute to play when his time came.

(THIS STORY WAS COMMENDED IN A SWW BRONZE QUILL COMPETITION.)

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

Featured Writer/Reader

The New Literature Board

Last issue, we featured the chairman, Nicholas Hasluck. We now feature two new board members, recent appointees, Connie Gregory and Philip Ayres and continuing member, Sue Gough.

Connie Gregory is a freelance writer and editor, now mainly working in the corporate sector. She returned to Melbourne over three years ago after spending thirteen years in Australia's Northern Territory where she was head of public relations at the

Northern Territory University (NTU), and later head of marketing and public relations at the Department of Mines and Energy. She has written and edited a large number of corporate publications and feature articles.

She shared the Age short story award in 1983 and has since written short stories, poetry, reviews and articles, many of which appeared in Northern Perspective and other Northern Territory publications. She was editor of Northern Perspective (1988 and 1999) and a board member (1988-1994). She was a board member of NTU press (1988-1990), and a board member of Radio Station 8TOPFM (1991-1995). She chaired the Jessie Litchfield Award for Literature (1990-1994) when it returned to Darwin from Melbourne.

Examples of her short stories have appeared in anthologies, including: Arafura (ed. Tony Scanlon, DIT Press 1986), Storyteller (ed. Ann Granat, Brooks Waterloo, 1987); Life Beyond the Louvres (NT Writers Coop 1989); North of the Ten Commandments (Ed. David Headon, Stodder & Houghton 1991); She's a Train and She's Dangerous (Literary Mouse Press, 1994).

In Darwin she represented the ASA (1989-1995) and International Pen. She ran a literary program on radio for several years, and was involved in the promotion of literature, writing workshops, literary events management, and was a founding member of the NT literary awards. She took a special interest in the development of the Arts scene in Darwin, supporting and promoting visiting writers and artists in residence, the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, the Darwin Chorale, the International Guitar Festival, fine art and theatre, writing extensively on these topics for the local and national market, as well as writing on Greek culture for the annual Glenti festival in Darwin.

Having left the magic of the tropics and the vibrant NT arts scene behind her, she was resigned to staying in the corporate field in Melbourne (well, it does pay very well!), but is more than happy to re-enter the literary scene and humbly work alongside the distinguished people who make up the Literature Fund.

Philip Ayres (b. 1944) is Associate Professor of English Literature at Monash University. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (London). His fields of research are Australian biography and eighteenth-century England. In the former field he is the author of MAWSON: A LIFE (Melbourne University Press / Miegunyah numbered series, 27, Melbourne, 1999) and MALCOLM FRASER: A BIOGRAPHY (Heinemann, 1987). In the eighteenth-century area he has published a number of books with Clarendon Press (Oxford), and Cambridge University Press (Cambridge), most recently CLASSICAL CULTURE & THE IDEA OF ROME IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND (CUP, Cambridge, 1997) and his two-volume edition of the works of the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999). He plans to continue with a series of major Australian biographies, and is currently working on a biography of Sir Owen Dixon, Australia's greatest judge, Ambassador to the United States (1942-44), and mediator between India and Pakistan over Kashmir (1950).

To colleagues who ask him why he doesn't write books about literature any more, he replies, "Biography is a literary form". He sees his contribution to the Literature Board in the area of non-fiction.

Continuing Members:

Sue Gough came to Australia in 1962 as a 'ten pound migrant'. She worked in journalism, advertising, counselling and educational publishing before becoming a theatre critic and author. Her theatre criticism appeared in *The Australian* and *The Bulletin* over thirteen years. *A Long Way to Tipperary* was her first young adult novel and was the Children's Book Council's Honour Book in 1993. This was followed by *Wyrd*, which was chosen by the CBC as a 'notable book'. Her most recent publication, *Here Comes the Night* was described in the *Australian Book Review* as "a book of great importance in contemporary Australia".

As well as assessing playscripts for the Queensland Theatre Company, Sue regularly works as a writer in residence at both primary and secondary schools, is a mentor for the Australian Society of Authors and a manuscript assessor for the Queensland Writer's centre. In the past Sue has chaired the Brisbane Writer's Festival, and was one of the writers selected to join the famous Queensland Writers' Train of 1992. Currently she is serving her second term on the board of the State Library of Queensland and is a judge of the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, the State Library Young Writer's Award and the national Nestle Write Around Australia competition.

Western Australian Writers will be interested to learn that two writers, Chris Mcleod and Heather Grace, have been appointed to the Arts Panel of the Department for the Arts in Western Australia.

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

Best of the Literary Box

Station Call Signs.

ABC seems to have a new video clip and continues with the others, ad nauseum, sometimes running the lot together. Ugh! I have noticed, perforce, that the children's programmes feature a peculiar creature with three buttocks, that leave the imprint of the squiggle in the sand. Ho hum.

SBS carries on and on and on.

The Irish Empire

This series is not literary, although it draws on writers of all sorts, including locals Thomas Kenneally, Veronica Brady and Gerald Henderson, to name a few, to talk about the Irish diaspora and other matters. It has been fairly boring and repetitive but with some sparks of interest. Probably there was enough material for one programme or perhaps two, but it seemed to go on and on like an Irish joke.

I hasten to establish my 25% qualification to comment critically on matters Irish.

Global Village

Global Village on SBS on week nights at 6.00 pm, continues to charm, although it is in repeat mode.

It is highly recommended.

Pride and Prejudice

ABC's re-run of Jane Austen's masterwork has finished. It is one of the best literary adaptations for the screen that I can recall and has every right to be classed as a television masterwork. My only concern was the casting of Susannah Harker as Jane. Although she is good looking, she certainly cannot claim to be the fair beauty expected from reading about Jane in the book, but she grows on you. It was worth seeing again, not only for the wonderful characterisations, but also for the interplay of eyes to convey information, replacing large passages of prose in the book.

I will watch it again when the inevitable re-run comes to the screen. The writer who adapted the work, whose name I failed to note, has done a superb job.

Barchester Chronicles

This is a re-run of a marvellously acted and presented dramatisation from Trollope's novels with script by Alan Plater and directed by David Giles. A watchable and almost flawless piece of television.

Great Expectations

The dramatisation of Dickens's dreary but memorable work was somewhat too free for my liking, with Old Orlick almost claiming a starring role and a youngish Miss Havesham played by Charlotte Rampling, uncharacteristically fully garbed. Its upbeat ending contrasts oddly with the despair of the original.

I look forward to reading the book that this piece of television inspires.

Poet Laureate.

Andrew Motion is poet laureate of the United Kingdom, and the talented and articulate Robert Pinsky is poet laureate of the United States of America.

Will Australia have a poet laureate? Should Australia have one? Who will it be? Will Les Murray get the geurnsey? For possible elucidation, read on.

Contestants should take comfort in the fact that although poets laureate are versifiers of the highest quality, their commissioned verse for special occasions is rarely memorable

and probably best forgotten.

Jim Cornish leads off with the first of an expected deluge of entries to be featured in PixelPapers 8.

Shortcuts

or

The Lamb Shall lay down the Law to the Lion

There was mourning in the nation for word had got around
that Clint had dropped the axe on Aussie lamb.

He'd cut the export quota causing woe and consternation
and he'd done the dirty deed for Uncle Sam.

Our Prime Minister was angry and with righteous indignation
he said "Oh stuff that bugger Bill."

He said "I'll go and see him and I'll put him in the portrait
and I'll let him know he can't fleece us like that.

I'm going to beard the lion in his den.

I'm going to fly to Washington and then

He'll find he can't do wee-wees on the Aussies and the Kiwis."
and he donned his very best Akubra hat.

Then with his rod and his staff to comfort him, he went
up the hill to the antipodes in Japan to see their p.m. in the a.m.
(before going to the U.S.) to say hello and have a friendly chat.

When John arrived in Washington Andrew was there to
greet him. He ran a barbeque and he'd rounded up some friends.

Al was there and Maddy and all the usual suspects
but none of them was there to make amends.

Although Andy's ex-Miss Texas would have liked to break their
nexus and Peacock was quite proud of her you bet.

Then John went to the White House and he said "Is this the right
house? I've come to see the President. I'm Howard."

And they said "the President's busy; he'll see you in an hour.

Would you care to take a seat here in the hall."

While he waited nearly napping, suddenly there came a rapping
as of someone gently tapping on his shoulder. "I'm a visitor"
he muttered. " Only this and nothing more."

"It's the President" they uttered "He can let you have ten minutes.
He's got a haircut booked for half past four."

"Look here Bill" said tough John Howard in a terrible
threatening voice. "Don't think you've got us cowed; you know our
best lamb cuts are extra choice. You'll find you can't do without"
But to show he'd lots of clout, Bill the lion began to roar
and he soon pinned poor old Johnno to the floor

with a series of short lion chops, saying
"We don't care a hill of beans. We'll use U.S. lamb in our
butcher shops though it's tough as the U.S Marines."

"Well what about free trade?" said Johnno
"Don't we have a deal made?" and Clint said
"Don't make such a fuss. You know we're only dedicated to
free trade as long as it's free for us."

So Clinton gave him the bum's rush saying " Frankly, my dear
John I don't give a damn. We can't do a deal that's a fact."
and showed him the tradesman's entrance
and said "Go forth and subtract"
and John said "Bah!!" but he went out like a lamb.

Jim Cornish (Laureate Aspirant)

Metamorphosis

Before we try to metamorphosise,
May I remind, with political veracity,
that our heritage,
the monarchy
is so named
as to honour
one Australian butterfly
emerged from cocoon to glory
without a single alteration
to its constitution.

Long live the Monarch.

Marlene Marburg

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

Reviews

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

Articles old and new

Electronic Publishing - What's It All About?

by Sherry-Anne Jacobs (aka Anna Jacobs, Shannah Jay)

Big things are happening in electronic publishing, but mostly in America. There are quite a few e-publishers producing e-books for sale on the Internet now and even Diana Gabaldon has a novella for sale with one e-publisher.

In this article, I'll answer the questions I'm most commonly asked about e-publishing - but if you have any more questions that I haven't answered, do send them to our editor, Wal, and we'll do any follow-up he deems worthwhile.

What do you mean by electronic publishing?

A book is put up for sale on the Internet at the e-publisher's web site/home page. You can buy a book either by e-mail download (it will arrive within 24 hours usually) or you can purchase it on disk, which will take longer, according to snail mail and where you live on the planet. The process of publication is not much different from paper publication. The book has been edited, provided with a cover, blurb and bio of the author, and you can read a sample from it on the web site. When you purchase you read the book on your computer or you can print it out. The price is much less than that of a paper book, about \$3.50 - \$5.00 US.

What is wrong with paper books?

Nothing is wrong with paper books, but perhaps e-books will complement paper books. There are times when an e-book can definitely be more convenient. For instance, I went on a trip in 1998 which included three weeks in a tiny Irish town with no bookshops, and we were living in the house of people who didn't own any books at all(!). I knew this in advance and carried along a pile of paperbacks to read. I also took along three e-books on my laptop, and the comforting knowledge that I could always download more e-books from the Internet if I needed them. (Our non-reading hosts were on the Net, at least.)

Other useful reasons for using e-books are:

sight impairment - you can increase the font size to whatever suits your eyesight

working in a quiet reception area where you can read on your computer, since you look busy, but you can't read a paperback as it looks bad to customers. Bosses do allow some staff to do this, honest!

students carrying heavy bags to and from school - some US school districts are already looking into having their students purchase e-book readers and loading them with the locally produced curriculum books

physical impairment or illness - you can't get to the shops, but you can get on the Internet

a wish to preserve trees - how many paper books do you actually keep?

a way of publishing minority books which just don't justify a print run, but which some people would love to buy

living overseas in a non-English-speaking country where you can't easily buy books in your own language.

These are just a few of the reasons put forward now - but who knows what will happen as time passes? Remember, the present generation of children are growing up with computers and may find them more natural to read on than paper books.

What are these e-book reading gadgets I've heard of?

There are several e-book readers on the market already, a bit like walkmans, but for reading books on. These are first generation technology and some started out quite expensive eg \$500+ but have already gone down to \$300 or so. The next generations of e-book readers may become as cheap and common as walkmans and faxes are now. When technology is convenient and useful, it is easily accepted.

Bill Gates has pledged that Microsoft will work on software that will set industry standards for fonts, technology and readability. Remember the video battles of Beta and VHS? Mr Gates seems to think they're here to stay.

Several Internet friends of mine were among those chosen to trial the Rocketbook reader by Nuvomedia. They were unanimous in thinking it was wonderful and not wanting to give it back. It was a hardback book-sized gadget, with a page-sized screen and you pressed a button to turn the page. As I've said before, you could increase the size of the font if that was more comfortable. The gadget could either plug in with an adaptor for the voltage, or you could use battery power. It had a backlit screen for reading in the dark - they were ecstatic at that, and so would I be. (Have you ever tried to read in a dimly lit motel room with no lamp nearby?) You could load about 10 books into the gadget, but the talk is of gadgets which will carry 100+ books. How would you like to buy your romances each month by taking your e-book reader to the store and loading it with the books you want? Or even easier, doing it by phone or by Internet? I don't know anyone who keeps all the books they read.

At first you had to buy your books from the manufacturer and they could only be read on your own coded reader. You could lend the gadget to a friend, but you couldn't lend a book. However, things have changed due to public demand and now you can load other books on your gadget.

To add to that, publishers in the US are now able to offer one-off printing, ie you can order an out of print paper book from a local designated printer, and have it printed off specially for you on this hugely expensive machine. So if an e-book was a keeper then you could order yourself a paper copy.

What sort of books are now available as e-books?

The e-publishers are producing a wide range of books. I've had eight accepted for publication so far. Two are reprints of out of print novels, one SF, one regency romance.

Two are how-to books for writers, PLOTTING AND EDITING and AN INTRODUCTION TO ROMANCE WRITING. Three are originals - a young adults fantasy saga, THE SWORD OF AZARAY, a historical romance that breaks the rules, and a short contemporary romance A SUITABLE BRIDE. Finally, there's a collection of short SF/F stories for young adults.

E-publishers are not afraid to publish books that are different, so hopefully they'll provide an alternative to the babies, brides, cowboys, amnesia romances that are flooding our markets. One publisher is to produce a collection of poetry by a major American poet. There are university text books for small markets. Indeed, there seems to be just about everything.

Some major publishers in the US are now making their normal offerings of books available electronically as well as in paper, but they charge more than the e-publishers do and they pay lower royalties to authors - though they'll probably sell more copies. It didn't take the giants long to join in the race towards new methods of selling, did it?

What do e-published authors get in payment?

I'm not going to talk in actual figures, but they're not nearly as big as paper sales - yet. However, they are slowly increasing as people grow more used to e-books. None of the e-publishers that I know about give advances, but they do pay higher royalties eg 30%+ and they pay them quarterly. Most e-publishers buy the rights to publish books for a year, then renew the contract. There is no holding back royalties for 18 months in case of book returns as paper publishers do.

Although e-books don't yet sell in the numbers that paper books do, they can stay in print for longer, so it is not a question of being on the shelves for a month, as romances are, or a year or two, as mainstream novels often are, but of being available for as long as the e-publisher or author cares to offer them - and people care to buy them. And I've seen authors take the same book from one e-publisher to another.

How do I find out more?

There's only one way - go and check for yourselves on the Internet. The best site to go to is that run by EPIC - the Electronically Published Internet Connection, an association for authors, either paper or e-published. You'll find the site at:

<http://www.eclectics.com/epic>

If you click on links, you'll find a variety of information and links to various electronic publishers, the Association of Electronic Publishers, Writers Associations, producers of e-book readers and miscellaneous other sites, as well as articles about e-books.

If you go to my web site, you'll find links to my e-books and sample first chapters to see if you fancy reading them:

<http://www.iinet.net.au/~jacobses>

I hope you do!

My e-publishers are:

New Concepts Publishing <http://www.newconceptspublishing.com/envoy.html>

ENVOY (SF thriller/romance), THE SWORD OF AZARAY (YA fantasy saga)
WORLDS BEYOND (coming in a few months, YA collection of short SF/F stories)
Hard Shell Word Factory <http://www.hardshell.com/personsrank.html>
PERSONS OF RANK (historical romance)
Fiction Works <http://www.fictionworks.com>
PLOTING AND EDITING (how-to book for writers)
Diskus <http://www.diskuspublishing.com/suitable.html>
A SUITABLE BRIDE (contemporary romance)

Go forth and enjoy your new experience!

WRITERS PROTOCOL.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO 1

ISSN

The writers protocol was written as a guide to inform writers and their publishers of some reasonable expectations and standards of behaviour. It was taken up nationally and with some enthusiasm by the federal council of the Fellowship of Australian Writers. There were some problems with the section about competitions so that a member was delegated to take it away for re-drafting, but it was never brought back, as the national council dissolved.

I reprint it here for possible use by writers organisations.

The aim of the FAW PROTOCOL is to act as a guide for writers and the people with whom they deal in seeking to have their work published. It has no legal force excepting where it has been formally included in publishing or competition rules, but sets a standard for the parties to adopt. If an editor or competition host advises that he or she abides by the FAW PROTOCOL, then a whole lot of meaning about procedure, safeguards, rights and payments is conveyed to contributors in an economical way.

If advertised competitions in FAW newsletters used and cited it, two postings per entrant would be saved and competition secretaries would be spared extra work and photocopying.

COMMERCIAL PRINT PUBLICATION PROTOCOL FOR ARTICLES AND SHORT FICTION.

A WRITER SHALL:

Submit the MS double or one and a half spaced and clearly typed or printed on one side only of A4 sheets with a 3cm left margin and each page numbered and titled. An approximate word count is helpful and availability on disk may also be a selling feature. Some word processors give an accurate word count. The work should be clear, neat and clean.

Attach a self-addressed, reply paid or stamped envelope of sufficient size if you wish to have your MS or an advice note returned.

Clearly indicate the status of the MS, whether it has been previously published or is part of a multiple submission. Published in this context, means broadcast or printed in such a way that it compromises or could compromise the market value of the publication.

Clearly state what is being offered: e.g. first publishing for a given state or the country as a whole or for an open market, syndicated publication, etc.

State what you expect to receive, whether it is ruling rates, if the publication's policy is known, or your own estimate of value.

THE EDITOR/PUBLISHER SHALL:

Indicate acceptance or rejection within two months. If a multiple submission MS is accepted, acceptance must be faxed or telephoned before publication, to avoid duplication.

Pay for accepted MS within sixty days of acceptance. (Sadly, most pay at the end of the month following publication.)

Return rejected MS or advice note in the envelope provided.

Publish the MS within twelve months of payment, otherwise any rights to publish lapse and the writer is free not only to keep the fee but also to submit the MS for publication elsewhere for another fee. (The original fee becomes a "kill" fee.)

COMMERCIAL PRINT PUBLICATION PROTOCOL FOR POETRY.

A WRITER SHALL:

Submit the MS clearly typed or printed on one side only of A4 sheets with at least a 3cm left margin and each page numbered and titled. The work should be clear, neat and clean. It should be laid out in the desired format as far as possible and it is not necessary to double space unless this is part of the display as poetry content is not edited.

Attach a self-addressed, reply paid or stamped envelope of sufficient size if you wish to have your MS or an advice note returned.

Clearly indicate the status of the MS, whether it has been previously published or is part of a multiple submission. Published in this context, means broadcast or printed in such a way that it compromises or could compromise the market value of the publication.

Clearly state what is being offered: e.g. first publishing for a given state or the country as a whole or for an open market, syndicated publication, etc.

State what you expect to receive, whether it is ruling rates, if the publication's policy is known, or your own estimate of value.

THE EDITOR/PUBLISHER SHALL:

Indicate acceptance or rejection within two months. If a multiple submission MS is accepted, acceptance must be faxed or telephoned before publication, to avoid duplication.

Pay for accepted MS within sixty days of acceptance. (Sadly, most pay at the end of the month following publication.)

Return rejected MS or advice note in the envelope provided.

Publish the MS using the writer's preferred format, within twelve months of payment, otherwise any rights to publish lapse and the writer is free not only to keep the fee but also to submit the MS for publication elsewhere for another fee. (The original fee becomes a "kill" fee.)

COMMERCIAL PRINT PUBLICATION PROTOCOL FOR NOVELS, BOOKS, AND OTHER MAJOR WORKS.

A WRITER SHALL:

Submit the MS double or one and a half spaced and clearly typed or printed on one side only of A4 sheets with a 3cm left margin and each page numbered and titled. An approximate word count is helpful and availability on disk may also be a selling feature. Most word processors give an accurate word count. The work should be clear, neat and clean and flat bound or boxed for ease of handling.

Attach a self-addressed, reply paid or stamped envelope or container of sufficient size to allow the return of your MS. Vouchers should be enclosed for return mailing by overseas publishers.

Clearly indicate the status of the MS, whether it has been previously published or is part of a multiple submission. Published in this context, means broadcast or printed in such a way that it compromises or could compromise the market value of the publication.

THE EDITOR/AGENT/PUBLISHER SHALL:

Acknowledge receipt by return mail. Report on status within two months and monthly thereafter.

Return rejected MS in the envelope provided.

Offer a written contract, with a suitable advance, when work is chosen.

Publish the MS within two years, otherwise any rights to publish lapse and the writer is free not only to keep any advances but also to submit the MS for publication elsewhere.

COMPETITIONS PROTOCOL FOR ARTICLES, SHORT STORIES AND POETRY.

A writer's aim is to present work as far as possible in a finished, attractive form, especially for poetry. Providing generous space for editorial notes is not really necessary

as the work is to be read and judged.

A WRITER SHALL:

Submit the MS clearly typed or printed on one side only of A4 sheets with a 3cm left margin and each page numbered and titled. There should be an approximate word count. A pen name should be used and the writer's name should not appear on the work. The competition fee, if any, should be attached. (FAW is not keen on fees but accepts that up to \$2.00 per entry is reasonable to support a competition.)

Submit a separate envelope, marked on the outside with the name of the competition, title of the MS and your pen name, only. Inside there should be a separate sheet with real name, address and telephone number plus a self-addressed, reply paid or stamped envelope for results, if required.

MSS must not have been published, which means broadcast, read or printed in such a way that the judging of the competition is compromised or could be compromised. It would not matter, for instance, if the judge is from out of town, if the MS had been read aloud at a local meeting.

THE COMPETITION SECRETARY SHALL:

Reject outright any MSS that do not fit the competition criteria, such as chosen theme or size.

Make public the judge's awards within three months of the competition closure.

Supply the result sheet in the envelope provided, if any.

Arrange to publish the winning MS/MSS in the competition host's publication or anthology within twelve months, otherwise any rights to publish lapse and the writer is free to submit the MS for publication elsewhere.

Competition hosts may gain limited publication rights to the MS they have paid for by way of prizes instead of the normal commercial rates. They do not have any right to other MSS unless there is separate negotiation.

Writers are ill advised to enter the few competitions which virtually require them to sign away the rights to their own work for nothing.

NOTES

The AJA freelance rate of payment is 46.5c per word. Beginning writers can hardly expect this much. I have sold work at 25c per word for first publication and \$50.00 for a poem. Writers must decide for themselves on what constitutes fair payment for effort in terms of cash or prestige.

Does multiple submission of MSS work? I'm inclined to think that unless you are one of the biggies in the business, it could be the kiss of death for your MS.

If you are lucky enough to be commissioned to write an article or to rewrite a story, get the offer in writing. As they often say in the AWG journal when talking about scripts, oral

contracts are not worth the paper they're printed on!

Submission by disk is not widespread here, but apparently common in the USA. It could be attractive to editors as it avoids tiresome keying.#

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

Words Worth

Family Name. As a child it is fascinating to find your name in some noble or heroic context. I can remember being impressed by the fact that there were peers, baronets and knights bearing the name of Vivian and two of them even managed to marry Plantagenet princesses. Overweening pride was somewhat marred by a news item about a Vivian peer, apparently shot painfully in a private area in a domestic dispute, when climbing over a bedroom window sill!

Pride about noble connections should be tempered by the fact that sometimes servants acquired the family name of their employers! Nevertheless, given common promiscuity with servants, this may not have necessarily interrupted bloodlines! Doubtless, every name has a noteworthy or noble connection.

Back to Back. This Americanism is creeping in to describe consecutive events, or again and again, such as a football team winning back to back or consecutive matches. Origin is unknown and unclear and there are some obvious shortcomings. Consider:- The board had back to back meetings about the new policy. The lovers embraced, back to back.

Criteria, Criterion. Criteria, is the plural of criterion, which is a standard or a benchmark by which something is judged. It is commonly used in both singular and plural cases in much the same way as data is often used for datum. There is a good case for domesticating foreign words so that the singular becomes a plural with the addition of a final "s" or "es". For instance, radiuses is a simpler plural of radius than radii.

Such matters would be something upon which an Australian Academy of Letters could pronounce.

Chef. This little word from the French, means chief or head, as in chef de cuisine or head of the kitchen, translating better as head cook. We tend to use it instead of "cook", which is more descriptive, although it should be noted that some of the better television presenters of cooking programs now describe themselves simply as cooks. There is a slight degree of absurdity in all cooks being classed as chefs, for if all are chiefs, there is almost a complete lack of indians! It is another case of the adjective being used instead of the noun, as in the principal of a school being described as the head.

There is some humour in a recent newspaper caption about, "The head chef"! Perhaps the battle has been lost and we will soon read of cheffing in the kitchen and meals being well cheffed! Snobbery about the use of French in the food industry is also leading to some funny uses and permutations of maitre d'/maitre de.

Meld. I was shocked when checking my use of this word, that in the English dictionaries it is listed as a term from card playing, meaning to declare. Commonly, "meld" is used in the sense of blending or mixing, and fortunately, we are supported in this by American dictionaries and our own Macquarie. Its roots are in "melled", to mingle, to be found in older English usage. It is related to the mell in pell mell, a robust game, which later was used to describe an area of London devoted to playing the game, becoming Pall Mall, and begat our use of the word, "mall" as in shopping mall.

Banks. Banks are often devious, slimy, treacherous, not to be trusted, mucky and rarely straight. I refer, of course, to the banks of rivers such as the Murray, the Murrumbidgee and the Swan, although if the managers of financial institutions feel offended and wish to turn this magazine towards positive comments about them, we are open to offers. *Bank* as in finance, derives from the French *banque* and Teutonic *bank*, meaning a bench or platform whereas the bank of a river derives from the Old Teutonic *bankon*.

(FRANK DEVINE HAS A DELIGHTFUL COLUMN, IN SOMEWHAT SIMILAR VEIN, IN THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN.)

BLIMPS AND BLIPS - GOVERNMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THE ARTS

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

Seeding Money

The notion of seeding money is beloved of politicians and administrators, because it does not involve them in a great deal of thought and is an excuse for ad hoc policy. Seeding money may be withdrawn after a time on the premise that it is not needed because of growth.

It works well in agriculture. An investment in seed may give many hundredfold returns.

However, in other domains, especially the arts, it is very like the biblical parable, where seed mostly falls on barren and stony ground, some is lost, and some withers away for lack of husbandry.

There are very few arts investments that go on to profit and financial independence. Some arts must be propped up otherwise they would disappear. Many seem to depend on continuing money which could perhaps be described, for more than one reason, as fertiliser funds!

Without truly enormous subsidy, opera would almost certainly disappear, perhaps with no great loss to the community.

It seems that the seeding that gave rise to Australia's rich variety of literary magazines is being withdrawn, as most have failed to find sufficient readership support and attract revenue to make themselves self-sufficient. It is a pity, as there are few outlets for poetry, short stories and reviews, but there is no doubt that some very slack organisations were

nurtured. It raises the fundamental question about the validity of art forms, which, like opera, have failed to attract an audience. Has the short story been superseded by the video clip? Has traditional poetry lost ground to song lyrics, rap and performance poetry?

There was some irony in a wistful observation by a former chair of the Literature Board, Marion Halligan, that support is given only to first novels, the implication being that it is a hard placing writer's subsequent books.

There are whispers that the Australia Council would like to see the Writers Centres find funds from other sources, as if there are magical possibilities merely waiting to be identified. Current funding is to the year 2000. If the centres are to be cast adrift, it would be better that it be done sooner rather than later, before the voluntary sector is destroyed.

The notion of seeding must be balanced against attention to providing an environment where things may grow and it may be said that arts funding bodies do indeed, have a difficult row to hoe in determining priorities and predicting trends.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Goliardys - Saucy little stories or verse.

(WE HAD CONSIDERED PUBLISHING EXCERPTS FROM THE CLASSIC PORN OF OUR YOUTH, PENGUIN'S *THE GOLDEN ASS* BY APULIUS, TRANSLATED BY ROBERT GRAVES. HOWEVER, WE BAULKED AT TRACKING DOWN THE COPYRIGHT AND HAVE TAKEN AN EDITORIAL DECISION TO AWAIT WRITERS' INITIATIVES.)

Joker

This side-splitting contribution from N.anon, records the utterances of lawyers and witnesses when the tongue functions somewhat faster than the brain in the charged atmosphere of a courtroom. The voodoo episode is suspicious in that it echoes a passage in a popular song, but all is possible.

Attorneys' courtroom questions and answers, from the Boston Bar Association Journal:

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July fifteenth.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.

Q: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

Q: This myasthenia gravis - does it affect your memory at all?

A: Yes.

Q: And in what ways does it affect your memory?

A: I forget.

Q: You forget. Can you give us an example of something that you've forgotten?

Q: All your responses must be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

A: Oral.

Q: How old is your son--the one living with you.

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"

Q: And why did that upset you?

A: My name is Susan.

Q: And where was the location of the accident?

A: Approximately milepost 499.

Q: And where is milepost 499?

A: Probably between milepost 498 and 500.

Q: Sir, what is your IQ?

A: Well, I can see pretty well, I think.

Q: Did you blow your horn or anything?

A: After the accident?

Q: Before the accident.

A: Sure, I played for ten years. I even went to school for it.

Q: Do you know if your daughter has ever been involved in the voodoo occult?

A: We both do.

Q: Voodoo?

A: We do.

Q: You do?

A: Yes, voodoo.

Q: Trooper, when you stopped the defendant, were your red and blue lights flashing?

A: Yes.

Q: Did the defendant say anything when she got out of her car?

A: Yes, sir.

Q: What did she say?

A: What disco am I at?

Q: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Q: The youngest son, the twenty-year old, how old is he?

Q: Were you present when your picture was taken?

Q: Was it you or your younger brother who was killed in the war?

Q: And you say that the defendant tried to kill you?

A: Yes.

Q: Did he kill you?

Q: How far apart were the vehicles at the time of the collision?

Q: You were there until the time you left, is that true?

Q: How many times have you committed suicide?

Q: Are you qualified to give a urine sample?

Q: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

A: Yes.

Q: And what were you doing at that time?

Q: She had three children, right?

A: Yes.

Q: How many were boys?

A: None.

Q: Were there any girls?

Q: You say the stairs went down to the basement?

A: Yes.

Q: And these stairs, did they go up also?

Q: Mr. Slatery, you went on a rather elaborate honeymoon, didn't you?

A: I went to Europe, sir.

Q: And you took your new wife?

Q: How was your first marriage terminated?

A: By death.

Q: And by whose death was it terminated?

Q: Can you describe the individual?

A: He was about medium height and had a beard.

Q: Was this a male, or a female?

Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?

A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?

A: All my autopsies are performed on dead people.

Q: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

A: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

Q: And Mr. Dennington was dead at the time?

A: No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy.

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing?

A: No.

Q: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Q: But could the patient have still been alive nevertheless?

A: It is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere.

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? What's right with rhyming verse?

Are verbs as good as they used to be?

[Back to CONTENTS](#)

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

[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.

Other Australian search engines:

AltaVista Australia <http://www.altavista.yellowpages.com.au>

AusIndex <http://www.ausindex.com.au>

Answers <http://www.answers.com.au>

Excite Australia <http://www.excite.com.au>

Matilda <http://www.aaa.com.au/matilda>

Matilda features a number of Australian State search engines to help narrow your search even further.

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/

The QUOTATIONS HOME PAGE, contains a mass of information at : <http://www.geocities.com/~spanoudi/quote.html>

Australian Writers Organisations On-line e-mail Addresses: (Please contribute any others that you would like to have listed.)

Australian Society of Authors <asa@asauthors.org.au>

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

(THESE TWO ARE THE PROFESSIONAL AND "UNION" ORGANISATIONS FOR WRITERS OF BOOKS AND SCRIPT, RESPECTIVELY. THEIR FEES ARE HIGH AND THEY MAINLY CATER FOR WRITERS WHO ARE GENERATING INCOME FROM THEIR CRAFT.)

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

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

Peter Cowan Writers Centre (WA writers centre) <nwacowan@iinet.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>

New Zealand Writers Organisations On-line e-mail Addresses:

New Zealand Society of Authors <nzsa@arachna.co.nz> (The Society apparently includes the New Zealand PEN and has six branches.)

New Zealand Author <nza@clear.net.nz> (This the nzsa magazine.)

(Home Page URLs, if available, may often be found by re-jigging the e-mail address:

[http://www.\(address after @\)/~\(address before @\)/](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.)

Sherry-Anne Jacobs is an internationally published writer in three genres, with nearly a score of publications to her credit. Her superb home page is at <http://www.iinet.net.au/~jacobses/>

John Kinsella has published many books of poetry, as a visit to his web pages or the Fremantle Arts Centre Press will show. He is presently a fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge.

Rosanne Dingli has been writing short fiction for over 13 years. And boy, is she tired. (SHE HAS ALSO MANAGED TO SUPPORT HERSELF AS EDITOR, JOURNALIST AND POET AND HAD THE DISTINCTION OF WINNING THE STUART/HADOW SHORT STORY COMPETITION AND ALSO THE HIGHLY COMMENDED AWARD.) HOME PAGE = <http://www.cs.uwa.edu.au/~hugo/rosanne.html>

Diane Beckingham is a well-known West Australian writer and teacher. Some of her poems featured in these pages have appeared in *The Ararat Advertiser*, *The Canberra Times*, *Fremantle Arts Review*, *Prints* and *Westerly*.

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. Fran recently brought out her own extensive collection of poems, *Flight Patterns*.

Roland Leach is a prize-winning West Australian writer and teacher.

Shen practises medicine and poetry in Adelaide.

Kevin Gillam earns his living with his bow as a teacher of music and has had many of his poems published in literary magazines.

Helen Jean Hagemann, is a student of creative writing at Edith Cowan University as well as a writer, and is deeply involved with the Peter Cowan Writers Centre.

Janet Woods is a British-born, Australian writer. The first short story she wrote was accepted for publication and her first novel, "Thread of Destiny," was published by Robert Hale (UK) four years later, and sold on to Wordsworth Publishing. Her second novel, "Spellbound," has been serialised in a magazine, and along with "In Bed With The Enemy," a more recent creation, will be e-published by New Concepts in February, 2000.

N.Anon has an ancient and honourable lineage. It is, of course, Net Anon!

Advertisements.



Sappho's Delight, poems by Walter Vivian

\$12.95 posted.

Spring Burning: New and Selected Poems 1967-1997 by
Glen Phillips

Glen is well-known poet and sometime contributor to this magazine. He has enjoyed writing fellowships in Italy and China to draw on for some of his

subject matter.

Publisher: Folio/Salt (John Kinsella)

The Wheels of Hama

Collected War Poems by Alec Choate

\$17.50 or \$19.00 posted from 11A Joseph St, West Leederville WA 6007, Ph: (08) 9381 8203

Alec Choate is the doyen of poets in the west, with an extensive record of publication and several books of verse brought out by Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

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.

Subscription is \$10.00 per annum or \$5.00 singly from Blackwatch, Presbyterian Ladies College, Box 126, COTTESLOE WA 6011.

Not a Proper Shop

Walter Vivian

This nostalgic book of poems would make an ideal gift for a west coaster exiled overseas or interstate. See reviews on PixelPress page. Available at Dymocks Floreat, Dymocks Claremont, Lane Bookshop Claremont, Collins Cottesloe, Bookcaffé Swanbourne and other booksellers.

ISBN 0-9587350-0-X \$10.00

Sudden Alchemy

The winning poems from the prestigious 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*.

Flight Patterns

A collection of poems by Frances Arnett Sbrocchi, principally on the theme of migration and immigration. Available from Fran <naisburi@iinet.net.au> or

The Well Bookshop @ \$12.00.

Dutch Point by Barbara Yates Rothwell (Lagoon Press) \$35.00

The Boy from the Hulks by Barbara Yates Rothwell (Longman Cheshire) \$9.95.

www.iinet.net.au/~ignpress/mymag

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.

Have you noted PixelPapers'

bookmark? Please surf in again!

[Back to CONTENTS](#) OR

[Back to PixPress Home Page](#)