



# Issue The Fourth, March 1999.

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## Notice for Perth readers:



"Sappho's Delight", Walter Vivian's second book of poems, will be launched from the steps of Tom Collins House at 4.15 pm on Sunday, 2nd May, hopefully by Sir Percy Pixel himself, and certainly to the strains of the singing violin of Les Helfgott.

Please come along, a little later than the usual meeting time, to enjoy violin and verse under the sighing, souging gum trees of Melon Hill in Allen Park, Swanbourne. All are welcome.

## Editorial

Noted British novelist and writer Auberger Waugh, in a Margaret Throsby interview on Radio National, expressed the view that some of the best writing in his country was to be found in newspapers.

It is a claim that could hardly be made about writing in the Australian press, which apart from occasional sparks of excellence, is characterised by hurried maunderings that are soon forgotten. Film reviewers such as David Stratton, Evan Williams and Mark Naglazas are responsible for some good efforts that seem to be consistently better than the book reviews, although comparison is difficult, because book reviewing is usually dispersed amongst many occasional writers whose work is presented intermittently.

The early Phillip Adams, prior, I suspect, to using a dictaphone to keep up with his prodigious output, was a shining gem in "The Australian", and Patrick Cook in "The Bulletin", is master of the comic muse.

Newspapers reflect change as radio and television claim more of our attention.

Essays have disappeared. There is nothing like Walter Murdoch's polished pieces, that were a noteworthy feature of the newspapers of my childhood, second in interest for me, only to meagre comic strips.

Short stories are decidedly out of fashion in the pages of the daily press, doubtless giving way to drama on television. Episodic publishing of novels is virtually extinct, probably for much the same reason.

Poetry retains a precarious toehold in our better newspapers but is under pressure as the literary magazines are squeezed by withdrawal of funds.

Perhaps the vehicle for emergent writerly style and wit is to be found in the travel pages, that seem to be gaining much more editorial space as many more people now travel in reality, in contrast to less affluent yesteryears when prospect of travel for most had an element of fiction and was something of the mind or spirit.

Interestingly, poetry and essay live on in American television in the folksy but entertaining

Newshour of PBS, screened on Australia's SBS network late in the afternoon. Who would have thought that the wheedling, begging, cash-strapped PBS network, struggling to survive in an environment of rampant commercialism, would yet find time and space for such indulgence? They have a regular spoken essay on some aspect of life and culture and appearances by the American poet laureate, who recites poems from the treasury of English literature with great clarity and aplomb. We have nothing like it in Australia.

The millenium or Y2K bug is prominent in the media, with speculation that airliners may fall out of the sky, financial house computers freeze, data bases become inaccessible and home appliances with chips will fail.

The problem has its origins in a very human but flawed perception of the young that the future is something so far away that it is not their concern. So the pioneering young nerds in computerland only worked with two digits to represent the years in their program code strings, which was all fine and dandy until 2000 loomed and the dangerous ambiguity of 00 to 99 in the twenty first century became apparent. The young nerds who created Apple Macintosh, either through sophistication or sheer good luck, fixed on four digits instead, which you would expect to give them little trouble until the year 10000. However some of the third party software used by Macintoshes could be suspect.

How will the dreaded bug affect the arts, especially writing? Aside from the decline of that popular and overworked phrase, *fin de siecle*, for a very obvious reason, the impact should be slight. It is unlikely that the bug will bite clunking old Imperials, Remingtons and Olivetti 22's. Few writers seem to have computers of sufficient sophistication to be in jeopardy. Data could be lost, but if the normal, prudent, practice of backing up is followed, this should not be a problem.

Observation suggests that, fortunately, arts agencies are so close in thinking and practice to *fin de siecle* mark 1, that there will be little impact on them from *fin de siecle* mark 11!

This issue marks eight months of the existence of PixelPapers, which has attracted a growing readership. The idea of showcasing previously published work does not seem to be popular, despite the obvious advantages of presenting to a potentially vast audience. I have therefore applied for support from the funding agencies to pay writers, especially for new work, but given the past history of funding of web-based projects, I have no great expectations.

I suspect that many writers fear computer technology, clinging to their beloved old typewriters or Parker pens. In view of this, I have submitted a proposal to a major supplier to market a special writers package. There may be more about this in the future. In the meantime, I would urge writers to explore the benefits that computers provide (See my previous article on the subject.). There are marvellous bargains available with quite good secondhand hardware that may be obtained for two or three hundred dollars, a mere fraction of the prices a decade ago.

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## Poetry - Poems About Poetry And Poets

Perverse Rhyme

Walter Vivian

In poetry there is nothing worse  
than stilted, cloying, rhyming verse,  
creating prisons of each page,  
lines confined in a verbal cage,  
give me the loopy tangled line,  
chopped eratically, that's fine,  
for poetry should be bounding free  
gaily scattered word confetti,  
riddled with joyous ambiguity  
unfettered in glorious liberty;  
down with structure, strictured rhyme  
with boring, stale, metronomic time,  
rhyme is passe, rhyme's done and dead,  
full free-formed verse reigns instead.

and/or

Perverse Verse

Walter Vivian

I like a poem that rhymes,  
none of your fractured lines  
staggering on crooked feet,  
tangling ideas in vain hope  
of weaving semblance of sense,  
and peurile enjambment, so that  
every line is half a drink behind,  
forcing a gulping of words  
to keep up with the flow,  
like a drunk too drunk  
to dance to the music,  
but floundering on the floor,  
so give me poems with rhyme  
---- every time, almost.

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## Poetry - Virgin Verse and Verse From the Pros

autumn  
Kevid Gillam

On Joseph Street  
beneath a canopy  
of flame trees

she's stooped over  
picking up leaves,  
hands working the

unkempt crab grass,  
veins taut under  
wish-bone skin.

in the flukey breeze  
they fall in profusion,  
russet and brindled.

these are her  
rusted days.  
she throws them away

a.m.  
Kevin Gillam

I sleep swollen, fat as the moon.  
Wake beckons, tickling eyelids, playing tricks with the light,  
sweating and cussing, clicking fingers, never standing  
still shooting holes in clouds and pillow,  
running shopping lists and bank statements through my mind. But

the morning is yolk unbroken, the meniscus too strong, I remain, steaming along a  
track of rainbow gauge, next stop the forgotten castle, where I trudge the steps  
of Escher, forever searching for treasures and trinkets of  
the head, the what-might-be's, the fleeting shadow of the  
dream undreamed, while wake hovers with hands in pockets, waiting

The Shadow of You  
Helen Jean Hagemann

She has that look about her  
the one you envy-  
vogue shapes and fine lips  
curves of beauty, head cocked to one side  
sashaying just ahead of you  
between skin and schema.  
Her caramel thighs dance and shine

and you can almost  
catch her light  
as it falls on your oversized  
stretched lycra bike knees  
chasing the teasing shadow.  
At the top of the hill  
a thin, parked figure  
waits for the larger you.

At night, the light of shadow  
catches you leaning  
in cool cake-shelves.  
The only touch you feel  
is the cream on your fingers  
as you hold the layers of cherries wedged  
between the chocolate and rum liqueur.  
Your mouth moistens to bite down  
into what you know is warm, whipped ecstasy.  
Your tongue salivates  
on thick white dust-  
tilts a morsel of crushed almonds  
over effeminate lips.  
Thoughts drip like chocolate syrup.

The plate is washed and stacked.  
Hot water stirs a mist between frame  
and moonlight.  
A fluid fog chases the shadow of you  
back into the dark night.  
And the space between your left and right  
looks to a distant past  
through streets of thinness  
when you did lose weight, could lose  
had every reason to lose  
the first time you loved.

seagull  
Kevin Gillam

dart of beak  
leads a selfish  
eye, washing day  
white with a  
smudge of grey,  
all pluck and strut  
atop legs  
like red twigs

beyond salt  
Kevin Gillam

just beyond salt and  
tilting into dream I

find you  
in a bottle,

blacker than  
black, writhing in the

light. inside my shell

of cupped palms I  
let you be

Amber Scramble  
Jim Cornish

Friendly emerald, kindly gleam,  
beam on with cheerful favor.  
I approach; you greet.  
No fog, no rain, no night  
can dim your benevolent  
amiable verdant glow,  
no storm or heat  
still your generous heart,  
Deny your GO.  
...but wait! Oh wait!

Mischievous imp, you amber lamp,  
you treacherous interfering  
topaz fool.  
You coward colored witless scamp.  
Assassin! My green friend  
at thirty metres -- slain!  
And I with foot at brake,  
ambivalence tugging at  
my virtuous rectitude  
or temporal gain.

For in the offing  
amber's fierce confederate  
impatient, hot eyed

waits his turn;  
a malevolent, baleful  
ruby Cyclops  
eager to enforce his ban  
and I -- feel his burn  
pursue  
as I dash through.

### Old Whaling Station Albany Diane Beckingham

Sunset watch on Frenchman Bay  
Rocks and islands in the Sound  
are plumed with mist. Light is fading  
"Thar she blows" and Breaksea Island  
becomes a ponderous Sperm Whale  
lashed to a buoy.  
On the flensing deck I see  
the creature hacked away  
blubber stripped off like banana peel  
I see the head-saw slice the bony head  
ivory teeth loosen in a steam-bath  
sharks swarm near the 'blood beach'  
men stoke the cookers with quivering flesh  
and the gutters run with gore.  
Noise, blood and stench are traded for  
tons of oil, whalemeal, glue...

I stroll the splintered deck  
reliving what is past  
while the sea boils  
around Breaksea Island.

### Christmas in the Antipodes Diane Beckingham

Red robins, holly berries,  
snow-white scenes peak not to me -  
my Christmas joys are sun-coloured:

The season's ripe with melons,  
peaches, apricots, nectarines,  
the pink and white of prawn flesh.

Orange featherflower sells in bunches,  
late wattles bloom, coral gums;  
wheat harvests fill the silos

and by the road to beaches  
Nytytsia floribunda trees  
are heavy with ants and bees.

### Monkey Mia Diane Beckingham

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

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

Before the gentlest of mammals  
we are the captives  
with cameras at the ready.  
A child squeals, a dog barks,  
a red umbrella is unfurled -  
they curve away gracefully  
and are gone.

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

### Notes on Black Holes Frances Sbrocchi

I

We walked carefully placed boards  
our guide

murmured on;  
but I looked down  
into the caldron

into the eye

of the old god

saw his outrage  
and I knew  
that it had been a long time  
since his last feeding

2

We used to shoot marbles  
across the schoolroom  
into mouse holes

and I wondered  
what mice  
made  
of those hard  
round  
tasteless things

3

I cast words  
into the howl  
and a great wind came forth  
hurtling  
across the loud

I woke, clutching a single sheet  
blank

4

Portugues sailors  
found a black hole  
found a black river  
found the way  
into the tree-hung river  
venturing  
black  
to the river  
to the river people  
bringing  
white

5

On that night  
when I thought you were dying  
black opened  
out of the sunset  
over the edge  
over the land's end  
where the Maori spirits  
say good bye  
to the long cloud

Previously published in The Wascana Review

## Ancient Graffiti Frances Sbrocchi

I

Village women carry heavy jugs  
Squatting on bricks  
in the centre of the square  
I bore my child proud breasted  
feeding him for thirty days  
in a wide street

But the white snake in the jug is angry  
his anger futile  
unless I release him

Why do these newcomers cover their faces?  
Bodies  
hidden in houses  
there there are too many women

Grain barques carry wheat and cedar  
cinnamon and opium  
Stone masons build  
for the new god

We have no village god to find our lost  
His portrait  
has dead eyes

II

You tunnel into my innermost cavern  
I am empty under the sun  
under the rock face  
Water cannot cool  
or sun warm

my emptiness  
You have entered my darkness  
and my darkness is forever

White birds against the sky  
cry out  
cry out against the ravishing  
weep for the opening  
of the tomb  
of the white snake god

The children ride white donkeys  
two saddle bags  
carry bread to the god

The fathers are tied  
to stakes

they die  
for the god  
of the broken sarcophagus

You have entered my darkness  
and my darkness is forever

(Previously published in Quarry)

## VILLA BHORGESE Shane McCauley

Room after unselfconscious room,  
Ceilings as if held in place by  
Rosy rumped cupids, and art  
Of so many centuries stares  
Me back, confronting

A head filled with preconceived  
Varieties of ignorance, lazy familiarity  
that has ended novelty, eyes  
Glazing at another annunciation,  
Deposition (though Rubens Magdalen  
Diverts with her mourning breasts)  
Or god-encircled saint.

Dead gladiators upon the floor  
Almost quiver mosaic limbs

And the myths still live in Bernini,

Persephone's thigh dimpled  
In Hades, tenacious grip,  
Appolo aghast at a tree.  
My pleasure is not stilled, nor does  
It rise so awe-struck as it might,  
And I search a room overfilled  
With gods, dissatisfied to find  
Appreciation so great, so slight.

## LOVE IN THE AFTERNOON

Shane McCauley

Touch retores its memory, bringing  
Its clumsy photos into focus. Delight's  
Embellishments are elusive. We rush  
At them like children catching  
Bursting bubbles, silver rainbows tickling  
Flesh, then gliding into air.

For the moment, kisses cover separation's  
Confusion, each second a razor. Never  
Its exhaustion so longed for, flank melted  
Into flank, peripheries dazzled into sleep,  
Dust motes, hopes, flurrying still. Breath  
Trickles so sweetly out of us.

Hand, tongue, lips: mechanics of elation  
Dwindle while chasing sleep or smiling  
Simply to smile because this all  
The resurrection we may ever get.  
Or need.

## INVALID OF REALITY

Shane McCauley

I slice the clockface like a pier,  
Disinheriting it from morning, noon  
And night. Who has not yearned  
to live a lie?

I seek distraction from distraction.  
Caught between abstraction of a pulse,  
Unfocussed images of winter wind

And sea.

If a tree, my outermost leaves  
Would always be brown and falling.

Retrieval, gathering up, is for younger  
Hearts. No good calling now  
Through the deadened streets,  
Static moments stunned with sensation.

Breath an accumulation of ghosts.  
Reason atrophies into hope  
Of some as yet undreamt of season.

### New Time, The Turn Rob Finlayson

Time, time, time to do what, to go where, to say what, to whom, how, why, when is there  
enough time to shake out the hours and the minutes, wring them and shape them, caress  
them, peruse them?

This is it, the new year, the time of the day, the hour before the cock crows, the sparrow  
farts, the chorus dawns, all waiting, nascent, new, just born, looking out of the air and  
smoke and sea and earth to the sky, trees, the scent of blossoms, the crisp yellow grass,  
the leaning on the fence before we move, the unheard of song from someone's quiet yard  
before the treetops move in the slight morning breeze, expectant, ready, looking with  
some sort of expectation and plenty of 'seen it all before', the kind of enthusiasm we can  
do without as our mortal coil unwinds, day by minute by second.

It's time's hand moving into our bellies, our minds, winding up or winding down,  
bringing forth children, neuroses, careers, a trip to the dentist, another birthday, more  
socks, electronic data transfer, a new type of pie at the baker's, illness, old age, death.

And we see it, this hand, moving through the night, the day, the traffic, stirring the dust  
and heaping up the hurts and hopes as surely as we see the white horses on the sea,  
salt-licked and rapid, and the willy-willies of dust in the corners of our memories, or the  
sparks of electric trains, the plumes of diesel from exhausts. It's a hand wrist-watched  
and fine-boned, indolent, caressing, anything but haphazard. It holds itself out as  
saviour, the death-watch, the forgotten and the hoped-for. It provides everything we need  
in order to pass.

And in this way we become time itself, measuring our passing on our bodies, in our  
failures and successes, forgivenesses and revenges, people we've loved and lost and  
found again, and the finding of love, its nuances, its ridiculous, ordinary, mundane  
cadence that slowly, if we let it, unfolds, takes up space, irons out creases, fills and  
radiates like a choir's deep song in an old wooden hall in the country years ago, or a  
morning glow through the dust through the window through the white lace curtains  
when all else is still except the sun's creep across the floor and the cat's one soft paw  
outstretching.

Outstretching we become ourselves as we outpace ourselves, leave ourselves for dead, forget who we thought we wanted to be, discover nothing at all, the soft sounds, the paramount nature of the ephemeral, the power of one or two words that echo through decades, handing over our voice to kindness in awe of the speed of speech, its power, the deft lilt of tongue's hunger for infamy overturned gently, spatula-ed, by the feel of it in our skin after years. We give it up to kindness.

How easily we can turn, as if in our soft beds, as if asleep in our lives, as if in a dream of our soft selves ... seemingly utterly timeless.

## Sacred Time

by Rob. Finlayson

The best thing about this time of the year, this early Summer, this Christmas, this end-of-the-year, is the coming of the different time, the slow shift into slippery time, the advent of sacred time, the long run of holy days, the plunge into the infinite, the out-of-order, the lazy, the late, the shocks and jolts as the work-world adjusts its clocks, as the up-early-and-off-to-work world starts to loosen, shake up a bit, slip into something more comfortable, wriggle out of everyday clothes and into the holy days, the days when time is infinite, when the kids stay up late and the gods walk the sea, the night tingles with crustacean stars, friends visit from over east, over seas, and deadlines give way to the demands of live invitations, parties, remembrances, singing, ritual occasions, visits an hour late, or too early, or someone has to go so we'll go with them, and can you drop so-and-so here before just stopping for a swim, let's have lunch now, or later, it doesn't matter, there's no hurry, the day's are long and hot and there's nothing to do except everything that's different, that doesn't add up, that doesn't quite fit, that suits the shape of infinite time, of holy time, when the body and the clocks are all out of whack and we're reminded that family is an infinity of persons and identities, of times and places, and the shapes and shifts of relationships are frozen for an instant as we take stock, as they're highlighted, held up, dropped for another year, until we meet again, just here, in these days, seeing each other again, different, the same, the relationships consolidating, changing, liquid, embraced by the ritual time, the sacred time of the constantly recurring pageant, and we move, and we bow, and each drama, each kiss, each handshake, each marriage, each divorce, each baby, each dog, each toy, each sibling, each cousin, each parent, each grandparent, each grief, each illness, each death, is made anew, is shifted, is embraced and welcomed, acknowledged, made room for, within the anger and grief, the sadness and regret, the arrivals and departures, and we become special to each other again, all over again, on this made-special occasion, bound by the seemingly slight bonds of being, never forgotten, always present, forever relative, in the hands of the velvet moon, the chattering salt stars, the sandpaper sun, the old-aching earth and that sweet orange sea.

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## Shorts - old and new

## Safety Bay Holiday

by Andrew Burke

When we were ten years old, Terry Everton and I were thick as thieves, but thin as matchsticks. My father used to say we had to stand together to cast a shadow. We both had freckles, but Terry owned most of them, big patches of pigment on his face, like continents on a world globe. My big brother called him 'Atlas'. He and his mates thought it was a big joke.

Our homes were boring. Tidy lawns, swept paths. 'Don't play there, dear, you might hurt the agapanthus'. So, when Terry's family asked me to their beach-house for the Christmas holidays, I was overjoyed.

Safety Bay was an hour from home, but a world away from suburbia.

Its few houses were spread far apart along uncurbed roads. White beach sand blew across black bitumen, and the neighbourhood slumbered through hot summer days, like everyone was taking an afternoon nap. The Evertons' house was brick-and-tile, sparsely furnished, with a cold shower downstairs in the garage to wash the sand off.

At the last minute Mr Everton couldn't come. This meant the family launch stayed in town as well. We didn't mind - his absence gave us freedom.

'See ya, Mum,' Terry yelled from their front door.

Mrs Everton hurried from the kitchen. 'Where're you going, boys?'

'To the beach, Mrs Everton ...'

'See ya 'round lunchtime, Mum.'

We escaped to the beach every day, from dawn to dusk if we could.

The beach sat in a placid bay beyond the dunes across the road, with gentle surf that ran up on clear white sand. We would sprint up a dune then slide down the oceanside between pigweed and spiky balls that rolled in the wind.

The air smelt of salt water and rich seaweed. Each day the beach was ours.

If there were people, we would spy on them and draw them into our world.

This day there were two girls, aged about seven. Stealthily we

crawled over the hot sandy dunes until we were behind them. They were

digging for water high up on the beach and their arms couldn't dig deep

enough. We ran down the hill, screaming like warriors ... We were going to

use our longer arms to reach water but they took off in fright, running as

fast as they could up and over the dunes.

We stood silent for a moment.

'We were only going to help them,' Terry said.

'Yeh, now we're in trouble ...'

'But we didn't do anything ...'

'... they thought we were after them ...'

'Idiots. What made them run?'

'Girls are frightened of everything. My sister cries in the dark,

scared of bogey men!' I pulled a face, stretching my mouth and eyelids

with my fingers into hideous shapes. Terry laughed and did it too. We

started monster-walking up the beach , plowing our feet into the sand in

exaggerated strides. 'Booooo!' I cried, and 'Whooooo!' he replied.

'We are the monsters,

deepsea monsters,

we are the monsters,

come to eat little girls in Safety Bay.

We are the monsters,

deepsea monsters,

we are the monsters

come to frighten silly girls away.'

The Indian Ocean rolled its treasures on to the beach. We drew a boat's outline in the sand and sculpted it in mud. We slapped down dripping mud, then shaped it. It dried fast. As it dried, we collected brown spiky seaweed, green slushy seaweed, all shapes and sizes of shells, driftwood, a length of frayed orange rope, and a twisted weather balloon spear. With these we built cabins and cannons and a steering wheel.

With no building plans to hinder us, our boat evolved into a fantastic vessel, a giant sailing ship, no longer two dimensional on the sand but three dimensional on the high seas. I felt the ship roll and take the waves beneath my feet, sails full of the driving wind. We called her the 'Cuttlefish Maria' like one of those ghost ships our history teacher told us about, swallowed up by the ever-swirling Sargasso Sea.

Terry was Captain and I was First Mate.

Suddenly I ran at him with a mud bomb, threatening to throw it. He looked up startled from our seaweed steering wheel ...

'Whaddaya doing?!'

'Mutiny! It's a mutiny,' I shouted, in my sailor's accent, 'the crew are taking over. I'm their leader and I order you to walk the plank.'

'But - but you can't ... I'm the captain, what I say goes.'

'Yeh, so? It's a mutiny, I've got twenty men behind me, you don't stand a chance.' The bomb was dripping down my arm but the story stuck.

'Okay, you got me. What're we gunna do now?'

I chucked the mud away.

'Grab that big bit of wood and drag it over to the side of the boat, we'll have it sticking out like a plank ...'

The wood was black, slimy and heavy. It must have been submerged a

long time before it floated up on the tide. As we carried it over to the boat, Terry said:

'Maybe this really was a plank one day back then and somebody did walk off it and drown in Davy Jones' locker ...'

'Yeh, now it's your turn ... You're an evil captain and all the crew want you dead.'

I pulled out a handkerchief my mother made me carry.

'Now I'm gunna blindfold you.' It fitted tightly and I made sure he couldn't see by waving my hand in front of his face and asking him to tell me how many fingers I held up. Then I steered him to the plank.

'Now walk,' I cried. 'Walk! walk! walk! walk! walk!' The crew chanted into the afternoon seabreeze.

He walked, balancing on the slippery wood, until he got to the end.

He stopped.

'Cowardy cowardy custard,' I started chanting, but he bent his knees and jumped.

The moment he hit the beach he rolled into a little ball and started wailing. For a second I thought it was part of his act, then I ran over. His left foot was bleeding and in the sand stood the jagged end of a broken beer bottle. Blood was mixing with sand around his foot so I helped him hobble down to the water to wash it off. Then we wrapped his towel around the cut, picked up my towel, and started home. He was leaning on my shoulder, and hopping on his right foot.

'I know what - I'm the "man with the donkey" and you're a wounded soldier.'

'Yeh, I've been shot and you're trying to get me back to headquarters without getting blown away or anything.'

We made the sounds of sniper fire and ducked to let the bullets

whizz over our heads. A bombed tank lay behind us and the dunes were sandy mounds between trenches. We arrived at the road.

'Come on, Private, only a short way to the medical post.'

The towel had come off and on so many times he now wore it over his shoulder, its blood stains adding a touch of realism. Then we stopped. A police car was parked outside their house. It was empty.

'Don't worry, boys,' Terry's mother said, twisting her hands in her lap, 'the sergeant has some questions to ask you. A terrible thing has happened and he thinks ...'

'Thank you, Mrs Everton, I'd like to take it from there if I may.'

He was wearing his summer uniform - short sleeved blue shirt, short grey hair and a beer pot. He leant towards us: 'What have you two been doing today?'

We mumbled, heads down, feeling guilty and afraid: 'Just playing.'

'And where were you playing?'

'On the beach ...' Terry sniffled and I was afraid I might cry any minute myself.

'That where you cut yourself ...?'

'Yes, sir.'

'What time did you go there, boys?'

'This morning ...'

'They went down there straight after breakfast - must've been before eight ...'

'And you've just returned home?'

It was mid-afternoon, we had forgotten lunch.

'We were hungry,' Terry said.

'And he cut himself,' I added.

The sergeant leant closer and his voice lowered: 'Did you see anyone else down the beach today, boys?'

We shook our heads. Suddenly I remembered the girls, and would have blurted it out but Terry caught my eye and he seemed to say Don't. I didn't, but the sergeant saw my reaction.

'What's your name, son?'

'John.'

'Well, John, take a minute to think over the morning and tell me if you saw anyone - anybody at all - on the beach.'

I thought. Then spoke: 'There was an old fisherman up the end of the beach ... he was fishing and left just after we got there.'

'Do you know his name, where he lives?'

'No, I, I don't.'

Mrs Everton said, 'Probably Mr Evans, he always fishes early, regular as clockwork. He lives in that big place at the end of Shoalwater Drive ...'

The sergeant made a note then turned to me.

'Nobody else? Say, later on, midmorning perhaps?'

I mumbled 'No, sir, no-one.'

He stared at me a minute, then turned his attention to Terry. 'Can you remember anybody on the beach today, son?'

'No, sir, only the fisherman.' He spoke clearly and directly. I was impressed.

The sergeant left the police station's phone number in case we remembered anything suspicious on the beach that day. Anything at all, he said. When we looked out the window to see the police car drive away we saw other police searching the dunes and the road verges. Their black boots squashed

the pigweed.

'Well, you boys told the police all you know, that's all you can do. They have a job on their hands finding who killed that poor girl ...'

My heart jumped.

'Wha, what girl?' Terry stuttered.

'The little girl from the shop. She and her friend went to the beach today and when they were walking home some pervert attacked them ...

The other girl got away,' she sniffled, 'but the little one ... she didn't ...'

'But we ...' I started but Terry looked at me sharply.

'Yes, John?'

'We - didn't see anyone or hear anything ...'

'No, it was near the shop, the girls were nearly home,' and she started to cry. Terry put his arms around her, and winked at me. Then I started crying too.

## Picture of You

By Cam Smith

I now sit in the dark corner of my life; self-depression seems to be a key element in the endless regurgitation of unconscious routine. Condemned by darkness I wake up alone in my bed. I get up holding my head. Unable to think clearly, it's like the world is spinning. I pull back the curtains as light pours in from the window flooding my room. I squint my eyes as they adjust to the harshness of the light. My head feels so heavy and I feel so disorientated. I peer at the empty bottle of Scotch lying next to my pillow. The emptiness of the bottle makes me search my mind for the answers to last night's events. I rub my eyes trying to recall what happened but I can't. I look at my bedside table. I see the picture of her. Looking at her my body fills with emptiness making me feel grey and lifeless. I gently run my fingers around the outline of her face, having flash backs of what it was like when she was alive.

I get out of bed and walk into the kitchen. I look around my dull apartment, the only light source coming from my bedroom. There are clothes all over the floor; dishes piled up, yet the state of my apartment doesn't phase me. I search my cupboard and find the other bottle of Scotch. Holding the Scotch in my hand I feel safe and secure. I have nothing left in this life, there's nobody left to care for me only my bottle of Scotch, which only makes my daytime drag on and the nights so sad. Taking the Scotch and a packet of cigarettes I leave them on the bench and go for a shower.

I come out of the shower wrapping the towel around my waist. I walk over to the mirror wiping the

steam off it. I look at my sad unshaven face and picking up the razor from the sink I begin to shave. Thinking about her I shave more and more, unconsciously pressing harder and harder with the razor, as I continue to think back to what it used to be like. Harder and harder I press until the razor suddenly snaps. I drop it onto the ground and blood pours from my face. I bite my lip as a tear runs down my cheek. I sit down on the side of the bath holding my head and wiping my eyes.

I patch up my face and get changed into my black suit, straightening out the creases on the arms. I grab my pack of cigarettes and walk out of my apartment.

Walking through the colourless city, grey clouds hang high over large black and white buildings. I walk past unfamiliar faces as they stare uneasily at me but yet it doesn't worry me. I walk into a florist looking at all the multi-coloured flowers. My attention is drawn to a single red rose. I take it and pay the lady, not even making eye contact. I sit on a bench just outside the florist smoking a cigarette and occasionally gazing at the perfect rose. A sign catches my eyes. It's a bar; A small narrow alleyway leads down stairs. I walk into the bar and I feel the sharp temperature change, as the warmth of the pub pushes the coldness of the outside away. I sit on a stool at the bar. A bar tender comes over to ask me what I want. I ask for a Scotch with ice, without really paying any attention to him; it's like no one exists. I slowly have my drink, trapped in my own world, day dreaming. Time whines on but yet it feels like it's going so slowly. Ever since she died I feel I have no purpose. Drinking faster, the Scotches seem to get easier to drink but I still find it hard to swallow. I feel pain in my heart; a relentless pain which never seems to ease. My eyes feel heavy and sore. After a few more drinks I decide to leave.

Walking through the city once again I decide go to the cemetery. The walk seems to drag on forever. Suddenly it comes to the end as I walk through the gardens of the cemetery. The bright green grass seems to stand out even on this black and white day. The flowers on the graves are bright and kaleidoscopic. I walk through the maze of graves, which seems to be second nature, as I've been here so many times before. I walk up to her grave and just stand there. Rain begins to fall down on me like my whole world has. Looking at her grave, tears run down my face; I place the flower down on the grave with my hands shaking; I fall to my knees unable to do anything. I feel my whole body has gone weak. I feel the harsh pain in my heart, a feeling so common in my heart but yet I still can never get used to it. I try to breathe but all I do is sigh. Unable to take anymore, I get up still looking at her grave and leave.

I walk into my apartment, cold and wet. It seems the rain has followed me home. I sit on the chair with the bottle of Scotch that I got off the bench. I sit there looking at her picture thinking about how much I miss my wife. I open the bottle and drink the Scotch like it is water. I look at the coffee table on which the gun rests. The silver sharpness of the barrel grabs my attention. I pick up the silver six shooter and upon opening it, I find one bullet. I spin the cylinder around not knowing where the bullet is; hoping it is ready to be fired. I hold the gun to my head loosely with her picture resting on my lap and the bottle of Scotch in the other. I place the bottle of Scotch down on the table. I begin to squeeze the trigger gently. I feel my body rush as I think the bullet is in the right chamber. I feel the gun click back ready to almost fire. Tears run down my face as I become prepared to be reunited with my wife once again, then I fully pull the trigger. CLICK the chamber is empty. I throw the gun down, shaking as I try to catch my breath. I hold her picture against my head.

"I miss you", I groan. I wipe the tears from my eyes. No matter how much I miss her, no matter how much I love her, I am unable to take my own life.

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# Page Three Writer/Reader Revealed

WE HOPE SOON TO HAVE A PIECE ON NICHOLAS HASLUCK QC, THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE LITERATURE BOARD. NOT, WE HASTEN TO ADD, ACCOMPANIED BY A PICTURE OF HIMSELF IN A SWIMSUIT!

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## Reviews

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## Articles old and new

Pressing On  
José Borghino

"there will be more novels written by more Australians over the next 20 years than in the previous 200."

In the future, there will be Regular and repeated predictions That the 'novel is dead' José Borghino, Executive Director, Australian Society of Authors, thinks not.

You're on a hiding to nothing predicting the future of most things, let alone forecasting future trends for something as diverse, complex and contradictory as 'Australian Literature'. So, before I launch into prognostication, indulge me for a moment and let me pronounce an absolute sure-fire bet: in the future, there will be regular and repeated predictions that the 'novel is dead'.

My second sure-fire bet is that these predictions of the novel's demise will be wrong. There will be more novels written by more Australians over the next 20 years than in the previous 200.

And my third sure-fire bet is that the same wrong predictions will be made about poetry.

"We tell ourselves stories in order to live". So begins a magisterial essay by the American writer Joan Didion entitled 'The White Album'. Didion's sentence sums up what any cultural artefact does &ndash; it tells a human story we can learn from; it creates myths we can live by; and it helps us construct a social identity. Writing literature will always be a risky business. It is usually a kind of solitary confinement for people who commonly show up in medical statistics as depressives. But in an increasingly fragmented and alienated world, the number of writers increases daily, their words roll off the presses like a flood and there doesn't seem to be an end in sight to the stories they need to tell us.

It's a safe bet then, that until we find a better textual form for the telling of stories, countless novels

and poems will be written and published and read. Of course, film, video and interactive visual media will attract attention. But, for the moment, film and these newer forms are more formulaic in their narrative structures &ndash; whereas the structures of prose fiction and poetry promise writers an abundance of depth and complexity to play with. Although the financial rewards of film-writing are relatively enormous, many writers still prefer to see their work in print rather than reduced to a screen.

So more stories will be told - the real question is how will we consume them? The Australian publishing scene has changed greatly over the past ten years. Publishers and writers are less patient now. They strive for instant bestsellers with every first-time book and there is less long-term nurturing of new writers than in the past. The consequence is that more writers will be one-hit wonders, appearing as if out of nowhere and disappearing just as quickly. Literature will continue to be published in the future, but it may be even harder than it is now to sustain a literary career. Matt Condon, a prize-winning Australian writer who has published six novels since 1988, sees a possible trend towards smaller publishers. "There will always be storytelling," he says, "it's the basic human desire to gather round a campfire &ndash; but it seems that most new novels, these days, have to include something unusual or sensational to get published by the bigger publishers. Maybe new, smaller presses will focus on individual writers and provide the intimacy required to make a fourth or fifth book better than a writer's first or second efforts."

Publishers' profit margins are already tight. Poetry has been abandoned by most of the larger publishers and literary fiction is being asked to perform like commercial fiction. Some writers like Tim Winton can sustain the crossover, but others may fall by the wayside. This is the area publishers call the 'mid-list'. Sophie Cunningham, publisher at Allen & Unwin, sees most mid-lists being squeezed in the future as publishers look for books with obvious hooks, about hot topics or by 'marketable' authors. She says that more Australian writers are now aware that writing a book is only the first step in the process and that publicity and promotion are more crucial than ever before, especially with the fall in available review space.

Writers will continue to be asked to transform themselves into personalities, entertainers, sellers. For those who can't play the promotion game, it will become easier to self-publish and niche markets for specialist readers will flourish. The Internet is the obvious place for this, but short print-run, hard-copy books will also become collectors' items. There's a certain medievalism in all this &ndash; a kind of going back to the future &ndash; as there is in the revival of performance poetry and other oral forms. Audio books will boom and other screen-based reading technologies will become cheaper and more common.

Technology will impact in the long term as whole new generations grow up reading differently from the way we do today. In academic non-fiction, short print-run publishing and electronic storage and retrieval will create an archive for books that might otherwise go out of print. Perhaps the days of hard-copy, print-based publishing with its attendant production and distribution problems are numbered, and there will be a shift towards electronic publishing in the future, of which the Internet is just a contemporary phase.

George Papaellinas, writer of two novels, literary magazine editor and teacher of creative writing, sees the new technologies as creating opportunities for new types of writing and narrative: "Hypertextuality, the non-linear linking of narrative elements, will change the accepted idea we have of the writer as individual genius. In the same way that films are collaboratively created now, maybe team-writing will become more the norm in the future, even for text."

Electronic publishing is already forcing a re-think of the concepts of copyright and text ownership. The future will require a refinement and expansion of current Lending Right schemes and the

introduction of modified pay-per-use systems to accommodate the new accessibility of electronically stored text. Writers will need to monitor these developments and become much more politically active at the industrial level.

Despite all these ifs and buts, future Australian writers will continue to tell us distinctive stories that inform, entertain and define us. The best stories will be quirky and idiosyncratic, uniquely Australian and internationalist at the same time. My hope is that, while we go on telling ourselves stories in order to live, in the future more Australians will be able to live from the stories they tell.

"This article is reprinted from "Artforce - Summer 1998 edition" - the newsletter of the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body."

## Are WC's and SLO's the Write Stuff?

Walter Vivian

I have doubts about the Australia Council's Writers Centre/Literature Officer program, that is run in cooperation with the states and territories, and has been in place for over a decade. It is funded as follows, on a dollar for dollar basis, depending on whether a centre or an officer is established.

New South Wales Writers' Centre \$43,000 per annum (1998-2000)

Northern Territory Community Writing Program \$42,000 per annum (1998-2000)

Queensland Writers' Centre \$43,000 per annum (1998-2000)

South Australian Writers' Centre \$43,000 per annum (1998-2000)

Tasmanian Writers' Centre \$30,000 per annum (1998-2000)

Victorian Writers' Centre \$43,000 per annum (1998-2000)

WA State Literature Officer \$26,500 per annum (1998-2000)

(This table is from an AC report on its website.)

Has the program generated interest in literature, promoted new writers who are producing significant work, and become a significant community resource? Or has it become a bureaucratic, monolithic program that has stifled initiative, competition and diversity by killing off or weakening existing writers organisations, diverting scarce arts funds from writers and writing projects?

My experience has been limited to visits to the South Australian Writers Centre in two of its manifestations, a visit to the New South Wales Centre during its second year, and distant observation of the operations of the literature officer in Western Australia for four years. My perception has also been coloured by the fact that I was president of the 800+ strong Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia and was therefore competing on its behalf for funds.

In Western Australia there is a Literature Officer based in the Fremantle Arts Centre and once largely controlled by that organisation, although there is an advisory committee with varied representation including outsiders but leaning heavily towards the academic sector. The incumbent is a competent person, but works in an environment where there are three writers centres, unfunded by The Australia Council but supported by members and minuscule state grants, and is therefore hard pressed to find things to do that are not already being done, and to some extent, actively competes with the writers organisations. (In the literature of the newly formed Country Arts authority the SLO is recognised as a writers organisation!) It is interesting to note that Western Australia receives \$16,500 less than other states for daring to have its own style of writers centres!

The Fellowship of Australian Writers in Western Australia has achieved a membership in excess of 800 and hosts the Tom Collins Writers Centre producing a monthly magazine that is arguably the

best of its kind in Australia. As FAWWA is hard pressed for funds, the centre is open now for only a few hours a week, so that access to its library, facilities, and computer equipment is restricted and cannot be on a drop-in, casual basis, which was the case when for a year it received funding of \$16000 and had a full time administrator.

The Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers Centre, originally set up by FAWWA is situated in the hills east of Perth and is run by an independent foundation, receiving some local government assistance as well as a very small state grant. It uses the FAWWA magazine to good effect and has run an interesting program for many years.

The Peter Cowan Writers Centre, newly situated in the fast growing northern suburbs of Perth, apparently receives some support from Edith Cowan University, the city of Joondalup and a very small state grant. Interestingly, the state literature officer spends time at this centre but not at the others.

Western Australia also has an active branch of the Australian Writers Guild, which runs a part time office, and an effective but entirely self-funded Society of Women Writers group.

I liked the South Australian Writers Centre's first premises at the end of Rundle Mall, where it occupied the top floor of a smallish city building. It was pushed for space but seemed to have all things needful, but a dearth of writers present, in the time that I was there. The second site in a decaying, rambling, old two-storey building (It is amazing how the arts and decaying old buildings are seen by politicians to go together.) did not work as well and seemed to require a staff member especially devoted to guarding the entrance. The SAWC is strong, with a membership last heard to be in excess of 1200. On the downside, FAWSA has faltered and faded. It seems that most matters literary are now channelled into and through the Centre.

The New South Wales Writers Centre is situated in the grounds of the old Roselle Asylum in a large, old, two-storey building. (There is a story that the first administrator was troubled by persons climbing up the outer mesh screens on the windows.) It seemed to me that there was too much space and a diffuse program to match, again, with a dearth of writers using the Centre, which is not really conveniently situated. The Centre does not seem to have had an impact on FAWNSW, which apparently functions at much the same level as formerly, as a coalition of virtually autonomous groups although the membership of about 1000 is small for such a large state. New South Wales also hosts the professional writers organisations, The Australian Writers Guild and the Australian Society of Authors, which have their own premises and their own agendas and seem to be little influenced.

I am at an age and stage to question whether the writers centres and literature officers meet the needs of writers and would-be writers. I am also amazed that the present federal government has followed blindly in supporting a program which has more in common with the Proletarian Writers Guilds of Eastern Europe than the hard-driving, lean, individualistic, competitive units of conservative philosophy. I suspect that in accord with a long line of arts ministers, Richard Alston is much more interested in the Communications side of his portfolio. He is certainly not pushed by his shadow minister for the arts, whoever that may be!

I understand that the program has been evaluated but cannot get details and find that in Western Australia that the largest writers organisation, the Writers Forum of all writers organisations, the literature development officer and the head of communications school of a large university, were unaware of it. What sort of evaluation ignores the client base?

In my own state, I am sure that an equivalent amount of writers centre money (or less) spent annually on the writers organisations, would have produced a more satisfactory outcome than obtains in other states with their institutional, monolithic writers centres.

But I suspect that we might have a basic conceptual problem. Is the Australia Council, through the Literature Board, encouraging writers to write and to have their writing published or performed, or is it concerned with building an expensive edifice to its own design, regardless of needs and outcomes? Are its programs aimed at poetasters rather than poets?

Writing is a solitary craft. We don't write in hordes and our best writers are rarely to be found in writers centres or participating in writers organisations: they're too busy writing. Bearing this in mind, resources should be channelled to the solitary writer through maximising publication and performance opportunities and providing information and support through the new technologies.

The importance of stimulation of literary/social contact is undeniable but perhaps this could be achieved through computer networks and modern technology supplementing the work of the writers organisations, which although often bumbling and folksy, have the virtue that they are owned and run by writers and would-be writers.

Perhaps Richard Alston is right, and the tools and support that writers need are more likely to emanate from the other part of his portfolio.#

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

NEXT ISSUE, AN ARTICLE ON EVALUATION AND THE ARTS.

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

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

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

The Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, is to draft the proposed new preamble to the constitution. We wonder at his incentivisation and laud his initiative fulsomely.

As correspondent Margeri Mather of Woollahara, NSW, writes in The Weekend Australian of February 27-28:

"With an abundance of fine writers in this country - writers with elegance of expression, beauty and originality - we are all reduced by the decision of John Howard that he will write the preamble to the Australian Constitution."

Australia's Minister for (against?) the Arts, apparently casts no shadow, or if he does, there is very little evidence that he or she is there. Who is Australia's shadow minister for the arts?

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## Goliardys - Saucy little stories or verse.

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

## Joker

Ouch and Touche!

Bill Gates, supremo of Microsoft and one of the world's most fabulously rich men, has commented:

"If GM had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25 cars that get 1000 miles to the gallon."

General Motors' response was understandably dripping with irony, which users of computers can appreciate to the full.

"If GM had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics:

¥ For no reason whatsoever your car would crash twice a day.

¥ When they repainted lines on the road, you'd have to buy a new car.

¥ Occasionally, your car would die on the freeway for no reason and you would just accept this, restart and drive on.

¥ Occasionally, executing a manoeuvre such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.

¥ Only one person at a time could use the car, unless you bought *Car95* or *CarNT*. But then you would have to buy more seats.

¥ Macintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, be reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive, but would run only on 5 per cent of roads.

¥ The oil, water temperature and alternator warning lights would be replaced by a *general car default* warning light.

¥ The airbag would say *are you sure* before going off.

¥ Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in unless you simultaneously lifted a door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.

¥ GM would require all car buyers to also purchase a deluxe set of Rand McNally, now a subsidiary, road maps. Attempting to delete this option would cause the car's performance to diminish 50 per cent or more. Moreover, GM would become a target for investigation by the Justice Department.

¥ When GM introduced a model, buyers would have to learn to drive again because none of the controls would operate in the same way as the old car or be in the same place."

I'M INDEBTED TO PAM CASELLAS AND BRONWEN CLURE OF *INSIDE COVER*, "THE WEST AUSTRALIAN" OF 29 DECEMBER, 1998, FOR DRAWING ATTENTION TO THESE DELICIOUS QUOTES.

A PASSING THOUGHT OCCURS. WHAT IF THE LITIGIOUS AMERICANS MOUNT A CLASS ACTION AGAINST COMPUTER COMPANIES WHO SOLD THEM HARDWARE OR SOFTWARE THAT MALFUNCTIONS AND FAILS IN 2000?

## ALLEGED BUMPER STICKERS FROM THE INTERNET, AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

A day without sunshine is like, night  
On the other hand, you have different fingers.  
I just got lost in thought. It was unfamiliar territory.  
Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.  
I feel like I'm diagonally parked in a parallel universe.  
You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say will be misquoted, then used against you.  
I wonder how much deeper would the ocean be without sponges.  
Honk if you love peace and quiet.  
Pardon my driving; I'm reloading.  
Despite the cost of living, have you noticed how it remains so popular?  
Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.  
The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.  
I almost had a psychic girlfriend but she left me before we met.  
I drive way too fast to worry about cholesterol.  
I intend to live forever - so far, so good.  
If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?  
Support bacteria - they're the only culture some people have.  
The only substitute for good manners is fast reflexes.  
When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane, going the wrong way.

If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.  
 A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.  
 Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.  
 For every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism.  
 He who hesitates is probably right.  
 Never do card tricks for the group you play poker with.  
 No one is listening until you make a mistake.  
 Success always occurs in private, and failure in full view.  
 The colder the X-ray table, the more of your body is required on it.  
 The hardness of the butter is directly proportional to the softness of the bread.  
 The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the ability to reach it.  
 To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.

### FOR THE CRYPTICALLY MINDED, SOME CLEVER ANAGRAMS FROM THE INTERNET, AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

Dormitory - Dirty Room  
 Evangelist - Evil's Agent  
 Desperation - A Rope Ends It  
 The Morse Code - Here Come Dots  
 Slot Machines - Cash Lost in 'em  
 Animosity - Is No Amity  
 Mother-in-law - Woman Hitler  
 Snooze Alarms - Alas! No More Z's  
 Alec Guinness - Genuine Class  
 Semolina - Is No Meal  
 The Public Art Galleries - Large Picture Halls, I Bet  
 A Decimal Point - I'm a Dot in Place  
 The Earthquakes - That Queer Shake  
 Eleven plus two - Twelve plus one  
 Contradiction - Accord not in it

*This one is amazing:*

"To be or not to be: that is the question, whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

Anagram:

In one of the Bard's best-thought-of tragedies, our insistent hero, Hamlet, queries on two fronts about how life turns rotten.

*And the grand finale:*

"That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."  
- Neil A. Armstrong

Anagram:

A thin man ran; makes a large stride, left planet, pins flag on moon!  
On to Mars!#

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

It is hoped that Sir Percy Pixel will be in Perth for the launch of Sappho's Delight, which will be officially published on 1st April, 1999.

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

What about some flaming arrows for editors or arts policy?

What's wrong with rhyming verse? What's right with rhyming verse?

Are verbs as good as they used to be?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## FREE NETSCAPE

For those who have had irritation and frustration in trying to download Netscape Communicator 4.5, try

<http://people.netscape.com/olcen>

Mac users can get direct to the business area without interrogation with

<ftp://ftp6.netscape.com/pub/communicator/4.5/english/mac/smartupdate/>

It takes about two hours to get all the goodies, and this time, my new software did not gobble up address book, list of bookmarks and correspondence.

## COOL RELIEF

If you are tired of slaving over a hot computer in a heat wave, or like looking at penguins, snow, ice or old huts, for instant mental relief visit Australia's Antarctic stations at

<http://www.antdiv.gov.au/>

## 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>

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

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

GENERATING INCOME FROM THEIR CRAFT.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### Contributors

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

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

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

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

Roland Leach is a prize-winning West Australian writer and teacher.  
(rleach@plc.wa.edu.au)

Cam Smith is a Melbourne based writer.

Kevin Gillam is a Perth based writer with a many poems published in Australian journals.

Andrew Burke is a well-known poet, teacher and writer and the author of several books of verse published by FACP and others.

Rob Finlayson is a professional writer who lives in Fremantle. He was formerly the creative administrative office of FAWWA.

## Advertisements.

### Brillig

edited by Roland Leach

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

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In October 1996, photographer Richard Polden set off on an extraordinary adventure. Together with an international crew of men and women, he sailed from Fremantle, Western Australia, bound for London aboard the magnificent Endeavour replica. Two hundred and twenty-six years before, Cook sailed a similar route, limping home with a sick crew and a battered ship. By contrast the Endeavour replica's voyage was the start of her planned four year journey around the world. In dramatic detail, these photographs from the voyage capture the very essence of sailing on Endeavour.

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

ISBN 1 86368 227 9 \$24.95

### 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, Bookcaffe Swanbourne and other booksellers.

ISBN 0-9587350-0-X \$12.95

### 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. Bundsell 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.

## Notice for Perth readers:

"Sappho's Delight", Walter Vivian's second book of poems, will be launched from the steps of Tom Collins House in Swanbourne at 4.15 pm on Sunday, 2nd May, hopefully by Sir Percy Pixel himself, and certainly to the strains of the singing violin of Les Helfgott.

Please come along, a little later than the usual meeting time, to enjoy violin and verse under the sighing, souging gum trees of Melon Hill in Allen Park, Swanbourne. All welcome.

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

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