



Issue The Eleventh, May, 2000.

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The next **Disk** reading will be held on Tuesday 23 May at The Mezzonine

Café, 49 King St, Perth.

featuring:

Mark Reid – poet; Mark's latest book "Parochial" will be released by Fremantle Arts Centre Press this month.

Leslie Stein – novelist; Leslie's first Novel "Adam Kadmon" will be released this month.

Suzanne Covich – poet.

Doors open at 7:30PM for an 8PM start. Admission is \$5-00.

There will be an Open Readers section later in the evening at which anyone is welcome to read for a maximum of five minutes.

As PixelPapers is not funded by any agency, we don't pay. Your only reward is the showcasing of your work to a growing, potentially worldwide audience. Work previously published in hard copy is welcome.

Please send contributions as text in the body of e-mails and not as files, as my software turns files into masses of symbols or plays editorial tricks such as replacing with an "i" the apostrophe, to lend a quaint antique touch I can well do without! Besides, few editors now accept files, in case they have a nasty virus embedded in them.

Contributors should note that unlike hard copy publications, the medium allows for rapid correction. If we have erred or you would like the format of your work changed, please advise by e-mail before another twenty or so readers log on and see it.

Editorial

PixelPapers 11 has an abundance of prose, with opening chapters from novels by Sherry-Anne Jacobs and Janet Woods. There are few poems, so we'll keep the editorial e-mail box open for a week or so for late entries of poems, short stories, articles and letters. Letters are especially welcome, for apart from a few welcome plaudits we have had little reaction. Please take another look later in May.

PixelPapers 10 has attracted over a thousand readers according to one of my server's counters and over two thousand, according to another. I've therefore put a counter on my first page to verify.

In view of the many signs and portents, it is high time for Australia's federal minister for(?) the arts, Richard Alston, to consider what could be chiselled on his political tombstone. Richard has pushed his line that less is really more for so long that he is in danger of believing it. Worse, he may assume that somebody else does!

When he goes to that immensely privileged, superannuated heaven reserved for ex-politicians, how will we remember him? Certainly there will be no recollection of him being in any way a champion of the arts, or an innovator. He has been relentless in cutting back in an area of human activity that is of prime importance in a society where isolation and alienation is growing. He has looked upon the arts as an optional extra rather than as a vital component of society.

It is true that he has not been pushed by his political opposition, which seems to be more interested in the communications arm of the portfolio.

For the first time, there will be a tax on books. Richard has been dismissive in response to protest, saying that there will be reductions or credits for the printing process but has provided no evidence. Possibly ink and paper may be marginally cheaper, but any sub-contracted work such as typesetting and photo processing should be dearer. Books are likely to be ten per cent dearer and this is an impost which the publishing industry will find difficult to bear, as it is already close to the edge, and mergers and closures have been a feature over the past few years.

From a writer's point of view, contraction of publishing opportunities will make hard going almost impossible. What is Richard doing about it? Is he dreaming up some more arguments to support his peurile assertion, which could well be his political epitaph!

The Pulitzer prize for poetry was won this year by c.k. williams for a book of verse, entitled, "repair". Despite his depressing preference for the e.e. cummings style of script, sans upper case capitals, which has been done to death and raises suspicion about the psychological condition of the writer, he is a fine poet, if the poem he read on The News Hour (PBS via SBS, 20 04 '00) is an example.

In Australia we have nothing like the Pulitzer to honour outstanding achievement and we have little endowment by the super rich to mark their passing. Offhand, I can think of only the Felton and Elder endowments, for art and music, respectively. True, there is the Bond University, but who actually endowed this institution is ultimately unclear! I suspect that we will see hell freezing over before we have a Packer or Murdoch Prize, although in Mr Murdoch's case he is related to a noted essayist and former professor of English in the west, the very late Walter Murdoch!

Perhaps there'll be something out of the blue in the form of a Norman or Harvey Norman Prize.

There is some hope. Kerry Stokes of Channel 7, one of the junior league of super rich,

has shown keen interest in getting into the arts. Go Kerry, go!

Cities in so-called regional Australia, like one-horse outback towns with but a single pub, are often blessed with a single daily newspaper. Brisbane has "The Courier Mail", Adelaide "The Advertiser" and Perth has "The West Australian". It is true that the various editions of "The Australian" are making some inroads, but they lack the local news, especially the demographics.

"The West Australian" has been of vital importance to local writers and has been supportive over many years. We strive to have pieces published or to have our books reviewed, but the West has almost turned its back on literature.

Its always been something of a paradox, as a broadsheet quality paper in tabloid format. To compensate, a broadsheet insert into the Saturday edition was established and proudly named, **The Big Weekend**, but cost cutting has seen this shrink to be something of a Weak Bigend, with less literature and certainly less and less local content. Often, there is almost as much literary comment in our free newspaper. One comment I heard was that the literary pages had become very blokey!

The problem seems to be that management does not value editorial content, with a very highly placed executive voicing the novel view that people buy newspapers for the adverts!

In view of the development of free local newspapers, free placement trading newspapers and development of teletext, newspapers that skimp on their editorial content are likely to suffer a disastrous slump, no matter how much they spend on car competitions and other promotions. The tabloid track, focusing on adverts, will inevitably bring them down to the level of the little trade type papers sold in London, that are virtually lists with a veneer of editorial content.

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Poetry - Virgin Verse and Verse From the Pros

Poems from Anthropology: Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

At Old Pulmungar, Copmanhurst

Four bay ponies, a moped,
a truck, two yellow waggons,
a combi van, and a battered runabout
kids use
to take them two miles down the field
to catch the school bus.

It takes a lot of vehicles
to transport
a farmer's life.

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

A Child's Language

This child finds words
and hurls them back
against the god who made
all big things.

Let Us Remain
Wind
worries the headland
but cannot dislodge
the march
of anonymous white stones.

Grass greens
over our reluctant bones
torn from the ground
where we fed roots
of mango
and passion fruit

Our recompense
to those whose fathers
shared
our darkness.

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

The Burial

Monday
sun

earth
sky
I make a narrow shadow
by the edge

Tuesday
hot
earth stirs
a broken seedling
falls

Wednesday
angry soil
mutters and rises
sifts into my nostrils
outlines bone

Thursday we dug six feet
under magma
looking for solid ground
to hold
his casket

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

Elizabeth Nakamara

Caged birds
huddle against the cold
Do their frail bones hold memory?
I hunch myself against the wind
my coat grime-spattered by passing cars.
I am island born and know
these Thursday Island birds, finches and lorekeets,
feathered in emerald, amethyst, coral.
This small bulb's a sorry substitute for our
rich northern sun; the sun
warmed their singing tree.

Do their brothers still fly
calling and clustering
over salt-white sand?
Do they gather at sunset
to sing down the night?

Here, at the darker hour
of dark day
someone down below turns up the heat

soon he'll shutter out their light
and I'll go back
through grey
through damp
to my small room

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

Nardoo's Song

Katuina, I have cooled
your flesh with blood
and ashes

I touch your lips
with water
bring you leaves

We go from the land of hot stones
from old men
from dance singers

My love and I
no longer walk
in the shoes of the emu

Hold fast
clenched between us
I carry your spirit

Old men cannot follow
will not
scar your shining

I cool
your burning skin
with blossoms

I caress
your marks of stone
and fire

Hold fast, my Katuina
for we shall grow old
in the land of the strangers

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

Moccasins

In that classroom
the children
wore moccasins
spoke softly

Moccasins
smell of smoke
and do not make blisters

Moccasins
are out of fashion
where music
is the beat
of steel guitars

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

Innocent?

How old I am-how old am I?
I want my words
to be returned to me.
For I remember, then, that gay
meant childhood merriment; then
tricks were games we played
on Hallowe'en and John, the name
we gave a baby son, in hope
that he would be beloved.
I remember well when grass
waved in the fields and fed the cows
when bread was baked in ovens warmed
by burning yellow poplar. Pot
was a vessel not to be confused
with kettle;
We strolled down Granville Street
on Saturday night and dreamed
of having goods we could
not yet afford. Horse was a powerful
gentle beast. Screw,
a small nail with threads,
that father used to mend
our broken toys. And what our parents

did in bed was love.

But broken china, mended,
still shows cracks;
and I am old, who would be innocent.

Frances Arnett Sbrocchi

Terabytes

(A Report on the Conference)

Megatrendies focus on the bigger pic.
They know community perceptions tick
away, waiting, waiting to be polled.
In the global village, however, we grow old.

Our betters, sweat beading their brows,
strain to facilitate their models. 'How's
your leverage?' they say. 'Put a spin
on that shortfall!' But the ranks are looking thin.

Audits come and go like whores at night.
Powerpoint presentations flood the screens with light.
Convenience issues amaze the corporate culture
as the contract professor circles students like a a vulture.

The biggest challenge facing sector institutions
now is how to masimise their febrile apirations,
how to megafy their network links.
Trouble is, the process stinks.

Glen Phillips

Heavy Metal In The Foundry

The lowly skimmer boy conducts the casting
as the overhead crane groans and rattles chain
heavy ladle splashing golden metal
fully charged with spitting incandescence
he takes up his baton, a hooked steel skimmer
and awaits the approach to cold black moulds;

suddenly there is radiance, a cauldron of liquid sun
so hot it crystallises the sweat on his face
and he thrusts forward to hold back the lava flow
glowing slag, while the honey gold of running metal

lights up the moulds and chases out blue-flamed gas;
the boy taps his skimmer, shattering shards of brittle fire
and conducts slag free pouring after pouring, until he achieves
a sparking, sputtering symphony, and the casting is done.

Walter Vivian
from *Not A Proper Shop*, PixelPress 1998

Grease Monkey

Twice a week young Neville the devil,
the engineers' apprentice,
risked life and limb in the rafters
amidst slapping belts and pulleys,
with oilcan and grease gun and
blue overall pockets, stuffed
with fluffy cotton waste,
to clean shafts and grease bearings,
charge reservoirs and nipples,
and all the while targeted
unsuspecting journeymen,
intent on a lathe's final cut
or delicate adjustment of thread or gear,
raining down on their heads
like an imp, squirts of warm oil,
and they aware at last,
would, paradoxically,
raise their eyes heavenward to curse!

Walter Vivian
from *Not A Proper Shop*, PixelPress 1998

Hot Foot

The metal splashed like fiery honey
off dungarees onto my right boot
and lodged in the laces
burning through leather in a trice
and I dropped my skimmer
scattering shards of fire
and hopped hot-footed
into the quenching tub;
Old Jack said I really oughta have
by regulation, elastic sided boots

so the metal would splash off;
Old Frank said he'd heard of a bloke
wearing shoes, stepping unsuspecting
onto a freshly poured flat pig
sheeted with sand against the glare
casting hot metal around his whole foot;
I mourned a burnt instep and boots
worth a week's wages.

Walter Vivian
from *Not A Proper Shop*, PixelPress 1998

Christmas Eve In The Foundry

Barney counted down sixty days
on the wall by the quenching tub
turning strokes into crosses until
it was knock-off day;

We raked out foundry furnaces
piled high cast iron mould boxes
heaped neatly riddled black sand
stacked patterns and pigs
generally tidied up and
got in each others way
until time for the pissup with
bitter beer and nutty sweet sherry;
'Twas Christmas day in the foundry
a day of all good cheer
the moulders sat around the keg
their bellies full of beer
old Frank recited verses at length
and we joined in the chorus
*We don't want your Christmas pudding
stick it up your arse!*

Roy said he'd have a rest
'Cause he'd had a crook guts
Jimmy and Billy were going to have
fourteen days on the piss
Arthur, too, but hoped for extra
a bit on the side
Long-tack Jack was going camping
with the wife and kids by the beach
Robby would stay home for sure
saving money against the future
and Hooky, almost a fitter
would keep in good Nick;

By the door drinking and yarning
we sat in easy idleness
finding Dutch courage
to chat up passing factory girls
we'd whistled at all year,
and by the time that Ivan
brought in the payroll
and gave it out at old Jack's tall desk
that was the foreman's office,
we were almost too pissed to sign
and too befuddled to appreciate
the wealth of three weeks' brass;
eerie silence when motors stilled,
and belt slap slowed and died
in the engineering shop next door,
and freedom, stumbling from gloom
into sunlight that promised
surf, sweetness and more besides
and rinsing plumbago from grubby hides.p

Walter Vivian

from *Not A Proper Shop*, PixelPress 1998ensive balloons!

Drawing The Nude

A long, slow, look
drinking in the essence of the pose
mere flicker of desire tempered by
care for naked vulnerability
quick quick lines to capture,
curve of spine and carriage of head,
disposition of exquisite limbs
a check of proportions
an eye to balance and weight, then
back
shoulders
belly
breast
thighs
calves
arms;
lines of complex life-revealing curves
feet, hands and head
investing verisimilitude
checking life to image
seeing how much magic

is stolen from the beauty of the nude.

Walter Vivian
from *Sappho's Delight*, PixelPress 1999en

Nude Magic

Why does the artist draw the nude?
Is it to capture like a camera
a fleeting moment of beauty
fixing it in time for all to see?
Is it a symbolic seduction
as eyes, surrogate for hands and lips
caress each joyous, complex curve?
Or, like the caveman artist by flamelight
magicking oryx, deer and bison
is it a simple matter of casting a spell
for ritual possession of desired prey
so that, image once portrayed
it is impelled by the gods, to feed the appetite
of a lorn, drooling drawing, designing acolyte?

Walter Vivian
from *Sappho's Delight*, PixelPress 1999e

Decent Exposure

A poet is an artist
painting with words
to shape perception,
with light and dark,
cunning chiaroscuro
symmetry of form, balance
proportion and rhythm
titillating textures, colour
mysterious voids
liquid, languid, line.

But also like the model
nude for viewing on a stage
a poet is revealed
dancing naked on the page.

Walter Vivian
from *Sappho's Delight*, PixelPress 1999

.... Damien

casts his saving words,
Irish accent tin-snipping sense

for he's a monk -
words of bible weight,
born-again edge

he finds my knots,

undoes them
then gives me more

'and have you forgiven yourself?'
Damien's saving words
candles for home

Kevin Gillam

.... screwdriver and receipt

(i)
screwdrivers contains 2 e's and receipt contains 2 e's
and screwdriver is yellow and receipt white and if you're
pissing white and not yellow it means your lemons wont
grow and screwdriver is magnificently phallic while receipt
is like tongue so there's sex and innuendo and you
might have got the receipt when you bought the screwdriver
and you might have used the screwdriver to open the till
to get the receipt

(ii)
screwdriver contains a d while receipt doesn't and
receipt rhymes on itself while screwdriver holds 3 different
vowel sounds and screwdriver is beautifully metaphoric as
power and knowledge and opening caskets of previous lives

comes to mind while receipt sits cluttering up purse and
screwdriver knows a thousand stories while receipt tells only
one and screwdriver represents the repression of the
working class in their quest to unscrew the lids of
feudalism and social inequity while receipt is a faceless
reminder of the cashed up consumer driven oligopoly in
which we eke out a living.

Kevin Gillam

.... Fri

day

and I'm

taking my

shallowing day

and not forgotten

sister for drowning but

she is floating and

day is filling

and I'm tast

ing be

ing

Kevin Gillam W

ords of bible weight, born-again edgee

Made of sand

(Monks dismantle a sand mandala in Fremantle 1997)

A Tibetan monk in a still room
makes a budding tree from green and
yellow sand, a spring planting
during an Australian summer.

What he does next is perfect unity.
A Tibetan, he lets the waters of an
unfamiliar river wash away an exiled
tree from his native land. A Buddhist, he
gathers up the beautiful work,
offers it to the Swan River
because all things are ephemeral.
An artist, he understands irony
and permanence, so leaves behind
only coloured sand and this lasting
image of a flowering tree.

Shen

Before sleep

What else to
do before sleep ?
The bills on the
table, ready to post

tomorrow. Lunch
packed in its
paper bag, by
a heavy briefcase.

All keys turned,
doors locked,
lights turned out in
empty rooms. Now

this next chapter
of the book lying
by the bedside, and
then the lamp

switched off.
Close your eyes.
The softly
glowing numbers

of the alarm clock
still flicker in the dark.
Yet no sleep comes -
could there still be something

you've forgotten to do ?

Shen

Native wildlife

Trudging a miserly trail with sounds of
the main road blanketed by trees
and evening light dense as steamed
breath. Suddenly, the crackling of power lines
humming a tuneless song overhead,
like an echo of calling birds perched
on a rusted bonnet, as I turn a bend.
The tension throbs in the air on the tips
of pylons just visible over the edge of
the M3 flyover. Tiny beads of light
thread the freeway toward London like
a snake with glistening scales slithering out
of the undergrowth.

Shen

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Shorts - old and new

There Is Something...

(...at the bottom of the garden)

by Barbara Yates Rothwell

I wouldn't tell anyone but you. If I tell Jack he'll say I'm crazy. But you won't laugh - will you? Because I just have to tell someone.

Midsummer Day. Jack was away on the endless course he was so excited about. I was all alone. And I was mad - I'd looked forward for weeks to going to the Midsummer Ball in town.

Why? Just because! Jack was always too busy these days for what he called frivolity. I was in this town where I hardly knew a soul. You know how it is. If I'd had children I would have got to know young mums. If I'd been good at arty things I'd have joined a club. So I either cycled around the endless new-estate streets, where everyone else was in a car; or I sat at home, waiting for someone to knock on the door.

I should have done better than that, looking back. Perhaps I was a bit down.

Jack had said, very grudgingly, that he'd think about it - the ball, that is. Don't get the idea that Jack and I have real problems; it's just that he was so single-minded about the wretched course. OK, I know - he needed the qualifications.

So I said goodbye to him and plunged into routine. Wash up, make the bed, wave a duster at the furniture, empty the bin, take the food scrapsto the compost heap at the end of the garden...

Well, that's where it all started.

Now, I don't expect you to believe this. It's all true, but it boggles the mind more than somewhat. I tipped the scraps on to the heap, then wandered over to the lavender bed; as I turned back to the house there was a flicker of movement among the bushes and I glanced down.

My legs went weak. I blinked. There, sitting on a brick, was a - sorry, I have to use the word - a fairy!

Not your average fairy. No gauzy wings or drifty tutu. No starry wand. This was a little mannikin, not more than six inches tall, dressed in black, with dark-rimmed spectacles too heavy for his minuscule nose. I know! It doesn't sound likely.

What was he doing? He was reading a tiny book, so intently that he hadn't heard my approach. I think he was as alarmed as I was. We stared at each other for a long moment, then he moved as if to hide among the lavender stalks.

I found my voice. 'Don't go!' He hesitated. I said, 'Who are you? What are you?'

He stood for a second, then threw his book on the ground. 'I knew it!' he cried in a tiny

voice I had to strain to hear. 'I knew it was too soon.'

'What was too soon?'

'Going solo. I told them I'd only mess it up. But they said it was time.'

I sank to the ground. 'Do sit down. I won't hurt you.'

He moved cautiously back to the brick and perched on its edge. I can't believe I'm doing this, I thought. I can't believe I'm sitting in my own back garden talking to a - to a...

'What are you?' I said again.

'I'm a fairy.' Said without surprise. A fact, nothing more.

'I thought fairies were...'

'Everyone does,' he retorted. 'Gauzy wings, frilly skirts! It doesn't follow.'

'I thought male fairies were elves or goblins.'

'Quite different. They're mischief-makers. Fairies only do good.'

'Is that why you're here - to do good?'

'That's what they said. Are you number thirty-two?'

'Yes.'

'Well, stand by.' He sounded fed-up. 'You're going to have your dearest wish granted. If I can find the right page in the manual.' He riffled through the tiny book.

Typical! Trust me to get a fairy with attitude.

'Haven't you done this before?'

'No. I've only assisted. It was very educational, seeing some of the daft things quite sensible people ask for as their dearest wish. I remember...'

I didn't want to know. 'How do you do it?'

'You look up the category, then go through a list of possibilities. With any luck you hit on the right one, chant the spell, sprinkle, and there you are. Dearest wish granted, one happy customer, and a move up for me.'

'Like a - a grade, you mean?'

'Exactly! At the moment I'm a grade five.'

'And what will you be if ...?'

'Fledged. Grade six - the highest.'

'Does that mean...?'

'Yes.' He was mildly impatient. 'It means I'll get my wings. If I get it right.'

'What if you get it wrong?'

He shrugged carelessly. 'Them's the breaks!' He seemed quite pleased at the thought.

'But you might...'

'Oh, nobody turns people into toads any more. That's old stuff. No, we're much more sophisticated these days. We feel we have a role to play in the stabilisation of the human psyche. It's very unstable, you know.'

I was briefly silenced. Then: 'But if you do get it wrong?'

'I'd have to call home.'

'And someone would - unfrog me?'

' Unless you got Merlin on one of his bad days.'

I pondered this. 'What's your name?' I thought it might be as well to know, even if I could only croak it.

'Cobby,' he said. 'Short for Cobweb, of course.'

I laughed, surprised. 'Is there a Mustardseed?'

'Musty? Oh, she's out somewhere dealing with a shrewish wife. She's a grade six.'

'How do you deal with a...?'

'We have ways,' he said darkly, 'of making you stop talking.'

He turned a page and sat up straight. 'Now - what is your dearest wish?' He stared up at me through those spectacles that made him look like a very small business executive. 'Try to make it something fairly straight-forward. I'd like to get it right first time.'

Well, I know it sounds silly, but my mind was a blank. Here was this never-to-be-repeated offer, and I couldn't think of anything I desperately wanted. I mean, I wanted to go to the Midsummer Ball, but not without Jack, and he was too far away. And there were other things, too - decent furniture, friends in this wasteland of suburbia, a precious somebody asleep in the cradle in the small front bedroom. But these were not things to off-load on to a trainee wonder-worker. I'd settle for the ball, with or without Jack.

'I want to go to the ball,' I said, a bit tremulously.

'Ball,' he said. 'Ball?' He was searching through the index. 'Ball -

here it is. Ball, golden. Ball, glass, for witchcraft. Ball, magic, for princesses. Ball...

'Not that sort of ball. A dance! I want to go the Midsummer Dance at the Town Hall.'

'Oh! Ball - ball...' his finger ran down the page. 'Right! Ball - for dancing - see page 42.'

He turned the pages quickly. 'Here we are! One, coach. Two, horses. Three...'

'I don't need them. I just need my husband.'

'Where is he?'

I told him. 'But...'

He waved my objections away. 'Let's see what happens.' I wondered if that was really enough. 'Look, you'll have to kneel down. I can't reach you up there.'

I knelt. He produced a tiny flask, and with an anxious frown began to murmur the words on the page. He reached up and sprinkled the contents on my bowed head, muttered some more, then gave a deep sigh. 'I hope that was right. I'll be here tomorrow morning, so you can let me know if it worked.'

'Is that all?' I felt let down. No sparkle, no sudden frisson of magic.

'It's all it says here.' He closed the book and stood up. 'I must say, if that's your dearest wish you must live a very sheltered and comfortable life.'

I hesitated. 'Not my dearest wish, perhaps. But you did say keep it simple.'

He gazed into my eyes thoughtfully, then slowly nodded. 'Yes,' he said, smiling suddenly. It lit up his tiny, perfect face. 'That would be a bit more complicated. But I'll see what I can do.'

'What do you mean?'

'I must be off. See you tomorrow!'

'But...!' My voice died in my throat. Cobby had gone.

Well, what do you do after a visitation like that? I must admit I began to think there must be something wrong with me - a brain tumour seemed the most likely. But when I combed my hair I found something sticky where Cobby had sprinkled me. So I sat before my bedroom mirror and willed it all to happen. I would go to the ball - with Jack!

When evening came I bathed and perfumed myself, slipped into my one evening dress (my wedding dress dyed midnight blue) and put on the sapphire earrings Jack gave me on our first anniversary. All the time I was waiting for his key in the lock.

It never came. I knew it! I muttered to myself. I knew that rotten fairy was a fake. That's the last time...

I was so mad that I rang for a taxi, gathered up my evening bag and the silk stole that had been Grandma's, and went off to the ball in a state of mind that precluded enjoyment.

Alone, I sat by the wall and wished I hadn't come. No one asked me to dance. The band thumped away, mocking me. My earrings were pinching me. No one loved me.

Then, suddenly, there was Jack, his eyes scanning the dancing couples! Cinderella couldn't have flown to her prince more swiftly than I to him.

'Why?' I gasped. 'How?'

'I knew you wanted to come. I took the late afternoon train. Say you're pleased to see me.'
Oh, I was, I was!

We had a wonderful night and went home in a dream. 'Good old Cobby!' I whispered as I slid into sleep. 'Fly high!'

Next morning I went down the garden. Cobby was sitting on the brick, looking nervous.

'Top effort, Cobby,' I said. The anxiety left his face. 'What about the wings?'

'Grade six. Got it first time!'

Well, believe it or not (and I don't suppose you will), suddenly there they were, tiny, just emerging from his shoulders, fluttering a little in the breeze; delicate as those on a dragonfly, shimmering and spreading in the sun. He tried a few tentative flaps, rising a littleway into the air. 'So far, so good,' he said. Then, with a silvery flash, he shot up into the sky and was gone.

Oh, boy, what an experience! And that wasn't all. Cobby knew, I'm sure, what my real dearest wish was, though it's stretching things a bit far to give him credit. The baby's due at Easter, and we're both thrilled.#

(THE STORY BELOW WAS PUBLISHED IN A SMALL SF MAGAZINE. I WROTE IT ON THE WAY HOME FROM A MEETING IN CANBERRA, AMUSING MYSELF WITH A "WHAT IF" IDEA.)

Meths

by Walter Vivian

For my five hundredth birthday party my family hired the megastadium at Old Tuggeranong in Canberra. I would have liked to have had it under the quaint copper dome of the old Academy of Science building, but it is far too small and there is some doubt about its condition. I have about nine hundred descendants. Together with my sister's line and my brother's line, and my friends, we number nearly two thousand.

"Happy birthday, grandfather!" A smiling young woman with a toddler in her arms kissed me. She was wearing a 14 badge which showed that she was of the fourteenth generation of one line of my grandchildren. "Meet Colin of your fifteenth generation," she said, lifting the little boy to be kissed.

The child whimpered at my whiskers as I kissed his cheek, and struggled back into his mother's arms.

"You look very much like my first wife, Clare, the American. You're obviously of her line," I said. "She died young in her one hundred and thirty second year. It was an accident really. We were with a group protesting about the solar energy power farm. We wanted a compact atomic reactor power station instead."

"I know, grandfather. My name is Clare 14."

I realised that I was being boring, for my history is well known to the family. I suppose that I'm really getting into my dotage. Still, it's not bad to reach five hundred when most people die before they reach a mere three hundred years. I'm pretty healthy and have all my faculties, although I gave up work nearly eighty years ago. Everybody calls me Grandfather.

Clare 14 smiled and moved into the crowd. My fourth wife, Renata, was somewhere in there dancing to the yammer of some appalling modern music. It was colourful. Some of the youngsters would leap above the crowd with a frantic, shimmying, crawl stroke, falling back as their energy gave out and gravity claimed them. It was something that adults could no longer do, due to changes in the lower atmosphere that was regressing back towards the old-time standards.

I was alone on the dais. I took a pull at a squeeze bottle of hapjuice and began to think of Clare and the first time I met her, four hundred and seventy six years ago. It was in a staff house on the fringe of the campus of the old Australian National University in Canberra, although it wasn't old then.

I was lounging on the uncomfortable couch we had in the front room, checking through the car ads in "The Canberra Times". My old Toyota had seized and I desperately needed a cheap car to take me on my daily haul up to the Mount Stromlo Observatory. I looked up, and she was standing in front of me, a slender, fair woman, with hand extended.

"Hello. I'm Clare V. Ewing. You must be Doctor Le Olfent."

I jumped to my feet and shook her hand, pleased that she had called me doctor, because my doctorate was very new, and overwhelmed by her beauty. I think I fell in love with her instantly.

"Pleased to meet you. I'm Colin," I stammered. "You're American" .

"From Stamford."

It suddenly dawned on me. "You must be the Dr C.V.Ewing, I'm expecting," I said, blushing furiously. "I'm sorry but I thought he - you - was a guy with a bow tie and a college hair cut. I had that mental image."

She laughed in her joyous way and I laughed with her. I hardly left her side for the next century.

We worked together at the observatory and lived in the staff house with two other men and two other women. I don't think we were very good company for them and I can't really remember them. They were just like extras in our life story. Our project was the comet, Meths, a pale bluish light in the western sky, discovered by a young Professor Peake of the Hubble Institute. It was poetic that he was using the Hubble telescope that

began to orbit the earth in 1990. Our doctorates were written on our studies of this approaching phenomenon and it soon became clear that Meths was to be our life's work. We measured it, photographed it, analysed it, charted it and wrote and talked about it incessantly.

Concern had been growing in the scientific community when it was realised that Meths was going to pass comparatively close to earth. First calculations suggested, quite wrongly as it turned out, that it had probably passed nearby on a previous encounter over three or four thousand years ago, hence the name Meths, short for Methuselah, the ancient of the Old Testament.

"It's a bloody big chunk of material," said Oscar Paech. "And it could have a bad affect on us. It's the closest contact in human history. It could take some of our atmosphere or cause a crustal slip."

"Nonsense," I said. "You've been reading too much Velikovsky."

Many shared at least some of Oscar's concern and near panic set in as the biggest comet in living memory neared the earth. There is plenty of evidence that huge, heavenly bodies have hit the earth in the past and a good case that devastation resulting from a massive collision, sixty five million years ago, brought the age of the dinosaurs to a close. The powerful impact on Jupiter of the Shoemaker-Levy Comet fragments in 1994 had impressed us. People feared a killer comet.

Meths lit up the night sky so that we had constant twilight. It was foolishly suggested that the military forces of the world should combine to destroy it with missiles, but nobody took this seriously. But there was worry in official quarters and we were forbidden to make statements to the media in case they sparked community hysteria.

People turned to religion and big groups assembled on hilltops for prayer and ritual in the bright twilight. Some strange sects surfaced and there were reports of animal sacrifice. Black Mountain became very popular for the establishment churches whilst Mount Ainslie attracted fundamentalist groups. It was reported that several covens and an African group from the embassies met on Red Hill.

A company in Fyshwick made a fortune by contracting to turn family swimming pools into survival shelters. People can be so naive.

We calculated that Meths would pass by on the night of 7th August. As it drew closer the light increased in intensity but the colour paled more and more. On the 9th of August, Clare was sure that there was the faintest tint of red. In any case, there were no abnormal earthquakes, volcanoes, tides, winds or storms and no changes to the atmosphere, excepting that the night sky was brilliantly beautiful with the pale shimmer of the aurora in gorgeous hues and many so-called shooting stars.

It was a magical night when we sat outside, drinking good Australian sparkling wine and some smooth old brandy, also Australian. I asked Clare to marry me and we were intoxicated with love. We stumbled up the stairs to bed, well after midnight and were soon fast asleep.

I remember half waking during the night, thinking to myself that I was going to suffer for

my sins in the morning, for the evening had been so sweet that I had drunk a lot and I could feel the beginning of a headache.

I awoke late. It was after nine o'clock. I felt fine and elated although my breathing was heavy as if I had hay fever. Clare was still sleeping peacefully. I pulled on my track suit, moving very sluggishly, even though I felt good, and padded slowly to the window. There was a fine mist filling the hollows and masking the lake. It was quiet, apart from some slow, unfamiliar bird calls, like the muffled belling of currawongs from the high trees. Some small grey birds were on the lawn and our neighbour's cat was stalking them. I hate cats being allowed to prey on our native fauna. If I had my way, cats and dogs would be tethered or caged at all times.

I strode angrily towards the stairs and tried to skip down them as I usually do, but I felt as if I had to thrust my way and moved lethargically. The door was heavy to push open. For a moment I had panicky thoughts about suffering a stroke, but I felt so good. I saw the cat and tried to shout at it but my voice was heavy as if I had a bad cold.

The grey bird skittered easily out of the cat's way, for it moved sluggishly. The cat turned and tried for others, which flew up with a peculiar motion into the lower branches of a red bottlebrush shrub. Christ, it suddenly hit me! What I'd thought were birds were carp from the lake and the cat was swimming! I swooned to the grass and lay there for a moment.

"Go - lenn," a heavy sound like the track of an old movie that had stretched or was being played too slow, caught my attention. I saw that there were fish flying about the lawn and the shrubbery, and a kingfisher flew slowly down, caught one of them, and flapped laboriously to a low branch.

"Go - lenn," the heavy sound rumbled again and only then did I recognise that it could be my name. Clare was running towards me in her nightdress, her eyes big with fear. It was like a nightmare. She was moving in slow motion. We clung to each other. I expected to wake all over again and find that I'd had a very realistic dream, but Clare was very real and warm. Close together, our voices sounded almost normal.

"Colin. Colin. What's happening?" She was very near to hysteria and so was I.

"I don't know, love. It'll be all right," I said. It did not help to see the cat flying slowly overhead with a rapid swimming motion. It was like the cow jumping over the moon in a child's picture book.

There was a chorus of rumbling sounds. Our housemates were spilling out the door. One of them, the slight girl who liked to dance, seemed to swim up into the air and slowly fall back.

"Christ, Clare. It's Meths. It didn't take anything from us! We've taken something from it!"

"You mean atmospheric gases?" Clare rumbled as I helped her slowly to her feet. "It's not possible."

But it was. The world had to adjust to having a new compound in its atmosphere, a compound that had some very peculiar properties in relation to oxygen and blurred the

boundaries between air and water. It hung like a super fluid blanket to a depth of four or five metres over land and sea, streaming up the sides of hills and tall buildings so that it was present even in an aircraft in flight.

Once we'd become used to the change in sound and adjusted to movement, it wasn't so bad. They called it, clinton, to honour an American statesman who was very big at the time. We've never been able to fully understand it or to work out why its existence was never suspected before. As my friend Oscar says, very loosely paraphrasing Kuhn, "If you don't have the paradigm then you can't really perceive a phenomenon."

Clinton has been very kind to the biosphere. We live longer and are healthier. There's been a marvellous interchange of flora and fauna between land, sea and air, which has heavily qualified our thinking on evolution. Early on, dolphins cruised inland and learnt to prey on the rabbit population and airports had to be careful of the danger posed by dense schools of fish drifting across runways, although takeoff and landing could be effected more easily at much lower speeds. Coastal farms found a new hazard in predators from the deep sea attacking sheep and cattle. I was put in mind of the Galapagos Islands where iguanas range freely on land and sea.

The question was often raised, "Has Meths visited us before to stir our lazy little world into change?"

There's no doubt that clinton is now breaking down in the lower atmosphere. The layer is getting thinner but there is strong evidence that the ozone layer is increasing in thickness and clinton is responsible. When I was young, the average fit man could pull himself up three or four metres and swim above the ground, but no more. That's only for kids and real lightweights now.

Anyway, I owe my long life to clinton. I suppose that there is no way that our world could have supported forty billion people without. But I must confess that I long for the old days, especially the sound. It was so clear. Not the yammering and rumbling that you have all about you now with that so-called modern music. There's not a bright note in it. Come to think of it, that's one of the really big drawbacks of being five hundred years old. I'm really the only one old enough to remember it like it was and there's no way that I can make them understand.

"Congratulations, Grandfather." A pretty, dark little woman kissed me. She wore a 9 badge.

"You must be a Yoko. You remind me of my third wife, Yoko. She met her death accidentally when she was only a hundred and seventy nine, protesting against the dolphins. She had too much to drink and fell asleep at sea and actually drowned. The dolphins once threatened to overrun the land and humankind, you know."

"I know, Grandfather," she said. She kissed me again and danced off into the crowd, blowing me a third kiss.

My eyes felt heavy and I slept, dreaming of the bright sound of brassy trumpets, tinkling pianos, rilling water and sweet soprano voices and sounds that had delighted me so long ago.#

(IT WAS ALSO PUBLISHED EARLIER IN PP. OOPS!)

SPELLBOUND & IN BED WITH THE ENEMY. (1st Chapter)

Janet Woods

ISBN 1-58608-014-8

<http://newconceptspublishing.com>

Happily ever after was not Leon's immediate concern when he woke just before dawn. Helen's long leg was draped over his thigh, her arm had wound through the curve of his waist and lay lightly against his stomach.

He could feel her breath drifting through the perfumed silk of her hair, soft and warm against his shoulder. He caressed her silky, smooth thigh. It seemed leaner somehow, firmer - as if she'd been exercising.

Immediately, his body began to assert its male prerogative. He turned in her embrace, and nuzzling his lips through the curtain of hair covering her face took her mouth in a kiss designed to bring her into lustful consciousness.

Her response was delightfully immediate, her mouth responding with a sensuous softness that surprised him. Helen didn't usually enjoy making love in the morning, yet she snuggled compliantly against him. She must have missed him more than he'd imagined.

Then she suddenly stiffened. Her hands came against his chest and she pushed him away with considerable force before scrambling to a sitting position with the sheet clutched protectively in front of her. Flicking the hair back from her face in one movement, she stared at him from shocked blue eyes and hissed with the false bravado of a cornered cat.

'Who the hell are you?'

Now it was his turn to scramble upright and clutch at the sheet. God, did he need something to cover himself at that moment!

There was a bit of a tussle for possession, with both of them locking eyes and glaring at each other. Eventually, might of muscle won and she was forced to snatch up a pillow to cover her obvious charms.

Harshly, he said. 'What's more to the point - who the hell are you, and

what are you doing in my bed?'

'Would you believe, Goldilocks?'

'This is no time for sarcasm. I'd be quite within my rights to call security. We don't allow women of your type in the inn, so get out of my bed and go and ply your trade elsewhere.'

Darcie's face began to burn, but she refused to let her terror show. 'Listen, you poor excuse for a rat. It was you who was mauling me. I happen to be a guest of Leon Price.' Her hand reached out to the bedside table and snatched the receiver from its rest. 'If you don't get out by the time I count to ten, I'll ask reception to ring the police and have you arrested for attempted rape.'

'Go ahead.'

His glance wandered down her long shapely legs as she began to dial. There was something vaguely familiar about her. 'You forgot to count.'

'Nine ... ten ... I counted silently.' She kept a watchful blue eye on him as she spoke. 'This is Darcie Channing. I'm a friend of Leon Price's. Would you call the police station, please. There's an intruder in my room.'

She had guts, he'd give her that much. His smile was an ironic slice as he drawled. 'The reception desk isn't manned until eight, and I'm Leon Price.'

Impossibly, her eyes became even larger, and even though they were undecided she managed a disbelieving snort. 'Leon Price has a moustache.'

He grinned slightly, recalling the mo he'd grown in his twenties in an effort to appear mature. So she went back that far. 'I can't recall ever setting eyes on you before, but the name's slightly familiar. Perhaps you'd like to see my credentials.'

'I've seen enough of your credentials to last me a lifetime,' she snapped back, then incredibly, she blushed.

There was something about her that made Leon grin. Perhaps it was the pillow clutched against her. She was a smooth fluid curve of shoulders, hips, thighs and calves around a small oblong of white - almost like a modernist sculpture.

'I take it we've met before, Darcie Channing.' When she worried at her bottom lip and didn't answer, he prompted mockingly. 'Perhaps we had a one-night stand in the past, and you enjoyed it so much you've come back for seconds?'

Darcie felt like dying of embarrassment as she met a pair of amused grey eyes, and she clutched the pillow tighter to her body. 'You've got to be joking.'

He raised one dark dark eyebrow. 'No, I'm not joking. You look just the type of woman I'd go for.'

'Make one move towards me and I'll scream blue murder.'

'Likewise.'

Darcie's mouth twitched up at the corner as she tried not to laugh at his answer. Being in bed with the enemy was no laughing matter.

There was something appealing about the woman despite her profession, Leon was thinking, so what was she up to? 'Am I to take it someone is about to burst through the door with a camera? If you've got blackmail on your mind, forget it.'

'The very last thing on my mind is blackmail, Mister Price. At the moment I have a pressing need to get off this bed and get dressed.'

'Go ahead.'

There was a grin on his face now, and her insides fluttered like a salad being tossed. It was obvious she'd have to reason with him. 'Mister Price. I came here to talk to you - and for no other reason. I'm not the type of woman you seem to think I am.'

'So - talk.' his hands triangled behind his head as he relaxed back on the pillow and closed his eyes. 'You have a captive audience.'

He was impossible! Her glance went to the sheet. If she snatched it off him fast ...?

'Don't even think about it.' A warning glint of arctic grey came her way before his dark eyelashes closed again. 'Talk, lady - and make it fast.'

The fury Darcie had experienced the night before was impossible to rekindle when dressed only in a pillow. He had her at a disadvantage - and knew it! Taking a deep breath she flung the pillow at his face, leaped out of bed and dived for the robe she'd left on the chair. It was safely wrapped around her when she turned to face him. 'Now we can talk!'

Someone rapped on the door.

'Don't you dare open it.' The sudden start of alarm on his face nearly made her laugh.

Was he kidding? It was the breakfast she'd ordered - and breakfast meant a waiter - and a waiter meant safety. She made the door in five seconds flat and opened it a crack, inviting. 'Come in.'

Leon Price groaned.

Darcie caught a glimpse of a pair of vicious green eyes and a red-slashed

mouth. The next minute she was sent sprawling backwards as the door was pushed in her face.

'It's not what it looks like, Helen,' Leon Price was saying desperately as Darcie scrambled up from the floor.

'No?'

Helen was some riled-up lady, Darcie noticed as the woman whipped the crumpled sheet from Leon's body with the finesse of a matador waving a cape at the bull.

'Ahah!' Helen cried out.

Ole! Darcie thought, her eyes widening a fraction.

Leon's hands protectively covered himself. He had the desperate look of an animal about to be gelded, and Helen was obviously the type of woman with the disposition to do it.

Darcie suddenly felt sorry for him. 'You're making a big mistake if you think-'

'Shut up you cheap little tramp. I'll deal with you, after.' Helen's eyes were armed lasers. One glance, and Darcie was vaporised.

That's what you think, lady I'm not about to be mauled by a female with nails as long as yours - or get involved in something that isn't my business!

Discretion getting the better of valour Darcie picked up her case and headed for the bathroom. For safety's sake she shot the bolt on the door and turned on the shower so she didn't have to be a witness to Leon Price's murder.

Ten minutes later when the shouting had died down, she pulled a raspberry coloured sweater over her head, then tearing the wrapping from a complimentary toothbrush scrubbed noisily at her teeth.

She nodded in approval as Leon's voice rose above that of Helen's. 'This is the last time I ask you.'

'You must be mad if you think I'm going to give up my friends and live in this dump of a place. I hadn't realised you were quite so drearily provincial. If you want a wife and children you can marry that cheap little trick you shacked up with last night. She'll probably jump at the chance.'

Darcie gave her reflection a toothpasty grimace, rinsed her mouth and spat the water down the plug-hole.

'I might just do that, Helen.'

And a canine chorus might sing The Messiah at the Sydney opera house!

'Go ahead.' Helen's voice was one big sneer. 'You'd better warn her though. Every time I snap my fingers the great Leon Price will come running back to my bed. You see, Leon darling. The thing I find quite divine about you is your ability to -'

Darcie hastily stuck her fingers in her ears, and only deemed it safe to remove them when a slamming door reverberated through the bathroom. She waited for a few minutes, giving him time to compose himself, then poked her head around the corner. 'Is it safe to come out?'

Water dripped from his crisp dark hair. She reached for a towel and threw it at him.

'Thanks,' he grunted, applying it to his head as he glared at her.

There were roses all over the pillow and a vase still spouting water on to the middle of the bed.

'Helen doesn't muck about, does she?'

She couldn't decide whether his lip movement was a snarl, a grimace or a grin. At least he's more or less dressed, she thought deciding to risk it anyway, as case in hand she strolled casually out of the bathroom and towards the door - but he looks as mad as a nest of hornets! She winced as he savagely zipped up his jeans.

'Where do you think you're going?'

'To chase up my cousin. I can ring for a taxi from the phone box down the road.'

'You're not going anywhere until this is sorted out. You worm your way into my room - sleep in my bed - destroy my life, then expect me to let you walk away as if nothing has happened. Get real, lady.'

'Perhaps I should make an appointment to see you after your disposition improves.'

A battle went on his eyes, then he frowned ominously and his forefinger stabbed at a chair. 'Sit!'

She sat.

A PROPER MATCH Chapter 1

by Sherry-Anne Jacobs

This is a revised version of my first novel ever published

(PERSONS OF RANK)

CHAPTER 1

'Persons of our rank,' declared the Dowager, quivering with outrage at the mere idea, 'do not fall in love! They may, if they are that way inclined, come to feel some affection for their spouses - I have known it to happen, even in the best of circles, though I myself consider it extremely vulgar - but - are you listening to me, Beatrice? Eleanor? - I repeat, persons of rank do not, under any circumstances, fall in love!'

The two young women standing in front of her exchanged speaking glances but knew better than to argue, so made noises to signify they were paying attention.

The old lady rapped her cane on the floor by her chair to emphasise this point and added, with monumental scorn, 'Nor do persons of our rank read sentimental tales about low-bred persons and their amours! They leave such absurdities for menials and governesses who know no better!' Her eyes flashed with scorn as she surveyed her niece, Beatrice, and her granddaughter, Eleanor, both in severe disgrace for being caught reading a novel together.

Beatrice suppressed a sigh and schooled her face into the calm expression she could summon up at will. Heaven knew she had had enough years to practise that since her mother's death, when she was brought to live here with her father's much older sister. She shot a quick glance sideways, but saw with relief that Eleanor was staring past the Dowager out at the gardens and did not seem about to argue.

As she looked back at her aunt, another worry surfaced. What would happen to her if the old lady died? The Dowager had appeared so frail lately. Beatrice shut off that thought resolutely and tried to pay attention to what her aunt was saying.

'And both you girls come from good stock, so . . .'

On the other side of the room, Eleanor dug her fingers into her palm to distract herself. She was still filled with anger at seeing her enthralling tale thrown on the fire by her grandmother. Now she and Beatrice would never know whether poor Melissa managed to escape from the toils of the evil Count and be reunited with Gervaise, her childhood sweetheart! And what's more, Eleanor decided, simmering with rebellion as the lecture continued, she had every intention of falling in love one day, whatever her grandmother said, and had already begun to inspect the unattached men she met with extreme interest and care. Bea said that was not the way you did it, but Eleanor did not suffer from her young aunt's shyness and had every intention of studying the field of candidates. Not that there were many young men here in the depths of Hampshire, and sadly, none of the ones she'd met so far had troubled her dreams in the slightest.

She caught a worried glance from across the room and winked, but did not defy or contradict her grandmother, in whose charge she had been for nine years. One did not get one's own way by outright opposition to her ladyship. In fact, poor Bea rarely got her way at all, but Eleanor was never quite sure whether that was because she was submissive by nature or because she didn't care enough to dispute Lady Marguerite Graceover's authority.

She herself was cast in a more resolute mould, Eleanor felt complacently, stealing a quick glance sideways to admire her reflection in the mirror over the fireplace. The new way of arranging her hair looked very well, but this gown was far too plain. White muslin, for heaven's sake, as if she were still a child instead of a mature woman of nineteen! Well, she had no intention of allowing her grandmother to plan her whole life for her, let alone choose her husband. Why, Grandmama had spoken approvingly only last week about second cousin Maria's engagement to a quite elderly nobleman, who was thirty-two if he was a day. Just because his family had come over with the Conqueror!

Eleanor knew that her own future was presently under consideration, because she had just happened to overhear her grandmother talking to the family lawyer recently about marriage settlements. Unfortunately, one of the maids had come along at that moment and she had had to move away from the door. But there was no doubt she would be a rich prize and she meant to make the most of that, whatever Bea said. Only - that would mean leaving her beloved Satherby to live with a husband and she hated the thought of doing so.

The Dowager paused for breath, then continued the attack. 'Pray tell me, Beatrice, since you are the older, why you were reading such - such vulgarities?'

Eleanor watched an agonised expression creep over Bea's face, so rushed to the rescue. 'We only wanted to see what such books were like, Grandmama. How is one to know about love and - and such things, if one cannot discuss them or read about them?'

'You have only to ask me. I can always tell you exactly what is or is not suitable for a Graceover of Satherby Abbey.' She saw a stubborn expression on her granddaughter's face and added sharply, 'I forbid you, do you hear, absolutely forbid you to read such housemaids' trash again! Love! Pah! Love is only for the lower classes, who can afford to become quite ridiculous under its influence! Or for those fools who have forgotten their station in life. Fools like my younger brother Warwick.'

This was one of the Dowager's favourite cautionary tales and was regularly trotted out and brandished before them as a warning. 'Look what happened to him! Married for love, dead before forty, wife and child left living in poverty. It is I who have had to provide for my poor niece! My brother's fate is a lesson to us all.'

Beatrice was alarmed at how white her aunt had gone, her lips a thin blue-tinged line in a face like wrinkled parchment. She exchanged worried glances with Eleanor and shook her head in warning to say nothing more.

After a few gasping breaths, the Dowager abandoned the rest of her customary diatribe and ended with the same old warning, 'To marry without money is the height of improvidence, as I have told you many times before, have I not, Beatrice? And why are you both standing there like maidservants waiting for an order? Go and sit down on the sofa like gentlefolk. You know I cannot abide people looming over me.'

Beatrice nodded and obeyed, tugging Eleanor across the room with her. She had some sympathy with the Dowager's views, since she and her mother had lived in extreme poverty for a while after her father's death and she had never forgotten what it felt like to go to bed hungry. Or to be without the means to pay the doctor's bills.

'Mind you,' continued the Dowager, in the softer tones of one determined to be fair, 'Beatrice could perfectly well have found herself some curate or gentleman farmer to marry who would not care about her lack of dowry. She's a Dencey, after all. My family's pedigree goes back even further than the Graceovers' and we can hold our heads up in any circles.' She squinted at her niece, as if seeing her for the first time. 'She's pretty enough to attract some gentleman's attention, too, were she to set her mind to it.'

Beatrice picked up her embroidery and made a determined stab at it with her needle. Over the years, she had grown accustomed to her role as the Dowager Lady Graceover's unpaid companion and had developed a genuine affection for her aunt; but once in a while she could not help thinking wistfully how pleasant it would be to marry and have a home of one's very own - and even, perhaps, to have a family. She had always loved children, which was why she had welcomed the chance to help raise Eleanor, who had been orphaned at the age of nine. But that was not the same as having a child of one's own. Or a husband.

'In future, kindly do not forget what you owe to the Family!' the Dowager said, in what was, for her, quite a mild tone. 'I have better things planned for you, Eleanor, than falling in love! You'll be the last of the Graceovers, more's the pity, but you're rich enough to seek a husband among the True Nobility.'

Eleanor perked up and leaned forward, eagerness in every line of her body. 'What exactly have you got planned for me, Grandmama? May I not know?'

But this was going too far for the Dowager. 'No, you may not know, miss! I'll tell you what you need to know when the time comes. And what are you doing lolling about on the sofa like that? If you have nothing better to occupy yourself with, you may go and practise your music. I wish to have a word with Beatrice in private.'

Eleanor breathed deeply and rose to her feet. It was no use arguing with

her grandmother when the old lady was in this mood. As she turned to leave, she winked at Bea and rolled her eyes, then composed her expression and left. Still looking thoughtful, she made her way to the Blue Salon downstairs, where her favourite piano had been placed out of her ladyship's hearing, since only inconsiderate persons inflicted the sound of their practice upon the ears of their families. There she sat down and began to play, for she loved music and could lose herself in it for hours. But her thoughts were on what was happening upstairs. Clearly her grandmother was considering the question of her marriage. But to whom? She would not marry someone she did not like, however well-connected his family.

In London a gentleman of high enough rank to satisfy even the Dowager and handsome enough to delight the most romantically-minded young lady as well, got ready to go to a small, pre-season ball designed to introduce some of this year's crop of young ladies to the ways of the ton. In the middle of tying his neckcloth, he paused, scowled at himself in the mirror and swore softly, tossing aside the piece of mangled cloth. 'No, definitely not.' Turning round, he stared at his valet as if he had never seen him before, then said harshly, 'I've changed my mind. I shall not be going out tonight, after all, Beamish.'

'But sir - '

'That will be all, thank you.'

Beamish breathed deeply, but said nothing. When his master was in that sort of mood, you did not argue with him. He picked up the pile of mangled neckcloths and walked out with his usual measured tread.

When the valet had left, the gentleman flung himself down in the comfortable armchair in front of the fire and stared blindly into the flames. If he set one foot in that ballroom tonight, everyone in the ton would know that he was seriously looking for a wife this season. And did he really want that? No, he did not! He loathed being a focus of gossip, absolutely loathed it.

The trouble was, his mother was growing very insistent that he marry. She had driven up from Bath to Hertfordshire to visit him twice in the past year, and the last time she had made him promise to spend at least part of the coming season in London.

He stretched his tall body with a sigh, feeling a sudden longing sweep through him for his home in the country, for a canter through the woods and a fresh breeze on his face. Then he sighed and scowled down at his feet, forcing himself to face facts. It was his duty to marry. His absolute and inescapable duty. His mother was right about that.

But somehow, he had never met a lady who did not bore him to death after a few encounters. They were all so obliging, so breathlessly eager to please

him that it made him feel angry. If he'd said the moon was purple, they'd have agreed. And they'd be just as eager to please any other gentleman of fortune, anything to get themselves a husband. He gave a snort of bitter laughter. Oh, he was a fool, expecting the impossible. Persons of his rank did not marry for love, but for sound social and financial reasons. Why should he be any different?

He jerked to his feet and went to pour himself a brandy, then slumped down in the chair again with a growl of annoyance and stared down into the rich amber liquid. He was three and thirty, and his mother was right, damn her. He raised the glass in a mocking toast, 'To my future Lady Wife!' He would not go to tonight's ball, though, but would wait for the season proper to start and proceed with caution, drawing as little attention to himself as possible.

He raised the glass in another toast to his reflection in a mirror. 'Here's to the last of the Serles!' He would take great care in choosing a wife, he decided. Not just a woman of breeding and fortune, but one of character. Surely there must be some women around who didn't use their beauty as a weapon, live for gossip and fashion, and regard men merely as providers of heirs and money?

'Ha!' he said a little later, as he refilled his glass, spilling some brandy on the polished surface. 'Maybe I should look at the ugly ones this time. At least they'd be grateful!' He drank to that as well.

Beamish peeped in a little later, worried that his master had not come down for dinner. He gaped in amazement at the sight of the overturned glass and the figure sprawled in the chair, sleeping soundly. It was not at all like Mr Serle to dip into the brandy. Shaking his head in surprise and disapproval both, he woke his master and persuaded him, not without difficulty, to go to bed.

'She's pushing him too hard,' he muttered as he closed the bedchamber door. 'There's going to be trouble.'

When Eleanor had left the room, the Dowager fidgeted and cleared her throat a couple of times, then snapped, 'Put that sewing down and pay attention to me, Beatrice! This is important!' There was a pause, then, 'It's time we were thinking of the chit's future, but I'm out of touch with the younger set.' She scowled across the room. 'Don't know who's who any more.'

Beatrice was thoroughly mystified. 'Why should you need to keep in touch with the younger set, Aunt Marguerite?'

The Dowager ignored this, as she ignored all questions she didn't wish to answer. 'And I'm too old to do another Season, more's the pity.' She glared at her twisted hands, then folded them in her lap and fixed a hawk-like gaze upon her niece. 'So you will just have to go up to London for me.'

'Me? Go to London!'

'Yes, you, ninny! Who else is there? No men left in the family now, are there? So we've only got ourselves to rely on. Ah, we women are weak vessels!' She attempted to look frail and ill-used, but only succeeded in looking even more ferocious than usual.

'But Johanna lives in London. Surely she would be the best person to deal with any business you wish conducted there?' Beatrice protested. They had occasionally visited Johanna in town until the last few years, though they had never gone about in society during those visits, because the Dowager said the ton was full of nobodies these days and she had better things to do than say how-de-do to farmers and shopkeepers.

The Dowager's scowl deepened. 'I shan't trust her judgement when it comes to finding a husband for Eleanor.'

'F-finding a husband for Eleanor?'

'Stop repeatin' what I say! Makes you sound like a sheep.' Marguerite Graceover looked down at her lap for a moment, sighed and said more temperately, 'I shan't ask Johanna to attend to this for me! Look at the sort of men she allowed her own daughters to marry! Johnny-come-latelies, both of them. A mere baronet! And the grandson of a nabob! What's the world coming to when a descendant of the Graceovers marries a tea-merchant?'

This connection had rankled with her for several years, Beatrice knew, though in the eyes of the world, Johanna's daughters had done well for themselves and the gentlemen in question were not only rich, but pleasant-natured and had made Penelope very happy.

'Though you'll stay with Johanna when you're in London, of course,' the Dowager added. 'You'll need her as a chaperone, and she knows everyone, whether they're worth knowing or not.'

'But I - '

'Stop interrupting! How am I to get my tale told if you keep stopping me? I'll write and tell Johanna what I want and to whom you're to be introduced. Then you can do the Season and look 'em all over for me.'

By now, Beatrice was feeling quite bewildered. 'Look who over, Aunt?' 'I've just been tellin' you! Young people don't know how to listen to their elders any more! Why am I always surrounded by ditherers and half-wits? I'm talking about the younger set! The ton. Or what passes for the ton nowadays. Persons of rank, mind, not cits and tea-merchants! You'll have to go and look 'em over for me! How else are we to find a husband for Eleanor?'

'But I can't - '

'Of course you can! I'll give you a list of acceptable families, then you'll only have to sort out one or two possible husbands and invite them

down here to meet Eleanor. I'll do the rest. We should be able to get the knot tied before the end of the year - if you will only bustle around a bit, that is!

'But Aunt, really, I couldn't possibly - '

The old face grew grim. 'I'm not lettin' the chit loose on the town without me to keep an eye on her. She's not only pretty, she's far too rich for her own good. And too impetuous. But innocent, of course. I've seen to that. Brought her up properly, at least.'

Beatrice wondered what her ladyship would say if she knew about some of the exploits which the innocent chit had been up to lately, the little excursions into the village unescorted, the flirting at social gatherings 'just for practice'.

'But surely, Aunt Marguerite, Johanna could - she could - '

The cane thumped down again. 'Johanna could not! She encourages the attentions of upstarts and mushrooms! I want better breeding than that for my granddaughter.'

She bowed her head for a moment, then looked at Beatrice and for once there was no hauteur in those knowing old eyes. 'Thing is, the doctor don't think I'll last much longer, Bea. Get a pain in my chest if I do much nowadays. There's nothin' he can do about it. A year at most, he thinks. M'heart's failing.'

'Oh, Aunt, I'm so sorry!' Beatrice moved quickly across the room to kneel by her aunt's chair and clasp her hand.

The hand squeezed hers once, patted it and was withdrawn. 'I believe you mean that, for which I thank you, Bea, but I'm five and seventy, and I've had a good long life, so I'm not complaining.' She looked across the room into some distance only she could see. 'The pity of it is that with two healthy sons I didn't get even one grandson to carry on the name. That idiot, William Herforth, will inherit. No, he died, didn't he? I keep forgetting. All the fault of that stupid will! How my husband came to write it, I'll never know!' Her eyes closed for a moment, then she jerked upright. 'What was I saying?'

These slight lapses of concentration were another thing which was beginning to worry Beatrice. 'You were talking about the Herforths, Aunt.' 'Yes, so I was. It's Herforth's son who'll be inheriting, isn't it? What's the fellow's name again?'

'Crispin.'

'Yes. Crispin! Did you ever hear such a ridiculous name? Crispin!' she repeated with awful scorn. 'It's a name for actors or dancing masters.'

'It's only a word,' Beatrice said softly.

The Dowager's mouth worked, as if she were swallowing something distasteful. 'I swore no Herforth would set foot across the threshold till I was gone, but I've changed my mind, had to change my mind. I've invited that Crispin fellow to come and stay here for a while, because he needs to learn how to manage the estate. Got to make sure he's up to snuff socially, as well.' Her voice trailed away again and for a moment or two she dozed, as old people will, for the anger had exhausted her.

Beatrice went back to the sofa and sat on in silence, her thoughts in too much turmoil to go and face Eleanor yet. Once or twice she looked across at her aunt and felt tears come into her eyes. If her ladyship's heart were indeed failing, she had good reason to be worried about Eleanor's future. Her husband, who had died twenty years before, had left his wife life-long use of and control over the estate, which was then to pass to the next male heir. With two sons living when he wrote the will, he could perhaps be forgiven for expecting that one of them or their descendants would inherit, but although both had survived him, neither had lived beyond the age of thirty and neither had sired a living son, so now the estate would pass to Crispin Herforth, not Eleanor.

And there was another problem to be considered - what would happen to Beatrice herself when her aunt died? It was something she had worried about occasionally, but now it had suddenly become of immediate concern. She had no other relatives and not a penny to call her own. What was to become of her?

In Hertfordshire, Crispin Herforth read the letter which had just been delivered by a groom from Satherby in growing indignation.

Sir

Since you are heir to Satherby and in view of my increasing years, I have decided that it is necessary for you to become acquainted with your future inheritance. I shall therefore expect you to make time during the next few weeks for an extended visit here. Please advise me of the date of your arrival and do not delay in setting matters in train.

Marguerite Graceover

'I shan't go,' he told the spaniel snoozing in front of the fire. 'She refused even to receive my father when he asked to visit Satherby, so why should I go to her now?'

But as the day passed and he rode round his own much smaller estate, the Dowager's words kept coming back to him 'in view of my increasing years', she had said. Did that mean she was ill? Dying even?

'So what?' he told his favourite mare. 'I've never even met the woman and I don't want to, either.'

But what if she were dying? How would he reconcile a refusal to visit with

his conscience?

Not until he was getting ready for bed did he admit the other reason for going. Satherby Abbey itself. To inherit such a place was a sacred trust. So many people depended on you for their livelihood, so many generations of the family before you had given their lives to it. You simply could not turn your back on that.

It was two days, however, before he bowed to the inevitable and his reply was equally terse and to the point.

Dear Lady Graceover

I thank you for your kind invitation. I am not at present at liberty to visit you, but shall hope to be free later in the year.

Crispin Herforth

He smiled as he signed it and remained in a good mood all day as he made certain arrangements. He would do this his own way. You did not walk blindly into a lion's den. Or a lioness's, either.

The Dowager woke up with a start, coughed and spluttered for a moment, blinked at her niece, then reverted to her topic. 'Have to settle you both, but Eleanor's more of a worry, d'you see? She's a considerable heiress, even if she can't have this estate. Don't want fortune hunters buzzin' around. Can't rely on a gal of her age makin' a wise decision.'

'Yes, Aunt.'

'And it's only fair to leave you properly provided for as well, Bea.' She saw that her niece was looking embarrassed. 'Don't think I've forgotten you. I couldn't look for a husband for you before, because I needed you to help me bring up the chit. Too old to do it all myself. Never had much patience with children, anyway. And you did a good job, as well, young as you were.'

Beatrice smiled reminiscently. 'That was a pleasure for me, as you know.'

'Yes. You're a born mother. Y'should have had your own family by now. It's my fault you haven't. But it's not too late to amend that.'

Beatrice flushed. 'I'm nearly thirty, Aunt. Past thinking of such things.'

'Twenty-eight last month. Don't exaggerate!' Rap! went the silver-headed cane that always stood ready by the chair. 'Now! Hold your tongue and listen! I've fixed it all up with the lawyers and settled enough money on you to get yourself a husband of whose breeding we needn't be ashamed.'

'I don't care to have you buy me a husband, Aunt! I should be grateful for a small annuity, certainly, but - '

'Hoity-toity!' The Dowager's face softened. 'You'll do as you're told

because it's my dying wish to see you settled and because I know you'd like to have a family of your own.'

Beatrice shook her head, not wishing anyone to buy her a husband.

'Please, Beatrice! I beg of you! Please do this last thing for me!'

Never once had Beatrice heard this autocratic old termagant plead with anyone for anything.

'But Aunt, I . . .' Her voice tailed away and she could only look beseechingly at her relative.

The sunken eyes stared at her unwinkingly. The body might be failing, but the mind inside it was still as sharp as ever. 'Didn't think to hear me plead, did you? And I didn't think I'd have to do it, either. Just goes to show. Death is a great leveller.' She paused, then asked sharply, 'What's got into you, girl? What have I asked you to do that sticks in your gullet?'

'I don't - I cannot like the idea of - of having a husband bought for me - someone who will only be interested in my money.'

Her ladyship cackled loudly, sounding more like an ancient parrot than a respected member of the upper classes. 'Is that all?'

'Isn't it enough?'

'No! It ain't enough! What other way is there for persons like us? Whether you admit it or not, marriage is a business transaction. And besides,' she glared at Beatrice, angry for being made to continue pleading, 'I can't die with you on my conscience, girl! I should have found you a husband years ago.'

Beatrice shook her head. 'Aunt, I just can't like the idea!'

The old eyes narrowed in cunning and the voice grew softly persuasive. 'Eleanor will need you even more once I'm gone! And you'll be able to look after her much better if you're a married woman, not to mention looking after yourself, too!' She clicked her tongue in exasperation. 'For heaven's sake, child, a woman's business in life is to marry, and marry as well as she can.'

'I shall need to think about it, Aunt. I can't just - just snap up your offer straight away. I can't!'

Her ladyship nodded. 'Yes, you ought to take the time to think about something so important. It's what I'd do myself in your place. Come here!' When Beatrice approached her chair again, she pulled her niece's head down towards her own and planted on the soft cheek the first and last kiss she would ever give her. 'You're a good girl, in spite of your mother. It's the Dencey blood coming out in you, I dare say. Quality will always tell.' She patted her niece's cheek, then pushed her away again. 'Go and do your thinking, then! But send my maid in to me first. And not a word about this

to Eleanor, mind! Promise.'

Beatrice's thoughts were in a turmoil as she took refuge in her own bedchamber. When Eleanor knocked on the door and demanded admittance, she made no move to open it, simply calling out that she needed a rest.

'But Bea - '

'Go away, Eleanor. I'll talk to you later.'

She had locked the door, so she ignored a renewed tattoo on its venerable panels and plumped down in front of the fire. One of the few indulgences she allowed herself was to sit on the rug and toast her stockinged toes. The Dowager would have been horrified at such undignified behaviour, but Beatrice had long ago found that staring into dancing flames was a good way to sort out one's thoughts. She had needed to do that many times when she had first arrived at Satherby, a grieving and inexperienced girl of seventeen, with no understanding of her father's world and only a lawyer's assurance that she would find a home there.

Well, she had come to terms with many things since coming to live at Satherby, so she supposed she could come to terms with this as well. But, she decided, frowning into the embers, although she might not be able to find a husband whom she could love (and unlike her aunt, she did believe in love, for her parents had been deeply in love and none of the privations of their life together had soured that) she would insist on having some say as to whom she married. She could not marry someone whom she did not both respect and like. That would be her one condition in agreeing to her ladyship's wishes.

A little later, Eleanor banged on the door again. 'Are you ready for dinner, Bea?'

'Oh, sorry! I'm not changed yet. You go down without me.'

With a shock Bea realised that she had allowed the fire to burn down low and was feeling thoroughly chilled. She put on more wood, then lit the candles with a taper, before changing her clothes and tidying her hair in time for the dinner gong. She didn't bother to summon the housemaid whose duty it was to wait on her if required. She had never grown used to servants hovering over her while she performed her intimate tasks. 'I'll have to do it,' she told her reflection in the mirror, 'but the choice of husband will be mine, not my aunt's!' If anyone wanted her. Two clear hazel eyes stared back at her in a face anyone else would have considered remarkably pretty, but which Beatrice rather despised, for the full redness of her lips and the slumberous beauty of her eyes were, to a mind schooled by long years with the Dowager, rather theatrical in appearance.

She smoothed the creamy skin of her cheek with one fingertip and turned to

study herself from the side, then shrugged her shoulders. She supposed she'd have no trouble in finding some sort of husband if she had a generous dowry, but oh dear, she didn't want things to change. She had come to terms with her role in life and was quietly happy at Satherby, enjoying the beauties of the changing seasons in the country and the power she had to improve the lot of the poorer tenants on the estate. That meant a lot to her. But when the Dowager died, everything would change. Her aunt was right. Beatrice had to face that fact and prepare for it. She smoothed her full silken skirts, shaking the pale blue frills around her feet into place, then picking up a warm shawl to counter the draughts that abounded in this ancient house. No use worrying about the future now, when she had not even sealed her bargain with the Dowager. Taking a deep breath, she opened the door.

I can do it, she told herself firmly, as she walked down the stairs. Of course I can. My aunt would never expect me to marry someone I despised.

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LIKE NO OTHER Chapter 1

by Anna Jacobs

published by

Hodder & Stoughton UK, paperback due out in June in Australia.

CHAPTER 1 - 1753

Bored by the wench's halting attempts at conversation, Bill decided it was time to get some return for the tedious half-hour he had just spent listening to her talk as they walked up towards Whin Ridge. She had some right barmy ideas, this one did. But she also had a father with a bit of money in his pot, so Bill had been pretending an interest in what she was saying. Well, you had to court 'em a bit, didn't you?

'Let's stop an' catch us breath,' he growled, chucking his coat down on a grassy patch. 'It's a steep climb, yon.'

'Yes, but worth it for the view. Just look at that sky.'

He sighed and wished she'd shut up. He'd have to listen to her maundering on and stare at her plain face every day once they were wed, but not now! Now was for other things. At least there was some pleasure to be had in walking out, even if the lass was taller than you. There was little joy in marriage, as far as he could see, but now that his mam had died, he had to get someone to look after the house and spin the wool into thread for him to weave, and it might as well be this one, whose father was his good friend.

'That's enough o' talkin',' he growled, and reached out to pull her down with him on the grass, where her height wouldn't matter. With the ease of long practice, he thrust one hand down the front of her bodice and forced his knee between her legs - as well as he could, with the long skirt and petticoats she was wearing.

She didn't scream as any other wench would have done, she just yelled, 'Leave go of me!' and tried to shove him away.

'Ah, you'll like it,' he said, willing to woo her a little more.

She didn't give him the chance to prove this. A ringing slap on his ear was followed by a series of punches to any part of his body within reach, delivered by a hand as hard and muscular as most men's. Yelling, he rolled off her and scrambled to his feet.

She rolled in the opposite direction and jumped up facing him. 'If you try to touch me again, I'll make you sorry!' she panted, face flushed. When he made no further move, she began to set her clothing in order. He tugged his breeches straight, keeping a wary eye on her. They all knew she had a hot temper.

'Damn you, woman! Why did you lead me on like this if you didn't want a bit of a fondle?'

She paused to gape at him. 'Lead you on? How have I been doing that?'

'You agreed to come out walking with me, didn't you? What else did you think I meant by it?'

She glared at him, struggling to keep the tears back now.

He spat on the ground at her feet.

'Well, you can keep your precious body all to yourself from now on, Rachel Bloody Smedling. I'd as soon bed a viper as you. Sooner!' And so he'd tell her father next time they met, friend or no friend.

'Hah! Think I'd waste myself on a stunted weasel like you!' she flung back at him, trying to set her hair to rights by feel. 'I wasn't leadin' you on, an' well you know it, Bill Withers! When you asked me to come out for a walk, I told you straight there'd be no messin' around. I couldn't have said it plainer.'

'Aw, that's what all the lasses say when they're in the village, but they change their minds quick enough once you get 'em out o' sight o' their mothers.'

She bit back further words. What was the use in arguing? She'd been surprised when he asked her to go walking, for no other fellow ever had, but he'd been so nice about it she'd thought that once, just once, someone liked her well enough to find out if they got on comfortably together. But all he'd wanted was her body and - she scowled as she worked it out - someone to look after his house now that his mam had died. She should have realised that sooner, but she'd been so happy to have a fellow interested in her, like the other lasses. Well, she wouldn't fool herself again, indeed she wouldn't.

He snatched up his fustian jacket and began to drag it on, frustration making him want to hurt her. Stunted weasel, was he? He'd make her sorry she'd called him that, by hell he would! 'You should think yoursen lucky anyone's botherin' to take an interest. I haven't seen no one else askin' you to walk out with them.' He bent again to retrieve his hat and stick, winced at his sore cheek and added spitefully, 'Proper old broomstick, you are! Grateful to me, that's what you should be, grateful!'

She felt sick with anger, as much with herself as with him. 'Grateful!' she mimicked, with the biting sarcasm for which she was famous. 'Grateful! To have an animal like you pawing at me.' She forced a laugh and tossed her head so that some of the soft, straight hair fell in front of her eyes and hid the tears still welling there. 'Well, I'm not grateful! I'm sickened by your slobberings. What's more, a hog'd not only have better manners than you, it'd smell nicer, too.'

Breath hissed into his mouth as he jammed the shapeless felt hat down on his greasy black hair. 'Well, there's other wenches as aren't sickened. Plenty of 'em.'

'Go an' slobber over them, then!' He'd been a rough bullying sort of boy, she remembered suddenly, from the days when she'd been free to play out a bit with the other children. And he clearly hadn't changed much since.

'I will go an' find mesen a prettier bit of skirt, that's for sure,' he growled. 'Don't think I ever fancied you, you old horse-face! 'Twas the dowry I were after. An' someone to take Mam's place. A man can't see what's in bed with him in the dark, but a good dowry goes a long way in the daylight, an' so does a steady hand with the spinning wheel.' He swished his stick at her, making her jerk backwards, then turned to leave.

'What?' The word was a gasp of air as his meaning sank in.

She caught up with him in two leaps, barring his way with a ferocious look on her face. 'What d'you mean - dowry?'

He took a step backwards. He had no mind to provoke her further, not with

that expression on her face. 'I meant nothin', nothin' at all. It were just words.'

"Tweren't just words, neither, Bill Withers. What did you mean by it?" Her voice was quieter now, but the fury flashing in her eyes and throbbing behind her words made him feel nervous. She was too strong for a woman, this one was. He preferred them soft and manageable.

'It were nothin', I tell you. Just a way o' speakin', like.' He kept a wary eye on her hands, which were curled into two very unfeminine fists, and tried to edge round her.

One of those hands shot out and before he could take a second step, Rachel had seized his stick. After a very brief tussle, she wrenched it away from him and used all the strength she could muster to send it whistling through the air, tumbling end over end as it bounced down the hillside.

He watched it open-mouthed, then edged back from her.

'I reckon I'm a match for you, Bill Withers,' she said, determination in every line of her body, 'so if you don't tell me what you mean by a dowry, you'll have to fight your way back to Upper Clough.'

'Well, then,' Bill's words came out in a rush, anger at being bested by a woman making him lash back at her in the only way he dared, 'it's your father as has talked about a dowry. He's offered five guineas to anyone as'll marry you an' take you off his hands. I could use the money, yes, an' a wife to spin for me, but I've changed my mind about havin' you! I'll find mysen a softer armful to warm my bed, by hell I will! You hardly even look like a woman! Proper old beanstick, you are! No, a maypole. They should tie ribbons round your neck an' save themselves the cost of that new pole they're talkin' about setting up.' He grinned at his own wit, then scowled again as she made no response, just continued to stare at him, grey eyes narrowed like a cat's. 'So you can keep that precious body of yours untouched, an' I'll look for a likelier lass.'

She moved out of his way then and flourished one hand in a gesture to him to leave, for she could not have spoken a single word. Sick humiliation sat in a cold lump behind her anger and she stood motionless, arms folded across her breast, as she watched him hurry down the path towards the village. A couple of times she saw him glance over his shoulder as if he was afraid of her following him, but she didn't move, couldn't, for very shame. It was all she could do to hold her head up and keep her back straight.

Only when he was out of sight did she allow her shoulders to sag. 'Oh, how could he?' she whispered, thinking of the shame her father had put upon her. Knowing him, she could guess he'd have made the offer in the Lower Clough alehouse for all to hear, because that's where he spent most of his time. Most of his money, too, lately. Oh, she could kill him! And then, suddenly, it was all too much for her - the tall thin body, the

gaunt face, the mind that refused to be quiet and the temper that flared out of control sometimes and made enemies for her. Why had she been born like this? Why couldn't she be soft and pretty like her cousin Nell? It would be a waste of time fussing over her appearance, whatever her mother and Nell said. When did she have time to primp, anyway?

And even if she did change how she looked, she would still be too tall and she wouldn't think like the other girls, would she? Or behave like them, either. When the lasses of her age had started to walk out with lads and sit with the older women of an afternoon, spinning and gossiping, Rachel Smedling had been at home learning to weave, as the brother who'd died would have done. For some reason it had amused her father to teach her - and when she'd shown an aptitude, he'd kept her at it, for her work brought him more money than she would ever have saved him by spinning wool for him. She was as good a weaver as any of the men in the village, but it didn't make her more popular - it only emphasised how different she was. She moaned in her throat, misery trickling through her veins like slow, thick acid. What had she done to deserve this? She stood next to her father at her loom in the attic for as long as he did every day, longer since he'd taken to the drink. And when she wasn't weaving, she had to help her poor ailing mam to keep the house clean or else labour on the family's plot of land. It seemed sometimes that the work never ended. From early morning till she fell into bed, she was always behind with something.

Lately she had grown to hate him, whatever it said in the Bible about honouring your father and mother! And she knew he felt the same way about her. It had soured him when her poor little brother died and since then he spoke to her scornfully, mocking how she looked, not only at home, but publicly.

A grim smile sat briefly on her face. He didn't try to hit her any more, though. Last time he'd slapped her, she'd told him straight she'd thump him back if he laid a finger on her again. When he'd raised his fist, she'd grabbed a piece of wood and clouted him with it. Hard.

Her mother had got so upset he'd backed down, saying Rachel wasn't worth bothering about, and he hadn't touched her since, but it had never occurred to her that he would try to get rid of her by bribing the men from the Weaver's Arms to wed her.

She drew in a few deep breaths and tried to calm down, but the thoughts still twisted round and round in her skull. She could guess why he'd done it, of course. Last year she'd insisted on getting her share of the weaving money and had vowed she wouldn't work at her loom if she didn't get paid for it, though she had had to let the loom stand idle for five days to prove that. Then he'd given in, but with a sour grace. So now that he couldn't steal all she earned, she supposed he didn't see any use in her staying around.

And if it weren't for her mam, she'd leave home this very day, oh, she

surely would - and take her savings with her. He knew she had money put by, but he didn't know where or how much, though he'd gone through her things once or twice looking for it, she could tell that. She was very careful nowadays when she added new coins to her store, making sure he was out at the alehouse before she dug up her little tin box.

Suddenly, it was all too much! Overwhelmed with shame and anguish, Rachel buried her face in a tussock of springy moorland grass and began to weep hoarsely. Bill Withers! If her father had to buy her a husband, he should look for a better bargain than that! Buy her a husband! Oh, dear Lord, the shame of it!

A few days before Rachel went for her walk, Maggie Kellett sat down in her sister-in-law's comfortable kitchen in Hepstone, in the big farmhouse where she had grown up and lived till she got married.

'Oh, Bella, if only Justin could have got somewhere closer to home. I'm going to miss you so.'

Bella sighed. Maggie's shoulders were drooping, her blond hair was in tangles and her eyes were red-rimmed. The younger woman was a weak reed and it would be a relief not to have her living nearby, sending little Peg running to her aunt for help at every small crisis. 'You'll be fine once you get settled in,' she said bracingly. 'Mr Armstrong told your Justin the house in Upper Clough has three bedrooms and a proper parlour. Think how much better that'll be than the cottage you've got here, with only the open loft for the children to sleep in. And,' she looked suggestively at the other woman's swelling stomach, 'you're going to need more sleeping space once you've had the child.'

Maggie cradled her belly, but her face didn't brighten. 'I was later on than this when I lost the last one.'

'Well, you had two fine little girls before that, didn't you?'

'And lost two others. And I still haven't given Justin the son he wants.'

Bella ran out of patience. 'For heaven's sake, stop complaining, Maggie! Once the move is over, you'll be much happier in Upper Clough. You know you will.' She ignored the gulp and the trembling lips. 'Now, have you got everything ready for my Ned and Caleb Hesketh to load on the big cart tomorrow?'

'Everything except Justin's books and writing things. He wouldn't let me pack them till today because he was working on a sermon. You know what he's like, always reading in the evening. I can hardly get a word out of him sometimes.'

Bella wasn't getting into that argument again. 'Then you'd better go home

and start packing the rest, hadn't you?'

Once she got home, Maggie began to tie the books into bundles. 'Justin thinks more of these than he does of me,' she muttered and brushed away another tear. She didn't want to leave Hepstone. The village might be small, but she had grown up there and her only remaining family lived just outside the village. Justin should have been offered the living here, for he'd been curate for eight years, but he wasn't the sort of man to talk softly to anyone, even his patron, especially when he saw an injustice or a better way of doing something. Eight years of living in a cramped cottage had made her feel very bitter. Well, who wouldn't be, in the circumstances? She'd come down in the world, she definitely had.

Her brother Ned was lucky. Men always had the best of everything. He'd inherited South Lea Farm from their father while Maggie had got nothing except some money, a few bits and pieces of furniture and her mother's silver locket. And of course her husband had immediately taken charge of the money, so she hadn't had the pleasure of spending it.

Why, even Caleb Hesketh, a distant cousin of Justin's, had a small farm of his own beyond the village, and he was bastard born. She sometimes thought she should have set her cap at him instead of Justin - except that Caleb was so big and stern he always made her feel a little nervous. And Black Top Farm, where he lived, lay right out on the edge of the moors, a bleak place where the wind whistled like a pack of demons in winter. She'd not fancy living there, nor enjoy living with his mother. Joanna Hesketh was a sharp-tongued woman and had nowhere else to go if her son married. But her Justin was such a fine-looking young man that she'd been in a daze of love almost from the moment he came to the village as curate. He was still handsome; it was she who looked and felt worn out. She sat down on the edge of the bed and was tempted into lying down for a rest. Her back was aching again and she had craved sleep all the time she had been carrying this child.

Feeling guilty for her sharpness, Bella came round at dusk to help and found her still in bed, the books lying scattered on the floor, the little girls' needs forgotten. Eh, Maggie lass, Bella thought sadly, looking down on the sleeping woman, I don't know how you'll go on without me.

Justin returned home and frowned to see no evening meal ready and the packing still not finished.

'She's not carrying this baby easily,' Bella offered by way of an excuse.

'She never does. Thanks for your help, Bella, and for having the three of them to stay with you tomorrow.' He stifled his annoyance and went to shake Maggie awake. 'Time to get us all something to eat, love.'

As his wife yawned and took her time about getting up, he picked up the

last few books and tied them together. He had finished his final round of farewells and duties as curate now, and was more than ready to leave Hepstone.

Only when little Peg came to try and help him did his expression lighten.

But a shriek of dismay from the kitchen made the frown return to his face again, as he went to sort out his wife's latest domestic crisis. Perhaps she would cope better in a larger house. Or perhaps she wouldn't. Perhaps . . . he shook his head and banished such thoughts. She was his wife and whatever her faults, he owed her respect and love.

Anna Jacobs, historicals 10/99 OUR LIZZIE (pbk), 10/99 LIKE NO OTHER (hbk)
coming LANCASHIRE LASS (5/00) OUR POLLY (3/01)
Sherry-Anne Jacobs, A PROPER MATCH, regency romance (6/00)
Shannah Jay, ENVOY (SF), THE SWORD OF AZARAY (YA fantasy), WORLDS BEYOND (YA, 4/00)
<http://www.annajacobs.com>

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Featured Writer/Reader

Heather Nimmo is an award-winning playwright who also writes for film, television and radio. Significant stage credits include *The Hope* (Playbox /WA Theatre Company), *Mean Deeds* (Hole in the Wall), *One Small Step* (State Theatre Company of WA, interstate tour) and *Whispering Demons* (Perth Theatre Company, Vitalstatistix); *All Men Are Mortal* (film); *Fly in - Fly out* (radio). Publications: *The Hope*, *One Small Step* (Currency press). Awards: WA Premier's Script Award (*One Small Step*, *Whispering Demons*); AWGIE (*Fly in - Fly out*). Her children's plays included *Junk*, *Fossils* and *Gammer*. She has also written the book and lyrics for two musicals: *A Touch of Midas* and *Beijing Spring*. She is currently writing the puppet script, *Eat the Moon*, and working on various film projects. From time to time she teaches writing for the theatre at various WA universities. She also acts as a script assessor, dramaturge and writing mentor. She is a member of the Literature Fund of the Australia Council. She has been married for twenty-five years to a geologist.

Heather is also an excellent presenter with a keen sense of humour. Her brief bio nearly completes the set of Literature Fund members, with only **Frank**

Devine being outstanding, but hardly standing out, through his missing short biography.

Congratulations to chairman, **Nicholas Hasluck QC**, who has been appointed to the bench, thereby constraining even greater respect from his fellow writers. Literature Fund decisions will doubtless be even more sober, magistral, and certainly better than magisterial, but I would not be surprised if his honour steps down to attend to his new and onerous duties. It would be a pity for several reasons, not the least being that the Australia Council webmaster has at last got his state of origin right on the website!

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Best of the Literary Box

Oliver Twist on Channel 2 was a controversial adaptation by Alan Bleasdale, that has gone far beyond mere dramatisation of the printed work. He has taken up Dickens's brief outline of the story leading up to the events of the book, treating it as a back story and fully portraying events leading up to the birth and subsequent vicissitudes of Oliver. If the process were somewhat reversed, an Oliver trilogy could well be written from the screenplay!

It was beautifully done with a top cast and excellent direction. As ever, the sets were authentic as there is still a lot of Dickens about England, and English society.

The Beginning of the **End of the Affair** (Masterpiece SBS) is truly a multi-arts mix, being the documentary of the film of the book based closely on the long time love affair of the author, Graham Greene. Catherine Walston and Greene were together for nearly thirteen years and had a profound affect on each other.

The documentary, directed by Mike Dibb, is fascinating on a number of levels. Catherine's son, Oliver, takes such a leading role and behaves so professionally in front of the camera that I was left mistakenly with the notion that he may have been the director.

In the film, Julianne Moore plays Catherine and bears a striking resemblance to her. Both she and Ralph Fiennes, who plays the lead role, are compellingly cerebral about their work, as is the writer and director of the film, Neil Jordan.

Greene's book was written during the affair and he makes little effort to disguise its biographical nature, which must have caused some hurt to the cuckolded Harry and his family.

It is recommended viewing next time round.

As an aside, I read somewhere that Greene anonymously entered a **WRITE LIKE**

GRAHAM GREENE contest but only scored second prize!

Lawrence Durrell (Masterpiece SBS) is featured in a television documentary entitled, "A Smile In the Mind's Eye, by Margaret McCall.

I first came to Durrell through the highly amusing book by his zoologist and broadcaster brother, Gerald, "My Family and Other Animals", which gave an insight into their unusual ex-patriate background, with its consequent influence on their very different modes of thinking.

Like Graham Greene, Durrell played with sexual themes and is certainly guilty, in similar vein to later feminist writers, of using shock/horror to titillate the English speaking world and sell more books. He recounts with relish, the amazing sexual feat of an acquaintance in Alexandra who had seven women in one day.

He was a brilliant writer, seen by T.S.Elliot to be the bright hope of the English novel.

I enjoyed reading the Alexander Quartet many years ago but have not been left with a desire to revisit. I was struck by his use of differing viewpoints and one vignette persists, a servant loudly invoking the gods of the Nile in terror before daring to use the indoor plumbing!

He flaws his heroines. Clea suffered the amputation of her hand when it was pinned to a wreck in a diving accident with a speargun. It's nitpicking, I know, but a very clumsy device, as any moderately experienced diver could attest, as it would be so much easier to tear a hand over the haft of the spear than to carry out a difficult amputation under water with a diving knife.

The documentary is a fascinating work, to be looked for again.

"So this is Modern Art" (Channel 2) was a six part series by artist, Matthew Gooding with some interesting comment as well as lame equivocation. It is relevant to these pages simply because of its insight into the mind set of creative people in the past century as they strove to bring innovation into their art form, often failing dismally. A cynic could also be forgiven for thinking that many so-called modern artists have been more wordsmith than visual artist! Their twaddle is somewhat reminiscent of the various analytical movements amongst literary academics that have surfaced from time to time, and, happily, sunk without trace.

The series opens with Gooding making a poor job of drawing from a nude model, with obviously no idea of how to go about it, observing that artists these days don't necessarily have such formal training, as if this were some kind of virtue. It seems to me that the genuine innovators have been well practised enough in the techniques of the art form to push the envelope and create something new. Picasso and Dali come to mind. Further, art that survives has a lyrical quality.

The series charts some of the utter despair and pretension that dogged the modern art

movement.

In anticipation of somebody adopting white on white in literature, I announce that the world's first white on white or grey on grey novel, written by me thirty days ago, follows immediately after the conclusion of this edition of PixelPapers. Look for it!

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Reviews

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Articles old and new

Worm In My Apple revisited.

I'm afraid that my feminine side got the better of me, and after my tirade about Apple's shortcomings, I've bought an iMac DVD! It's a marvellous machine, five hundred times more powerful than my original 128, with a nominal dollar price less than I paid in 1985, for an original Mac 128, making it about a third of the real price.

My earlier problem was simply and fairly solved by yet another dealer, so it pays to shop around.

I'll write up a road test for next issue.

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Words Worth

Cannes, Cairns revisited

The ABC commentator on Channel Two got it right for the last test with New Zealand and avoided pronouncing Cairns as cans, can or carn!

Apostrophe. This cursed high-flying comma causes a great deal of confusion, even amongst the relatively well-educated segment of our community, and pepper's sign's, brochure's and advertisemnts's. The simplest rule for indicating possession, harking back to an educator, Luella Cole, is to place an apostrophe after the owning noun, followed by an "s", unless it closes on a "z" sound, in which case it is omitted. So we have St John's gospel but Jesus' life.

I would add a second rule. When in doubt, don't!

BLIMPS AND BLIPS - GOVERNMENTS FOR

AND AGAINST THE ARTS

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

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Impressing & Depressing - the rise, fall, amalgamation and gossip about presses and publishing.

Fran Sbrocchi is the featured writer in a Canadian literary e-zine
LadybugFlights at <<http://www.ladybugflights.com/index.htm#TOP>>

Fran has published extensively, and in PixelPapers, and her book, *Flight Patterns*, was brought out last year.

Stephen King's e-book edition novella, brought out by Simon & Schuster, has now passed the 600,000 mark.

We regret the passing of two major writers, **Jack Davis** and **Gerald Glaskin**.

Jack was partly of Aboriginal descent, a great champion of Aboriginal causes and a mentor to young Aboriginal writers. His plays were widely performed. Last year he was honoured by the W.A. Writers Forum.

Gerald achieved international fame with his books, notably, "*Lion in the Sun*", in which he used his experience of life in Singapore, where he worked for several years as a financial broker. Ironically, he achieved local fame, being charged with indecent exposure in our puritan years, through nude sunbathing, quite alone and away from the eyes of all but purposefully searching police, in the sandhills at Swanbourne. Swanbourne is now an officially tolerated nudist beach that attracts thousands on hot summer days.

Tracy Ryan, one of Australia's finest poets and winner of the 2000 WA Premier's Book Award for poetry, is to be writer in residence at Tom Collins Writers Centre.

Kevin Gillam, a much published poet and contributor to these pages, also commences his residency at Tom Collins Writers Centre, today.

Goliardys - Saucy little stories or verse.

Joker

Restitution

Contributed by Jim Cornish.

The Curator, Art Gallery

Dear Sir,

About the bronze reclining nude that you lost. It was me that took it. I was out of work, in debt and desperate. It was that easy to snatch the figurine I gave in to temptation. Not wanting to be found out, I melted down the item and got \$5.40 from a scrap metal merchant. Now that I have got a job and am better off I'm sorry for what I done. I know it was very bad and I want to make restitution. So to ease my conscience I am sending you the enclosed \$5.40.

Yours
Sincerely

A. Nonymous

Survival Techniques

Contributed by Jim Cornish.

It's a well documented fact that private detectives have very few close friends. This is brought about by the fact that most people are aware of the risks they run being associated with any very successful dick or PI. In any congregation of say eight or more which includes one of these private investigators, no matter how amateur or dilettante he or she is, there is sure to be one or two newly deceased fellow members turn up in the course of the party, excursion, journey or whatever. Detectives are constantly surrounded by ill-will which is seemingly generated by their very presence. Anyone who has unwittingly or unconsciously become one of a gathering of a dozen or so guests on a luxury yacht or snow-bound in a ski resort and then found that one of the party is a Famous Detective has reason to be on the qui-vive at all times because something nasty is going to happen to someone.

It is all too easy to be mistaken for the Intended Victim or become a Key Witness and be the recipient of a poison needle or an ice pick while the lights are out or maybe a doctored drink or a stiletto through the curtain. On the other hand, if one really were the Heir to a Fortune or some-one's Next of Kin without knowing it, one could easily become the Intended Victim.

In such cases it seems that the presence of a sleuth is desirable if not essential to create the proper atmosphere and milieu and this alone is reason to be extra alert. On the other hand it may be that his or her presence is by itself a challenge which any self-respecting villain feels compelled to accept and it certainly is the case that a sleuth with a high success rate is the most likely to be plunged into a murder case with the same regularity attributed to prunes and wheat bran, It is also likely, in that case, that the victim will be picked at random and every precaution needs to be taken by guests to ensure that one of the other party members is more readily available by always keeping a low profile and one's back to the wall, eyes peeled and ear to the ground.

"Pudding Guy" rules. GREAT TRUE STORY

Nanon

At this point, two things seem clear: It will be a very long time before David Phillips will have to pay for another airline ticket. And it will be even longer before the poor and homeless people in the Sacramento area will want to see another cup of chocolate pudding.

Phillips, a civil engineer at UC-Davis, has become a cult hero in the obsessive subculture of people who collect frequent-flier miles by parlaying \$3,150 worth of pudding into 1.2 million miles.

Oh, yeah - he's also going to claim an \$815 tax write-off.

Last May, Phillips was pushing his shopping cart down the frozen-food aisle of his local supermarket when a promotion on a Healthy Choice frozen entree caught his eye: He could earn 500 miles for every 10 Universal Product Codes (bar codes) from Healthy

Choice products he sent to the company by Dec. 31.

Even better: Any bar codes mailed by the end of the month would rack up double the mileage, or 1,000 miles for every 10 labels.

"I started doing the math, and I realised that this was a great deal," he said. "I wanted to take my family to Europe this summer, and this could be the way."

Frozen entrees were about \$2 apiece, but a few aisles away Phillips found cans of Healthy Choice soups at 90 cents each. He filled his cart with them, and then headed to his local Grocery Outlet, a warehouse-style discount store. And there he hit the mother lode.

"They had individual servings of chocolate pudding for 25 cents apiece," he said. "And each serving had its own bar code on it. I did some more math and decided to escalate my plans."

Phillips cleaned the store out - bought every last cup of pudding in the warehouse. He then asked the manager for the addresses of all the other Grocery Outlets in the Central Valley and, with his mother-in-law riding shotgun in his van, spent a weekend scouring the shelves of every store from Davis to Fresno.

"There were 10 stores in all," he said. "Luckily, most of them were right off the freeway."

He filled his garage to the rafters with chocolate pudding and stacked additional cases in his living room. But Phillips wasn't finished yet - he had the manager of his local Grocery Outlet order him 60 more cases.

"A few days later I went out behind the store," he said, "and there were two whole pallets of chocolate pudding with my name on them."

All in all, he'd purchased 12,150 individual servings of pudding.

Around this time, Phillips began to reveal his scheme to fellow readers of the Webflyer Web site (<http://www.flyertalk.com>), where he posted an account under the name "Pudding Guy." Phillips' tale was met with scepticism, if not outright disbelief, until he uploaded photos of his haul. They're still there, at <http://www.flyertalk.com/pudding.html>.

But then Pudding Guy discovered he had a problem on his hands: The deadline for earning double miles was quickly approaching, and there was simply no way Phillips and his wife could tear off all those bar codes in time.

"I had to come up with something to do with all that pudding, fast" he said.

Phillips trucked the pudding to two local food banks and the Salvation Army, which agreed to tear off the bar codes in exchange for the food donation.

"We'd never seen anything like it," said Larry Hostetler, community relations director for the Sacramento Salvation Army. "We've gotten some big donations, but always from companies and institutions, not individual people."

Phillips got his bar codes in the mail in time to beat the deadline, and then held his breath.

The promotion specifically said I could get the miles for any Healthy Choice product," he said. "But still, it seemed like there was a good Chance they'd get me on some technicality."

But then packages - large packages - started arriving in the mail from Healthy Choice. In all, they contained 2,506 certificates, each good for 500 miles. That's 1,253,000 miles.

Under the terms of the promotion, Phillips could have the mileage posted in any airline account. He split 216,000 between his United, Delta and Northwest accounts and posted the rest - 1,037,000 miles - to his American Airlines account.

By surpassing the million-mile mark, Pudding Guy now has AAdvantage Gold status for life, entitling him to a special reservations number, priority boarding, upgrades and bonus miles.

While we talked on the phone, Pudding Guy did a little math - as you might have noticed by now, he's very, very good at math and figured out that scheme netted him enough miles for 31 round-trip coach tickets to Europe, or 42 tickets to Hawaii, or 21 tickets to Australia, or 50 tickets anywhere in the U.S.

"Wow - 31 trips to Europe for a little over \$3,000," I said. "That's less than \$100 a ticket."

"Oh, it's better than that," Phillips said. "Since I gave the pudding to charity I can take a tax write-off of \$815. So that brings the cost of a ticket to Europe down to \$75."

As it turns out, Pudding Guy didn't donate all his stash to the foodbanks. He kept about 100 servings for himself, and he's just about finished them.

"Actually," he said, "I really like the stuff."

2000 San Francisco Examiner

(This piece smacks of urban myth, but is nevertheless instructive in case someone here really tries a similar competition.)

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

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

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

[The Australia Council](#) has a new, redesigned page with useful links to other arts agencies. The terrestrial address is:

372 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills NSW 2010,.
PO Box 788 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.
Tel (02)9215 9000, (02)9215 9111 Toll free 1800 226 912.

[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.

For vigorous, way-out poetry, try [sonikdosage](#).

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.

Check out the Peter Cowan Writers Centre and Helen Hagemann's Poetry at

<http://www.geocities.com/pcwcentre> &

http://www.geocities.com/helen_hagemann - with lots of good links!

Feel free to add these URL's to your web site.

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> <http://www.asauthors.org/>

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) <woods@inet.net.au>

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

<<http://www.inet.net.au/~fawwa/>> Located at the base of Melon Hill in Allen Park, near the corner of Kirkwood and Wood Streets in Swanbourne.

Postal Address: PO box 312, Cottesloe 6011. Phone: (08)93844771, fax: (08)93844854

Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre (WA Writers Centre) <kspf@inet.net.au>

Located at 11 Old York Road, Greenmount 6056. Phone: (08)92941872, fax: (08)92941372

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

Located on the Joondalup Campus, Edith Cown University, POBox 239, Joondalup 6919. Phone/fax: (08)93012282

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

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

South Australian Writers Centre <sawriters@sawriters.on.net>

Tasmanian Writers Centre, 1st Floor 77 Salamanca Place, Hobart TAS 7004,
ph: 03-6224 0029, fax: 03-6224 0029, email: writers@trump.net.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@inet.net.au becomes <http://www.inet.net.au/~pixpress/>)

Contributors

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

Glen Phillips is Associate Professor of English Studies at Edith Cowan University, author of several books of poetry, and all-round nice guy and resource for writers in the west.

Fran Sbrocchi is an accomplished and prolific writer and poet. Fran recently brought out her own extensive collection of poems, *Flight Patterns*.

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

Jim Cornish is a writer of whimsical (and other) poems and co-author of a chapbook with Fran Sbrocchi.

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, was e-published by New Concepts in February, 2000.

Kevin Gillam earns his living with his bow as a teacher of music and has had many of his poems published in literary magazines. He is presently writer in residence at the Tom Collins Writers Centre in leafy Allen Park, Swanbourne.

Barbara Yates Rothwell is a successful writer who has had many stories published and several books.

Shen practises medicine and poetry in Adelaide.

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

Ashes to Water

The sixth book of poems by Alec Choate

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 or from this site.

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) 1998 \$35.00 hardback. 471 pp.

The novel covers 300 years of mainly WA history. It starts with a Dutch shipwreck, the rescue of a solitary seaman by a local tribe of Aborigines, and the curious matter of a Dutch coin. Mystery, adventure and the pioneering spirit carry the story through the years, to the arrival in Fremantle of Mrs Ketteridge and her five adopted orphans. Their progress to become the influential Burleigh family, a second shipwreck during World War II, a lost boy and agruesome discovery revitalise the early mystery - and lead to its solution.

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

The Boy from the Hulks is for juvenile readers (10-14) and tells the tale of Lemuel, falsely accused and transported to Sydney in the 3rd Fleet. How will he prosper? What steps will he take to deal with the villainous Bulstrode? Why is he attracted to the clumsy Georgina? All is revealed, and once again Lemuel can hold up his head with pride.

(Published by Longman Cheshire - 1994) \$9.95 softback. 137 pp.

Both books are now available from The Lagoon Press.
email: lgnpress@inet.net.au.

KSP Science Fiction/Fantasy Award

Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers' Centre DEADLINE: MAY 26, 2000

11 Old York Road

Greenmount WA 6056

Entries invited from: Writers in Australia. Members of the KSP Foundation Management Committee are not eligible to enter.

Sections: Open and Youth. Youth = Under 20 years of age.

Entry form: No entry form required. Conditions available from early February send SSAE, or Email: kspf@inet.net.au Multiple entries accepted - maximum 3.

Entry fee: \$4 per story - all entrants.

Payable to: Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation Inc

Entry presentation

Manuscript: typed or computer printed, wide left hand margin, double-spaced, on one side only of white A4 paper or continuous feed separated and trimmed, with pages numbered

Instructions: and stapled in top left corner.

No writer's name to appear on manuscript.

Handwritten, faxed, email, or computer disk entries will not be accepted.

Cover sheet: to state name of competition, title of story, word count and age of entrant if under 20 years.

On a separate sheet: note name and date of competition, title and word count of story, writer's name, address, telephone number, fax number, and email address if available.

Entries are to be forwarded in an A4 size envelope. Include a similar-sized SSAE if manuscript return is desired.

Entries must be: Original, unpublished and not previously broadcast on radio, not entered in another competition at same time or have received an award in another competition, or be selected for, or under consideration elsewhere for publication or broadcast.

Word Count: 1500 - 3500 words.

Range of interest: Science Fiction / Fantasy only.

Common flaws Encountered: Lack of final editing, polishing.

Judging finalised: Early August.

Winners notified: By telephone or mail prior to announcement at the KSP Sunday Night Readings in August when those able to attend will be invited to read their stories.

Full list of winners: Automatically supplied if business-size SSAE is included with entry.

Judge's report: Winners result sheet includes some comment from judge.

Prizes: Open: First - \$200; Second - \$50. Youth: First \$100.

Highly Commended and Commended certificates will be awarded in both sections at judge's discretion. Depending on sponsorship, book prizes may also be offered.

Rights: Remain with writer, but Competition organisers reserve the right to publish winning entries subject to satisfactory negotiations between the writer and the organisers should the opportunity occur. If required, writer bio-notes will be obtained after announcement of winners.

Western Writers Brochure

Coming Events

Tom Collins House Writers Centre is run by the Fellowship of Australian Writers, WA (FAWWA). Founded in 1938 by a group of accomplished WA writers, Tom Collins House was left to the FAWWA by Samuel Furphy, son of Joseph Furphy who wrote "Such is Life", the chronicles of a character known as Tom Collins. From its old address on Servetus Street, progress moved TCH to Allan Park in 1998. It is now situated in a leafy wooded Historical Precinct next to green playing fields, with a backdrop of the Indian Ocean. The house is a valuable historic monument and as such was listed by the National Trust in 1978.

MONTHLY MEETINGS: The last Sunday of the month, TCH Writers Centre, Allen Park, Swanbourne. For transport to and from Grant Street Railway Station, ring the office (9384 4771) before 2:30pm on the Friday before.

ONGOING WORKSHOPS:

Mondays: 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Monday Night Group - Informal sessions led by practising writers. \$5.00 members, \$10 non-members

Tuesday: 10:00am to 12:00 midday

Wild Writing - with Andrew Burke. Informal workshops with Andrew Burke. \$10.00 per session. Come whenever you are able.

2nd Sunday each month, Round Table Writers Workshop

Bring your work to read and discuss in an informal setting with friendly critics! 3:00pm to 5:00pm - \$5 members, \$10 non-members.

Please note: Unless stated otherwise, all workshops and General Meetings will be held at the Tom Collins House Writers Centre.

Workshops are from 1:00pm to 4:00 or 5:00pm, usually on Saturdays, and General meetings from 3:00pm to 5:30pm on the last Sunday of each month.

Special events day is indicated.

Tom Collins House Writers Centre

PO Box 312, Cottesloe WA 6011

Phone 9384 4771 Fax 9384 4854

Office Hours: Thurs 8:30am to

1:30pm, Friday 9am to 2pm

Sunday 30 3:00-5:00pm General Meeting: Fictionalizing Fact and Factualising Fiction. Nicholas Hasluck discusses the constraints of creating a work of fiction based on an actual person or event with special reference to 'Our Man K' (short-listed in this year's Premier Book Awards). This is your opportunity to find out which characters were really real!
\$5 non-members, \$3 members.

MAY

Saturday 6 1:00-5:00pm Workshop: Freelance Writing For Profit, with Barb Clews. \$45 non-members, \$30 members.

Saturday 20 9:30- 4:30pm Fantasy and Science Fiction Writing, with Christopher Kenworthy. Christopher 's stories have appeared in many science fiction and horror magazines in the United Kingdom and Australia. He was nominated for the Best Short Story in the British Fantasy Award. \$45 non-members, \$30 members.

Sunday 28 General Meeting. An afternoon journey with the first TCH Writer-in-Residence for 2000 TBA. \$5 non-members, \$3 members.

JUNE

Saturday 3 1:00 to 5:00pm Workshop Creative Writing - Getting Started with Carrie Sonneborn \$45 non/ \$30 members.

Saturday 17 1:00 to 4:00pm Workshop. Mystery Session. The Centre's first Writer-in-Residence leads you into an exploration of life as a creative writer. \$45 non-members, \$30 members.

Sunday 25 3:00-5:30pm General Meeting, Catapulted Into Writing! with Georgina Price. Correspondence with another young scientist in the Antarctic, with an exchange of ideas and messages, provided the basis for Georgina's first book. It caused a sensation on publication. Now she works as a writer and communicator. \$5 non-members \$3 members.

Friday 30 Closing date for entries in Lyndall Hadow-Donald Stuart Short Story Competition. Entry forms from Tom Collins House Writers Centre.

JULY

Saturday 1 1:00-5:00pm Workshop: Where The Story Lies - Telling the Truth About Your Family, with Georgia Richter. Explore ways to research the fascinating figures that lurk in the background of families. \$45 non-members, \$30 members

Saturday 15 1:00-5:00pm Workshop - Practicing Poetry. Gwenda Steff is an experienced poet and teacher. Former winner of the Tom Collins Poetry Award, and facilitator of the Monday nights writing groups, Gwenda will lead members of this workshop in innovative ways of developing the initial inspiration into a finely crafted poem. \$45 non/\$30 members.

Sunday 30 3:00-5:30pm General Meeting, The Short Story. The announcement of winners of the Lyndall Hadow-Donald Stuart short story competition for 2000, reading of winning entries and Judge's report. \$5 non-members, \$3 members.

KSP Writers Centre

11 Old York Rd, Greenmount WA

Ph: 9294 1872 Fax 9292 1372

email: kspf@opera.iinet.net.au

Caroline Horobin available

Thursday 9.00am to 4.30pm

Tours

Guided tours of Katharine's Place are available on request, \$5 entry. Explore the former home of novelist Katharine Susannah Prichard, wander in the grounds, absorb the atmosphere of her writer's retreat. Tour bookings can be made on (08) 9294 1872.

KSP Young Writers

Tuesdays 7:00 - 8:30pm during school term. Cost \$2.

10-18s. Ring Cate Hale on 9298 8041. Special youth tutor.

Last Tuesday of each month from 7:00-9:00pm , Cost \$5.

April-May Writer-in-Residence is Carmel Macdonald Graham, a writing teacher at Edith Cowan University, where she has recently completed her Phd. Carmel will work on a four part narrative project set in Rottneest Agra, Montana and Cervantes.

July- August - Peter Bakowski

Peter Bakowski, a Melbourne based poet, has recently completed residencies in Paris and Rome. He is our

Established Writer-in-Residence this year and will work on his fifth volume of poetry, a collection of travel and philosophical poems set in Paris and Australia.

Regular Groups at KSP

Casual writers groups meet weekly at Katharine's Place from February and December and welcome new members.

Thursday Night Group

A writers' circle for readings and constructive criticism in a supportive group. Thursdays 7:30-10:00pm.

Cost: \$2.00 plus \$0.50 for supper.

Writefree

A women's writing group with three anthologies to its

name. Ring Margot Lowe 9378 8041. Wednesdays
9:00-11:00am. Cost: \$3.00, includes morning tea.

Susan Hayes State Literature Officer is at Katharine's
Place. Consultation by appointment only.
Literary Agent, Christine Nagel. Enquire with Christine
on 9295 3364 for her Special Workshop Series at KSP.
KSP Writers Centre
Greenmount

MAY

Friday 5 9:30-11:30am Cost \$12 non/\$10 members.
Occasional Workshop: Developing Your Writing Practice
With highly successful author and tertiary tutor, Zan Ross.

Saturday 20 1:00-4:00pm Cost \$12 non/ \$10 members
Occasional Workshop: The Story Machine - Generating
New Stories with our workshop facilitator, Cecily Scutt.

Sunday 21 7:00 for 7:30pm Cost \$6 non/ \$4 members
Sunday Night Readings with supper plus open section.
Special guests: Nigel Gray, Steve Kinnane, Collin
O'Brien.

Tuesday 23 7:00-9:00pm For 10-18 year olds
Cost: \$5 Heather Nimmo is our Special Youth Tutor
@ KSP Young Writers.

JUNE

Friday 2 9:30-11:30am Cost \$12 non/ \$10 members
Occasional Workshop with scriptwriter and experienced
teacher of indigenous writing, Jan Teagle-Kapetas.

Saturday 17 1:00-4:00pm Cost \$12 non/ \$10 members
Occasional Workshop: New Directions in the Short Story
with 1998 & 1999 KSP Short Fiction Award winner,
Patrick West.

Sunday 18 7:00 for 7:30pm Cost \$6 non/ \$4 members
Sunday Night Readings with supper plus open section.
Special Guests: Amanda Curtin, Christopher
Kenworthy, and Glen Phillips.

Tuesday 20 7:00-9:00pm. For 10-18 year olds.
Cost: \$5 Suzanne Kovic is our Special Youth Tutor
@ KSP Young Writers.

JULY

Friday 7 9:30-11:30am Cost \$12 non/\$10 members
Occasional Workshop: Drawing with Words with local
visual artist and wordsmith (facilitator to be announced).

Saturday 15 1:00-4:00pm Cost \$12 non/\$10 members
Special poetry workshop with KSP Writer in Residence,
Peter Bakowski.

Sunday 16 7:00 for 7:30pm. Cost \$6 non/\$4 members
Sunday Night Readings with supper plus open section
Special guests: Peter Bakowski (Writer in Residence)
Sarah French & Marie Kovacs.

Peter Cowan Writers Centre

Joondalup

Founded in 1985, the Peter Cowan Writers Centre began operations as the Northern Writers Association. Early in 1998, Edith Cowan University set aside a room for the Centre in the newly constructed Edith Cowan House on their Joondalup Campus. Further financial assistance from the City of Joondalup enabled the Centre to employ a part-time coordinator. Membership is fast approaching 150 and growing monthly.

OUR CENTRE is open Wednesday 8am to midday & Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm.

Visitors are welcome but please call ahead. We hold regular meetings and group meetings, conduct workshops and creative writing classes, sell members' books, make equipment - such as computer, scanner, printer, photocopier, guillotine, heat sealer, laminator - available for members to use at cost, hold writers' retreats, meet the writer session, book launches, and much more.

GENERAL MEETINGS: First Thursday each month, 7:30 to 9:30pm.

Members free,

Visitors \$3 - supper provided. In summer months, meetings are held outside under the pine trees and invited guests speak about various aspects of writing, publishing etc. In the cooler months we move into the house where members read their work for comment by fellow writers.

GROUP MEETINGS: Saturday is the time for some "real writing". From 10:30

until 12:30pm you will join other writers for some quality writing time, with the opportunity for feedback from fellow writers, and writing exercises if necessary. Caters for the beginner to the advanced. \$3.00 members, \$5.00 non-members.

WRITER/EDITOR IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM: allows members and others to meet interesting writers, both emerging and established, and professional editors.

STATE LITERATURE OFFICER, Susan Hayes, is available for consultation at the Centre by appointment only.

NEWSLETTER - We currently publish events and program in the Western Word.

As well, our quarterly newsletter is mailed direct to members. A monthly pick-up newsletter is also available from the Centre, ECU campuses and local libraries.

For general inquiries, or further information on any of the above, phone or email the coordinator, Helen Hagemann.
Peter Cowan Writers Centre

Applications invited for Established Writer-in-Residence position. Three weeks full-time or part-time equivalent. Send SSAE to 'Established Writer-in-Residence,' PO Box 239, Joondalup WA 6919, for guidelines. Saturday 29, 'Quality Writing Time'- **ON THE MOVE** - Writers to be advised.

Announcement of Primary School Short Story Competition.

MAY

Thursday 4 Members' Meeting - Critique Night (Square Table) Members to bring work. 7:30 to 9:30pm, Members free, visitors \$3. Supper provided. Announcement of the 'Trudy Graham Literary Awards 2000.'

Saturday 27 - Creative Writing Workshop with Carmel Macdonald-Grahame. (Brush up on skills for Trudy Graham Competition) 2:00 to 4:00pm.
Other Events: Launch of 'Anthology 2000' Date to be advised.

Saturday 6,13,20 & 27 Quality Writing Time in Edith Cowan House, 10:30 to 12:30pm. Members \$3, Non-member \$5.

JUNE

Thursday 1 Members' Meeting - 'Follow-up Critique' (Square Table) Members to discuss own work. 7:30 to 9:30pm, Members free, visitors \$3. Supper provided. Applications close for Established Writer-in-Residence. Entries for the Trudy Graham Literary Awards 2000 - National Competition.

Poetry and Short Story. Entry Fee \$5. Possible publication in an Anthology depending on numbers.

JULY

Thursday 6 Members' Meeting, Special Guest and Open Readings. Members free, visitors \$3. Supper Provided.

Saturday 1,8,15,22 & 29 Quality Writing Time in Edith Cowan House 10:30 to 12:30pm.

Monday 31 Results of Primary School Short Story Competition.

World Of Women

Poetry, Prose, Plays and Performance

Celebrating diversity of writing and culture

Presents Guests:

MICHELE BISHOP Poet/Scriptwriter

CECILY SCUTT Storyteller

NORMA HATCHETT Musician

at THE DEEN

Upstairs, 84 Aberdeen St Northbridge WA

opposite a CAT Bus stop

Monday 5 June 7.30pm &endash; 10pm

Waged \$4 Unwaged \$3

Open Readers and Performers

Bring some of your own work to read or perform

Everyone welcome (men and women)

WOW: Poetry, Prose, Plays and Performance is held on the first Monday of every month. If you're interested in performing, send a short bio, or for more information, please contact:

Vicki 9342 3467 vwormald@student.cowan.edu.au

Marion 9371 6715 marionmcinn@netscape.net

Maureen 9473 0684 mairs@iamwaiting.com

The following workshops will be taking place at the Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers' Centre, 11 Old York Road, Greenmount. Bookings are essential for all workshops - non members \$12/members \$10. You can contact the centre on 9294 1872 Mondays and Thursdays.

Friday 2nd June

9.30 - 11.30 am

"Dancing on the edge - not just dreaming"

with award winning author

Jan Teagle-Kapetas

Saturday 17th June

1.00 - 4.00 pm

"New Directions in the Short Story"

with 1999 KSP Short Fiction Award Winner

Patrick West

SPECIALLY FOR YOUNG WRITERS

Tuesday 20th

7.00 - 9.00 pm

Special ArtsWA Youth Tutor

(Cost \$5)

Suzanne Kovic

Sunday readings - 18th June

7.30 PM

Amanda Curtin, Christopher Kenworthy, Glen Phillips

Plus open forum!

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!

Target publication dates are the first of January, March,
May, July, September & November.

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